"Now unto Him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy,—To the only wise God our Saviour be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and for ever. Amen."—Jude 24. 25.
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"HITHERTO HATH THE LORD HELPED US."

"Then Samuel took a stone and set it between Mizpeh and Shen, and called the name of it Ebenezer, saying, Hitherto hath the Lord helped us" (1 Samuel 7. 12).

A CHRISTIAN who had had fifty years' experience of the goodness of God said that if she had raised a stone of remembrance every time the Lord had helped her, she would have built a solid wall fifty years in length. She had found the Lord ever by her side, a very present help, renewing His mercies every morning, and never failing in His compassions. And many can say, and we among them, There has not failed one good word that He has spoken, and if in our wall of Ebenezers there are gaps, they mark the times when in self-sufficiency and pride we thought we could manage our own affairs without reference to God; then we had to learn sore lessons as to our folly, and own that independence of the Lord meant disaster for us. But even then He was not far from us, and as when He arose from the dead He appeared to defeated Simon (Luke 24.) so has He often proved to us that His grace is greater than our failure. And because of all this we can say as we look back on the past, "Hitherto hath the Lord helped us."

We have been kept by the power of God, and with confidence we can look on to the future when He will present us "faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy." To Him be thanksgiving and praise both now and for ever!

But our purpose is not to dwell upon the individual help that we have received from the Lord, though that would be an encouraging and happy theme, but to speak of the sad condition of things in Christendom to-day; and a disheartening subject it would be if we could not show the way of deliverance. There is a striking analogy between the condition into which Israel had fallen in the days of Samuel and the present spiritual condition of Christendom in which, of course, all the people of God on earth have part. In order that this may be clear to us all, WE ASK THAT THIS SEVENTH CHAPTER OF SAMUEL BE READ; we shall find it most interesting and instructive. Israel were a backslidden people; they had turned from the Lord and His truth to false gods; they were sorely oppressed by the Philistines, "AND THE TIME WAS LONG . . . and all the house of Israel lamented after the Lord" (verse 2). "Thou hast left thy first love" was the charge that the Lord brought against the Church very early in its history. Thou art "wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked" is the present condition of Christendom, as the Lord sees it (see Rev. 2. 3).

WHO WERE THE PHILISTINES?

Who were these Philistines that held Israel in such bondage and brought them into such misery and poverty? And what do they represent? They sprang from Egypt (Genesis 10. 13, 14), but though they had left Egypt behind and got into the land which God had promised to His people, they had not taken His way into it; their way had been an easy and short cut by which they escaped the Red Sea and River
Jordan. These things that prefigured deliverance and blessing by the death and resurrection of Christ had no place in their history. They were in the land of God's people, but they had not travelled into it by the God-ordained way (Exodus 13. 17). Really they had no right in the land at all, for God had apportioned it to Israel (Deut. 32. 8, 9). They are figurative of what we might call secularized Christianity, religion made acceptable to unregenerate men. Ritualism and Modernism are some of the Philistines of our day; they are really pagan superstitions and philosophies that have invaded the sphere of faith and made it like a great house of mixed vessels (2 Tim. 2); and they are sorely oppressing the true Israel of God; they draw near to God with the lips, but are scornful of that heart exercise and spiritual life that have marked the revivals of former days. They have the form of godliness, but deny the power.

One remarkable feature in the history of these Philistines was their anxiety to obtain and spoil the most sacred and precious possessions of God's people. I pass over the fact that both Abraham and Isaac were in danger of being robbed of their wives by them (Gen. 20. 26), for these incidents arose from their own cowardice and want of faith in God; but chapter 21. tells us that they violently took away one of Abraham's wells, and chapter 26. tells us that they filled up with earth the wells of water that Abraham digged. They did it because they envied Isaac, it was spiteful and wanton work. Then when Isaac digged other wells they claimed them and strove for them. These wells were essential to the life of the patriarchs and their households, and John 4. and 7. give us the right to interpret them as figuring the Holy Spirit which is given to us, and who is indispensable to the life of God's people now. But what place is there in the carnal religion of our day for the Holy Spirit? Where the superstitions of the ritualists, and the blasphemous criticism and scientific doubt of the modernists prevail, He is a grieved and a quenched Spirit, the wells are filled with earth; nor has the Spirit any place in dead formality, which while boasting in the correctness of its creed has neither faith nor fervour. They seized also the Ark of the Covenant (Samuel 5. 2) and were in the land of promise as though it was their own, and Joel 3. 5 says of them, "Ye have taken my silver and gold, and have carried into your temples my goodly and pleasant things." The counterpart of this is seen in our day in the fact that men who have not entered the kingdom of God by being born again, but are in it by profession only, are now accepted leaders and teachers in it, and have tacked on to their own philosophical fables the name of Christ, and taken the goodly and pleasant things of our holy faith and attached them to man as he is in his fallen nature, as though there was no necessity for regeneration and redemption, and a new creation in Christ Jesus.

The Philistines were ruled by five lords (Joshua 13. 3; Judges 3. 3), and this modern religion is ruled by five lords also, for it is governed by the five senses. Its devotees are controlled by what is natural, and all outside the range of the senses is more or less denied. It is nothing to them that the Scriptures saith, “The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned” (1 Cor. 2. 14). The natural man is all they are concerned about, for they know no other, and they fulfil this very word
by rejecting all that is miraculous in the Word. The Incarnation, sacrificial death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus are denied and ridiculed, and His miracles are explained away. Everything that would offend a world that has crucified the Lord of glory, or that the natural man cannot understand or see or feel, is rejected.

It is a remarkable thing that though these people only possessed a very small strip of the land of Canaan, it has taken its name from them, for Palestine means the land of the Philistines, but this name is only given to it in Scripture when the judgment of it is foretold (Exodus 15. 14; Isa. 14. 29, 31; Joel 3. 4). They come into prominence first in Genesis 21, where they violently robbed Abraham of a well of water, and they were Israel's most persistent foes throughout their history in the land; there is more about them in the Old Testament than any other nation but Israel, and the last mention of them in Scripture is, “I will cut off the pride of the Philistines” (Zech. 9. 6). Of the condition of things that is the antitype of them in our day, the Lord has said, “I will spue thee out of My mouth.” In the Laodicean Church we see the Philistines in full force.

WHAT CAN BE DONE?

Rationalism and Ritualism both make their appeal to the natural man who is glad to have his mind inflated and his feelings moved, and they both obscure Christ, indeed He has no place in either, and many a true-hearted disciple entangled in these things, and seeing no door of deliverance from them, must be crying out like Mary by the empty sepulchre, “They have taken away my Lord and I know not where they have laid Him.” What can be done?

He has an insensitive heart that does not feel these things, and he who feels them will be humbled before God about them, for those who have named the name of the Lord cannot claim to have no responsibility in these matters. The churches of God on earth have failed to maintain the testimony of the Lord, and we all have our part in the churches’ failure. There may be those who have separated themselves as far as they can from these evils, yet they cannot be indifferent to them as though they did not concern them; a spirit of that sort would be the spirit of the Pharisee, and as obnoxious to the Lord as the evils they condemn. If Paul the Apostle wept about those who were enemies of the cross of Christ and who were exercising their malign influence among the people of God even in his day, we also may well weep as we consider Christendom leavened and corrupted as it is. And those who feel these things the most deeply in company with the great Shepherd of the flock of God will be the most likely ones to be vessels of deliverance to those who are longing for deliverance.

WHAT ISRAEL DID.

Let us see what Israel did in their extremity, and how they travelled from degradation and defeat to victory, for therein may be help for us.

1. They were weary of their bondage—the time was long—and they lamented after the Lord.
2. They put away their false gods and separated themselves from iniquity.
3. They gathered to Samuel at Mizpeh.
4. They poured out water upon the ground.
5. They confessed their sins to the Lord.

They longed after the Lord. These
false things that they had permitted to grow up in their midst had not satisfied them, they had enslaved and impoverished them. The Lord satisfies, and He delivers and enriches, and He stands at the door and knocks ready to bless those whom He loves, but they must turn away from the evil things. The Word of God is plain. "Let him that nameth the name of the Lord depart from iniquity," and leave the consequences in the hands of the Lord, the Deliverer.

They gathered together to Samuel at Mizpeh. They were united in their misery, but also in their search after the Lord; they did not come blaming one another as the cause of the trouble, for that would have set them to fighting each other, but they owned in unity their common shame and sin, which was all the more heinous by the fact that they were the people of God. It was to Samuel they gathered; he was the great intercessor of that day, and is a figure of our Lord Jesus Christ, who ever liveth to take up His people's cause; and Mizpeh was the place of their gathering. Now Mizpeh means the watch tower, and this reminds us of the prophet Habakkuk, who at another crisis in Israel's history said, "I will stand upon my watch, and set me upon my tower, and see what He will say to me, and what I shall answer when I am reproved" (chap. 2. 1). So with Israel, there would be deep heartsearchings among them as they listened to God's Word through the lips of Samuel, for he not only interceded on their behalf, but he judged them there, he exposed their condition and ways in the presence of the Lord, and set before them the word of the Lord.

They poured out water upon the ground before the Lord. Thus they owned, in dramatic fashion, their helplessness and nothingness. Their sin had brought them to their wits' end, they had no hope except in God.

It is this humble and contrite spirit, that waits only upon the Lord and gives heed to His word, that is needed among the people of God to-day. The meek will He guide in judgment, and He will show Himself strong on behalf of those who have no might. But the exposure and confession of helplessness and sin is not enough, it is necessary, but it is negative; how and from whence can come the oil of joy instead of the mourning? The question arises, Upon what righteous ground can God intervene on behalf of a sinful and demoralized people, so that His grace shall more abound where their sin has abounded? The answer is the burnt offering. AND SAMUEL TOOK A SUCKING LAMB AND OFFERED IT FOR A BURNT OFFERING WHOLLY UNTO THE LORD: AND SAMUEL CRIED UNTO THE LORD FOR ISRAEL AND THE LORD HEARD HIM (verse 9). The eyes of all Israel were turned to the burnt offering. Of course, it speaks of Christ, and to Him our eyes must also turn. And how great is the relief when we do turn from our failure to His faithfulness. God rests in Christ, and we must rest in Him also if we are to find any rest at all. He is the holy One of God, He was the spotless Lamb for a burnt offering—the Lamb of God. He offered Himself without spot to God, and only on the ground of that perfect offering could God have received us at first, and it is only because that offering has lost none of its efficacy that He can go on with His people now, and continue to bless them in spite of all their failure. The burnt offering was wholly to the Lord, it spoke in figure of the complete devotion of Christ in death to the will of God, but it was
FOR US, for “Christ also hath loved us, and hath given Himself FOR US, an offering and a sacrifice TO GOD, for a sweet smelling savour” (Eph. 5. 2). What a wonderful and abiding link this is between us and God! And what good thing could God withhold from those who plead this before Him?

And victory over every foe, even over Satan himself, is gained through the blood of the Lamb; as it will be in the day of which Revelation 12. speaks so it may be now: “They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb”; for that blood has not only made complete atonement for the sins of those who believe, and so has silenced the accuser’s voice for ever, but it is the proof and measure of God’s great love, and this love being shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Spirit becomes the word of testimony in the mouth, and makes those who know it forget themselves, and ready to sacrifice themselves for the will of God, for “they loved not their lives unto the death” (Rev. 12. 11).

We desire to show the way of victory. What attraction could the fictions of Rome and the “vain babblings and opposition of science falsely so-called” have for those whose faith has grasped the meaning of the blood of the Lamb, and who have seen God revealed in Jesus? And what place could dead forms and all the ceremonies that please the flesh have in their approach to God? These Philistines must lose their power over all who rejoice in the blood of the Lamb.

When Israel gathered together confessing their sin and helplessness, and offering to God, not their own merits, but that which spoke of the excellence of Christ, it aroused the Philistines against them, and they drew near to fight against them. They did not know that the Lord was with those contrite people; but He was, as He ever will be with the upright in heart, and He showed Himself strong on their behalf, for He thundered against their foes and set Israel free. It does not please the devil when the people of God gather together before God in their weakness, he would rather see them making great demonstrations of their fancied strength, but the lowly place is the place of power. “Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord and He shall lift you up.” “God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble.” “Submit yourselves therefore to God, resist the devil and he will flee from you” (James 4.). God fights for the humble, and He approves of those who, in their weakness, gather together to look only to Him.

The story has been written for our learning, and we call attention to it in the earnest hope that the Lord will give to those who love Him an understanding of the lessons it has to teach us. He has a way for the feet of His saints as He ever had, and this way is a way of liberty and not of bondage; in it they may follow righteousness, faith, love and peace with a pure heart, instead of fables and superstitions and traditions and pride. “If any man will do His will he shall know of the doctrine,” and even if he has to stand alone as far as his brethren are concerned, he will be able to raise his Ebenezer as Paul did and say: “Notwithstanding the Lord stood with me and strengthened me.” Yes, so shall it be with every man who turns wholly to God and is not ashamed of the testimony of our Lord.

How does the Lord wean us from the false things of the world? He weans us by winning us. It is His attractiveness that throws all else unto the shade.
THERE IS NOTHING TOO HARD FOR THEE.
Notes of an Address on Jeremiah 32. (W. Bramwell Dick)

Here we have the account of an extremely interesting incident just perhaps where we should least expect to find it. It may be we are not so familiar with the Book of Jeremiah as we are with some other portions of the Holy Scriptures. The inspired writer has been termed “the Weeping Prophet,” and on that account we have perhaps decided that his prophecy will be of a melancholy character and have therefore left it severely alone. Yet it would be difficult to find a more interesting, thrilling, exhilarating incident than that of which we have just read in this thirty-second chapter. It is truly the story of an amazing transaction! The state of matters among the people of God at the time was just as black as it could possibly be. Their sin and rebellion had been so great that Jehovah had determined to visit them in judgment. Jeremiah had told the King of Judah that the King of Babylon would come, take him and his subjects captive and burn the city, and no power could prevent it. The disaster was imminent, and doubtless all were preparing themselves for the inevitable.

It is just here that we are introduced to Hanameel. Numbered amongst the people of God, he was nevertheless a man of the world. It may be he was like Demas of the New Testament (2 Timothy 4. 10), just as the imprisoned prophet of the Old Testament seems to correspond to the imprisoned Apostle who penned that Epistle. How many there are to-day who profess to know that their sins are forgiven and to be sure of going to heaven when they leave this world. They have a very foggy idea of what sort of a place heaven is, and they are not in any particular hurry to get there. They are out to make the best of this world while they are here, and they hope to have a long stay, and they trust they will be able to make the best of the other world when they get there. Hanameel was troubled not about the sin of God’s people and the judgment that was to fall upon them. He was concerned about a field that he possessed. His cousin Jeremiah was, it may be in his judgment, a confirmed pessimist. He was always predicting dark days. The unfortunate thing was that his predictions turned out to be correct. If this disaster happened he would lose his field. What was to be done? If he were to put it up for sale he would not receive a single bid, and his friends would laugh at his simplicity or audacity. As things were, the field was not worth a pin. He wondered if he could induce his cousin to buy it. He was not by any means a businessman, he viewed things in an altogether different way to other people, and it might be he could persuade him. He hied off to the prison, made his proposals and—did he hear aright?—Jeremiah agreed to it, made no conditions, did not attempt to cut down the price, paid him full value, had the transaction carried out in the most approved legal fashion to the entire satisfaction of all concerned, and Hanameel left feeling, without doubt, that he had done a good stroke of business. Had things been normal he could not have done better. What could it mean? Did Jeremiah not seriously believe that that which he had prophesied would happen? Was it that seeing the doom of the people was sealed he did not care what he did? Or what was it?

Here we take our leave of Hanameel without being able to express the
slightest admiration for him, but rather with the earnest prayer that we may be graciously preserved from taking him as a model in these difficult days in which we live. We read our chapter once again and we find that Jeremiah was in "the secret of the Lord," for "the secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him." Jehovah had told him to buy the field, and when, having done so, he said in the hearing of Hanameel and the witnesses to the purchase, "Thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel; Houses and fields and vineyards shall be possessed again in this land" (verse 15), he was passing on the secret that Jehovah had confided to him. Now having said adieu to his cousin, he turned to God, and in verses 17-25 we have a beautiful instance of the prophet's intimacy with, his delight and confidence in, and his holy boldness in speaking to Jehovah.

"Ah, Lord God! behold Thou hast made the heaven and the earth by Thy great power and stretched-out arm, and THERE IS NOTHING TOO HARD FOR THEE."

The force of this word is, "There is nothing too wonderful for Thee." In verses 18 and 19 he expressed in sublime language his delight in Jehovah; his confidence in Him; and his knowledge of His infinite power. Then he confessed the sins of the people, and justified Jehovah for His judgment upon His people. "Now," said he in effect, "the mounts—the engines of war—have already arrived, the city is already given into the hands of the Chaldeans. What Thou hast spoken is come to pass; and behold Thou seest it; and yet Thou hast said unto me, O Lord God, 'Buy thee the field for money, and take witnesses; though the city is given into the hands of the Chaldeans.'" Humanly speaking the whole affair was extraordinary, and absolutely inexplicable. Now we have Jehovah's answer: "Behold, I am the Lord, the God of all flesh: IS THERE ANY THING TOO HARD FOR ME?" (verse 27). In other words, "is there anything too wonderful for Me?" He assured Jeremiah that all He had said about Israel and Judah was sadly true. Princes, priests, prophets, people had all alike turned their back upon Him; they had refused every overture, and they had brought upon themselves this fearful judgment. Yet, notwithstanding all that, He would "in wrath remember mercy" (Habakkuk 3. 2).

As we read how He proposed to lavish His mercy upon them, we should be amazed were it not that we know how He has bestowed His mercy upon us. We remember how when Jehovah appeared to Moses while the Children of Israel were groaning under the slavery of Egypt He announced what He proposed to do for them in the well-known sevenfold "I WILL" (Exodus 6.6-8). They had proved how He had fulfilled His Word to the very letter. Alas! They had wandered far from Him; His hand was heavy upon them, yet His heart was filled with compassion toward them, and in our chapter as He told His servant what He would do, we hear Him ten times saying "I WILL." None but Jehovah could say "I WILL." Shall we note what He determined to do?

1. "I WILL gather them out of all countries" (verse 37).
2. "I WILL bring them again unto this place" (verse 37).
3. "I WILL cause them to dwell safely" (verse 37).
4. "I WILL be their God" (verse 38).
5. "I WILL give them one heart and one way" (verse 39).
6. “I WILL make an everlasting covenant with them” (verse 40).
7. “I WILL put My fear in their hearts” (verse 40).
8. “I WILL rejoice over them” (verse 41).
9. “I WILL plant them in this land” (verse 41).
10. “I WILL cause their captivity to return” (verse 44).

We read these precious words, we ponder over them, and may we not well exclaim: “THERE IS NOTH­ING TOO HARD FOR THEE!” What a God indeed is ours! How unspeakable is His love! How infinite is His power! We go on to chapter 33. (and we entreat our hearers to read every word of these two chapters). Jehovah again speaks to Jeremiah. He invites his confidence; He promises to show him “great and mighty” (inaccessible) “things” (verse 3). He promises the people “health and cure,” and to “reveal unto them the abundance of peace and truth” (verse 6). He undertook to “cleanse them from all their iniquity” (verse 8), and He said the city should be to Him “a name of joy, a praise and an honour before all the nations of the earth” (verse 9). Joy and praise would take the place of desolation and sorrow, Jehovah and His mercy would be magnified, and the house of the Lord would again resound with the singing of His people (verses 10, 11). Judah would be saved, Jerusalem would dwell safely; His name would be named upon them, and it would be “The Lord our righteousness” — “JEHOVAH-TIDKENU!” Once again we say, “THERE IS NOTHING TOO HARD FOR THEE!”

Now what are we to learn from all this? Is it not this? Jeremiah was deeply conscious of the failure. He confessed it. He made it his own. Because of his loyalty to Jehovah, his fidelity to His Word, and his faithful testimony to His people, he suffered bonds, imprisonment, privation and the most fearful treatment imaginable at their hands. Yet in these chapters we find him maintained in communion with God; in the secret of what He was going to do; and so in the power of faith that when everything was at its blackest and its worst he could buy that field in view of the time when everything would be seen at its highest and its best. Viewing God's people and God's intention for them from God's side, he was overwhelmed not by their failure but by God's mercy and power, and hence he could say to Him, “THERE IS NOTHING TOO HARD FOR THEE!” Let us bring this down to date. We look abroad to-day upon the church universal. What do we see? Failure writ large upon everything. The church outwardly split into a thousand fragments, and that which was once so beautiful now a reproach to the name of Christ.

What are we to do? Shall we say, “Everything has gone to pieces, there is nothing left for which to stand, and we must just scramble our way to heaven as best we can”? Surely not! We turn to our blessed Lord. We hear Him say, “Upon this rock I WILL build My church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it” (Matt. 16. 18), and He seems to say in our ear, “IS THERE ANY THING TOO HARD FOR ME?” We listen to the testimony of the Holy Spirit that He (Christ) will present the church to Himself “a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing” (Ephes. 5. 27), and we gladly say to Him, “Lord, THERE IS NOTHING TOO HARD FOR THEE.” We own the failure, we sadly confess our share
in it, we bemoan the dishonour that has been brought upon His Name and the way in which His glory has been dragged in the mire. Notwithstanding all this, we seek to realize what His assembly is to Him at the present moment. We endeavour to apprehend what He is going to do for His assembly, and we seek in all lowliness, without any pretension, to be found in the secret of His purpose, in the current of His mind, in the path of His will, desiring to maintain the honour of His Name, the holiness of His house, and to be walking, in the midst of the failure, in the light of the coming day of His triumph and His joy. The world will have no use for us. Our fellow-believers may misunderstand us and shun our company. We will go on, however, careful that all our actions and our entire line of conduct in this day is governed by that for which we confidently look in that day, and ever saying to the Lord, “THERE IS NOTHING TOO HARD FOR THEE!”

If without appearing to do violence to the exegesis of our Scripture and of the text that we have so frequently repeated, we might venture just two applications, we would suggest that in these words there is encouragement in this for gathering of saints. Just as in the best-ordered families friction may occur, so sometimes amongst companies of those who love the Lord difficulties arise. At such times there is the danger of resorting to human, artificial means. There may be a sort of unwritten law that a certain course should be followed to extricate those concerned from what appears to be a deadlock, and as a result they get deeper into the morass. Would it not be well at such times to remember that He who as Jehovah spoke to Jeremiah, now, as “the Head of the body, the church” (Col. 1. 18), speaks to “His own,” and asks, “IS THERE ANYTHING TOO HARD FOR ME?” Where there is the display of simple, unswerving confidence in Himself, we may be quite sure HE will come in and HE will work out His own purpose for His own glory and prosperity of His beloved saints.

Then we would, in closing, take the liberty of taking our text out of its setting and apply it to our walk as individual Christians. It may be some dear brother or sister in Christ is labouring under a heavy burden—domestic, business or otherwise. You are up against a dead wall and there seems no way out. Anxious days, sleepless nights, groans and tears, sometimes the heart asking, “Does God care?” It may be someone has whispered in the ear, “THERE IS NOTHING TOO HARD FOR THE Lord”; and there has been an almost impatient answer, “O yes, that's all right!” Invariably the burdened one has said, “It's easy for him to speak, he has no burden to carry, he does not know what I am passing through.” The attitude, the thoughts almost seem to imply, “This is too hard for the Lord.” Listen, dear brother, dear sister. He knows all about it. He understands your case thoroughly, He loves you, His heart is wounded as He sees you turning to everything and to everyone instead of simply, trustfully, restfully leaning upon Him. He draws near to you, He whispers in your ear, “IS THERE ANYTHING TOO HARD FOR ME?” After all, you can give only one answer to that. What then will you do? What should you do? What would He have you do? Place yourself, your burden, your whole case here and now unreservedly in His hands; say to Him, “THERE IS NOTHING TOO HARD FOR THEE,” and leave everything in confidence to Himself.
"CAUGHT UP."

"The Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words."—1 Thess. 4.

"A PHYSICAL IMPOSSIBILITY," SAY THE MODERNISTS.

A PAMPHLET came into our hands recently, written by a well-known American University professor. In it he endeavoured to show the absurdity of a literal interpretation of this great statement of truth which is so great a comfort to so many Christians. He admitted that the early Christians believed that at the coming of the Lord all who believed on Him would be suddenly translated to heaven—"caught up," as our verse puts it—but he contended that that was because they were ignorant of the laws of nature that are known now to children in elementary schools. For instance, he said, such an event is a physical impossibility, and they would never have supposed it possible if they had known anything at all about the law of gravitation.

But what is the law of gravitation? It is a natural law; and what kind of bodies does it control? Natural bodies. Does that, then, settle the matter? Certainly not. The learned professor had not studied his subject; he had not carefully read his Bible, he spoke too soon. Our bodies as now constituted are natural bodies and so are controlled by natural laws, but they are to be changed. The natural will give place to the spiritual, as 1 Cor. 15. 44 tells us. And what sort of laws will control spiritual bodies? Spiritual laws; and the greatest of all spiritual laws is that Christ is the centre of the universe—His Word is supreme, and He is the great magnet of His saints. That is why we shall rise to meet Him when He rises from His throne to meet us. He shall change these bodies of humiliation and fashion them like unto His own glorious body according to the power by which He is able to subdue all things unto Himself (Phil. 3.). Science cannot discover the spiritual world, for it lies open not to investigation but to faith, and in this spiritual world spiritual laws operate, and knowing this we hold on to and rejoice in the blessed hope, and comfort one another with these words.

USEFULNESS AND DEVOTEDNESS.

No right-minded Christian would wish to be useless, but usefulness may usurp the place of devotedness. It is our business to serve whenever and wherever the opportunity occurs, but our first thought should be the Lord Himself. Men can commend usefulness, but the heart of Christ values devotedness above all things. Usefulness makes demands upon us, there must be the expenditure of energy, but devotedness claims us entirely. If to be useful is my only thought, I may think much of myself in it and labour much to satisfy my own thoughts, but if I am devoted to Christ He absorbs me. Certainly I shall not be less useful to Him, but self will be forgotten in the service. Anna is an example: she was a widow so devoted to the God of Israel that she was permitted to be the first to greet Him when He entered the Temple; and the widow who gave her two mites—all her living—is another: she was approved of Him the last time He was in the Temple.
"THAT I MAY KNOW HIM." (W. TAYLOR.)

To know the Lord is the Christian’s desire, but how shall we that are finite comprehend the Infinite? We may touch the hem of His garment but the secret of His being is hid from us. We believe that He is God and know that He is a Man, but how the human and the divine unite in His blessed Person we do not know. We contemplate Him as the Eternal Word by whom the worlds were made. We see Him as a servant doing God’s will. We think of Him as the only-begotten Son in the Father’s bosom and as a Babe in Bethlehem’s manger. We think of Him as Wisdom, the One in whom God delighted before the worlds were made, and as Jesus of Nazareth anointed with the Holy Ghost and with power! We think of Him tempted and through weakness defeating the foe. We know Him as the One without sin, yet behold Him as the Lamb of God bearing our sins on the Cross. There is no lack of contrast in these views, which are like prismatic rays of various colours shining from the same precious stone.

Paul speaks of the unsearchable riches of Christ which he was commissioned to make known, but in Christ there are treasures untold. The mystery of Christ remains. No man knoweth the Son, but we may search the heights and depths of His love. There is no restriction in this sphere which we may explore to our heart’s content. It was love, we know, that led Him from the home of divine affections to the cross at Calvary; which rent the veil of His flesh that God might be revealed in very nature and character. Love brought Him into the world to save sinners; to show mercy to the undeserving—a fact not only writ large on the pages of Scripture but of present-day experience and realized by the individual. “The Son of God,” says Paul, “loved ME, and gave Himself for ME.” Hence his desire to know Him, so ardent that he suffered the loss of all things, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus our Lord. Hence, too, his prayer that WE might know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge.

HOW TO SERVE THE LORD.

Do not be too anxious as to laying down rules for your service; let the love of Christ constrain you and ways and opportunities will be opened for you. “Go to the mountain and bring wood, and build the house; and I will take pleasure in it, and I will be glorified, saith the Lord” (Haggai 1. 8). Contribute something to the prosperity of God’s building on earth. You will find it described in 1 Cor. 3. 9-17, and encouragement and warning as to any part you may have in it. If the love of Christ constrains you, you will be watching and waiting to see how you can serve in accord with His heart. He has served and blessed you, you know this—it may be your continual joy; as it is you will speak of it simply, artlessly and freely, and of Him whom your soul loveth; so will you be blessed in fuller measure, and the Lord will take pleasure in your service and the Holy Spirit will put His seal upon it, and God will be glorified.
REDEEMED AND RECONCILED.

(Edward C. Bicknell.

"I HAVE redeemed this valuable watch!" remarked a man to his friend, who replied, "I could purchase one at the jewellers just like it!" "That may be true, but you could not have obtained this one, for you had not the right of redemption. It is mine, and I only had that right!"

God has redeemed those who have believed in His beloved Son at a great price. He had the right to do so, and the redemption wherewith we are redeemed is eternal (Heb. 9. 12). Believers are not simply purchased, they are redeemed by the precious blood of Christ (1 Pet. 1. 18).

The man already referred to, through a quarrel, became alienated from his old friend. In this case it was not redemption that was necessary but reconciliation. The two things are quite different. One has to do with judicial rights, the other with the desires of the heart. God desired our reconciliation to Himself, as well as our redemption, and He secured it through our Lord Jesus Christ, even as we read: "Reconciled to God by the death of His Son" (Rom. 5. 10). "And you that were sometime alienated . . . yet now hath He reconciled" (Col. 1. 21). Both redemption and reconciliation are connected with the grace of God. What no works of ours could procure, His wonderful grace has brought to pass for us; and wonderful, wonderful indeed, that grace is!

The believer can truly give thanks to God, "being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus" (Rom. 3. 24). Knowing, too, that in Christ "we have redemption" (Col. 1. 14); yea, he can "also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the reconciliation" (Rom. 11. 5, N.T.); for the peace and rest which are found in the perfect righteousness of redemption are his, as are also the favours and rejoicings of reconciliation. Although they are distinct things, both are ours in Christ Jesus. We are redeemed and reconciled to God in Him, and both are based upon His completed work at the cross. It is important that we should understand and be established in these great verities of our faith.

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The former is very prominent in the types of the Old Testament, while the latter in its true meaning is reserved for the New, for it is here we have the full revelation of God's love. Among the many striking types given by the Spirit for our edification, that of Boaz and Ruth stands out as one of the most beautiful in regard to redemption. Boaz, the mighty man of wealth, was of the kindred of Naomi, Ruth's mother-in-law. To Ruth she said, "My daughter, shall I not seek rest for thee, that it may be well with thee?"

She sought this rest and well-being for the young Moabite widow in Boaz, for he had the right of redemption; and he worthily proved himself to be the kinsman-redeemer indeed! for in the gates—where judicial questions were considered, before the elders—all was settled, and the witnesses declared their satisfaction (Ruth 4.). On the ground of this redemption Boaz took Ruth, and she became his wife. Soon the worthiness of our Lord Jesus Christ will be publicly celebrated. Then shall we gladly sing to Him the new song, "THOU ART WORTHY! . . . THOU HAST REDEEMED" (Rev. 5. 9). Soon, too, shall the bride, the Lamb's wife, be seen shining with the light of the glory of God! (Rev. 21. 9-11).
Redemption's work in redemption's day shall fill heaven and earth with redemption splendours, and the glory of the Redeemer shall be worthily proclaimed.

The love of God seeks also man's reconciliation to Himself; and if righteousness is prominent in redemption, the deep desires of His heart are shown in regard to reconciliation. This is eloquently expressed in the words of 2 Cor. 5. 20: "God as it were beseeching by us, we entreat for Christ, be reconciled to God." Such words could not be used in regard to redemption. His love desired the reconciliation, though we did not. Even in regard to sinful Israel we read, He stretched out His hands to a disobedient and gain-saying people (Rom. 10. 21). He waited upon them with long-suffering, but they refused; and it is to the glory of His own grace that we have been brought to Himself. Rich in grace and in mercy too, He produced a response to His love in our hearts, having discovered to us the distance and distress we were in. It was the wanderer who felt his need, that came back to his Father! It was the confessed sinner, that returned and received the best robe, the ring and the sandals! It was the one who found out he was lost, that returned home! It was the one who was dead, that became alive again! The favours and the rejoicings at the feast were concerning him (Luke 15). This brought out the irreconcilable enmity of the elder brother, who said he had never transgressed. It shows that man at his boasted best is thoroughly alienated from God's thoughts of love—from that which gives PLEASURE TO HIM! And, though entreated to go in, he would not yield to the Father's gracious beseechings. Like self-righteous Israel, he scorned the outstretched hands, and the divine merry-makings of reconciliation were definitely refused. They that are in the flesh cannot please God, however cultured in religion they may be. Neither redemption nor reconciliation are accepted by them.

On the other hand it is deeply pleasing to the believer to know that God Himself is both glorified and gratified by these two divinely designed blessings; and those who enter into them by faith give pleasure to His heart—whose love counselled them—and by so doing it is shown that the enmity and alienation (which once estranged them from what was agreeable to God) are gone, and communion in mind and heart with Him in these glorious realities is theirs instead. Intimacy has taken the place of enmity. Nearness is now theirs instead of alienation. Oneness of thought and feeling marks them in regard to these righteous and rich providings of His great wisdom and love. Estrangement is therefore gone for ever.

"How great the grace wherein we stand—
The favour of our God:
'Tis joy and peace on every hand,
Through Jesus Christ our Lord."

This is according to the good pleasure of His will, and to "the praise of the glory of His grace," just as the fulness of redemption redounds to "the praise of His glory" (Ephes. 1. 6, 14). Redemption brings us to God in righteousness for His own glory. Reconciliation sets us before Himself in rejoicing for His own pleasure. Both place us in His presence infinitely suitable and eternally agreeable to His own fulness—we are "redeemed" and "reconciled."

The Christian on his knees sees more than the philosopher on tiptoe.
PAUL'S GOSPEL. No. 1.
Its Source.

ALL readers of the New Testament must have noticed in Paul's epistles the expression "my gospel." It occurs in Rom. 2. 16, and 16. 25; also in 2 Tim. 2. 8. In Gal. 2. 2 he speaks of the special gospel which he preached, and in 2 Cor. 4. 3 he associates others with him, "But if our gospel be hid"; also in 2 Cor. 1. 19, I Thess. 1. 5, and in one more characteristic passage, 1 Tim. 1. 11, "According to the glorious gospel," or the gospel of the glory "of the blessed God which was committed to my trust."

The New Testament commences with the very precious portion known as "The Four Gospels," written by beloved servants of God, who were endowed by the Holy Spirit to each present a distinct aspect of the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ. Matthew, His kingly dignity as Messiah; Mark, His perfect service for God; Luke, the companion of Paul, describes the lovely patient ways of the Man Christ Jesus; and John, who rested his head upon His Lord's bosom, presents to us the sublime person of God's beloved Son.

The first three Gospels are especially linked with the Old Testament—Matthew very distinctly so by his frequent quotations of the prophets. Mark, using only two verses from Malachi and Isaiah, shows us the prophet raised up like unto Moses, while Luke continues the story where Malachi left off, each one of them relating the history of our Lord until it is consummated in His death and resurrection, and in the case of Mark and Luke, His ascension. What, then, is the gospel according to Paul? Is there any other aspect that the Holy Spirit desires to speak of through him? There is. Paul's gospel has not its commencement at Nazareth or Jordan or Bethlehem, nor indeed does he begin with the cross. Paul's gospel has its source and origin in the glory of the Son of God—a Man in heaven. Does he then leave out the cross? In no wise: it becomes more wonderful in the light of the glory which excelleth. His conversion shows the source of his gospel. Exceedingly mad against the disciples of the Lord and the name of Jesus, he had obtained authority which would enable him to bring men and women bound unto Jerusalem. In his mad career he is approaching Damascus, when suddenly there shines round about him a light from heaven above the brightness of the mid-day sun, and upon his astonished ears there falls the voice of One in that highest place of glory, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou ME?" Fallen to the earth, his trembling lips can only utter the words, "Who art Thou, Lord?"

What a revolution takes place in his soul! His religious zeal is shrivelled into nothingness, his self-righteousness vanishes in deep conviction of guilt, as with his eyes fixed upon the Son of God, he hears His voice, "I am Jesus whom thou persecutest." Now what is to follow? Would it have caused surprise if the history had related that, taken in red-handed rebellion, he had been cast alive into the depths of hell? He, the chief of sinners as he calls himself, knew that it was the only thing he deserved. But instead he received the most unbounded display of sovereign grace it was possible to minister. The lips of the Son of God with grace o'erflow, and with commanding force every fibre of Saul's being is arrested by the words, "Rise, stand upon thy feet: for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose," not to condemn, but "to make thee a witness both of these things which thou
hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee; delivering thee from the people and from the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee, to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in Me.” He sees the cross in the light of the glory; from that moment the world of Jew and Gentile is crucified to him and he to the world. His blindness is gone, the day has come, the captive is free; and forgiven, blessed and sanctified, he yields his life to the Man who died for such as he, henceforth with adoring worship, proclaiming, This is the Son of God who loved me and gave Himself for me.”

Here, then, is the source of Paul’s gospel. In all this there is contrast with the Evangelists. They show us the way our need was met by One who came down to our estate and dust, and washed us from our sins in His own blood. Paul shows us that when all this was done there was the revelation of divine purpose, measured not by our need but by the wealth of the grace of God flowing from a heavenly source. It is altogether outside of man and man’s thoughts. Paul did not receive it from man, neither was he taught it by man, nor did he derive any authority from those who were apostles before him, for its proclamation. His ordination was from the pierced hands of the Son of God in heaven. This stamped its character upon the whole of his service, henceforth he knew Christ no more after the flesh, that is as Messiah, the source of earthly hopes and blessing, but he starts anew with a glorified Christ, a Man in heaven, the glorious hope of His redeemed, who were already united to Him and esteemed by Him as Himself. The apostles had followed their Lord until a cloud received Him out of their sight. With Peter they were the witnesses of the sufferings of Christ and partakers of the glory that shall be revealed. But Paul is a witness of that which is beyond the cloud, his knowledge of the Saviour began when He was in glory. He witnesses to this, and partakes of the sufferings consequent upon such a testimony. For while man in the flesh will tolerate a religious profession said to rest on Peter for its foundation, and will boast in a succession of office which puts honour on man, he will utterly refuse the witness of a rejected Christ who is accepted in heaven, for this is the utter condemnation of everything in which he can glory.

Hence the Jew became the bitterest enemy of Paul, lying in wait for him at every turn. Had he preached circumcision—something that man can do—he would not have suffered persecution, for then the offence of the cross would have ceased: The cross is the complete condemnation of all that flesh can do: it leaves men without excuse, and at the same time it removes every centre on earth from which honour can be derived. Neither Jerusalem nor Rome, nor any other on earth, is the Christian’s mother city. His citizenship is in heaven, Jerusalem above, viz., Christ glorified, is his origin, and here below not a place but a “Name” is that to which he may gather. That “Name” involves rejection and reproach here, for it is the Name of Him whose glory above bears witness that He has been refused every place on earth but a cross and a grave. Yet may His presence be known by those whose eyes have been opened to see the glory of God shining in His face—for such His promise never fails. “Where two or three are gathered together to My Name, there am I in the midst of them.”
VARIOUS WAYS IN WHICH THE WORK OF CHRIST IS VIEWED IN SCRIPTURE.  
JAMES BOYD,  
No. 1. The Desire of the Heart of God.  

IN this world everything is full of labour. The journey through it is a sore travail given by God to the sons of men, and in the end for their eternal profit, if they will commit the welfare of their souls and the disposal of their circumstances to Him, whose omniscient eye and almighty hand are over everything that He has made. The things that befall us on the way, the evils that beset us, the woes that come upon us with overwhelming power, the bewildering tangle of untoward events, the cruel thorns that seem to pierce through the centre of the very soul, have the tendency of giving us the impression that not in the whole universe exists one with love enough and power sufficient to minister to us the mercies that we feel we require. We are liable to think that no one cares for us, or that no one can render to us either sympathy or help. But all the exercises that we are thus passed through are, as I have said, for our eternal profit, if we commit the keeping of our souls to God in well-doing, as unto a faithful Creator (1 Peter 4. 19).

We all look for rest, for that is the outlook of every human being. But not in this present order of things can it be found. Arise, depart, says our God, this is not your rest: it is polluted (Micah 2. 10). What rest could there be found in a world of rebellion against God? Could a God of infinite holiness create rest for His creature in a corrupted creation? or can He allow such a state of things to go on for ever? Not if He is a God of infinite goodness and love. Before He finds His rest we cannot expect to find ours, and He cannot rest in a scene where there is the slightest speck of defilement, or of anything contrary to Himself. For this we can be profoundly thankful.

Again, the idea man has of rest is a state of indolence; and the reason of this is because mental and bodily fatigue cry out for cessation of labour, and that on account of our present fallen and feeble condition. It is not pleasant to us to look forward to an eternity of ceaseless activity, for a third of our life seems necessary for the recuperation of our wasted energies. But no sense of weariness shall ever enter the bodies of the glorified. Toil shall have for ever come to an end, an endless day of the activities of divine love is all the employment in which we shall be engaged, and there shall be no night during which these activities shall be quiescent. Here we accomplish as hirelings our day, but—

"There only to adore  
My soul its strength may find,  
Its life, its joy for evermore,  
By sight nor sense defined."

The rest of God is coming. Men have made Him serve with their sins, and wearied Him with their iniquities (Isa. 48. 24). But He had His own counsels to fulfil, counsels that were formed before the foundation of the world, counsels for the blessing of men, counsels of eternal love, which could not be allowed to fall to the ground unaccomplished, let the fulfilment of them cost whatever it might.

Man was a sinner under death, of which the devil had the might and wielded it over the whole human race, to keep them in terror of having in any way to do with God. Therefore it was necessary that propitiation
should be made for sins, death and the might of the devil both annulled. This could only be effected by the intervention of God on our behalf, for we were helpless to bring about deliverance for ourselves. But then if God intervene He must do it in righteousness. He cannot say, I will be merciful to their unrighteousnesses, I will forgive their sins, so that if they cannot go on with Me in My uprightness I will go on with them in their crookedness; if they cannot accommodate themselves to Me in My abhorrence of evil, I will go on with them in their abhorrence of good. The very thought of such a conclusion on the part of God would be akin to blasphemy. He cannot deny Himself. He must be true to His own nature.

Our confidence in Him lies in the fact that He is righteous, holy and true, and that He cannot deny Himself. Whatever may be the consequence of the entrance of sin into His universe, whatever it may cost Him to deal with it, if He is to show grace to His erring creatures who have become its slaves, He cannot change, He must deal with it in harmony with His nature and character. He may desire to show grace to the creatures whom He made in His own image and likeness, but it must be shown in strict righteousness, holiness and truth. In showing grace He will not convey any wrong impressions to His creatures in either a fallen or unfallen state, and grace He indeed desires to show.

This involved, not only that His Son should become man, should come and speak to us in grace, should reveal God to us in His true character, but that He should lay a foundation on the ground of which God could righteously present Himself to us as a Saviour, and set us in true and everlasting relations with Himself. But it may be profitable for both writer and reader to view the various ways in which this work appears on the page of inspiration. In 1 Timothy 2, this work of Christ is presented to us as an answer to that which we read of as

**THE DESIRE OF THE HEART OF GOD.**

His desire is, “that all men should be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth.” Therefore, prayer is to be offered for all men. But kings and all who are placed in authority are specially mentioned. And, I suppose, the reason for this is that those who exercise authority in this world can, if permitted of God, make the out-going of the gospel, which is God’s power to salvation of believers, a very difficult matter.

In the preaching of the gospel all men are in view, for God is no respecter of persons; the gospel presents Him in His true and gracious character to all. The preacher has the whole world before him; and like the apostles labours “to present every man perfect in Christ Jesus” (Col. 1. 28), and that for the simple and blessed reason “that God would have all men to be saved.” The preacher is to be under the influence of the Spirit of God.

Therefore, we find the eternal Son here in flesh as Mediator between God and men. Not an angel come near to us to terrify us with his greatness and might, yet utterly unable to lay his hand upon God. “One was necessary who might lay his hand upon us both” (Job 9. 33). This was the kind of Mediator necessary for such a situation as had arisen between God and man. Speaking of God the patriarch Job says: “For He is not a man, as I am, that I should answer Him, and we should come together in judgment. Neither is there any daysman betwixt
us, that might lay his hand upon us both” (Job 9. 33, 34). The type of the true Daysman comes to light in the person of Elihu, who says: “Be­hold, I am according to thy wish in God’s stead: I also am formed out of the clay. Behold, my terror shall not make thee afraid, neither shall my hand be heavy upon thee” (Job 33. 6, 7).

Elihu was a man like Job, but he had wisdom given him of God sufficient to enable him to probe into the depths of the malady from which Job suffered, and to show him something of the righteousness of the One to whom he was imputing unfair and harsh dealings. Elihu speaks of the righteousness of God, and out of the whirlwind Jehovah speaks of His power; but both the righteousness and power of God are exhibited in the true Mediator, and also the love of His heart which is the spring of all His activities in His ways with us.

The true Mediator has been here, and here presenting the rights of God where the rights of the fallen creature man were ceaselessly forced upon the ears of a selfish world, He had little to say on man’s behalf, but much to say on behalf of God. He ascribed righteousness to man’s Maker (Job 36. 1, 2). He will not have it that God was indifferent to the ruin and to the danger in which His rebel creatures were on account of their sins. He says: “He hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor: He hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord” (Luke 4. 18, 19). He also says: “Neither came I of Myself, but He sent Me” (John 8. 42). He tells Pilate: “To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth” (John 18. 27).

God is set forth in Him in His true character, and in infinite grace to men, and this grace is fully exhibited in His giving Himself a ransom for all; and man is manifested in the truth of his fallen condition as God’s inveterate foe who utterly refuses that grace, and who in the pride of his rebellious heart refuses to be indebted to God for eternal happiness. Poor blind and stupid mortal under the dominion of sin, and liable to a judgment from which there is but one way of escape, refuses that way of escape when it is brought within his reach, and can be secured by simple faith in the One who is held out as Saviour for all! The folly of such a line of action is apparent but difficult to understand.

This grace flows through righteousness, for the ransom of the Mediator has dug a righteous channel from the heart of the beneficent Creator to the heart of the most disreputable sinner; for God desires that all should be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth. By that ransom the righteousness, holiness, truth and majesty of God have been glorified, and that righteousness that was once against men is in favour of all who believe on His Son.

But it is not only that the Mediator was man. This He truly was. Woe to the mortal who denies it! He could be no Saviour for mankind if He were not; for how could the judgment that rested on us have been borne by Him, had He not come in flesh and given it for the life of the world? His terror did not make men afraid, neither was His hand heavy upon them. Rather was the hand of God heavy on Him in judgment, that it might be light on us in the blessing of eternal life and love.
But not only was He man, a true man, Son of David, the perfect witness of the truth and manifestation of the righteous character of God, but also was He the Son of God with power despoiling death and defeating him who had the might of death, and delivering us from the bondage under which we lay on account of its fear. Thus not only was the righteousness of God borne witness to, but the power of God also, the love of His heart too as the source of that love that was the spring of that glorious intervention on our behalf.

Therefore, not only are we saved by this grace, but in His intervention on our behalf all that He is in righteousness, power and love has been exhibited, and we have gained the knowledge of the truth. All that God was—His righteousness, holiness, intolerance of sin, His love to His erring creature man—came to light in that hour in which the rebel will of the child of Adam, acted on by the fell deceiver of the human race, found no obstacle, no restraining hand against its foaming tide of God-hatingness that surged around the man-rejected and God-forsaken Nazarene. But there and then was God glorified in and by Man, more than He ever had been by man dishonoured.

The sending of His Son to accomplish this stupendous work is the eternal witness of the favourable disposition of God to His human enemy; and the Son’s surrender of Himself that a way of salvation might be opened up for all is the mighty witness that in all things He and the Father are one.

MY HEART IS FIXED.

"But the God of all grace . . . stablish, strengthen, SETTLE you."—1 Peter 5. 10.

You are settled by having an object that controls your heart. Christ is that object. He must be more than a necessity to you, He is this, of course He must be more than your resource, He is this also—His fulness is the complement of your need, and your need will never exhaust His fulness. But He must be more to you. He must be more to you than his gold is to the miser, more than his garden is to the botanist, more even than an only son is to his mother. When Christ controls your heart His companionship is your delight and your thoughts become formed by His company, and the continual thought of your heart will be, How does this or that suit Him? It is good to turn to Him for guidance and grace, and to own that He is indispensable to us, but when He controls us, the thought of Him enters into all our ways and we enjoy nothing apart from Him. The heart is fixed.

When we consult Christ’s tastes, instead of our own, we are not less ready to spend and be spent for Him, but we serve in another way. It never occurs to us that what we are doing is a burden, when we work in answer to His mind; on the contrary, I have the assured sense of pleasing Him, and this is the greatest gratification of our love to Him. We feel we cannot do enough. Instead of being wearied by our doings for Him, we feel that they are quite inadequate to express the delight which it gives us to do anything which would meet with His approbation. When we have the sense of pleasing Him our only thought is to do more; and our study, to follow on the lines that He likes.
"THE LORD OUT OF HEAVEN."

( Samuel Levermore.)

"The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam a quickening spirit. The first man out of earth, the second man, the Lord out of Heaven" (I Cor. 15. 45-47).

NOTHING is more edifying than the obvious care taken by the Holy Spirit, whose chief object is to glorify the Son, in shielding Him from every possible encroachment of error or unholy speculation. Therefore as we gaze upon that Perfect Man—the Second Man—coming out of heaven, being "made like unto His brethren," the Holy Ghost says, that Man out of heaven is "THE LORD." Mark well, He does not say, "That Man is also the Lord," but "The Second Man is the Lord."

Extra-scriptural statements about the Incarnate Mystery so easily become unscriptural that our only safety is in keeping to the very words of Scripture. And when the tempest-tossed soul cries in its anguish, "Who was this Man?" the Holy Ghost at once in two words sets the matter at rest for ever, and answers, "The Lord."

"The first man Adam was made a living soul"—"made"—created. He received life, but the last Adam a quickening spirit. He gave life. "For as the Father raiseth up the dead and quickeneth them, even so the Son quickeneth whom He will" (John 5. 21.) Therefore the Second Man and last Adam—Son of the Father—is a quickening spirit. O come, let us adore Him! In Matt. 1. 20 the angel of the Lord, speaking to Joseph of the unborn Babe, says, "That which is begotten in her is of the Holy Ghost" (N.T.), and Elizabeth, filled with the Holy Ghost, addresses the blessed virgin as "The mother of MY LORD" (Luke 1. 43), whilst verse 35 says, "That holy thing also which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God." Mark, as born into this world, "that holy thing, the Son of God." Not a dual personality but one.

When our Lord asked, "Who am I—the Son of Man?"—Peter responded at once, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God" (Matt. 16. 12-17). The Son of Man, the Christ—Son of the living God. "The Second Man—the Lord."

And Thomas confessed, "My Lord and my God" (John 20. 28). So then as to His Person He never changed.

In I Cor. 15. 47, He is the Second Man, the Lord from (or out of) heaven, whilst in John 3. 13, He is "the Son of Man in heaven" (italics mine). And He says in John 6. 62, "What and if ye shall see the Son of Man ascend up where He was before?" Thus we see the Son of Man—the last Adam and Second Man, come out of heaven, yet remaining in heaven, and having, in death, begotten "many sons" (Heb. 2. 10), and as the dying seed-corn, bringing forth "much fruit" (John 12. 24). He ascends up where He was before to His Father and God, presenting them to Him as His brethren, crying, "Behold, I and the children which Thou has given Me" (Heb. 2. 13).

Mark well that it is the "Son of Man," the "Second Man" who comes out of heaven—who was ever "in heaven"—who, the only-begotten Son, was "in the bosom" (John 1. 18)—who ascends up "where He was before."

The One immutable Jesus Christ, "the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever" (Heb. 13. 8)—He who was, and is, and ever will be heavenly—descends
in grace unspeakable and love immeasurable into death—even the death of the cross—and by dying begets a new race of men—a “new creation” (2 Cor. 5. 17), (out of those who were “out of the earth”) of His own order, i.e., heavenly, to be “sons” with Him before His Father and God, and theirs.

Now the Holy Spirit is most careful to show us that the very same Jesus who humbled Himself is the very same who is exalted. For in Acts 1. 11 He says, “This same Jesus shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven.” Again (Acts 2. 32), “This Jesus hath God raised up.” Whilst Stephen, the proto-martyr, sees “the Son of Man standing on the right hand of God” (7. 56). He is ever the same Person. He is Sui Generis: His own order. He is God, and took part with men in flesh and blood so that in His death they might die as men in the flesh and rise with Him as men in the spirit—a new order, i.e., a heavenly. He, in amazing love, taking part with them, in order that they might take part with Him in the power of an endless life. “Quickened together”—“raised together”—“seated together” (Ephes. 2. 6). “All of one” (Heb. 2. 11).

As our “Apostle” He came out as Man to tell us of God, and as “High Priest” He takes us in as “sons” on the ground of His great sacrifice.

Yet, in closing, I would again refer to the unfailing and Christ-glorifying terminology of the Spirit. He says of “this same Jesus” that God hath made Him both “Lord and Christ.” Now “He is not ashamed to call us brethren.” But we are not Lords or Christs. We are members of His body, but He is the Head, and He is the Head of the body, the church, that in all things He might have the pre-eminence (Col. 1. 18). Because of His humiliation God hath highly exalted Him and given Him a “name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father” (Phil. 2. 9-11). Again the Spirit showeth expressly in Ephes. 1. 19-23 that the risen and glorified One has the highest place in heaven, and a “name that is above every name.” And such is the universal testimony of the Holy Ghost.

Therefore, my dear reader, I must confess that I do not like to hear the “sons”—His “brethren”—constantly referring to that “highly exalted” One as “that Man.” I would rather follow the obvious lead of the Blessed Spirit, who loves to glorify Him and call Him “Lord,” to the glory of God the Father.

WHEN WEAK THEN STRONG.

“Most gladly then will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.”—2 Co.. 12. 9.

“My grace is sufficient for thee” is a favourite text and a blessed one, but is it greatly understood? The circumstances are unchanged, but you are changed. It is not now so much what you have to do and bear, but what you are. The power of Christ rests upon you; it is the strength of the glorified Man, and the disappointments and fears and sorrows of life are met in that heavenly power. You will view your circumstances in another light, not as under them, weighed down and oppressed, but as being sustained and morally elevated—strengthened with all power according to the might of His glory.
THE BIBLE, A DIVINELY PERFECT RECORD.

If the only-begotten Son of God, divinely perfect and blessed, came into the world for the eternal blessing of men, it is only fitting that a record of His coming and His words and ways, also divinely perfect and blessed, should be given, that those for whom He came might have a divine and perfect assurance of it. Admit the former and the latter follows in logical sequence. To suppose that God would send His only-begotten Son into the world that we might live through Him, and having done that, allow an imperfect, contradictory human record to be the only record of His life and death here, would be to suppose Him to be guilty of colossal folly. The record must be as perfect in its own sphere as the One whose life and mission it records was perfect in His, or else we have no sure knowledge, no certainty, of the things upon which our soul's eternal welfare depend.

If the Holy Scriptures are what the critics say they are—mere ancient, human documents, in which are recorded events which the writers did but poorly remember, or which they greatly exaggerated or embellished; if they may be cut and criticized, accepted or rejected, in parts or wholly, then where are we in this matter? The angel's triumphant declaration that he brought "good tidings of great joy" when he announced the birth of Jesus may be a mockery; we cannot be sure that our great Redeemer ever did say, "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Such wonderful words may have been put into His mouth by one of these imperfect but very imaginative human writers, as Shakespeare put words into the mouths of his characters. Did our Lord really warn men of "the damnation of hell," and speak those words about the many mansions in His Father's house? We cannot say unless the record of them is divinely perfect and divinely sure. WE BELIEVE GOD, AND THE WORD OF HIS GRACE, and we are confident that if "God so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life," He would see to it that we should be in no uncertainty about it, else "His unspeakable gift" would have been in vain and none could have said, Thanks be unto God for it! The Scriptures are God-breathed; the men who wrote them were moved by the Holy Ghost; they had not the things they wrote from hearsay, or from their own imperfect observation, but from the source of all true knowledge—from God Himself. Hence the Lord's own veritable words are given in the divine records, and in those records they are divinely placed, and there they shine like apples of gold in pictures of silver for our blessing and joy. God be praised who has opened our eyes to see them!

The Lord and the Scriptures.

Jesus said, Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to My Father, and He shall presently give Me more than twelve legions of angels? But how then shall the Scriptures be fulfilled (Matt. 26. 54).

Remark here in so solemn and crucial a moment, the place that the Lord gives to the Scriptures: that thus it must be, for it was there. They are the Word of God.

(J. N. D., Syn. Matt., p. 185.)
ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

The Holy Spirit.

"Will you please explain what the Holy Spirit is, and does a person on being converted there and then receive the Holy Spirit? You will probably think me an ignoramus to ask such questions, but when I tell you that I have lived for seventy-two years without God and have only been on the Lord's side a few months you will see that I am only a child in spiritual matters, but it is my desire to learn. I have been told that I have not received the Holy Spirit. Is there some particular service that I have to render to the Lord to receive the Holy Spirit? If so, what? as I am anxious to serve the Lord to the full."—HULL.

The Holy Spirit is one Person in the Godhead, coequal with the Father and the Son (Matt. 28. 19). That He is a Person, and not a power or influence only, is clear from such Scriptures as: Acts 5. 3 and 4, "But Peter said: Ananias, why has Satan filled thy heart that thou shouldest lie to the Holy Spirit... THOU HAST NOT LIED TO MEN BUT TO GOD," and Acts 13. 2, "The Holy Spirit said, Separate to Me now Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them," and 1 Corinthians 12. 11, "But all these worketh the one and self-same Spirit, dividing to each one as He pleaseth." Read these Scriptures and they will help you to understand more fully the greatness of the Holy Spirit.

The word converted is not always used in our conversation as it is in Scripture, and we can only think and speak rightly as we get God’s thoughts and words. In the Word the reception of the Holy Spirit on our part, about which you ask, is connected with our belief of the gospel by which we are saved. Ephesians 1. 13 teaches this, "Christ, in whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise," and Galatians 2. 2, "This only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?" The hearing of faith is of course the hearing of the gospel. The gospel has as its theme Christ, who “died for our sins according to the Scriptures, was buried, and raised again the third day according to the Scriptures” (1 Cor. 15. 3). Note also that the first mention of the Holy Spirit in Romans follows the declaration of the fact that He “was delivered for our offences and raised again for our justification” (Rom. 4. 25). It says, “The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us” (chap. 5. 5). If you have believed this gospel of the once dead but risen Saviour, the Holy Spirit dwells in you. Romans 5. 5; 1 Corinthians 6. 19; Galatians 3. 2; 4. 6; and Ephesians 1. 13, all teach this; and these same Scriptures will also show you that you have not to do any service in order to receive the Spirit. He is God’s promised gift to all who believe. On our part we must not grieve Him, (Ephesians 4. 30), but walk in the Spirit (Galatians 5. 16), and pray in the Spirit (Jude 20.); then He will be unhindered in taking of the things of Christ and showing them to us (John 16. 13-15); which is the chief part of His service to us. From this occupation with Christ and growth in the knowledge of Him by the Holy Spirit, suitable service and fruit from us will result by the same Spirit; for He not only unfolds to us the love and glories of Christ, but He is the power within us by which we respond.


"I would highly appreciate a note on the subject of the Elder Son in Luke 15. Would you give an explanation of it, and an application to present-day family life?"—PARKGATE.

The elder son of the parable represented the Pharisees and Scribes of verse 2, who censured the Lord Jesus for receiving sinners. They knew nothing of grace and found no joy in the recovery of the lost; they were full of...
their own righteousness, selfish, proud, self-centred. All this we see in the elder son. There may be a difficulty in understanding how he could be called a son, and this would arise also in connection with the prodigal, but in this Gospel of Luke man's origin is traced back to God, "of Adam of God" (chap. 3. 38). As the creatures of His hand we are His offspring (Acts 17. 28, 29)—not the offspring of the ape. But the Jews had this place of sonship specially, because God had chosen them as a nation to be near Him, as Deuteronomy 14. 1 says, "Ye are the children of the Lord your God," while the Gentiles wandered in the far country of utter ignorance of God. They held to this position proudly, though it had lost all its reality, and they were utterly out of touch with the God whose sons they claimed to be.

When the Lord Jesus came into the world, the wonderful fact was revealed that God's heart yearned on the lost. He had come as the Son of Man to seek and to save them, and bring them back to God; and we are told that God makes merry over all who are brought to Him. We should not have known this if it had not been revealed to us, but what a joy it is to us now that we know it. But this was no joy to the elder son. He had lived with his father in an outward relationship, but he was a complete stranger to the yearnings of his heart, his thoughts, his character. He had no sympathy with the grace that could welcome the wanderer. That that made his father happy only made him angry. He was as much an alien to his father's thoughts as his brother had been in the far country.

His own mouth condemned him. "Thou never gavest me a kid that I might make merry with my friends," he said. He had no wish to make merry with his father, it was himself and his friends he thought about. We wonder if he had any friends; with him it was "I," "me," "my." Blessed it is to see that his surly and censorious spirit did not move the father. "It is meet that we should make merry, and be glad, for this thy brother was dead, and is alive again; and was lost, and is found," he said. That was final, nothing can change that.

As to the present application of this unlovely character, he is still with us. He is the self-righteous religionist, or the man who boasts in his high morality and hates and spurns the grace of God as revealed in the gospel; he remains outside the door of salvation and blessing and joy, while the sinful and lost are brought in. We do not see in what way it can now be applied to present-day family life, but we do need to beware of allowing the spirit of this self-centred hypocrite to have any place in our relations with our brethren, whether natural or spiritual. We are to "be kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you" (Eph. 4. 32).

"Be Still."

"It is God that worketh in you, both to will and to do of His good pleasure"
(Phil. 2. 13).

THOU sayest: "Fit me, fashion me for Thee."
Stretch forth thine empty hands, and be thou still;
O restless soul, thou dost but hinder Me
By valiant purpose and by steadfast will.
Beheld the summer flowers beneath the sun,
In stillness His great glory they behold;
And sweetly thus His mighty work is done,
And resting in His gladness they unfold.
So are the sweetness and the joy Divine
Thine, O beloved, and the work is Mine.
BEAUTY FOR ASHES.
Isaiah Sixty-one.

THE Phoenix of mythology was said to rise up out of its own ashes and soar away to the heavens with renewed youth and plumage of scarlet and gold; but the truth is more wonderful than the fable, as we shall see.

The first verse of our chapter describes the mission of our Lord to this world, about that there can be no question. The first time that He preached in the Synagogue of Nazareth, where He had been brought up, He opened the Book at these very words and read them. "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He hath anointed Me to preach good tidings to the meek [the poor]; He hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord." And He told His hearers that that very day these words were fulfilled in their ears. It is equally certain that the great blessings of His mission were to run in no narrow channel, for while His words were addressed to a crowd of Jews, He showed them how the grace that was in Him would work, it would flow out and on to sinners of the Gentiles, like the Zidonian widow and the Syrian leper. His mission was to the world; He came for the blessing of men, to seek and save the lost, to preach the gospel to the poor.

The time had come for the declaration of the innermost thoughts of God's heart, they could no longer be withheld from men, but who could tell them out? When the outraged government of God was to take vengeance upon the hopelessly corrupt cities of the plain an angel or two were enough; and when rebellious Israel were to be rebuked for their sins or instructed in the way of righteousness, prophets, men like themselves, were sent to them; but when the heart of God was to be revealed, when His great love was to be proclaimed in the world, angels and men were useless; the only-begotten Son which is in the bosom of the Father was the only one sufficient for this, and so He was sent upon this great mission.

Consider the fact that our Scripture describes: the Son of God came to earth, a Man: "for the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us" (John 1. 14); that holy Thing that was born of the Virgin was called the Son of God (Luke 1. 35); but as Man He was distinguished from every other man, not only by His superhuman birth and His sinless and holy nature, but by the anointing by the Spirit of the Lord with this mission in view. The words that He brought to men were the Father's words, and every one of them was spoken in the power of the Holy Ghost, and they were gospel words, they were good tidings to the poor, and they have reached us, for the words that He spoke abide to this day. He proclaimed the acceptable year of the Lord, a wonderful, happy new year, and that year has not yet closed, for, behold, now is the accepted time, behold now is the day of salvation (2 Cor. 6).

How wonderful was the coming of the Lord, He did not burst upon men's darkness with dazzling splendour, as the lightning that shineth from one end of the heavens to the other; or with fire and earthquake to make them afraid, as they were afraid at Sinai; but quietly He rose before the eyes of the watchers, as the light of the morning. And as the sun sheds its glory
upon field and forest, and crowns the hills with its beauty, and floods humble cottage and stately palace alike with its light, warming, vitalizing, gladdening all, so He came, for He was the true Light that coming into the world shineth for every man; yet men loved the darkness rather than the light, because their deeds were evil. But the sun that fills the earth with its glory reveals the fetid cesspool and the squalor of the slums, and so when Jesus came the condition in which men were, was clearly manifested. What corruption, what need His presence brought to light! But no need was revealed that He was not able to remove, or corruption that He was not able to cleanse. I love the Gospel of Luke, it is the gospel of grace, and I am sure if it were carefully studied it would be discovered the every need that could force a sigh or wring a cry of anguish from a human heart is met there by the One who came to bind up hearts that were broken and to preach good tidings to the poor. The Spirit of the Lord was upon Him for this very purpose; and this was His Father’s business, for this very cause He was sent into the world, and He never failed.

And what He was He is; for He is the same yesterday, to-day and for ever. All that He ever was to men in the fulness of grace that was in Him, He is to-day. Thank God if we have tasted that the Lord is gracious, He will abide so, and no need on our part will exhaust the grace that is in Him, for His grace is enough for us, and were our need one thousand times greater than it is, His grace would still be enough. The same yearning that brought Him down to men in their woes is in His heart to-day; with the same beseechings and entreaties He comes to us. All He desires is the opportunity to serve us, and to bless us. If we were only half awake to the joy it gives Him to lift our burdens and to give us peace for trouble, we should be humbled and blest.

It has often been remarked that the Lord ceased His reading of this passage in the middle of a sentence and closed the Book. He read of the acceptable year, but said nothing of the day of vengeance. And that was because the day of vengeance was not then, nor has it yet come, for God is longsuffering not willing that any should perish, and we count the longsuffering of our God to be salvation.

Our Scripture continues, “To comfort all that mourn.”

We pass over the unfulfilled word and come to this which brings us to resurrection. How sad was Mary of Magdala when she cried, “They have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid Him.” How sad were those two that walked to Emmaus when Jesus joined them in their journey. How sad was Simon Peter, who had denied his Lord with oaths and curses. They were mourners every one until they saw the Lord, but what comfort and joy came to them when they beheld Him again in resurrection, and so may we rejoice that, “now is Christ risen from the dead.” The gospel we have believed is the gospel of the risen Lord, and this means everything to us. We rejoice and are glad because of the grace that the coming of our Lord brought into this world. We like to be assured that He is sufficient for all our needs, that He is ever at hand to succour us in every time of trouble, and we could not do without this, life would scarcely be bearable without it; nor does God intend that it should be, but there is another side of the truth. The coming of the Lord had a great purpose in
view, and the lifting of our burdens, and the binding up of our broken hearts, and the preaching of good tidings to us, are all the means by which this purpose is realized. Our Scripture reveals what that purpose is: "To give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of gladness for mourning, the garment of praise for heaviness."

This could never have been, apart from the presence of the Holy Spirit who has been given to all who have believed on the risen and glorified Saviour. But to understand the blessedness of it we must learn what the meaning of the word "beauty" in this passage is. It means a head-dress; but from a footnote in J. N. Darby's New Translation we learn the sort of head-dress that it is. It is a priestly turban. And the whole truth as to God's purpose for us, as it has been revealed in the gospel, teaches us this very thing. We are lifted from the ashes of our degredation and repentance, and our heads are crowned with the priestly turban. Christ has loved us, and washed us from our sins by His own blood, and has made us kings and priests unto God.

I know that Israel is in view in the first place, and that all this will be true for them when they their great Messiah see, returning in His glory to bless them; but meanwhile we stand in the place of favour, and can draw near to God in full assurance of faith and worship Him in spirit and in truth, for He seeketh such to worship Him.

If Christ had not come revealing what God is in the great love of His heart this could never have been, for we should not have known God, and not knowing Him we should have been afraid of Him, and hidden from Him as Adam did. But now we know Him, the words that Jesus brought from Him to us are gospel words, and perfect love has cast all fear from our hearts. But our sins would have separated us from God for ever if Jesus had not died, now His blood has removed them, and we are made the companions of the risen Christ. This is a great dignity, but nothing less than this was God's thought for us. The priestly turban has been put upon our heads instead of ashes, and we have been anointed with the oil of gladness instead of mourning: we have received the Holy Ghost, for He which establisheth us in Christ, and hath anointed us is God, and the garment of praise is ours instead of the spirit of heaviness. Every sentence shows how blessedly we are brought to God and the joy that He has in having us near to Him.

Raised up by grace into this new and holy position we can say, "I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God, for He hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, He hath covered me with a robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments" (verse 10), and the word ornaments in this verse is the same as beauty in verse 3.

Here is our response to the wonderful revelation of God, and great is the privilege, but do we appreciate it? That is the question. But there is more, for our Scripture continues: "that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that He may be glorified."

We are reminded of 1 Corinthians 3. 9. "Ye are God's husbandry," planted by Him in His assembly for His own pleasures, and:

"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."

God grant that this great present purpose of our Lord's coming to earth may have a gracious fulfilment in every one of us.
THE LOVE THAT WILL NOT LET ME GO.

Hamot Smith.

How blessed to have found in Christ a Friend who loves with a love that will not let us go, according to that Word which tells us, “Having loved His own which were in the world, He loved them unto the end.”

Such love—the everlasting love of Christ, that never gives us up—cannot be satisfied until it has drawn out our love in response to His love. The answer to His love will only be realized in its fulness when at last we have reached love’s eternal home. Nevertheless, on the way to the home, the love that appreciates Christ, in the place of His rejection and the day of His rejection, is very sweet to His heart. This we may surely learn from the value that is set by the Lord on the love of Mary, that led her to anoint His feet with the very precious ointment.

Very encouraging it is, and good for our souls, to learn the gracious ways of the Lord with His people in order to awaken love, maintain love, and deepen love, in our hearts. It is these gracious ways of the Lord that we would briefly trace in the New Testament stories of two devoted women.

I.

THE AWAKENING OF LOVE.—

Luke 7. 36-39, 47.

In the great scene that takes place in the house of Simon the Pharisee, we see the awakening of love for the Saviour in the heart of a sinner. The Lord, in the perfection of His way, had stooped to grace with His presence the feast which the Pharisee had spread. While sitting at the table an unbidden guest enters, of whom the Lord can say, “she loved much.” How, we may ask, was this love awakened in her soul?

There is no question as to the character of the woman. The Spirit of God has described her as “a woman in the city which was a sinner.” Moreover her bad reputation was well known, for Simon is also aware that “she is a sinner.” She was a sinner and knew it, and Simon knew it and everyone knew it. Further, she was a burdened sinner, and possibly had heard those wonderful words of the Lord, “Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” Be this as it may, it is beyond question, that she saw in Christ the grace that could bless the undeserving. Thus driven by her need, and drawn by His grace, with the boldness of faith, she enters the Pharisee’s house and takes her stand at the feet of Jesus.

The Spirit of God calls attention to the fine scene that follows with a “Behold.” He would arrest our attention and have us to turn aside and see this great sight—the meeting between the devil’s hell-bound sinner and God’s heaven-sent Saviour. Doubtless, the onlookers were struck dumb with amazement, as they watched the scene unfolding itself before their eyes. They might well question what would happen. Would the Lord expose her character, condemn her sins, and dismiss her from His holy presence? Ah, no! The proud Pharisee may condemn the sinner, to find himself exposed by the Saviour; but the Lord will not condemn a confessed sinner.

The wisdom of His way is as perfect as the grace of His heart. At first no word is spoken. The guests are silent in wonder, the Lord is silent in grace, the woman is silent in sorrow. No sound breaks the silence but the sobs of a weeping sinner. If, however, nothing is said, much takes place, for the sinner’s heart was broken and the sinner’s heart was won. She “stood at His
feet behind Him weeping” and she “kissed” His feet. The tears tell of a heart that is broken, and the kisses of heart that is won.

What was it that broke her heart, and won her heart? Was it not that she saw something of the grace and holiness of the Saviour, and in the light of His glory she realized, as never before, the sinfulness of her life and her heart, and this broke her heart? But more, she realized that though she was a sinner full of sin, yet He was a Saviour full of grace for one who was full of sin. She found herself in the presence of One who knew her vile life through and through, and yet loved her, and this won her heart.

Good for each one, if we, too, have been in His presence, burdened and wretched by reason of our sins, there to discover that in Him we have found One who knows the worst about us and yet loves us. Thus to have love for Christ awakened in our souls, as we sing,

I've found a Friend, oh, such a Friend
Who loved me ere I knew Him;
Who drew me with the cords of love,
And thus has bound me to Him.

II.
THE MAINTENANCE OF LOVE.—

We have seen how love for Christ is awakened, and blessed indeed when at the outset of the Christian life the heart is won for Christ. We have now to learn how the heart, in which love has been awakened, can be maintained in the freshness of first love.

Do we not all know that, with the passing of time, many things may creep in between the soul and Christ? Not always gross things, which indeed might arrest the soul by the very wretchedness they bring, but things that are small and apparently harmless,—“the little foxes that spoil the vines,” and render the life unfruitful. The allowance of these little things will cast a chill over the affections, and gradually form an icy crust over the heart, and the Lord has to say to us, “Thou hast left thy first love.” Thus from one cause and another we often see, while love to Christ has been truly awakened in souls, some make little progress in spiritual intelligence whereas others grow in deeper acquaintance with the Lord and His mind. How, then, is the love, that has been awakened, to be maintained?

Will not the home at Bethany supply the answer? In the two sisters we have two saints in whom love to Christ has been truly awakened; yet in one sister we see a believer growing in grace and the knowledge of the Lord Jesus, while in the other sister we see a saint who is hindered by self and hampered by her service.

Martha’s love was shown by seeking to meet the physical necessities of the Lord as a Man. Mary’s love was seen in seeking to gratify the deep longings of His heart by hearing His word.

Martha was occupied with the “many things” which all have their end in death. Mary was occupied with the “one thing” that death could not take from her. One has said, “No attention, even to Himself in the flesh, though it were from one that loved Him and whom He loved, could replace this. The ‘many things’ end only in disappointment and death, instead of leading into life eternal, as did the words of Jesus, issuing from a heart broken that it might let forth the stream of life.”

If, then, we would know how love is awakened, we must in spirit visit the home of Simon; but would we know how love is maintained, let us visit the house at Bethany. Standing at the
feet of the Saviour, in the house of Simon, love was awakened in the heart of a sinner; sitting at the feet of the Master, in the home of Martha, love was maintained. At His feet we are in His company; in His company we hear His words, and His words declare His heart. There we are learners in the school of love. How much do we know of the good part chosen by Mary—the turning aside from the busy round of life, and the activities of service to be alone with Jesus, and more, to draw nigh to Jesus for the love of being near Him? The Lord loves our company; He delights to have us in His presence. He may dispense with our busy service, but He cannot do without ourselves. Thus only will first love be maintained, and if lost regained. We cannot live on the past. Past experiences may have awakened love, but only present communion can maintain love.

III.

THE DEEPENING OF LOVE.—

John 11.

Passing now to another incident in the story of Mary of Bethany, we shall learn another lesson in the story of love. If in Luke 10. we have seen how love is maintained in the common round of life, in John 11. we shall learn how love is deepened in the sorrows of life. There life was flowing in its usual channel, here the everyday life is arrested by a great sorrow. Sickness has invaded the Bethany circle, and the shadow of death is creeping over the home. In the trial that has overtaken them how will the sisters act? Moved by grace they take the best possible course. They draw upon the love of Christ. In Luke 10. Mary is learning the love of Christ in the calm of a quiet life; in John 11. she is drawing upon that love amidst the storms of life. There she enjoyed His love in His company; here she uses His love in her sorrow. All this is writ plainly in the appeal that these devoted women make to the Lord. They send to Him saying, "He whom Thou lovest is sick." They use the right plea, for they say "Lord, behold, he whom Thou lovest is sick." They plead, not the feeble love of Lazarus for the Lord, but the perfect and unfailing love of the Lord for Lazarus. So, too, they appeal to the Lord in the right way, for they do not suggest what the Lord shall do; they neither ask the Lord to heal, nor to come, nor even to speak a word on their behalf. They simply spread out their sorrow before the Lord and cast themselves upon the boundless resources of unbounded love. Will love disappoint them? Ah, no! For love delights to respond to the appeal of hearts moved by love.

However, love divine will take its perfect way. A way indeed that to mere nature may seem passing strange. The sisters have delighted His heart by drawing upon His love; now He will delight their hearts by deepening in their souls the sense of His love, and thus deepening their love for Him. For it is ever thus, the deeper the sense of His love, the deeper will be the response of our love. We love Him because He first loved us.

To accomplish His gracious work He will use the sorrows of life, and, that His love may be deepened in their souls, He will first deepen the sorrow. The saints are called to the glory of God after they have "suffered awhile" (2 Pet. 5. 10); so, on our way to glory, we often catch some brighter rays of His glory after a time of suffering. It
was thus with the sisters. They had to suffer awhile, for the Lord tarries, and no word comes from the Lord. The days are passing, Lazarus is sinking, the shadow of death is creeping over the home. At last death has come; Lazarus is dead. They have suffered awhile; they shall now see His glory—for “this sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby.” To sight it was for death, in reality death was being used to bring into display the glory of Christ and swell the triumph of His victory over death. To accomplish these great ends, how perfect the way He takes.

Human love, thinking only of the relief of the sick one, would have started at once for Bethany. Human prudence, thinking only of self, would never have gone, even as the disciples say, “Master, the Jews of late sought to stone Thee; and goest Thou thither again.” The Lord, rising above human love, and human prudence, acts according to divine love moved by divine wisdom. “As for God, His way is perfect.”

After patience has had her perfect work, in love’s due time, the Lord comes to the bereaved sisters at Bethany, and reveals the deep love of His heart, as He talks with them, and walks with them, and weeps with them. He is going to deepen their love by His words of love, and ways of love, and tears of love. What depths of love lie behind those sublime words, “Jesus wept.” It was a wonderful sight to see a sinner weeping in the presence of His love, but more wonderful to see the Saviour weeping in the presence of our sorrow. That we should weep because of our sins is a small wonder; that He should weep because of our sorrows is a great wonder—a wonder that discloses how near He came, and how near He is to a sorrowing saint.

Why, we may ask, these tears? The Jews, standing round the grave, misinterpret the tears, for they say, “Behold how He loved him!” Truly, the Lord loved Lazarus, but the tears were not the expression of His love for Lazarus. The sisters may weep for the loss of their brother; there was, however, no need for the Lord to weep for one He was about to raise. It was not for the dead He wept, but for the living—not for the loss of Lazarus, but for the sorrow of Mary and Martha. In a little, love will raise Lazarus, but first love will weep with Martha and Mary. He broke His heart to bind up our hearts, and shed His tears to dry our tears. In so doing He declared His love and deepens our love. Thus He uses the trials, the sorrows, and the rough ways of life to unfold the treasures of His love, and draw out our love to Him.

After this great trial the sisters would surely have said, “We knew that He loved us, but, until the trial came, we never knew that He loved us so much as to walk with us and weep with us in the trial.”

At His feet, in Luke 10., Mary was learning His love; in John 11. she draws upon the love of which she had learned, and is deepened in the love that she draws upon.

What holy happy lessons can we learn from these different scenes. We learn that at the feet of Jesus, as sinners, love is awakened; at the feet of Jesus, as learners, love is maintained; and at the feet of Jesus, in our sorrows, love is deepened.

A happy, joyful spirit spreads joy everywhere; a fretful spirit is a trouble to ourselves and all around.
VARIOUS WAYS IN WHICH THE WORK OF CHRIST IS VIEWED IN SCRIPTURE.

No. 2. The Love of Christ. 2 Cor. 5. 14.

In 2 Cor. 5. we are reminded of the judgment-seat of Christ, and of His love, and both have a necessary place in the ordering of our walk down here in this world. That we do not belong to the world, that we are not of it, that we have not, as children of God, derived our moral and spiritual existence from it, is directly declared to us by our blessed Lord Himself, but He has also permitted us to hear Him setting us in this holy character before the Father (John 15. 19; 17. 16): "They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world," are His own words.

Everyone must spend his eternity in the place for which he is fitted. He could not be in any other place, for God must have order in His own creation. Of the holy city, new Jerusalem, it is said: "There shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie" (Rev. 21. 27), and this shall be equally true of the whole redeemed creation (Rev. 21. 1–8). Everyone shall in the end find his own proper place, and shall know that it is the only place in which he rightly could be, for it is the only place to which he is morally fitted. Not only Judas (Acts 1. 25) but every other must go to his own place.

Believers are His workmanship created in Christ Jesus (Eph. 2. 10). There was no place suitable for the first Adam in his sinless state but the garden of Eden, and there he was placed. There is no place suitable for the last Adam but a place far above all heavens in the glory of God, and that is the place He occupies. If there is no place for that prime rebel the devil but the lake of fire, there is no other place for any of his seed. No lost sinner will be happy in hell, but neither would he be happy in heaven if it were possible for him to be there. Happiness cannot be his portion, because he has lost God, and by his godless life has fitted himself for a godless and woeful eternity.

But God is bringing many sons to glory, those in whom He has already done a work in view of the destiny to which He has called them, and to whom He has given His Spirit as earnest or pledge. This makes us always confident, well knowing that to be at home in this mortal body means that we are absent from the Lord, walking by faith, not by sight; but to be absent from the body would be present with the Lord. It cannot be otherwise, for He that hath wrought us for this selfsame thing is God; though, of course, our proper hope is to have this mortal, which is the present condition in which our bodies are swallowed up of life.

Knowing all this, and having our affections formed by the revelation made to our souls, we labour, whether present or absent, to be agreeable to Him, and that in view of being manifested before the judgment-seat of Christ, that each may receive the things done in the body, according to what he hath done, whether good or evil. This has no terror for us, for we know that then we shall be in the likeness of Christ, the Judge, who shall sit on that throne.

But as to sinners who are still without Christ, how shall such stand there? Is it not a terrible, the most terrible, subject that any human being
was ever called upon to contemplate—
a sinner in his sins before a righteous,
holy, sin-hating and omnipotent Judge,
there to receive for the things done in
the body, the full penalty demanded by
a career of rebellion against God!

Knowing therefore the terror of the
Lord we persuade men.” Felix, the
Roman governor, became filled with
fear as Paul stood before him and
reasoned of righteousness and temper-
ance and judgment to come; but
whether the effect was lasting we are
not told. How fearful a thing it is for
a sinner in His sins to fall into the hands
of the living God, in the day in which
God will bring to light the hidden
things of darkness, and make known
the counsels of hearts!

But, however, the fact of all having
to give account to God may have been
used of the Lord to influence him in his
gospel testimony, it was not the mere
need of men nor the fearful danger to
which they were liable that constrained
him to go out with the glad tidings to
the nations. He says: “The love of
Christ constraineth us, having judged
this, that one died for all, then all have
died: and He died for all, that they
who live should no longer live to them-
selves, but to Him who died for them,
and has been raised.” How fully
justified are His words, speaking as the
Man of God’s counsels, as recorded in
Prov. 8., where He says: “I was set
up from the beginning, or ever the
earth was ... and my delights were
with the sons of men” (verses 23-31).

Not angels but men were the crea-
tures that occupied the mind of the
Creator, with such the counsels of love
were engaged. In the intervention of
God on behalf of lost sinners, angels
are passed by. Fallen though many
of them be they do not seem to be the
subjects of redeeming grace. Though
man was of a lower order in creation
than these spiritual and deathless
beings, yet only with man was His
eternal mind engaged. Even when the
head of our race had fallen away from
Him and lay under death and Satan’s
power, yet with the ruined and guilty
race did He spend thousands of years,
cultivating, disciplining, giving laws,
sending prophets, though the laws
were broken and the prophets perse-
cuted, ill-treated and slain. Like the
wild ass, man scorned the voice of the
driver.

But this persistent rejection of
sovereign mercy could not drive back
the love into the heart of Him whose
delights were with the sons of men. It was a far cry from the form of God
to the form of a servant, from the light
unapproachable to the darkness in
which lay a lost world, but constrained
by the mighty love of His heart He
would take the journey. In that descent
myriads of angelic beings must be
passed by, but not for an instant must
they detain Him. The effects of His
desire lay far beneath even them. He
will assume the figure of a man.
He will take part in flesh and blood.
He will become a man among
men. He will enter into their circum-
stances, not the circumstances of inno-
cent Eden, but those found in a world
away from God—hunger, thirst, bodily
weakness, the reproach of those who
neither appreciated nor understood
the only righteous way that could be
taken for their salvation; all these
sorrows He must know. With one
exception He must be in all things
tempted like as we are; He could not
know experimentally what it was for
the creature to be drawn away of his
own lust and enticed, for He was
infinitely holy. He knew no sin.

And it was not to innocent man He
came, but to man upon whom on
account of sin death lay. He died
for all because all were dead. Death lay upon man the first moment he sinned, and death lies upon all his posterity from the hour of their birth. "By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned" (Rom. 5. 12). It is not that death has actually taken place, but it is certain to take place, unless by some special intervention of God, as in the case of Enoch and Elijah.

That men in their natural state are morally dead is also a solemn fact. He is alive to sin, to the pleasures of this world, to His own selfish ambitions, but to God he is dead. He does not know Him; he has no desire to become acquainted with Him. He does not hear His Word; that is, His Word does not carry conviction to heart or conscience as the voice of God; He does not hear it as God's Word. God, the true, the living God, is not found in any one of his thoughts. He does not love God, nor can he love Him while death lies upon him as the penalty of his sins. Therefore he does not live to Him; for no one can live to God except in love of Him, for "God is love."

He must be brought out of the state in which he is by nature. He must receive a new life and nature. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh," and the mind of the flesh is enmity against God. Man must be born again. There must be a new beginning of existence with him as far as life and nature are concerned. He must be born of the Spirit, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. The spiritual has come in in the risen Christ, flesh having been brought judicially to an end in the judgment of His cross.

The delights of living men are not with the dead. We bury our dead out of our sight. When death comes in all happy and joyful associations are completely severed, and where complacency existed abhorrence is found. We remember what they were, and with breaking hearts we recall the sweet companionship we had with them, but all those things which were the happy delights of life are at an end, and the dust must go back to dust, for the separation between the living and the dead is infinite.

And are there no great moral lessons to be learned from this? Why should we shrink from contact with the dead? And why should they be loathsome in our sight? In our natural state we are at enmity with God; yea, the carnal mind is enmity itself against God. Indeed, such is the moral gulf between man and God that nothing but mutual abhorrence can describe it (Zech. 2. 8). The cross alone shows us the terrible nature of the fall, and of the abominable character of sinful flesh. When His beloved Son, in whom was all His delight, took our place as representing what we were, He was forsaken of God.

And yet His heart was set on the sons of men. Not that they were complacent in the state in which they were by nature. No, all that they were had to come under the righteous judgment of God. But He would bear that judgment. He would give Himself for all, in order that He might be able in righteousness to cause some to live to Him by the lifegiving power that lay in Himself. He by His death on the cross gained the right to communicate His own life to those dead in sins.

"They which live"; that is, live by the life that is in Him, who died for them and rose again. The fountain of life is in Himself. He is the life of all who live according to God. He is the true God and eternal life (John 5. 20). To live in the Adam life is to live to sin and to self, which is all moral death. To live in the life of Christ is to live in...
righteousness and love. And either in the one or in the other life all men live. Those who live in the life of flesh live to themselves, not to God. Those who live in Christ live to God, not to themselves. The former are dead while they live.

Therefore in Christ is new creation. Judicially the old order is gone in the cross, and the believer, viewed as in Christ, is of the new and heavenly order where all things are of God. In Christ there is not a trace of the old order, neither do we know men after the flesh. Our eternal relations are with all who are in the life of Him who died for us and rose again. For those in the last Adam the old things are past away, and all things are become new. And all those new things are of the God who has reconciled us to Himself by Him who knew not sin, but was made sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

Surely our everlasting delight shall be in that love that brought Him down from the Father into this world, and also into death itself to cause us to live to Him in the love created in our hearts by the knowledge of His love which, after all, is knowledge-surpassing! May we increase in acquaintance with it.

PAUL'S GOSPEL. No. 2.
Its Power.

PAUL'S gospel is not a mere dream or ethereal vision, but a practical reality. In it is a power great enough to give effect to the revelation which filled the soul of the apostle, and to produce the grand result conceived in the mind of its divine Author. This power is resurrection. Upon this everything depends, hence the effort of Satan to corrupt the truth as to it in 1 Cor. 15. and 2 Tim. 2. 18.

Seeing that the source of Paul's gospel lies outside of man's world, which is bounded by death, it is evident that if the things therein revealed are to be fulfilled, a power must be brought into operation, that is superior to death. Without this it would be but the baseless fabric of a vision delighting the imagination for a moment, but vanishing at the touch of death and leaving not a wrack behind. Resurrection brings to light a power which is entirely beyond the conception of the natural mind. For this reason it is not believed, and its teaching is resisted, because, if true, the startling fact is brought home to the conscience that man must prepare to meet his God. Paul says (Rom. 2. 16), "God shall judge the secrets of men, according to my gospel," for in his gospel the power of resurrection is revealed which is either of life unto life, or else of death unto death.

Throughout all Paul's epistles, not only the fact, but the import of the resurrection of Christ, is seen in relation to every truth contained in his gospel (see Rom. 1.-8.). It was the climax in his own experience and purpose. That he might know Christ and the power of His resurrection was his present desire, and the goal of all his hopes was that he might attain to the resurrection out from amongst the dead (Phil. 3. 10, 11). It is in this that the special operation of God is seen, for while death still remains, Christ has been taken out from the dead and His
saints await a resurrection of the same character, which will put them with Christ in glory.

In their hearts men worship power, the greatness of mechanical force, the might of military achievements, the strength of navies, the power provided by wealth, and science waxes eloquent over the gigantic forces that are in operation in the natural world, whether in the growth of a tree, or the swinging of a star in its orbit. But all the learning of the schools stands silent before the impenetrable wall of death. Or if some seek by occult means to solve the problem, only disaster to soul and body awards the unhallowed search. It is to be noted also, that the more men discover the latent forces of nature and seek to harness them for their own purposes, so much the more liable are they to be destroyed by these same powers. Chemistry has brought to light high explosive elements, and men use these to sweep away thousands of their fellows in the horrors of war, but never can they discover a force great enough to raise the dead, for the simple reason that no power exists in the created universe capable of so doing. It is just at this point, that God manifests Himself as the wielder of a force by which He will accomplish all His purposes, and, indeed, which He has already brought into operation. Eph. 1.19, etc., is written in order that the saints may be informed of the working of this power and of its application to them. It forms part of the apostle's prayer, because if it is to be known, it cannot be simply by information, but by the spirit of wisdom and revelation which the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ alone can give.

The literal words are, "what is the surpassing greatness of His power, according to the energy of the might of His strength."

No exaggerated language is this, for he is speaking of the action of a power transcendent, put forth in that supreme moment when God came to the grave where Christ was lying dead and lifted Him from the lowest point of human weakness, and placed Him in the highest height of glory, at His own right hand.

The word 'hyperballon,' to throw beyond or in excess, translated 'surpassing,' implies a force that knows no abating, an ascent that has no thought of subsequent decline, a victory that will never know reversal, an act that can never be superseded.

Reader, you have often read Eph. 1. 19. Has the revelation of all that the words convey ever laid hold of your soul with its tremendous reality? For it is not only that the fact has taken place, but that it has a present and immediate bearing "to usward who believe." Consider not only the cross, but the grave of Christ, that "He was buried." What had brought Him to that place? He was there because He had borne our sins, and by the shedding of His precious blood had met the holy claims of God against those sins, redemption in this respect was accomplished, but Christ was dead. But for the first time death held One over whom it had no rights and against whom could be found nothing. What claim had death upon Him personally? None, for He was sinless. True, He had been made sin for us, but He had met this by an adequate sacrifice. He had taken upon Himself the curse of the broken law, but had endured its righteous sentence. What then? Was there any attribute of God that could be adduced as reason why Christ should be held in the bands of death? No, rather the full glory of all that God is, in love, majesty, righteousness, truth, was engaged to open the tomb of
Christ and raise Him from the dead. The prince of darkness had put forth all his strength, but how brief was his triumph and how absolute his overthrow. Defeated in his last stronghold, the power of death was wrested from his grasp, “captivity is captive led, for Jesus liveth who was dead.”

The resurrection of Christ was tremendous in its effects. The earthquake which accompanied it reverberated to the farthest limits of the unseen world. Not only were the powers of darkness crushed and confounded, but a new order of things was brought to pass amongst the mighty realms of the angelic hosts. For these exalted celestial beings who were created far greater than man, are now placed subordinate to “the Man Christ Jesus,” and gladly do they acclaim His worthiness to take the highest station. Besides which, henceforth they become ministering spirits sent forth to minister to them who as heirs of salvation are identified with the great results of the resurrection of the Christ of God.

Resurrection is the power by which God will accomplish all His counsels beginning with Christ the first-fruits, then quickening and raising from a state of death in trespasses and sins, the objects of His grace, and, finally, bringing to pass the redemption of their bodies. Such is the character of the power “to usward who believe.” It is not the power that made the worlds, nor the power which brought Israel through the Red Sea with mighty hand and outstretched arm, but a power far beyond either of these, exercised in the realm of moral and spiritual realities. Think of the amazing contrast between the grave of Christ and the right hand of God; between the Man who lay in death in consequence of having identified Himself with our sins, and the same Man placed far above all principality and power, the witness of the righteousness and love of God, and with the administration of all things committed to Him. Added to this is the marvellous fact that the application of the power of Christ’s resurrection is already ours. What should we think if the power that made the worlds was at our disposal? How physical impossibilities would vanish and difficulties cease. Yet even so that power could not deliver us from our sins, or set us beyond death, or give us a place of acceptance in the Beloved. But the power of resurrection that has done all this is even now working in all saints. May the eyes of our hearts be enlightened to know its active energy, by which Christ may be glorified in us, and we in Him even now, as all saints shall be completely at His coming, according to the grace of our God, and the Lord Jesus Christ.

“Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.”—John. 20. 29.

O MASTER, though our eyes have never looked
Upon Thy blessed face and glorious form,
Yet we would trust Thee with a perfect trust,
And love Thee and rejoice in Thee unseen,
And prove the heaven of Thy beatitude
On those who, though they see Thee not, believe.
IN THE HEART—IN THE HOME—IN THE WAY.
Deuteronomy 6. 4-9.

There can be no doubt that God intended that the piety of His people should be intensely real and practical. It was not simply to be something which they were to display on special occasions, but it was so to enter into the whole texture of their existence that to them it should be natural to live a life of godliness, because it came into every detail and every department of their history.

The first thing we observe in these verses is the acknowledgment of divine authority (verse 4). To apply the Scripture to ourselves as we proceed, we are called upon to own the Lordship of Christ. With this we commenced our Christian course (Rom. 10. 9). For this we require the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 12. 3. last clause). In this lies the secret of the true Christian life, as the whole trend of New Testament teaching shows so very clearly. It involves a great deal, for it implies that we have no will of our own, no wish outside His will, no ambition for anything in which we cannot glorify Him. It means further that, in measure, our life will be the transcript of His, for as the dependent Man in this world, His relation to God was just such as we have described; hence the unqualified delight in Him more than once expressed; the joy that that wonderful pathway brought to the heart of God; and the sweet fragrance that ever rose from every step that He trod in this world.

Next we see there was to be affection for God (verse 5), and it was to be undivided, wholehearted, sincere. How very touching it is to hear our blessed Lord speaking to "His own" in the seclusion of that upper room on the dark night of His betrayal, and telling them that when He had gone, while they were here, and during the whole course of the long night, He would count upon, would claim, and—oh, the marvel of it!—would compensate their affection (John 14. 15, 21, 23). Then, having risen from the dead, there was the challenge to Peter: "Lovest thou ME more than these?" "Lovest thou ME?" "Lovest thou ME?" (John 21. 15-17). Dear fellow-believer, do we hear His gracious voice speaking to us? Let us use the Lord’s question in another sense. Are there persons, or things, that presume to rival His claim, and threaten to divide our affections? Is He asking, "Lovest thou Me more than these?" Are we prepared to let "these" go in order that He may have His rightful place? And as we contemplate His love can we pray—

"O give our hearts its depth to prove,
And reign without a rival there!"

If so, we shall not speak of loss because of the incomparable gain that will be ours. It is our apprehension of His love that will produce a response in our hearts. It is in undivided affection for Himself that we shall find the way of joy, peace, satisfaction, fitness for the service of the sanctuary, and equipment for a walk that will be well pleasing to Him.

The third point we notice is that the words commanded by Jehovah, through Moses, were to be in the people’s heart. We presume every Israelite had a mental acquaintance with them; they might be able to repeat them and, if need be, to expound them; but here is the solemn, imperative statement: "These words, which I command thee
this day, shall be in thine heart" (verse 6). Just here is the test for us. We are living in a day of considerable head-knowledge. It is possible to know the letter of Scripture, to repeat it accurately, to expound it correctly, and yet not to have it "in thine heart." We need to have it in our heart, not to give it out but in order that it may become part of ourselves, that we may feed upon it, that it may form us, dominate our life, mould our character, and set us up in this world in the path of God's will, in the likeness of Christ. This will be because our having the Word in our hearts will bring us into, and will maintain us in, the joy of communion. Here again we see the connection between our portion under consideration and John 14. The result of love for Christ, and the evidence of it, is that we keep His commandments (verse 15) and His Word (verse 23). This secures for us the company of the Father and the Son, and means that we are dwelling in a region of love, favour, and fellowship; and this must have a marked effect upon us in all the relationships of life. We do well, therefore, to pray that His Word may have its own place in our heart.

Then there will be His Word, "in thine house" (verse 7). It was to be the regular manner of life to speak of the things of God, rising in the morning, in the leisure time at home, in the recreation of a country walk, on retiring to rest at night. It was not to be something worked up for special occasions: to speak of the things of God was to be just as natural as taking their daily food. Thus the children would grow up to love these things and would be preserved from a desire for other things.

Is there a lesson for us to-day in this? Are there Christian homes where modern inventions have been intro-duced which kill the appetite for the Word of God? Is there the sanctioning of the young people going to places which in time they prefer to the company of those who love the Lord? Is the absence of blessing following the preaching of the gospel due largely to the fact that the families of those who attend gospel meetings and who are known as believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, are in many cases antagonistic to Him and to the glad tidings? We suggest these inquiries in all love and in all humility. "Bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord" seems to be verse 7 of our chapter in the New Testament language of Ephesians 6. 4. If not right in the home-circle we seem to be wrong in every other circle. May the Lord exercise our hearts just here.

Lastly, there is the outside testimony. These words were to be on the hand, between the eyes, on the posts of the house, and on the gates (verses 8, 9). What might this mean for us? We think we need not draw upon our imagination for an answer. For guidance as to service we have the Word of God. For direction as to our path we have the Word of God. Those who pass our house should know that it is occupied by the children of God, and if they venture nearer they should be conscious of the presence of God. In all this there will be no effort nor will there be any trace of that greatest of all abominations—sanctimoniousness. The Word is in our heart, we practise it in our homes, and therefore without our being at all conscious of the fact it will come out in our life as we move in the various circles in this world in doing our business and attending to the legitimate claims of our daily life. It will be not what we say but what we are. What we are in the world will be the result of what we are
in the home, and what we are in the home will be the outcome of what we are in our private, personal ways. If His Word is in our heart, it will be in our home, it will regulate all our movements, and we will be here for His glory.

We are getting near the end of the journey. At any moment we may hear the assembling shout of our beloved Lord. It seems to us that what we need to-day is not so much to dissipate our time declaiming against the errors that are abroad—we expect them—nor forming new organizations in defence of the truth—it requires no defence; nor do we need so much to cry to God for a mighty world-wide revival. Shall we not rather each see to it individually that the Word of the Lord has its rightful place in our heart, in our home, in our service, in our Christian pathway, in our necessary relations with the world; and then is it not possible that there will be that awakening, that moral conformity to Christ, that preparation for His return that shall gladden His heart, encourage His saints, and lead to the completion of His great work of taking out from the world "a people for His Name"? May the Lord graciously grant that there may be a greater response to His love, an increased desire to follow Him, and as a result a showing forth of practical piety, or in the words of 1 Peter 2. 9, a setting forth of "the excellencies of Him who has called us out of darkness to His wonderful light" (New Trans.).

WHY THE SAVIOUR SUFFERED.

The wedding dowry that John Bunyan's wife brought to him consisted of two books. They were of greater value to him than thousands of gold and silver. One of them was Lewis Bayly's Practice of Pietie. In it there is a colloquy in which the Lord Jesus shows to the Soul the meaning of His suffering on the cross. We give it in the quaint language of the period.

**Soule**: Lord, why wouldest Thou be taken, when Thou mightest have escaped Thine enimies?

**Christ**: That thy spiritual enimies should not take thee, and cast thee into the prison of utter darkness.

**Soule**: Lord, wherefore wouldest Thou be bound?

**Christ**: That I might lose the cordes of thine iniquities.

**Soule**: Lord, wherefore wouldest Thou be lift up upon a crosse?

**Christ**: That I might lift thee up with Me to heaven.

**Soule**: Lord, wherefore was Thy side opened with a speare?

**Christ**: That thou mightest have a way to come nearer to My heart.

Let not the morrow be as a thief to rob you of this day's blessing.

You thank God for your food, thank Him also for your medicine, for a day's trial is often of more value to you spiritually than a year's prosperity.
“THE POWER WHICH HE HAS.”

(“Our commonwealth has its existence in the heavens, from which also we await the Lord Jesus Christ as Saviour, who shall change our body of humiliation into conformity to His body of glory, according to the working of the power which He has even to subdue all things to Himself.”—(Phil. 3. 20, 21, N.T.).

We wait Him from the heavens—Jesus Christ the Lord!
There our everlasting treasures with Himself are stored:
We expect Him from the heavens—from the throne on high!
There our true and vital interests wait beyond the sky:
Comes He soon to take us upward, as the sun the dew,
By the power which He possesses all things to subdue

For redemption’s day of glory to Himself.

Yea, He comes! He came the first time all our sins to bear,
And on the cross in suffering He made atonement there;
Christ our Saviour then revealing love and righteousness
Glorified our God and Father and redeemed us.
Raised, enthroned, returning quickly, Jesus fills the view
By the power which He possesses all things to subdue

For redemption’s day of glory to Himself.

Now the Man of resurrection—seen, heard, handled here,
Sits upon the throne of greatness, radiant and fair;
Pierced once, His holy body bears the scars on high—
Honour, favour shine upon Him far above the sky.
And He comes to form our bodies like His own anew
By the power which He possesses all things to subdue

For redemption’s day of glory to Himself.

From the earth a cloud received Him when He went away!
In the clouds we rise to meet Him on that coming day!
With a shout,—God’s trump attending and the archangel’s voice,—
He will call His blood-redeemed ones up to share His joys:
In the air we then shall greet Him, finding all is true,
By the power which He possesses all things to subdue

For redemption’s day of glory to Himself.

Still He’s waiting in the heavens for the joyous hour,
When as Saviour He transforms us by His quickening power:
In the heavens the throne, the brightness, immortality,
Beauty, blessing, crowning splendours tell His majesty,
And though waiting, what He promised quickly He will do
By the power which He possesses all things to subdue

For redemption’s day of glory to Himself.

Come then, Saviour, from the heavens! Come! O Lord, we pray;
Take Thy loved ones! change their bodies! Home Thy bride convey!
Oh, the rapture, when, beholding that loved form once scarred,
Thy dear face we see, and worship—that dear face once marred.
Love transcendent! grace resplendent! shine in heavenly hue
By the power which He possesses all things to subdue

For redemption’s day of glory to Himself.
ENSAMPLES TO ALL THAT BELIEVE.
Read 1 Thessalonians, 1 and 2. (Samuel Levermore).

THREEFOLD TESTIMONY
(verses 6–8).

After the “threefold subjective experience” (see Oct. 1927 issue) comes the threefold testimony. That is God’s order according to the divine pattern. “We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen” (John 3. 11). Experience first—Heart experience. Not other people’s. “I speak of the things things which I have made” (Psa. 45. 1). The order is “followers,” “ensamples,” “echoes.” The life testimony first. These Christians at Thessalonica first graduated in the school of practical piety, then served as ensamples or models to believers in Macedonia and Achaia. For model Christians alone can be ensamples to others. Then echoes. From you sounded out the word of the Lord (8). I just love that word sound. Doubtless the Holy Spirit had in His mind the pomegranates and the bells on the High Priest’s garments (Exod. 28. 34). “A golden bell and a pomegranate;” not two bells and a pomegranate, fruit and sound. “Word and work” vide 2 Thess. 2. 16, 17. We must be followers and ensamples before we can be echoes. “His sound shall be heard when he goeth in . . . and cometh out.” When our Lord went in at His glorification, there was in Jerusalem a “sound from Heaven,” the Holy Spirit, and there will be also at His Epiphany, (Rev. 14. 2; 19. 6).

Theirs was AN INTENSIVE EVANGELISM. Like Ezekiel’s River increasing as it flowed. There were no old swords, mummies or fossil remains in old Salonica, for only an evangelistic church can be an ensample. We must evangelize or fossilize. The gospel is not for libraries, but for life. When it is run out of the churches by pseudoscience or aesthetics it should take to the streets. It was a great day for evangelism when they turned John Wesley into the streets, and history repeated itself in a striking way when the Methodists in their turn dumped that remarkable man the late William Booth on Mile End Waste in the great, sordid artery of East London.

Thessalonica was the chief station on the great Roman road between two hills on the Aegean Sea, of great maritime influence. Here the Slavonians and Bulgarians were converted. One can easily visualize the scene. Brethren going off in pairs over the hills toward Achaia, holding sweet converse en route. The streets and thoroughfares of our great City, the highways and bye-ways, the hills and valleys, the country lanes and the sordid alleys, closes, and slums of the cities and towns are crying out for heralds—echoes—who are followers and ensamples.

THE CRYING NEED OF TO-DAY IS MEN “SENT FORTH BY THE HOLY GHOST” (Acts 13. 4).

Heart, Head and Hand co-ordinating and co-operating. Satan succeeded in side-tracking the church when it began to teach that when the Baptist said—Luke 3. 16—“He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire,” that it had no reference to the men to whom he was speaking—and to us—but only to millennial saints. The fire was not for us. This is surely a blind handling of the Word of God. They have treated the “tongues of fire” (Acts 2. 2) in the same way.

Such teachers are excellent FIRE EXTINGUISHERS, and a glance around proves it to a demonstration.
"Dear brother, you are far too enthusiastic," was said to a Spirit-filled brother. He at once replied, "Someone must get hot to melt the icebergs." "Where are you hurrying?" said one to the great sceptic Hume. "To hear Whitefield" was the reply. "But you do not believe the Bible." "No, I do not, but... he does." Oh to be echoes, not preaching Paul, but preaching in the mighty energy of the Holy Ghost what Paul preached.

Pentecost has cancelled the "tarry" of Luke 24. 49, and the "depart not" of Acts 1. 5, but it has not cancelled all that it meant. Let us be honest with God and ask ourselves, What do I know about it? We come now to a

THREEFOLD OPERATION
(verses 5, 6).

All Holy Ghost work. All in-wrought God-given. Contrast their "assurance" and their "joy" with that of the stony-ground hearer in Matt. 13.

There is a vast difference between carnal assurance and that imparted by the Holy Ghost. The assurance of the stony-ground hearer is like his joy: it is all of himself—ephemeral—of a mushroom growth. It goes in, but not down, and therefore it cannot come up. It cannot go down because it is stone—impenetrable and unploughable. No conviction, no repentance. All flesh-work. No Holy Ghost.

IS "MUCH ASSURANCE"—NORMAL—EVANGELICAL? Absolutely, but only the Holy Ghost can give it. See how careful the Word is by Paul in Rom. 15. 13. Having expounded the glorious doctrine of justification, he stands aside as it were and cries, "Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope through the power of the Holy Ghost." Right well Paul knew that if the Holy Ghost did not give it, he could not. (See also Heb. 10. 15; 1 John 5. 13; 2 Tim. 1. 12).

The only true EVANGELICAL BLAZE has the Word of God as its medium, the Holy Ghost as the fire, and affliction as the poker. Nota bene, "much affliction"—"much assurance." Jerusalem had to have the poker of affliction to scatter the fire along the country-side, cf. Acts 8. 4; 11. 19. "Much Assurance"—"Power, Holy Ghost, much assurance."

POWER, not pulpit, or oratorical, or elocutionary, but in the Holy Ghost. This is the CAUSE, and the effect is not doubt, or disputation, or conviction merely, or even peace—sweet as that is, but "much assurance."

"Full assurance of understanding" (Col. 2. 2).

"Full assurance of hope" (Heb. 6. 11).

"Full assurance of faith" (Heb. 10. 22). Blessed assurance indeed!

Next comes a

THREEFOLD EFFECT OF A HOLY GHOST MINISTRY:

Well-born — well-cherished — well-loved.

As to their being well-born, look at their spiritual father. Consider the conditions in which he preached, "much contention" (2. 3), "shamefully entreated" (2. 2). Then the nature of his preaching, negatively, not of "deceit," "uncleanness," "guile." Not as pleasing men (4). No "flattering words." No "covetousness." Then positively, in "labour and travail," "night and day." "Because we would not be chargable unto you" (9). Holy, just and unblameable behaviour. What a father! Surely these dear saints were very like their father. Well-born.
WELL CHERISHED. As a nurse her children (2. 7). “As a father his children” (11); and—

WELL LOVED (2. 8). How sweetly and powerfully expressed. “Being affectionately desirous of you, we were willing to have imparted unto you, not the gospel of God only, but also our own souls.” (Italics mine.) Working night and day for them. It is very different to-day, but are we who minister the Word any better for our, perhaps, too easy and even luxurious lives? Are we not rather far worse? To be lionized, feted is a very enervating and debilitating experience. Surely Acts 6. 4 is a very necessary word for such. “But we will give ourselves continually to prayer and the ministry of the Word.” To be much alone with God is essential. Strictly avoid the society of brethren who are given to lightness or “foolish talking, or jesting, which are not convenient.” The Spirit-filled servant of God should have no time for these baneful modern practices. Preaching is not all. Look at that little word in 2. 10, ” Among you,” “Exhorting,” “Comforting” (2. 11). Oh, how he loved them. Their true blessing was life to him. “Now we live if ye stand fast in the Lord” (3. 8). Oh Lord in mercy, please work this in us!

And they surely did stand fast, and life took on a brighter hue for that unique personality—loved of heaven, but hunted, haunted and hated of men—for the moral beauty of the Lord Jesus was irradiating their lives, projecting its living splendour, and communicating its transforming energy in every direction.

“Now we live” or, as we say to-day, “Life is worth living.” Oh what a life! deriving in, of course, a secondary sense its very life-blood, it’s health, its sap, its beauty, its raison d’être from their spiritual well-being.

With the Corinthian church it was quite different. In their case the apostle had to say—2 Cor. 4. 12—“So then death worketh in us, but life in you.” His death for their life. But the super-abundant life of the Thessalonians wrought life in the apostle.

“Now we live.” The Corinthians were carnal, the Galatians were legal, the Ephesians were cold, the Laodiceans lukewarm, but the Thessalonians were his glory and joy.

We must just glance now, in closing, at our closing triplet. The seventh—perfect number:

ITS THREEFOLD PROSPECT (2. 17-20).

Their’s was wrapped up in his. They were his “hope, joy, and crown of rejoicing.” Where? “In the presence (Gk. parousia) of our Lord Jesus Christ. When? At His coming.

In verse 17 the dear apostle absent, but “not in heart” endeavours once and again, with great desire to “see their face.” “But Satan hindered.” The hindrances of Satan are the permits (Gk. parousia) of our Lord Jesus Christ. When? At His coming.

In verse 17 the dear apostle absent, but “not in heart” endeavours once and again, with great desire to “see their face.” “But Satan hindered.” The hindrances of Satan are the permits of God, and are woven into that strange piece of Providential tapestry in Romans 8. where sixteen threads in verses 35-39, one of which, doubtless, is Satan, are woven into the “all things” of verse 28. “All things work” — actively — “together” — harmoniously — “for good” — beneficently. The evil as well as the good. The contrasts of life. Its light and shade. Its sunshine and storm. Enemies and friends. All times and states—all created things. All passing in review like the strong wind that rent the mountains, the earthquake, and the fire on Mount Horeb, and leaving
only the “still small voice” of God’s eternal peace.

How could those Thessalonians be his “hope, joy and crown”? After all their flesh was no better than his, and his was no better than that of anybody else. Was not Christ Himself his hope, joy and crown? Yes truly, and they also, because they were His—the fruit of His travail—the purchase of His blood. This blissful hope of reward at the Bema (judgment seat) when he would receive the Shepherd’s crown—the “crown of glory” (cf. 2. 20; 1 Peter 5. 4), filled the dear apostle with “joy.” And as he looks on to the blissful moment so sweetly described in chapter 4. 13-18, when every dear soul, called by his instrumentality out of the darkness and death of paganism into the light and life of God, should be recognized by him. In the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ, he cries in an ecstasy of delight, “Ye are our glory and joy.”

What they were to Paul, Christ was to them. Paul’s fellowship of Christ’s sufferings (Phil. 3. 10) was the gateway through which he passed into the fellowship of His joys. He had got to that. Identification of interest. Not merely a co-ordination and a co-operation, but a co-existence—a life partnership.

Happy and blessed man—the night of weeping was well-nigh o’er for him, and the glorious morning of eternal joy was breaking upon his faith’s vision. His life had been a veritable via dolorosa, as the world looks upon life. He had indeed counted all but loss and refuse for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus his Lord, and now after the night of weeping the glad morning was before him. Oh, that we loved our glorious Lord a tithe as much as he! But there was not only the joy of morning, but that of bringing his sheaves with him. His “hope,” “joy,” and “crown of rejoicing.” And if it cannot be ours to beget children and form Assemblies, bless God it can be ours to follow in the footsteps of these early saints and tread the pathway of Faith, Hope and Love. To be followers—ensamples and echoes as they were. Let us see to it that our wells are not choked by the Philistines of worldliness—Modernism—that they be always springing, bubbling, leaping, singing; that we grieve not the Holy Ghost in His indwelling—that we resist not His inflow and that we quench not His outflow; that we are Evangelical, Evangelistic, and Evidential. Trinal in the “election” of the Father (1. 5) in the deliverence of God the Son (1. 10) and in the “power and much assurance” of God the Spirit.

“Singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord” (Eph. 5. 19).

“Lay Thou Thy hand of gentlest love divine
Upon these jarred and loosen’d chords of mine,
And tune them to Thy will.
As likes Thee, deal with this poor instrument;
Thine is the counsel, mine but the consent,
I would be only still.”

God sometimes sends us a wintry season that we may the better bring forth summer fruit.
A CONTRAST.

"The WORDS of Job are ended."—(Job 31. 40.)

"The PRAYERS of David are ENDED."—(Psalm 76. 20.)

Consider the contrast. Job, after fifteen chapters of self-praise, self-righteousness and self-justification, comes to a pause, having exhausted all language in the effort, and closed from sheer inability to say more. He speaks of himself ("I," "me," "my,"') fifty times in the 29th chapter, and records ten of his virtues, and in the 31st chapter he enumerates fourteen sins which he had not been guilty of—pronouncing curses upon himself if it had been otherwise, and at last "the words of Job are ended"! What a relief!

But Job had not as yet come to an end of himself. "Who is this that darkeneth counsel by words without knowledge?" God enquired "out of the whirlwind." "Where wast thou when I laid the foundation of the earth? when the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy?" And then in quick succession Jehovah sets before him the wonders of His creatorial power, wisdom and glory, as evidenced in various examples of His own hand—Light and Darkness, morning and dayspring, snow and hail and rain, thunder, frost and dew, astronomical marvels in "the ordinances of the heavens," the brute creation, the fowls of the air, the great sea-monsters and so forth, until at last Job speaks again, no longer to justify himself, but cries, "Behold, I am vile, once have I spoken, yea, twice, but I proceed no further," and so indeed Job had come at last to the end of himself. "I have heard of Thee by the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye seeth Thee, wherefore I abhor myself and repent in dust and ashes." "And the Lord turned the captivity of Job when he prayed for his friends," and "the Lord gave Job twice as much as he had before," including the same number of sons (seven) and daughters (three) as were destroyed by the whirlwind.

And so, Job at last, in the presence of the divine glory, puts the extinguisher upon himself, and God fills the vision of his soul.

Turn now to Psalm 72. where the theme is "the King's Son," yea, the King Himself, the Lord Jesus Christ, portrayed in a magnificent prophetic sketch, in the position of royal power, and universal empire. As to extent, it ranges "from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth." As to duration, it continues "as long as the sun and moon endure throughout all generations," as to power, "His enemies shall lick the dust: all kings shall fall down before Him." As to material prosperity, even "on the tops of the mountains there shall be handfuls of corn, the fruit thereof shall shake like Lebanon: and they of the city shall flourish like grass of the earth." And best of all, as to its moral features, the kingdom shall be characterized by righteousness and peace. "The poor and needy" will be specially attended to, and their "oppressors broken in pieces" by the King of kings, whose Name shall endure for ever, and "men shall be blessed in Him, and all nations shall call Him blessed, and blessed be His glorious Name for ever, and the whole earth shall be filled with His glory, Amen and Amen. The prayers of David are ended."

All the psalmist's highest hopes are more than realized! The crucified and God-forsaken One of the 69th Psalm
is now glorified, He who suffered so infinitely reigns eternally. He who went down to the lowest depths of humiliation is raised to highest exaltation. His Name is on every tongue, before Him every knee is bowed, His blessings stretch to the furthest limits of the universe of God, and everything is filled with His glory. There is nothing more that the heart could desire, and as a necessary consequence

"THE PRAYERS OF DAVID ARE ENDED."

Job’s ‘words’ are ended because of the hopelessness of his theme, viz., himself. David’s ‘prayers’ are ended because, in the prophetic vision of his soul, his truest, highest, dearest hopes are realized in the established glory and excellency of God's Christ and there is nothing more to pray for.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.
The god of this world.

"I was questioned recently as to a remark in a prayer meeting that ‘Satan being the god of this world, the world is still under his power, and consequently it is his kingdom where he reigns over men.’ Is this Scriptural, or are we in the reign of grace so that Satan does not hold men in his power?" —ILFORD.

2 CORINTHIANS 4. 3, 4 tells us:
"If our gospel be hid, it is hid from them that are lost; in whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.”

Showing clearly that Satan rules over the minds of men, keeping them in ignorance of God, this is specially in evidence in the modernism of the day, which boas ts in its intellectuality and rejects the gospel of the glory of Christ.

EPHESIANS 2. 2, 3 tells us: “In times past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience. Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lust of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind and were by nature the children of wrath even as others.” This passage also shows how Satan dominates men, and this character of things is seen in the godless, carnal, pleasure-loving side of the world, though it also includes the mind. And the course of this world is according to Satan. He directs it from the seat of His power in the air.

1 JOHN 5. 19 tells us: “The whole world lieth in wickedness,” or as it should be, “in the wicked one.” It is his nursling, cherished, guided, and controlled by him, and being so is opposed to God and under Satan’s power, as John’s epistle clearly shows.

COLOSSIANS 1. 13 tells us that the Father “hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son.” This teaches that the world of men who are not delivered from the power of darkness abide still under it. These Scriptures show us that Satan holds the world in bondage, and in that sense rules over it. Men need a Deliverer, and Christ is the Deliverer they need, for GALATIANS 1. tells us of grace from “our Lord Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father.” Those who are delivered are no longer of the world (JOHN 17. 14), and so they are no longer in the power of darkness and Satan, they belong to the kingdom of God, and in that kingdom grace reigns.

Grace reigning through righteousness is in contrast to the reign of sin, and also
of law. God has intervened through Jesus Christ our Lord, and in perfect righteousness remits the sins of all who believe, and brings them clear of sin's dominion and penalty, and sets them in Christ, where there is no condemnation but eternal life. But all this is grace; it all flows from God's heart; it is His love in its activity towards guilty, helpless, death-doomed men. Sin's dominion is broken for those who believe because they are not under law but under grace (Romans 6. 14). The law never subdued sin, and it never gave the power by which anyone could overcome it; it only condemned the sinner and so held him in the state of subjection to sin and its consequences. But grace emancipates us from sin's dominion by giving a new life that sin cannot overcome; it supplies all that is needed for a practical life of victory and also gives a new motive for every-

Numbering the People.

"Will you please explain wherein lay David's sin in numbering the people"? I Chronicles 21?

"Newberry" refers back to Exodus 30. 11-16, and 38. 25-28. "J. N. Darby" in his Synopsis says: David "wishes to know the strength of Israel which was his glory, forgetting the strength of God."—CAMBELTOWN.

It would seem that pride in the heart of David gave Satan his opportunity, and he seized it and moved him to number the people. Herein lay his sin. Even Joab, unspiritual man though he was, felt the evil of it, and would have restrained David from his purpose and given the glory to the Lord, but the word of David prevailed. The people must have been as proud of their prosperity and greatness as was the king, or the judgment of God would not have fallen upon them. Anyhow, there does not appear to have been any acknowledgment of God in the matter, as Exod. 30. 11-16 commanded there should be. For the moment David had lost sight of the fact that all good comes from God; he would have the glory of it all himself, and in this showed the same spirit as Nebuchadnezzar showed when he said, "Is not this great Babylon that I have built?" (Dan. 4. 30). Judgment from God came in both cases, for pride is of all things an abomination to God; it was the condemnation and is the reproach and snare of the devil (1 Tim. 3. 6, 7). We have great need to watch against it when things go well with us, and not the less in spiritual things than in temporal.

"Belov'd of our souls! Well-Belov'd of the Father! Omnipotent Saviour, Redeemer and Guide, 
O come, and from waste and from wilderness gather
Thy loved ones for whom Thou hast suffered and died."

The Lord has bound up the rod of correction in our bundle of blessings.

John Wesley said: "I no more dare fret than I dare curse and swear."
ADORNING THE DOCTRINE.
A Word to Young Christians.

"Adorn the Doctrine of God our Saviour in all things"—Titus 2. 10.

The doctrine of God our Saviour is THE GOSPEL. It tells us that God is good and doeth good. How glad we are that we ever heard it; without it we had lived without God, without Christ and without hope in the world; and what would such a life have been to us?

“A walking shadow; a poor player,
That struts and frets his hour upon the stage,
And then is heard no more . . . a tale
Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,
Signifying nothing.”

So much for a life lived without the knowledge of God, but when such a life is done, what then? “After this the judgment,” when account must be given to God for it all. But the gospel has brought light and substance into our lives, we have something to live for now, as we shall see, and we have a glorious hope for the future. Let us thank God and rejoice that we ever heard the gospel. Now we are called upon to adorn the gospel, and how can we do that? Is not the gospel perfect in its beauty? Yes, so we thought it to be when first the light of it dispelled the darkness in which we groped, and we were right, and if it is already perfect, what can we do to adorn it? Truly, we cannot add anything to it, we might as well try:

“To gild refined gold, to paint the lily,
To throw a perfume on the violet,
To smooth the ice, or add another hue
Unto the rainbow, or with taper light
To seek the beauteous eye of heaven to garnish.”

But we can bring out in lives that have been renewed by it, the beauty that is in it. The world does not see any beauty in it, and we cannot wonder at that, for when He who is the theme of it was here He was despised and rejected of men, He was without form or comeliness to them, and when they saw Him there was no beauty in Him that they should desire Him, but “to you who believe He is precious, the chiepest among ten thousand and the altogether lovely One.” What Jesus was the gospel is.

Take a hyacinth bulb. A parcel of them was once left in a kitchen, and the cook, who mistook them for onions, said, “They had neither taste nor smell, so I threw them out.” But plant that dry looking root, with neither taste nor smell, in a bowl; give it water and light, and then behold it sending up its glorious spike of flowers and filling the whole house with its fragrance. But all the beauty that cultivation brings into evidence was there in the bulb before it was disclosed. So it is with the gospel. We who have believed it must live out its blessedness before the eyes of our fellow-men, to whom it has neither taste nor smell, and so adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things. What a responsibility, yet what a privilege lies within the reach of us all! In this world that reeks with uncleanly savours and the stench of sin we may produce and shed abroad the sweetness of the grace of God, we may be imitators of God, going about doing good.

The exhortation was first addressed to servants, slaves who had been sold and bought in the public markets. And four ways in which they might do good was set before them. They were to be obedient to their own masters; and meek in their behaviour towards them, not answering again; and honest, not purloining their master’s goods; and
faithful, showing all good fidelity. OBEDIENCE, MEEKNESS, HONESTY, FAITHFULNESS! Practical qualities these, and how good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour, and what a contrast to the spirit and ways of the world as we know it.

Young men and women who have professed the Name of the Lord, see that you do not come behind in these things; it is up to you all to show what the grace of God can do in lives like yours. You do not need to go to the mission field for this; do it in the house where you live and in the place where you work.

Have you got your Bibles open at Titus 2.? If so notice that verse 11 begins with “For,” and proceeds to give the cause which only can produce this desired effect, and it is this that we must now consider, “FOR THE GRACE OF GOD THAT BRINGETH SALVATION HATH APPEARED UNTO ALL MEN.” The grace of God is the activity of His love towards those who deserved His wrath, and it subsists for us in our Lord Jesus Christ. We shall understand it better if we see it in Him, and we have not got it at all if we dissociate it from Him, for grace and truth came by Jesus Christ, and He dwelt among us full of grace. The grace of God which is salvation was not sent to us but brought to us. It was not sent by an angelic messenger, it was brought by God’s beloved Son. Many people look upon this blessing as they do upon a present sent to them by parcel post. There it is, they have got it, and are glad to have it, for is it not a token of the love of the distant friend? But he is not there; how different it would have been if he had brought it. And along with this mistake these same people spell salvation, IT; that is the wrong way to spell it, surely; it should be spelt HIM, for if you have Him, the Saviour, then you have salvation. Moses understood it when He sang, “The Lord is my strength and my song, and He is become my salvation.”

Is not this what the Lord meant when He said to the publican in the tree, “Zaccheus, make haste and come down, for to-day I MUST ABIDE at thy house.” And as He crossed the threshold of that happy man’s home, He said, “This day is SALVATION come to this house.” Why? Because He had come to it, Jesus Himself was salvation. When He brings salvation to us, He comes to stay with us. It is as though He said, I love you so well, and I have sought you so long, I will never be parted from you. “I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.” We have the blessing, but we have the Blesser too. The grace of God has given to us the desire to adorn the doctrine, and the nature and power that can do it. What we need now is instruction as to how to do it.

As the sun arises in the morning for all, so the Lord Jesus appeared for all men. Alas that so few appreciate the grace that He brought. But we are glad, are we not, that our hearts have been opened to give Him a welcome? may we treat Him well who has come to us and show all good fidelity to Him. He has blessed us, He has saved us, we are His. But that is the beginning of the ways of grace with us. Grace saves us, and also teaches and instructs us in the way of righteousness, as we read, “TEACHING US THAT DENYING UNGODLINESS AND WORLDLY LUSTS, WE SHOULD LIVE, SOBERLY, RIGHTEOUSLY, AND GODLY IN THIS PRESENT EVIL WORLD.” We are now in the school of grace. Does the thought of school bring back memories of hard tasks and stern teachers? Those
things belong to the old school and school master whose name is LAW; the school of grace is different, for the Saviour is the Teacher there. It was He who said, "Take My yoke upon you and learn of Me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest to your souls, for My yoke is easy and My burden is light." If He is our Teacher how attractive the lessons must be, and He teaches not only by His words but by His ways. He is our pattern and guide, and we are to be imitators of Him. We entered His school on the day that He saved us; we shall be in it until the end of our days on earth; then and not until then shall we graduate; may we all do it with honours for His joy.

The teaching is not theoretical but practical. We must know the doctrine, of course, if we are to adorn it, but in this school of grace we are taught to walk rather than to talk. We must learn how to behave ourselves in three spheres of life: in the inner, personal sphere we are to live soberly, in our relations with others we are to live righteously, and in our relations with God we are to live godly. Christ has set us an example that we should walk in His steps, and all this was lived out perfectly by Him when He was here.

Do you know the beautiful hymn, some verses of which are:

"O Lord! when we the path retrace
Which Thou on earth hast trod,
To man Thy wondrous love and grace,
Thy faithfulness to God.

Faithful amidst unfaithfulness
Mid darkness only light,
Thou didst Thy Father's name confess,
And in His will delight"?

As we sit at His feet and consider Him, we admire and adore and sing:

"We wonder at Thy lowly mind,
And fain would like Thee be,
And all our rest and pleasure find
In learning, Lord, of Thee."

It all becomes so real so wonderful, that we are glad to turn our backs upon our former life; we deny ungodliness and worldly lusts. These two things make up the life of the world; they mean, "We won't have God, and we will please ourselves." But for us, God has become so attractive through the gospel that we cannot live without Him, and His light has revealed to us how pernicious our own way was so that we now choose His way instead of ours.

And grace has made us expectant, the love of God shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost has given us a hope of which we are not ashamed. We are "LOOKING FOR THAT BLESSED HOPE, AND GLORIOUS APPEARING OF OUR GREAT GOD AND OUR SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST." The blessed hope is the coming again of our Lord Jesus Christ, to fulfill His own word, "I will come again and receive you unto Myself, that where I am there ye may be also." There are those who teach, that only those who are faithful and watching, will be taken when the Lord fulfils this word; they insist on what is called a "partial rapture" which will be a reward for faithfulness and labour. If that were so—which, thank God, it is not—this hope would no longer be A BLESSED HOPE; for who of us would care to lay his hand upon his heart and say, "I am one of the faithful"? If we have a true sense of our own frailty we confess that we are unprofitable servants, but this hope does not depend upon what we are but upon what God is; it has been given to us by the grace of God, IT IS ALL GRACE; but "to him that worketh the reward is not reckoned of grace but of debt." It is a blessed hope, not because it is acquired by fulfilled responsibility but because it has been set before us by sovereign grace.
The glorious appearing will follow that blessed hope; indeed, it is part of it. The glory of our Saviour shall fill the world in that day. It does not fill the world yet; this is the night in which we have to shine as lights and be witnesses to the blessedness of the gospel, but the morning is coming when the Sun of Righteousness shall arise with healing in His wings. The world will not rejoice when He appears; all nations of the earth shall wail because of Him, but we shall rejoice in that day. And what is it that has made the difference? The next verse tells us, "WHO GAVE HIMSELF FOR US." Such was His love, and His glory will not change this, and because He loved us and gave Himself for us, we shall not be afraid when He comes in His glory, and because we love Him we shall rejoice to see Him exalted where once He was dishonoured.

He gave Himself TO REDEEM US FROM ALL INIQUITY. We were slaves, but He has set us free, and the price of our redemption was His blood. He gave Himself to deliver us from the bondage of sin and to lead us in the paths of righteousness, and "THAT HE MIGHT PURIFY UNTO HIMSELF A PECULIAR PEOPLE." He wanted us entirely for Himself, His own peculiar treasure, and for this He would separate us from every evil thing and from every rival and from every yoke.

It is blessed to be able to sing,

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

But there is more than that, we are to be ZEALOUS OF GOOD WORKS. We learn in secret, but we show our progress before the eyes of others. The Christian is not called to be a monk, wasting his days behind monastery walls, but as Jesus of Nazareth went about doing good for God was with Him, so are we called to follow in His steps, and to adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour by good works. In this matter we must not be slothful. Our spiritual force and progress are not gauged by our intellectual knowledge of the doctrines of the epistles but by the way we carry out the exhortations in them.

I would press upon you that the schooling is in secret. Cultivate secret intercourse with the Lord; sit at His feet when no eye but His can see you, and He that seeth in secret shall reward you openly. You will gain wisdom and strength in secret, you will learn there what resources you have to draw upon when the test comes; then come forth, to love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that despitefully use you, and persecute you; that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven [characteristically so]: for He maketh his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust. So blessed and good is He!

The Lord of glory looks down upon every believer on earth, and sees each one as part of Himself. This great truth, Saul of Tarsus learnt when the Lord challenged him with the question, "Why persecutest thou ME?" (Acts 9.).

There is something more wonderful than the glories of creation; the Creator has revealed His heart and it is full of love. He has become the Saviour of sinners. Redemption glories shall be for ever greater than creatorial glories.
IN Eph. 6. 19 the singular expression occurs, "the mystery (or secret) of the gospel." In order to understand this it is necessary to bear in mind two things which were manifested by the preaching committed to Paul. Firstly, there was the announcement of an entirely new attitude on the part of God towards men, not the imputation of trespasses but, in view of the Man at His right hand, forgiveness of sins and justification from all things which involved death under the law (Acts 13. 38, 39). Secondly, those who accepted this, whether Jews or Gentiles, became under the Lordship of Christ an assembly of people bound together with a common interest, and amongst whom the Spirit of God dwelt, in order that there might be in the world a living witness to the grace and power of the gospel (1 Pet. 2. 9). These two things formed the dispensation which in 1 Cor. 9. 17 Paul says was committed to him. By his preaching he laid its one foundation, Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 3. 10, 11), viz., the testimony to His death, resurrection and glory. On this the church in the aspect of the temple or house of God on earth was built. This construction entailed responsibility on the part of those in it, and like previous dispensations it must be tested and finally tried by fire. This would discover what kind of work was done and what sort of material used.

But further, not only might incongruous material be introduced, but enemies at work under the Christian name would bring about the destruction of the building, no less than of the destroyer (1 Cor. 3. 17). In Acts 20. 29, 30 Paul warned the elders of Ephesus of such, and in 2 Tim. he sums up their insidious working. In other words, the dispensation not continuing in the goodness of God would be ruined and at last cut off (Rom. 11. 22). Every dispensation only brings out the solemn fact that man in the flesh is utterly hopeless from first to last and spoils the very best that God does for him. So it has been with the present one. The grace set forth in Christianity has been used not to deliver from this present evil world, but to civilize it. The church, which should have been the epistle of Christ known and read of all men, has made alliance with the world, and has become a house into which has been built a mixture of material consisting of Jewish traditions and heathen idolatrous practices. The epistle to the Galatians is a warning against the one, the first epistle to the Corinthians against the other, and its moral downfall is described in the seven letters of Rev. 2. 3.

Such a result was not unforeseen, and it is depicted symbolically in the shipwreck (Acts 27.) which was the prelude to Paul's imprisonment under the world power of Rome, where Scripture significantly leaves him. The ship in which Paul sailed was hopelessly wrecked, at the same time none were lost whom God had given to Paul. Such has been the fate of the dispensation, the man who was used to lay its foundation witnessed the break-up of that which was built upon it and ended his career in a prison, his heart broken over the defection of those amongst whom his best work had been wrought (2 Tim. 1. 15; Phil. 3. 18, 19). But yet we see him unconquered, exultant and undismayed as he dictates a letter to the beloved saints at Philippi: "Rejoice in the Lord alway: and again I say rejoice." For he knew
that just as there was in the breaking ship soon to be reduced to boards and pieces, that which could not be lost, so in the dispensation whose unity was shattered there was "THE SECRET OF HIS GOSPEL," viz., "THE BODY OF CHRIST," the aggregate of those who are united to Christ, indwelt by His Spirit, and joint heirs with Him, who will be saved in spite of every obstacle.

Paul emphasizes the fact that he was a prisoner, but of the Lord, for out of his prison condition came the unfolding of the great secret which from the outset had been enclosed in the outward form of the dispensation. Just as the breaking of a shell brings to light that which is hidden, the kernel in which is the power of life, so in the prison epistles is revealed the divine purpose, which is the secret of the dispensation, which lies in fragments. This abiding reality depends not upon the responsibility of man but upon the power of God. In few words in Eph. 1. 22, 23, the secret is told in three statements concerning the glorified Man, Christ Jesus our Lord. (1) "Hath put all things under His feet." There is no surprise in this, for saints and angels acclaim His worthiness o'er all to reign. (2) "And gave Him to be Head over all things." Yes, surely, He must be supreme dictator and source of supply for all. Angels, authorities, and powers are made subject to Him, far above them He sits enthroned; is it possible that ought else can be said? Yes. (3) "To the church which is His body." Amazing thought, filling those great principalities with wonder. Had it been said "over" the church, matchless the grace, but it would have simply meant that the church was part of "the all things," but head "to" the church involves union as intimate, as complete, as vital, as that of the head to the human body, nothing less than "the fulness or complement of Him who filleth all in all."

This is the great secret hidden from the ages and generations. Hidden not in the Old Testament Scriptures but in God, who created all things, in order that a sphere might be formed for the display of this counsel of His will, which is now revealed to angels for their wondering contemplation (Eph. 3. 10), and to saints for the obedience of faith (Rom. 16. 26). In the church, the Ecclesia, His pleroma, His plenitude, all the activities of His heart and mind and will shall be displayed through endless ages for the filling of all things with the love of God. But not only shall future ages witness this wonder of divine grace, but now already, before the glory is revealed, the secret is declared to be, "Christ in you, the hope of glory" (Col. 1. 27). Union with the Head is an actual abiding reality by the Spirit, and Christ is in His members here on earth. From Him the Head, the whole body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God. The dispensation lies in fragments, nevertheless God would have His saints "comforted and their hearts knit together in love and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding to the acknowledgment of the secret of God, in which are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" (Col. 2. 3, N.T.).

Yet another figure was needed in order to reveal not only the fulness of supply and direction that is in Christ for His church, but also the intensity of His love for it, and this is afforded in Eph. 5. 23-32, where the body of which He is the Head is seen as His wife. Loved by Him to the extent of giving Himself for her, she is viewed as
subject to His love, cleansed, nourished, cherished, and finally presented to Himself a glorious church in wedding apparel (Rev. 19. 8) without spot or wrinkle or any such thing. Formed out of Himself, the Eve of the last Adam, there will be nothing in her but that which is of Himself. Here then is the great secret of Paul's gospel, known according to the measure of faith that is in Christ Jesus and love to all saints. Is there not a call to holy diligence that knowing we each have part in this revelation of love, we might be found “Holding the Head” in relation to all saints, and each filling the part He has assigned us in His wisdom and grace for the comfort and building up of those who are so dear to Him?

“I DON'T WANT IT.”

A MOTHER had taught her little boy, “The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want,” as a morning text, and in the evening she asked him if he could repeat it. He immediately complied with, “The Lord is my Shepherd, so I don't want it.” It was not the text of course, but how wonderfully true it is that those who can say, “The Lord is my Shepherd,” from heart knowledge of Him, do not want the countless things that others crave for. They do not want the world, they are not attracted by the glamour of it.

“They have heard a sweeter story, And found a truer gain.”

A great part of the misery and discontent in the world results from lust for things men do not possess and envy of those who do possess them. We shall be preserved from these miseries if we know the meaning of the words, “The Lord is my Shepherd.”

I pass on the child-interpretation of the text to those who are tempted to grasp the world and run after its pleasures, say, “The Lord is my Shepherd, so I don't want it.”

“The treasure I've found in His love Has made me a pilgrim below.”

Like Christian and Faithful in Vanity Fair, who could turn away from all the gay things of it, and be deaf to the voices of the syrens in it; because a brighter vision had shone into their souls, and a great love had taken possession of them.

I recall the story of Abraham, that hero of faith. He was a warrior when need called, and could strike a swift and decided blow for right and liberty, as was proved, when he pursued King Chedorlaomer and the Kings that were with him by night, and smote them and delivered their captives from them. A great man was Abraham that day, but he was greater by far when he stood up in the presence of the King of Sodom and said, “I will not take from a thread even to a shoe-latchet; and that I will not take any thing that is thine, lest thou shouldest say, “I have made Abram rich.”

What made him so morally great? “I have lift up mine hand unto the Lord, the most high God, the possessor of heaven and earth,” he said. That was the secret. So he did not want what the King of Sodom could have given him. God was his everlasting portion, his shield and his exceeding great reward.

We may all show the same moral superiority to the world. We may all say, “The Lord is my Shepherd, so I don't want it.”
FATHER: A MEDITATION.
Eph. 1. 3-6. 2 Cor. 1. 3-4. 1 Pet. 1. 3.

It is a very wonderful thing to look up to heaven and say, "Father." It is what the Lord Jesus did as He passed through this world.

When men rejected Him and refused His words, He said, "I thank Thee, oh! Father . . . Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Thy sight." When He stood weeping by the grave of the man whom He loved, He lifted up His eyes to heaven and said, "Father, I thank Thee that Thou hast heard Me."

When the shadow of the cross fell athwart His way, He asks, "What shall I say? Father, save Me from this hour, but for this cause came I unto this hour." Then in Gethsemane's garden, as the dark shadow deepened He says again, "Oh! my Father."

Even on the cross He prays, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." And when all is over and He has drunk the last drop of that bitter cup, He says, "Father, into Thy hands I commend My Spirit."

On the resurrection morn a woman is found weeping at His tomb, because she has lost Him whom her soul loveth, and to Her He entrusts the message which should put into eternal relationship with the Father those for whom He died (John 20. 17).

The Father's love was ever His joy and solace. He tells us that "whatever things the Father doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise," that "the Father loveth the Son and showeth Him all things that Himself doeth." It would only be the truth to say that He walked through this world, with all its griefs, in the deep consciousness of being loved, and in constant and abiding communion with His Father. He could speak of Himself as being in the bosom of the Father, and that what He did was what the Father was doing.

Does this mean anything to us, beloved? Think what it cost Him to bring us into the relationship of children, that we too might walk here in the sense of being loved, in the deep abiding joy of looking up to heaven and saying, "Father."

With these thoughts in our minds let us consider the Scriptures which head this simple page.

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: according as He hath chosen us in Him, before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love; having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, wherein He hath made us accepted in the Beloved" (Eph. 1. 3-6).

This ascription of praise to the Father occurs three times in the New Testament, and in each case it would seem to remind our hearts that God by these words, as it were, pledges Himself to be to us what He was to the Son of His love when here in this world. Ephesians 1. goes back to before the foundation of the world; it was no after-thought with God to choose a people in this One in whom was all His delight that they should be holy and without blame before Him in love. Adam the head of the first creation failed, Moses the lawgiver failed, Solomon mightiest of monarchs...
broke down utterly, but God had always this wonderful purpose in reserve.

Before any of the failure, before even the day when the morning stars sang together, One was by Him, as One brought up with Him, daily His delight, rejoicing always before Him, and in Him God was pleased to choose a people, in Him in whom there could never be a breakdown.

Does your heart rejoice in being thus before God, "accepted in the Beloved"?

"Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and the God of all comfort; who comforteth us in all our tribulation" (2 Cor. 1. 3, 4).

It may be said, we are here in the world still, we are sick, sorrowful, bereaved, lonely, perplexed, oftimes the burden of the way seems too heavy to be borne. True, but let us then the more dwell in spirit with Him who comforteth. How the load is lightened! When we look up and say, Father, knowing that nothing can change His perfect love, and that His love and power are alike engaged on behalf of His children.

A PARABLE.

Let us listen to these two flowering plants that are talking of the lives they live in the same room. Says one: "I stand in this window from month to month, and I declare that every possible attention is paid to me. I am watered every morning and the window is opened every day that I may enjoy the fresh air, but somehow I do not think that the lady who tends me with such care is satisfied with me, somehow she seems disappointed. I wonder what is wrong with me?"

The second plant speaks. It says: "Look at me. I am from the same stock as you, but my flowers are luxuriant and beautiful while yours are meagre and pale, and yet I receive no more care than you. Do you ask why there is this difference between us? I will tell you. It is not that I am a better plant than you, but you stand in a sunless window while I bathe in the sunlight all the day long. If you stood where I stand you would be as I am; if I stood where you stand I should droop and fade as you do."

The parable scarcely needs an interpretation; seven words are enough to reveal its meaning, "Keep yourself in the love of God."
IN John 10. Jesus is the good Shepherd, and gives His life for the sheep. His death is not viewed here in the aspect in which it is viewed in 1 Tim. 2, where in answer to the desire of the heart of God, who would have all men to be saved, He took up a mediatorial character and gave Himself a ransom for all, thus opening a way of salvation for all. Nor is it set forth as in 2 Cor. 5, as springing from the desire of His own heart, leading Him to take upon Himself the judgment under which all lay, in order that He might righteously be able to cause men to live to Him by the power of life in Him risen from the dead.

Here it is His sheep that are before His heart and mind, the sheep that were given to Him of His Father. None else comes into view in this chapter. If the world will not have Him, He will have His sheep. He will see to it that not one of them shall be lost. He looks upon them as dear to the heart of the Father; and they were also dear to His heart. He was no hireling, the sheep were His own. He could part with His life of flesh and blood, but He could not part with them.

It is not a New Testament figure of speech. In the past dispensation Israel is viewed as the sheep of Jehovah (2 Sam. 24. 17; Psa. 80. 1; 23.; 100.). But this was only in a governmental way and as a nation on the earth. They were not as a people in vital relationship with Him. They were not all Israel that were of Israel (Rom. 9. 6), nor were they all His sheep who were outwardly viewed as His. They were more ignorant of Him than the cattle of the field were of the one to whom they belonged, for the ox knew his owner, and the ass his master’s crib, but of Him the mass of the people knew nothing (Isa. 1. 3). The labour He had spent on that nation; the cultivation under which they for centuries had been, was proved to be in vain.

But in the midst of this evil generation there was a seed of God. There were many who were subjects of heavenly grace, who were born of God. Such have been here from the beginning, though never able to take the place of children of God until the Son had come and had died and risen, and the Holy Spirit had been given.

These were the true sheep of Jehovah, the generation of the righteous (Psa. 14. 5). They were in the midst of a generation of the wicked one, and all together ostensibly, as I have said, Jehovah’s sheep, but many bearing none of the characteristics of such; children of God and children of Belial in the same fold; for the time had not come for God to manifest His children, nor could it come while flesh was under probation. Law, and not grace, was the principle of that dispensation.

Not until the true light came was everything brought into perfect manifestation. In the person of Christ it shone in all its splendour, and then nothing could be hid. Everything came out in its true character, for everyone was seen in his relation to Christ. Everyone who had heard and learned of the Father came to Him. Those born of God received Him. His true sheep heard His voice, and responded to His call. Those who
boasted of their descent from Abraham by natural generation paid no attention to Him; they received Him not.

He entered by the door into the sheepfold. Others who were nothing but thieves and robbers took their own violent ways of gaining entrance; they climbed up some other way. But they did not get access to the sheep: "The sheep did not hear them." "He that entereth in by the door is the Shepherd of the sheep." The characteristics that marked the Shepherd and the way in which He would enter the fold had been pointed out in the prophetic word, and to Him the One who had charge of the door gave access to the sheep. His own sheep He called by name and led them out.

He did not enter into the fold to abide there along with the sheep, but to bring them out into salvation, liberty and green pastures. It was true that He was rejected, true that His sheep were cast out by those that took the place of shepherds. Nevertheless it was also true that this was His way of bringing His own out of bondage into the liberty of children of God. If they were cast out they were only cast out into companionship with Himself, for He was cast out before they were. If they were hated, He could say: "They hated Me before they hated you." The leaders of the people cast out of the synagogue the man who had been born blind and who had received sight by the mercy of the Lord. But when cast out he found himself in the company of Christ, and in the place of rejection learned Him as the Son of God. The place of rejection is the place of light.

There were other sheep that were not of the Jewish fold; but they were Christ's, and He says: "Them also I must bring, and they shall hear My voice; and there shall be one flock, and one Shepherd." These were Gentiles, and they were not to form a flock by themselves; but the sheep taken out of the Jewish fold, along with the Gentiles, were to form one flock, a new thing in the history of God's dealings with the nations. It is a heavenly company that God owns upon earth during the day of Christ's rejection.

But for His sheep He must lay down His life. David put his life in jeopardy for his father's sheep. When in the plains of Bethlehem there came a lion and carried off a lamb of the flock, and he says: "I went out after him, and smote him, and delivered it out of his mouth; and when he arose against me, I caught him by his beard, and smote him, and slew him." A bear also fell by his hand (1 Sam. 17.). He was there to guard the sheep his father had committed to his care, and if it cost him his life he would be faithful. And later on, when the day came for God to manifest the man who was after His own heart: "He chose David also His servant, and took him from the sheepfolds: from following the ewes great with young He brought him to feed Jacob His people, and Israel His inheritance. So he fed them according to the integrity of his heart, and guided them by the skilfulness of his hands" (Ps. 67. 70–72).

And here we have the true David, the Man after the heart of the living God, in the midst of the sheep committed to Him by His Father, not only endangering His life in battle with the roaring lion, but laying down His life for them; for only by His death could the forces of evil be annulled. But by that death they have been rendered as powerless as though they never had existence. Death and him that had the might of death have been annulled (Heb. 2.).
Then He is the good Shepherd who has brought His sheep into intimacy with Himself. He says: "I am the good Shepherd, and know My sheep, and am known of Mine, as the Father knoweth Me, and I know the Father: and I lay down My life for the sheep." (N.T.). This is the intimacy resulting from the divine life and nature in the power of the Spirit. This is fellowship with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ (1 John 1. 3). How unspeakable such a privilege is, to be brought out of immeasurable distance, and out of the blind night of our alienation from God, into the nearness of the Beloved of the Father and the brightness of the light of His revelation!

To the outward eye it would have seemed that by means of the cross men had deprived Him of life; and as to the wicked and murderous determination of His enemies it was unquestionably true that they were His murderers; but it was beyond the power of man to put Him to death. As to His life, He says: "No man taketh it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of My Father." Surely it were impossible for the creature to kill the originator of life, or be spoken of as having done so, except in murderous intent. That men were guilty of His murder is most true, for they did all that lay in their power to accomplish it; but this would have completely failed had He not of His own will laid down His life. His murder could not have expiated our sins; He died for our sins, but not by the sinner's hands. In His death the guilt of man was brought to light, for it was man's wickedness condemned Him to the cross, but it was what went on between Him and God during the thick darkness that from the sixth until the ninth hour fell upon that awful scene, that made atonement for sin. Him who knew no sin was made sin for us (2 Cor. 5. 21).

Here again instead of faith we have reasonings and divisions among the people: "Many of them said, He hath a demon, and is mad: Why hear ye Him? Others said, These are not the words of him that hath a demon. Can a demon open the eyes of the blind?" We cannot arrive at the truth by our reasonings. They appeal to Him: "How long dost Thou make us to doubt? If Thou be the Christ, tell us plainly." But what assurance would that give them? A man may say a great many fine things about himself, but on what ground is he to be believed? Had He not told them very plainly? And yet they had not believed. He had told them by the signs He had wrought under their eyes. He had done His works in His Father's name, and this left them without excuse, naked in their sin (John 15. 22).

But the truth must be told, however terrible be the import of His words: "Ye believe not, because ye are not of My sheep, as I said unto you." They prided themselves in being Abraham's children: "We be Abraham's seed, and were never in bondage to any man." It is easy to forget when one does not wish to remember. They had forgotten the brick kilns of Egypt, their oppression by Moab, Canaan, Midian and others during the time of the Judges. And even at the moment they were under the domination of Rome. Yet they could say they had never been in bondage to any man. What fools pride can make of its victims!

But the Lord points a power that
had a moral domination over them, a power of which they had taken no account at all. He says: "Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin" (John 8.). From this powerful oppressor no one but the Son could deliver them. They were sin's slaves, and of their father the devil, and proved to be his children by the fact that they were murderers and apostates. Their moral links were all with hell; they had no moral link with Him. "Ye are not of My sheep."

He says: "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me: and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand. My Father which gave them Me is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of My Father's hand. I and My Father are one."

One in the unity of the Godhead; one in life and nature; one in essential Deity; one in purpose, mind and thought; one in their affection and desire for the sheep. Well may we all and each one of His ransomed people say: "The Lord is my Shepherd; I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: He leadeth me beside the still waters. He restoreth (reviveth) my soul; He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for Thou art with me; Thy rod and Thy staff they comfort me. Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies; Thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life; and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever" (Ps. 23.). May both reader and writer meet there.

CHISEL WORK.

'Tis the Master who holds the mallet,
And day by day
He is chipping whate'er environs
The form away;
Which under His skilful cutting
He means shall be
Wrought silently, out to beauty
Of such degree
Of faultless and full perfection
That angel eyes
Shall look on the finished labour
With new surprise
That even His boundless patience
Could grave His own
Features upon each fractured
And stubborn stone.
'Tis the Master who holds the chisel;
He knows just where
Its edge should be driven sharpest
To fashion there
The semblance that He is carving;
Nor will He let
One delicate stroke too many
Or few, be set

On forehead or cheek where only
He sees how all
Is tending, and where the hardest
The blow should fall
Which crumbles away whatever
Superfluous line
Would hinder His hand from making
The work Divine.
With tools of Thy choosing, Master,
I pray Thee then
Strike just as Thou wilt, as often
And where and when,
The vehement stroke is needed;
I will not mind
If only Thy chipping chisel
Shall leave behind
Such marks of Thy wondrous working
And loving skill,
Clear carven on aspect, stature,
And face, as will,
When discipline ends are over,
Have all sufficed
To mould me into the likeness
And form of Christ.

"Having loved His own which were in the world He loved them unto the end" included Peter, and when he denied his Lord with oaths and curses, it did not change the heart of his Lord. Is there not comfort in this for you who are so sorely troubled, because of your failure?
IN considering the question of Christian baptism it would be well first of all to refer to the words found in the closing verses of the Gospel of Matthew (28. 19), "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." In the previous chapter you have the moving story of the cross of Calvary and the superscription upon that cross which, written as it was in letters of Hebrew, Greek and Latin, set forth the opinion of the then civilized world, religious, learned, and political, concerning the Person who was extended there in agony and blood. The King of the Jews whose entrance had been so gloriously acclaimed in the early chapters had been cut off and had nothing, carrying out the prophetic word of Daniel. To all appearance He had suffered a great defeat, but when we turn to the last chapter of this Gospel we find Him not using the language of defeat but of victory, for the power of death as well as the power of Satan had been destroyed, and now His servants are sent forth in the victory of the risen Christ to teach all nations and baptize in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. When we come to several cases of baptism in the Acts of the Apostles (see Acts 19. 5) you have baptism in the name of the Lord Jesus. This would not interfere with the formula of baptism or change it as given in Matthew, but rather that there had been the previous acknowledgment of God, but now that the preaching of the Lord Jesus and His work had come there is the acknowledgment of His claims, and baptism is now in His name. Without seeking to be dogmatic on the subject, I would suggest that the formula of baptism to-day would be in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost unto the Lord Jesus, but this is only a passing reference and each one must consider this for himself. The Lord Jesus has been rejected here, and for those who have got the benefit of all that He has done by living faith in Him and have confessed Him as their Lord and Master it is fitting that they should be identified with Him in His death by baptism. The words which we read at the opening of the meeting from Romans remind us that those who were baptized unto Jesus Christ were baptized unto His death. Associated as we are with Him in the place of glory into which He has gone, it is only right to be identified with Him in His rejection here. You will remember in the case of the Ethiopian after the preaching of Philip, how hearing that the life of Jesus was taken from the earth, and believing as he did the gospel, he desired to be baptized, and thereafter went on his way rejoicing. No longer did he need the company of Philip for he had made the acquaintance of Philip's Master, and went to his distant land to show that he belonged to the Lord Jesus in the place where He had gone but to show also that he was identified with His name in the world where He had been rejected. It is well to emphasize the fact that baptism is not in any sense connected with our entrance into heaven, but is connected with our place here on earth where awhile we wait for the One who has died for us and who now lives for us, and ere long comes again to have us with Himself. The water used at baptism is a figure
of death and we are buried with Him by baptism unto death, that like as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so now we should walk in newness of life.

It must be clear to everyone that baptism is now a purely individual act. There will come a time when the commission given in Matthew shall be fulfilled to the letter and nations shall be born in a day. There will be a great sweep into the kingdom as a result of the preaching of the gospel of the kingdom. The Holy Spirit shall be active amongst the nations of the earth who have not heard the gospel of the grace of God, and then the kingdoms of the world shall become the kingdoms of God and of His Christ. In the meantime the blessing is not national or universal, and whilst the offer of the gospel is to “whosoever will” yet the Holy Ghost is gathering out of the world a people for His name.

In closing this part of the subject it is only necessary to say once more that whilst baptism is an ordinance it is a most important ordinance, and if there are those who have confessed Jesus as Lord and who have received His salvation, who have not at any time of their lives been baptized, it would be well for such to consider the importance of the question and seek to fulfil the clearly expressed word of God in regard to this matter. Bear in mind that the countless millions that shall enter heaven will do so because of the value of the work of Christ alone and apart from baptism altogether, but for those of us who live in the world and seek to answer to the mind of God, it is incumbent upon us to pay attention to the teaching on this subject. Let us now pass on to consider the other outstanding ordinance of Christianity—the Lord’s Supper.

What is the definite teaching as to this? We must have the Word of God, but the RITUALIST makes the Word of God of none effect by his traditions, and changes this simple memorial feast into a superstitious rite. He answers to the Pharisee of the days of the Lord Jesus. Then the RATIONALIST, the Religious Materialist, cannot help us, for he does not care very much for the death of Christ and certainly does not believe in His bodily resurrection; he answers to the Sadducee. It has been observed that while our Lord ate in the houses of Pharisees and publicans we never read of Him doing so in the house of a Sadducee, for they denied the existence of spirits, the inspired Word, and resurrection. We turn gladly from men and their conflicting opinions to the Word of God, for it is as steadfast as the eternal throne of the eternal God.

You remember that wonderful never-to-be-forgotten scene we have been reading about. Dark was the night outside, the storm was about to burst upon the One to whom we owe our all for time and for eternity, and there in an upper room, borrowed for the occasion, where they had eaten the passover, you see the Lord Jesus, about to be crucified on the morrow, instituting this feast of remembrance. He takes the bread into His hands that to-morrow are to be pierced by His enemies, and to-night He is about to be betrayed, but to-night He takes the bread, and as He breaks the loaf He says, “This is My body given for you.” What did He mean by those words? Did He mean that in some mysterious way He who was standing in bodily form before them was reproducing another body with His hands and by His words, so that there should be in that upper room, two Christs, one standing before them, and another
reproduced in that bread which He hands to His own? To put the question thus provides an immediate answer in the negative.

When He said, "This is My body which is given for you," He was instituting that which should be a memorial feast right down the centuries, to be preserved without ritual or undue formality, in its own blessed dignity, and wonderful simplicity. And as we come together to eat the Lord’s supper, He would have us hear Him say to our very hearts, "This is My body which is given for you." We are reminded of His death and of His love in dying for us, and our hearts rise in thankfulness to Him, and praise and worship flow forth to Him and to His God and Father, who through grace is our God and Father too. As we come together to that holy feast, the Lord’s Supper, it does not detract from it, it does not rob it of its meaning or take away from its power, to have it in its original simplicity. To add to it ritual or undue formality, or introduce the miraculous and all that man thinks as ornate, is not adding to its glory, but it does obscure the Lord. Listen to the words of the Lord Jesus, and as you hear them afresh do you realize that He is saying to you, and saying as He did to those whom He so loved on that night of long ago, "This is My body which is given for you"? It is not meant as a means of grace. He does not mean that a man can come as an unsaved sinner, and taking the bread can thereby be helped Godward! No! It is for His own the Lord has instituted this. How can people remember One whose love they have not known and to whom they have never submitted? How can they take the bread which speaks of His body given for them when still they stand on the side of those who said, "Away with Him"? They have never got the benefit by simple faith in the work of Christ upon the cross. To any such we would say, first trust Him as your Saviour, then remember Him according to His Word.

It is the Lord's desire that we should remember Him in the way He has Himself appointed, but bread and wine it is before we have it at the Lord’s supper, and bread and wine it remains all through and afterwards. The elements do not become the very body and blood of our Lord, though they do speak to us powerfully of His body given for us and of His blood shed for us when He gave Himself a sacrifice for us on the cross. There is no material change and no spiritual change. Transubstantiation and consubstantiation we alike reject.

Now in what way does the Lord’s Supper have such an important place? Right down the centuries it has been preserved for us, and it is His desire that it should remain with us until He comes again. I am quite certain that those who have been at the Lord’s Supper know how effective it is. Before you come, perhaps you have been busy and burdened during the week, but as the hour appointed draws nigh you feel, if you are to go there and remember the Lord Jesus, you must go with a judged heart. There can be nothing in the heart or the life that can be allowed to pass unjudged, because you are going into the presence of the Son of God, who said, “Where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst.” And so you examine yourself. You are not to examine yourself and stay away, but if you feel there is something in your life which has displeased Him and remained unjudged by you, you get that matter put right with Him,
in order that you might be undistracted, and hear Him calling you to the remembrance of Himself, and as you eat of the broken loaf, and take from the cup of wine, you remember Him and show forth the Lord’s death till He come.

We are passing through the world, which is the territory of the enemy, for there are great unseen forces round us that would oppose everything of God and of Christ, but here we are preserved by the power of God, conserved by the wonderful grace of our Lord until He comes to transfer us to the glory, and as we pass through the enemy’s land, it is the happy portion of Christians to own their allegiance to the One who, on the night of His betrayal, asked that His people might remember Him, and who from the glory repeated the desire in the words that we have read from the writing of the Holy Spirit through the Apostle Paul, “I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you,” so it was not simply a Jewish remnant that were to remember Him, but from the glory, through the apostle of the Gentiles, the message was sent to the Christians again, that it was the Lord’s desire that He should be remembered in this simple way of His own appointing. Simple, dignified, powerful, it all is, and let it be so maintained till He come.

Let us now refer in conclusion to the verse, “He that eateth and drinketh unworthily,” etc. (1 Cor. 11. 29). Some true Christians shrink from partaking of these sacred elements because they do not feel that they are worthy to do so, they fear that because of their own felt unworthiness they will be condemned if they do. I do not think it means that at all. What I would suggest is that if you eat it in an unworthy way you bring condemnation upon yourself. In Corinth they were making the Lord’s supper like any other supper; some had eaten and some were drunken, they were making it into something like a heathen feast, or at least a common meal, and for this they came under the chastisement of the Lord. They did not recognize that in the death of Christ sin and the flesh and the world were judged for them by God, and they were taking the Supper which spoke of that death in an unworthy way—their carnal ways broke out at the very Supper, they were there unjudged. We are to take the sacred elements in the spirit of self-judgment, having no confidence in the flesh, but rejoicing in Christ Jesus, whose desire is that we should do this in remembrance of Him.

Newcastle-on-Tyne, Oct. 26th, 1927.

Are you troubled as to how you can stand fast? When the Lord cried, “Lazazus, come forth,” was not the command the enabling? He who made the sun maintains it in the heavens, and He who saved you, can keep your feet from falling.

I discovered that I was a helpless and ruined sinner, but the gospel revealed the Lord Jesus as the great Saviour for just such as I was. The sinner and the Saviour go together. The sinner needs the Saviour and the Saviour needs the sinner. I have found a place of eternal rest in the heart that rejoices over me.

Don’t be satisfied with limited thoughts of God’s bounty. His blessing is not measured by your needs, but by all the love there is in His heart towards those who are in Christ.
CHRIST: SACRIFICE, BLESser, CENTRE, BUILDER, LEADER, JUDGE, ADMINISTRATOR.

Read John 1. 29-51.

The first chapter of John's Gospel presents to us the Lord Jesus in the most exalted way. We are permitted to travel back in our minds to the most remote moment when we can possibly conceive of, the moment when there began to be the beginning of everything that has had a beginning, and we discover that He whom we know as our Saviour and Lord, Jesus Himself, was there then—the Word who was God, and who was with God. Then He became flesh and tabernacled among us so that those who loved Him might behold His glory and afterwards be able to write and say, "We have heard . . . we have seen with our eyes . . . we have looked upon and our hands have handled of the Word of Life" (I John 1.). He became audible, visible, tangible, even to men like ourselves, and He brought us the wonderful light of God, which shines for us to-day. He is the true Light.

The Lord Jesus then, a Man, has appeared amongst us and what wonderful things we have in Him! To begin with, in the verse that I first read, we discover that Jesus, the Word, who became flesh amongst us, is the Lamb of God for the bearing away of the sin of the world. He is presented to us as the great SACRIFICE for sin. I can well imagine that everybody here is thinking, "Well, we do certainly know something about that; we should not be Christians at all if we did not know the Lord Jesus in that capacity." Still we must remember that the fact is stated in verse 29 of John 1., in all its greatness as God sees it. The point is not merely the taking away of your sins, or my sins, but the fact that He is the great taker-away of sin. In virtue of His sacrifice as the Lamb, God is going ultimately to take away the last vestige of sin and all its results from that great universe which will lie through eternal days beneath His smile.

We pass a little further down the chapter and we discover that He who is the taker-away of sin by becoming the Lamb of sacrifice, is also the BLESser. He is the One who baptizes with the Holy Ghost, and thus, you see, He is not merely going to take away all the evil, but He is going to bring in all the blessing. He will flood the whole scene with the mighty energy of the Spirit of God. A day is coming when this baptism of the Spirit will affect all things here below, for in the bright millennial age God is going to pour out His Spirit upon all flesh. We Christians through infinite grace anticipate that day, for our sins have been forgiven and we have received the gift of the Holy Spirit. The joys which, thanks be to God, fill the hearts of Christians, are joys which are theirs in virtue of the indwelling Spirit of God. The Lord Jesus is He who has ministered them to us by His Spirit. He has already given the Holy Ghost to us.

Then we read further in the chapter and discover that He who is the Sacrifice and the Blesser, is the God-appointed CENTRE of attraction for all God's people.

When Jesus called Peter and Andrew and John and James and they followed Him, as recorded in Matt. 4., it was not the first introduction of these disciples to our Lord. These things happened
after John was cast into prison; the things recorded in John 1. happened before that event, and were the very start of that sweet and blessed companionship and communion that was known by these disciples with the Lord Jesus Christ here upon earth. He was set before them by John’s remark, “Behold the Lamb of God,” and hearing it they left John and followed Jesus. They instinctively discovered that here, not in John the Baptist, great man though he was, but here in the Lord Jesus, the Word become flesh, was the One worthy to be the great attractive centre for all the people of God. They left John, they followed Jesus, and when challenged by Him they said, Lord, our desire is to know where dwellest Thou? He said unto them, “Come and see”; they came and saw where He dwelt and abode with Him.

Come now, my friends, have you discovered that the Lord Jesus is the great attractive centre for the people of God; that God’s thought plainly expressed at the beginning and to be realized on a grand scale at the end is to make His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, the One to whom we are all united and all attracted? He is the all-important and all-sufficient Centre of God’s people.

Here we have the beginning, and we might well envy Andrew. We do not know very much about him, for he was not a shining light like his brother Peter whom he afterwards brought to the Lord, yet Andrew has a distinction that is not Peter’s. Andrew and another, whoever he may be, possibly the writer of this Gospel, had a great distinction. When we get to those great scenes in glory and the Lord Jesus Christ comes forth in the midst of all the mighty host of His redeemed church, Andrew will be able to say, “Lord, of all the thousands of thousands here to-day, I was the first. It was given to me first of all these countless millions to make the discovery that it is not John the Baptist, and it is not the ancient prophets, and it is not Moses, and it is not Elijah, and it is not my brother Peter, and it is not myself; it is Thyself Lord Jesus, THOU art the attractive Centre, and Thou alone.” I hope we have all made this discovery, humbly following in the footsteps of Andrew in that respect.

Christ is the Centre, but when you come to verse 42, you discover from His own words, although He put it in what we might call a somewhat cryptic way, that He is the great BUILDER of that which is going to stand untouched by all the ravages of time. When Peter was brought to Him by Andrew, the Lord Jesus forestalled him, and indicating His divine omniscience, He said in effect, “I know who you are; you are Simon, the son of Jonas, and now I rename you, thereby establishing My ownership, and I call you Cephas, and that means a stone.” Possibly Peter thought, What a strange name! Not until the time came recorded in Matthew 16. did Peter get an inkling of what it really signified. Jesus then said, “Thou art Peter,” that means a stone—a little piece of stone—and then He said, speaking of Himself, the Son of the Living God, “Upon this rock I will build My church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.” I am going to use a very homely phrase, but use it with reverence, Peter was just a chip of the block. He was not the block, for Christ Himself was the Rock. In John 1. the Lord Jesus was virtually saying to Peter, “Whatever you know or do not know, whatever you realize or do not realize, no matter what you
are conscious of or what you are not conscious of, coming to Me I annex you for My structure, My building."

The world we live in is like a large ant heap. Oh! what busy builders are the ants, especially when the spring comes, but then that thoughtless cow plants her ugly hoof straight into the middle of the ant hill and there is great consternation. Poor little ants! Why, my dear friends, that has been the history of the world again and again; nations have sprung at each others' throats and the ant hill has been greatly disturbed and the builders have been destroyed. You may even build your "churches," but man himself will knock down what man himself has made and time will make ravages upon all that man builds. Oh! Christian, wake up to it! Christ is the Builder and in the mighty energy of His Holy Spirit He is making more Peters—and there are a good many Peters through grace here to-night—more stones, and yet more stones. Thus quietly, and as silently as Solomon's temple was constructed, He is building. He is the Builder and that which He builds in the energy of His Spirit is the thing that is going to stand, when all man's little "churches" and his best "societies" have died a natural, or it may be an unnatural, death. That which Christ constructs is the thing that counts, for it is the thing that will stand to eternity.

So do not be downhearted if something is going wrong in some little society of your choice, because the sun will not suffer eclipse if it goes wrong. That which is for Christ and His glory, according to the purpose of God, is never going to be eclipsed, for it will never fail. Christ is the Builder.

The next verse tells us Christ is the LEADER. We had such a wonderful leader for our cause, but he is gone—some may say. The trouble is the years roll on and the leaders go, but Christ said, "Follow Me," as He is our Leader, and He abides for ever.

In verse 47 we discover that Christ is not only the Leader but the JUDGE. When Nathanael came into His presence the Lord showed him that He knew everything about him by saying, "Behold an Israelite indeed in whom is no guile." That is not equivalent to saying "In whom is no sin." Guile is sin it is true, yet there is much sin that is not guile. Guile is hypocrisy, vain pretence, unreality, lack of uprightness and honesty. Nathanael was a man who though a sinner was honest. Beneath the fig tree he had doubtless been confessing his sins to God, and Jesus, knowing that, said, "Here is a true Israelite who is without hypocrisy and not like the rest carrying on their religious ceremonials to keep up appearances." The mass were making believe that all was going on quite well though they had not got the beautiful glory cloud, for the divine presence had left them. Still they kept up a round of religious observances when God was not there, and the power was gone and it was an empty shell without a kernel. Nathanael was not like that; I hope we are not like that. Now the Lord Jesus showed Himself to be the Critic and the all-discerning Judge, and if He approves, well you really need not be much concerned that men blame you.

In the last verse of the chapter we discover that not only is He the Centre of attraction and the Builder and the Leader and the Judge, but He is the great ADMINISTRATOR of the coming age.

A day is coming and our eyes, blessed be God, shall see it, when the Lord Jesus Christ as Son of man shall take the central place in God's mighty
universe, angels ascending to him from beneath and descending on Him from above. Angels are now the servants of One who is a Man—"For unto the angels hath He not put in subjection the world to come," but unto MAN. The prophet had said, "What is man that Thou art mindful of him or the Son of man that Thou visitest him?" Jesus said, "Verily verily I say unto you, Hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man." You shall see the Son of man at the central exchange of divine authority; His word is law, His angels do His bidding in all quarters of His universe.

What did He say? In regard to the gathering work that had already commenced in a small way with Andrew and Peter, Philip and Nathanael, and that was going to proceed and enlarge, He said to Nathanael, "Thou shalt see greater things than these." Well, blessed be God, so we shall. Could you gather all the children of God in Newcastle together what a large meeting we should have, much larger than this. Could we gather all the children of God in England together—let them roll up in their tens of thousands—what a gathering we should have! Yet it would be a very small affair compared with what is coming. We are going to see greater things than these. We are going to see Christ in His central place of authority, administering in power, and all things subject to Him, and the whole church of God associated with Him in His glory.

Somebody may be saying, "What is the practical good of talking about these things while our surrounding conditions are so distressful?" Why, just this, what we want, is to encourage you to get into real personal, spiritual, prayerful contact, by faith for yourself, with the Lord Jesus Christ.

The state of public religion in this land of ours for many a long day has been feeble, because so much of it has been of a secondhand type. The attitude of so many has been, "Let the minister do it for me, let the priest do it for me. Do we not support them, and do they not carry on our religious matters with God?" Perhaps surreptitiously you rather like it so, because such an arrangement does not put demands upon you. Christian! Christian! you are Christ's one—the very meaning of your name—and you have to do with your Lord. You have to get into contact with Christ, and that is the end of the meetings that we have been holding to-day.

We aim at persuading you to a little soul concern on this matter. You young Christians, every one of you, see to it that you are concerned not to indulge in a kind of secondhand religion, but to have personal dealings with your Lord. In faith seek it and it will be yours. Knock at this door and it shall be opened, and you will have the privilege of personal heart contact with, and knowledge of, the Lord Jesus Christ, and when you enjoy that, then you will be able to go on. You will be in touch with the one great Centre, and the great Builder Himself, and this is the secret of being carried through.

_Newcastle-on-Tyne, Oct. 26th, 1927._

What a thought it will be for us when we see our Lord as He is in our Father's house above: He often washed our weary feet as we travelled through a defiling world to this glorious goal. His grace is as great as His glory.
NOURISHED AND CHERISHED BY THE LORD.

"No man ever yet hated his own flesh: but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church: for we are members of His body, of His flesh and His bones."—(Ephesians 5. 29, 30).

Here is described for us the Lord's present interest in and care for all who are members of His body, and all believers are this. He nourishes them, that is, He feeds them; and He cherishes them, that is, He nurses and keeps them warm. These are the two essential things of life: food and warmth. An infant must die if they are lacking, and the most independent man on earth cannot do without them. In a spiritual sense they are indispensable to us; our souls prosper or languish according to the measure in which we know and enjoy this service of the Lord towards us.

We are fed by Him, for in His storehouse there is the finest of the wheat and honey out of the rock to satisfy us (Ps. 81. 16). And these things He sends to us, often by His servants. May our appetite for them be greatly increased; but if we are to be cherished by Him we must be near to Him; our affection for Him can only develop as we are consciously in His heart and precious to Him; at a distance from Him our love to Him must grow cold. This cherishing is personal; no ministry, or meetings, or service can take the place of it. In the nourishing the Lord's resources are drawn upon, but in the cherishing it is all love—the innermost feelings of His heart find expression here. Yet the nourishing comes from the same heart. The mother warms and soothes her infant in the same bosom that nourishes it, but illustrations and words fail to teach all that our text means. Yet we may learn the meaning of it experimentally, and so know the love of Christ that passeth knowledge.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.
The Lord's Supper: is it a matter of individual responsibility?

"Does not 1 Corinthians 11. 27, 28 put the responsibility of partaking of the Lord's Supper upon the individual?"—CEYLON.

The Scripture referred to certainly emphasizes the fact that each individual is responsible to be in a consistent state of soul with that that he does. The death of the Lord, of which the supper is a memorial, was not only the declaration of God's love to us, but also of His judgment against sin and the flesh. When we partake of the Supper we profess our communion, not only with one another, but with God Himself in the meaning of it, and it would be a scandalous thing to be indifferent to our state of soul and to be living carelessly and going after the things of the flesh while taking part in that which speaks to us of God's judgment of the flesh and its evil. So that each individual is called upon to judge himself; and so eat of that bread and drink of that cup in a state and manner worthy of the solemn privilege.

But responsibility does not end with the individual. Indeed, individual responsibility seems to be largely preparatory. The Lord's supper is a matter of COMMUNION; if it were an individual matter only, then one could take it alone, but this would falsify its character. It is the bread which WE break, and the cup which WE bless (1 Cor. 10. 16). Not, mark you, the bread which
HE breaks, nor even the bread which you at Corinth break; but the bread which we break. Paul included himself, though he was far away from Corinth, and he included all the saints of God on earth. For the Lord's Supper is the great feast of the one assembly, it is the communion of the body of Christ. "For WE being many are one bread, one body; for we are all partakers of that one bread."

Communion means a partnership, and that carries obligations, and in it all are responsible as to who has part in it, and that responsibility evidently cannot be confined to the local assembly, for Paul did not say you . . . are one body, but we . . . are one body. There is then the responsibility of the individual, the responsibility of the local assembly as to reception and refusal of individuals, as chap. 5. and 2 Cor. 2. make clear, but there is also the responsibility of the local assembly in regard to the whole body of Christ on earth. If you consider this, we think you will see the importance and meaning of communion and what being in the communion of the body of Christ involves.

The Breaking of Bread.

Acts 2. 42-46: "Breaking of Bread."—"Breaking Bread from house to house."—A.D. 33. 1 Cor. 11. 20: "When ye come together into one place."—A.D. 59.

"With 3,000 souls added to the assembly in Acts 2. 41, is it not highly probable that they did have the Lord's Supper in separate houses, as with the authorities persecuting the Christians, it is hardly likely they could all meet in one building? Is not this the meaning of verse 46, "from house to house"? Twenty or thirty years later, do we gather that the same thing applied or that there was an attempt to gather together in one place, presuming the 3,000 had been scattered some distances?

"What would you say as to invalids desiring to partake of The Supper but being unable to present at its celebration?"—NORWICH.

The Scripture quoted from Acts 2. shows plainly that the Lord's Supper was eaten in the houses of those who had believed. Probably whenever they met together for Christian fellowship they had the Lord's Supper, and the simplicity and reality of it must have been very blessed. But we may be sure that it would be done in the unity and fellowship into which the Apostle's doctrine had brought them.

When the truth of the one assembly had come out fully through the ministry of Paul, the Lord's Supper took a very special place. It became the great expression of the unity of the body of Christ, into which all believers have been baptized by the Holy Ghost. The one loaf represents for us the body of Christ, which was given for us upon the cross; we all partake of it, and are therefore one body, "for we are all partakers of that one bread." We can see the fitness of the saints coming together in one place to partake of it together, and if this was impossible from such exigencies as distance they would still gather where they were and partake as being one in the one assembly, the body of Christ on earth.

As to invalids permanently prevented from being present at the celebration of the Supper, such should surely not be deprived of the privilege if they desire it. As the saints at the beginning broke bread in their houses, so now they surely may, and so comfort and joy be ministered to these afflicted ones. Two or three present are enough to secure the Lord's presence, but this should be done in the unity of the body, for the Supper is the communion of the body of Christ. Whatever had an independent or sectarian character would be contrary to this.

Christian, you were chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world, and you will be in Him when the heavens and the earth have passed away. Can any power of evil thwart the purpose of God or dissolve this eternal union between you and Christ? Impossible.
GLORYING IN TRIBULATION.

"AND not only so, but we glory in tribulation also" (Rom. 5. 3) read I to a Christian lady who was suffering with a painful illness. "That is something I have never been able to do," said she; "I ask God to give me patience, and that I may be resigned to His will, for I am sure He knows best, but I cannot go further than that, and I do not see how anyone can, for nobody likes to suffer."

"But perhaps if you saw what the end is that God has in view for you, even you might be able to glory in your tribulation. Shall I try to explain what I mean?" I said. I had her permission, and employed this parable. A famous sculptor went to a quarry and chose there a block of marble, which he conveyed to his studio. It was a rough and unsightly mass, and seemed strangely out of place amongst so many wonderful statues. But day by day the sculptor concentrated his energy upon it, hammering, chiselling, chipping here and there. The marble grew restive under this treatment, and at last found tongue and said, "Sculptor, I do not like the way you are treating me. I am doing my best to be patient and resigned, but I wish this chip, chip, chip would cease." But the sculptor answered the marble and said, "If only you knew what I was doing with you, you would be glad and let me proceed with my work without any interruption.

"Please show me what your purpose is, and that may help me to bear all the pain and discomfort better," said the marble. The sculptor then set before the marble some wonderful drawings and a beautiful model and said, "That is my intention for you, and I shall not be satisfied or cease my work upon you until I have succeeded in my purpose."

The marble was amazed and thrilled at the sight and said within itself, "Is it possible that I am to bear such beauty? Then I will be quiet and let the master's hand continue its work of changing my ugliness into that glorious image." And from that day onward, every blow of the hammer and every chip with the chisel made it say, "That brings me so much nearer the beautiful model."

That was my parable, and here is the interpretation of it. Romans 8. 29 tells us that God has predestinated us who believe to be CONFORMED TO THE IMAGE OF HIS SON, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. He has taken us, rough and unbeautiful material, out of nature's quarry to fashion us for His heavenly glory, and in this connection we read: "We know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose." So that if we are to glory in tribulation, in the chip, chip of the Sculptor's chisel, we must see the model and contemplate Him; what a destiny—the image of God's Son, and what wonderful love lies behind it all. The contemplation of the goodness and wisdom of God changes our murmuring into resignation and confidence, but when we see His purpose for us in Christ, then our resignation gives place to rejoicing. We glory in tribulation also, for we know that it all works now to moral conformity to the Son of God.

The lines on page 61 by Margaret J. Preston express it very sweetly.
GREAT SUBSTANCE.

"Afterward shall they come out with great substance." Genesis 15, 14.

They were to be greatly afflicted, these children of Abram, to pass through a horror of great darkness, in fact; yet the end of it would be great substance. "THEY SHALL COME OUT." They were not to be annihilated or completely overwhelmed in the furnace, they were to go through it and come out of it, free and enriched. God had pledged Himself to that, and He would be with them to fulfil His pledge. And this must always be so with the children of God when He is with them in affliction. For "God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able, but will with the temptation also make a way of escape, that ye may be able to bear it" (1 Cor. 10. 13). They will certainly come out of their trial—the testing of their faith—at the very moment that it seemeth good unto God. For though many are the afflictions of the righteous, the Lord will deliver him out of them all.

The ways of God seem strange at times, even to those who love Him best. Job’s history is the divine classic, the outstanding example of this; what we should have missed if his story had not been written for us by the pen of the Lord! He was a sorely and long-perplexed man, but he came out of his trial at last with great substance and with no regrets, except perhaps that he had been so slow in confiding wholly in God.

I would say to any who love the Lord and yet are afflicted, Let the thought of the end of the Lord, His intention for you, quieten your spirit and steady your trust in Him. You may be so distressed, your horror of darkness so great, that you can only cry to God for mercy, and plead with Him that you may be delivered at once from your affliction. Well, let God hear your cry, it will not dishonour Him if it is not one of murmuring against Him. Israel’s cry came up before Him because of the affliction of which Genesis 15. speaks, and we read, “Israel sighed by reason of the bondage, and they cried, and their cry came up unto God by reason of the bondage, and God heard their groaning . . . and God looked upon the children of Israel and God had respect unto them.” The margin reads “He knew them.” It is a moment of great gain to one in affliction when the discovery is made that God is his only hope, and what comfort there is in that thought, He knows them!

We are not stoics; God has given to His children hearts that can feel; they are often, and should always be, more sensitive than men of the world, and if so it is no relief to them to say, “This sort of thing is common to men, we must grit our teeth and bear it.” I have no fault to find with natural fortitude, but we who know God have more than that; that in itself could not carry us through. We may have God with us in every trial and the sure prospect of coming out of it with great substance. Thus succour from above and hope for the future give to the heart a buoyancy in the trial that nothing else can give. Even a sleepless night, a small thing to some to whom it is a rare thing, but a great affliction to others with whom it is a common occurrence, may be turned to great account, and a man may have gained spiritual substance while others slept, because He spent the night
making some new discovery of the grace and mercy of God. "Tribulation worketh patience, and patience experience, and experience hope, and hope maketh not ashamed because the love of God is shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Ghost that is given unto us" (Rom. 5.). All that I want to say is contained in that beautiful statement of Christian confidence, and what philosophy of the schools can rival it?

Suffering and affliction strip us of all pretence; it may take some time to do it, for pride yields slowly, but at last we are what we are before God, and the confession of this is a great relief. It gives great liberty of soul before God, when we tell all to Him who knows all. We must have some reserve even with those who know us and love us the best, but none with Him, and it is when all is told and they are without guile before Him that He brings His suffering saints to rest only in Himself. It is a great moment when one realizes, not as a doctrine but as a fact, that "the eternal God is thy refuge and underneath are the everlasting arms." Then the fact becomes an experience, and that experience is great substance, it is a vein of pure gold. Nothing else can give character and poise and quietness like this. The one who has it may not say much about it to others, but the little he does say will not be flippant, mere platitudes; there will be an unction about it that will impress his hearers, and the change in him will be felt; and to him will go for help those who are in need, for what is gained in this way is not for a man alone, it is for the common good; he is able to comfort others with the comfort wherewith he has been comforted of God. It is from this point of view that we see so much substance in Paul's second letter to the Corinthians. As we read the first, fourth, sixth, and eleventh chapters, we feel that we are reading the autobiography of a mortal man whose sufferings exceeded all others. Yet he can begin by saying, "Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of all mercies and the God of all comfort." And he gives us the secret of his rejoicing; he had heard the Lord Himself saying to him, "My grace is sufficient for thee," and he closes with this benediction, "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost be with you all." He had experienced for himself this threefold blessedness in the vicissitudes of his extraordinary life. A man's strength and resources are tested by adversity, here are the Christian's strength and resources. The triune God pours His wealth into the soul of a man who will commit his way to Him and go through affliction with Him, and Paul knew it experimentally and so he could minister the truth of it effectively.

But to return to our chapter. Notice that before any word was said to Abram as to the suffering through which his seed should go, God said to him, "Fear not, Abram, I am thy shield and thy exceeding great reward." "And Abram believed God and it was counted to him for righteousness." It is here where God would have us all begin. We are to know that He is for us, our Shield; and if He is for us, who and what can be against us? If He is for us, all things must work together for our good, even a horror of great darkness. How often has that word "Fear not" sounded in the souls of afflicted saints, when they appealed to be as weak as a leaf before a hurricane; but it would not have availed them in the hour of their sore need had not there been added to it, "I am thy shield."
"If God is round about me,
How can I be dismayed?"

"Is any afflicted, let him pray." Let him draw near to God and stay his soul upon His word, for his recompense and his reward are there, even God Himself. And here we must come back to Paul's second letter to the Corinthians and read afresh of his confidence and hope. "For this cause," he says, "we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory."

What great and abiding substance is here, but mark the condition on our part, "While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal."

I knew a Christian man who was active in religious work, he told me that he did not know of any gain that he had got through trouble or affliction. He afterwards made complete shipwreck, and I was not surprised after his strange admission.

And now an incident by way of illustration. The late Dr. W. T. P. Wolston, of Edinburgh, used to tell of a man whom he once visited in that city. He had suffered for a long time from an incurable and exceedingly irritating and painful disease. The doctor pitied him greatly, and feeling that his words were quite inadequate to help the sufferer in his affliction, suggested that he should pray for him. "All right, doctor," came the astonishing reply, "but let it be mostly praise."

Ah, that is it, afflicted Christian. Pray, by all means, pray without ceasing, but let it be mostly praise, for your trial shall afterwards yield the peaceable fruits of righteousness if you are exercised by it. You shall come out of it with great substance.

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**OUR GREAT SAVIOUR.**

He would relieve our consciences with a peace which He has made for us Himself by His own precious blood.

He would satisfy our hearts with attractions that are divine and ineffable, attractions that are all presented to us in Himself.

He would keep us from anxious care in all the affairs of this life by bringing Himself into them as our resource and guide.

Faith responds to all His desires for us. Faith apprehends the peace made by Himself, and therefore perfect peace, and clothes the conscience with it.

Faith apprehends the love and other blessed attractions that there are in Him, and the heart finds rest and a dwelling-place in Him.

Faith knows that He is no stranger to even the smallest detail and action in our lives and so invests the whole course of human life with a sense of His authority and sufficiency.

Faith realizes how He enters into and sympathizes with the joys, sorrows, circumstances, trials, and triumphs, of the pilgrim way, and how compassionate and tender He can be with us even in our failures.
CHRIST: AND THE FULNESS THERE IS IN HIM.

(W. H. WESTCOTT.)

Read Matthew 4. 18-23, Romans 8. 34.

The office of the Spirit of God is to bring home to us the infinite fulness that there is in Christ, to make us satisfied with Him, and to produce in our lives an actual response to Himself.

Most of the controversies that we hear of to-day must, I think, be very wearying to hearts that love the Lord. To those who have real affection for the Saviour, our Lord Jesus Christ, to hear all these endless discussions about church functions or church rubrics is utterly wearying; and I am convinced that in Christendom there are hearts that are aching for a personal knowledge of Christ that will fill them to overflowing, and that they may be in full response to all that they learn of Him.

The object of these meetings to-day is that we may help one another—God grant that we may recognize that all help comes from Him—but surely it is our desire to help one another in the pursuit of Christ in these very difficult days of formality and attention to externals, for this state of things does not satisfy hearts in whom the Spirit of God has produced longings after Christ.

There are in Newcastle itself a great number of people, I feel persuaded, who would discover if it be possible how to make everything of Christ. Feeling this I make reference to the Gospel of Matthew. In the Gospel of Matthew we begin with a very small apprehension of the Lord Jesus, even as a Babe. Turn to the first chapter for a moment, and you will see what I mean. The second half of verse 21 of the first chapter of Matthew says: "Thou shalt call His name Jesus, for He shall save His people from their sins." Now in our knowledge of the Lord Jesus this must be the beginning, but it is after all a very small beginning by comparison with what we may know of Him. If we read through the Gospel of Matthew, the One who is seen in all this condition of a Babe just born, grows upon us chapter after chapter, until, at the end of the Gospel (Matt. 28. 18) we find that He is great enough to fill heaven and earth. But I propose to just take up one or two details in the early chapters in order to suggest to you that in the Lord Jesus Christ is the answer to your every craving, and to your every desire.

Now the first presentation of Him is in the first chapter, and then under a very simple name—the name of JESUS. It may be remarked it is spelt in capital letters. Everyone who is beginning the Christian life, who has learned the grace of God to him, may rightly and joyfully say in his heart, "Well, I like that, because the Spirit of God has written the name of JESUS in capital letters on my heart."

Then the form in which He is presented is that of a little child—the very smallest form in which He can be observed in the Gospel, and in connection with the very simplest service—"He shall save His people from their sins."

This being a meeting for Christians, I take it for granted that those who are present have already learned the Lord Jesus in this simple way. Our sins would have sunk us down into eternal punishment, for our sins we should have been banished for ever
from the presence of God. But the
Lord Jesus has become more than a
name to us—He has become to us
an indispensable Saviour. We have
learned that through His sacrificial
work our sins which are many have
been atoned for, and in believing on
Him they are all forgiven. "He will
save His people from their sins."

But still our knowledge of the person
of Christ may not be great when we only
know Him as a Saviour. It is there­
fore interesting to notice that in that
very chapter we get suggestions of
greater glory. Look at the 23rd verse.
The birth of the Lord is in fulfilment
of the Scripture spoken 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.'" Beloved fellow Christians, how­
ever small our apprehension may be
to begin with, are we not conscious
by the grace of God that there are vast,
infinite glories in this Person who is
our Saviour?

The second chapter shows Him in
another light. "When Jesus was born
in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of
Herod the King, behold there came
wise men from the east to Jerusalem,
saying, Where is He that is born King
of the Jews?" Now although their
apprehension of Him was but small at
that time, these wise men were able
to recognize in this One of whom they
knew but little, the King of the Jews.
Therefore they came, guided by the
Word of God and the star, and we
read, "When they were come into the
house they saw the young Child with
Mary His mother."

Now at this time, to speak after the
manner of men, the Child was relatively
small, and Mary the mother was
relatively great, to sight. But these
men were taught and led by God, by
His providence, by His Word, and no
doubt by His Spirit. Therefore when
they saw the young Child with Mary
His mother they fell down and wor­
shipped HIM. Let us remember this,
for we are surrounded by a very great
change in the appearance of things
from 300 years ago. To-day we see a
great religious system spreading its
baneful influence through the whole of
this land, and again and again insisting
that attention must be paid to the
mother. But when these wise men
saw Him they fell down and worshipped
one of the two—and that one was not
the mother. They worshipped HIM.

We can recognize the great favour
that God has given to the Virgin Mary,
described as "Blessed among women,
but, dear friends, when we come to
the person of Christ there is no one that
can be put alongside of Him. He
stands out in distinct glory, even
though our apprehension of Him must
be but small to begin with. There can
be no possible mistake in the true
Christian's heart that, whatever honour
be paid to the mother as a human
vessel, the one who is the Object of
our reverence, our faith, our worship,
must be the Son.

Then you will notice that they first
put themselves at His feet, and then
they put all that they had at His feet.
This surely is the result of a growing
apprehension of the Lord Jesus that
the young convert puts himself at the
Lord's feet, and is glad to put all that
he has at the Lord's feet as well. Indeed,
when we read in the second
chapter that He is enquired of and
sought after as the one that is born
King, are we not reminded of that
passage in Peter where it speaks of
the king as supreme? We are to render
honour to those that are in authority
—to the king as supreme. I challenge
your hearts this evening. With the
little knowledge that you have of the Lord Jesus to begin with, has He become to your affection the Supreme One whose glory makes you put yourself and all that you have at His feet?

Now look on to the end of the third chapter. We find how very quickly we may grow in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus. I pass over the first fifteen verses, urgent and important as they are, for in the Lord Jesus we find the One who fulfilled all righteousness. Others were brought to the banks of Jordan and baptized of John confessing their sins; the Lord came to the same place, and was baptized by the same servant, but on what a different line He came. They confessed their sins. They had lost everything and forfeited everything because of their sins; but here was One who came and submitted to the same baptism who came on this other line of fulfilling all righteousness.

The young Christian has this to learn—that there is perfection in the Lord Jesus Christ. There never was in any detail either within or without any flaw, anything that could cause the heart to have a sense of disappointment in the Lord Jesus. He is not a disappointment. We may find in Him a Friend whose virtue commands our honour, our worship, our adoration. We are delighted with Him, the more we know Him. The more time we spend in His company the more do His perfections open out before us. These four Gospels are given to us to open out what He is in all His blessed ways on earth.

Now come to the end of the chapter, verse 16—"And Jesus, when He was baptized, went up straightway out of the water, and lo, the heavens were opened unto Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and lighting upon Him. And lo, a voice from heaven saying, This is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased."

Now you notice that in the presence of those standing on the banks of Jordan as He came up out of the water, the heavens were opened and the Holy Ghost distinguishes Jesus. John the Baptist was there—eminent servant, successful preacher; there were crowds of converts, the people who had come under the power and influence of John's ministry; but the Spirit of God signalizes the Lord Jesus Christ before all our eyes, distinguishes Him, puts honour upon Him. Then at the same time there is heard this communication out of heaven for the delight of our hearts, "This is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased." Thus by the time we have reached the third chapter we find that the one who was the object of our faith in the first chapter has grown so rapidly upon us that we have discovered Him to be the adequate Object of the love of God, and the Man in whom God has found His good pleasure. Why, dear friends, a whole world of interest opens up to us, we can see that there is a glory and fulness in Christ we had never dreamed of before.

Now come to the fourth chapter. Tested by the devil He answers by the Word of God. I pass that over, but will you look at verses 13, 14, 15 and 16? "Leaving Nazareth He came and dwelt in Capernaum, which is upon the sea coast in the borders of Zabulon and Nephthalim; that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, The land of Zabulon and the land of Nephthalim; that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, The land of Zabulon and the land of Nephthalim by the way of the sea beyond Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles; the people which sat in darkness saw great light and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death light is sprung up."
I do not think I can convey to you the wonderful picture that this gives to one’s soul of the condition of things up against which we find ourselves to-day. You find in the picture the nation of Israel in great darkness. You find religion certainly, you find synagogues, you find the great Cathedral of the Jewish Faith at Jerusalem, you find all the services carried on in their splendour and regularity, the feasts, the sacrifices morning and evening, the choral services, the Psalms of David regularly sung, and all this great organization of religion centring upon Jerusalem, and carried on by the ordained clergy of those days. The whole system, imposing, magnificent, was one that appealed in every way to the eye and the mind. All the record of antiquity lent glamour to the practice of this religion—songs beautiful, sweet, grand, and true, sung continuously, incense floating on the air. But you find the whole system—EMPTY! Because there was no glory there—there was no glory in it. There was the great organized religion of that day, but I repeat no glory in it. The glory had left as long ago as the days of Ezekiel, and had never returned.

Now down there in Galilee mark this Person whom you and I know. He was humble in His walk in life, nothing striking in His appearance, had never been recognized by the ecclesiastical authorities of the day, a Person living for a long while in a village of which it was said, “Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?” going down then to Capernaum, a small fishing village. But this Person, strange to say, is the missing glory—this Person is the one in whom we see the great light—the light of God.

If we take these pictures from God’s Word and study them, do they not help us in the midst of the difficulties by which we find ourselves surrounded in these days of ever-growing apostasy? From the highest to the least, in some form or other, the emptiness of it perplexes us, our hearts are sore because of it. Oh! dear friends, let us remember that in Christ there is still preserved for us all the light of God. The great thing is to know how we may get into contact with Christ.

Then, the second thing is in that chapter in the 18th verse: “Jesus walking by the Sea of Galilee saw two brethren, Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea; for they were fishers,” and in verse 21—two more; and they immediately left the ship and their father and followed Him because He called them. This is to me a very wonderful thing. I think that we ought to take it to heart, seeing that all that organized religion, although originally inaugurated and instituted by God, was but an empty show, as the Lord Himself said of them, “This people honoureth Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me.” That being so, you find God present among His people in the Person of Jesus, for His name is Emmanuel, “God with us,” apart from it all, and calling individuals around Himself.

Do you not see the position? In Him there was all the Resource of God, in Him you find the one who was great enough to be the object of the Father’s love and the Man of God’s good pleasure. There He was in God’s behalf calling people round Himself, in separation from the decayed religiousness of that day. Evidently it was a very small beginning—one Person and two followers to begin with, then two others. Just four gathered round and following the Lord Jesus.

A very simple beginning—but I
Scripture Truth

would like to ask you, if you had been as earnest in those days as you are to-night to find out something about God and God’s way for you, what would you have done in the circumstances? I know that the pull would have been very great to go back to Jerusalem, to go on with things there. All the Old Testament Scriptures if read in the letter only would point you to it, and all the order and splendour of the services. The fact that it had been the divine centre would have appealed to you, and it would have been a decidedly strong pull. When you saw the crowds going up to Jerusalem, as was often the case, I feel sure that it would have required a very great enlightenment from God for you to have said "No" to all that, and to have taken up the peculiar position and pathway of this lowly Jesus. But now come! Supposing you had been there, and with a real desire to know God and to be in the light of God, would you not have seen, being taught by the Holy Spirit, that there was now a new Centre round whom God was gathering souls? All the religion was going on as before, but now God had commenced this new work of drawing souls out of it all to the Person of Christ, and they were to find in Him the great Resource of God.

The next thing is in the end of the chapter. It says in verse 23 that "Jesus went about all Galilee teaching in their synagogues and preaching the gospel of the kingdom and healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people."

Not only is the light of God—the whole Truth that God had to present to man—presented in Jesus, but the power of God was there; the power of God that could meet all the need of this distracted and diseased and sorrowing people. There was the power of God in Him to meet every single case.

Now these things are pictorial. If you read on in the Gospel you will see in the Sermon on the Mount there is not only light and power, but wisdom too. There is the ability to legislate in the kingdom. Then in the eighth chapter (verses 16, 17) you have a wonderful record of His sympathy. That really led me to Romans 8., because in view of the extraordinary position of things to-day I am going to indicate to you what will be a comfort to you.

It is this. That this particular Person who was then the divine Son, and was gathering people round Himself, in whom were the light of God, and the power and wisdom of God,—this very one, having made atonement by the sacrifice of the cross, has now been raised from the dead and is seated in glory. “It is Christ that died, yea rather that is risen again.”

I would like to assure you of this, that on the throne of God sits this glorious Person—one in whom God is made known to us, and who is for God, a Man perfectly according to His own heart. That Person is there, and actively engaged for you. He knows the difficulty you are under. He knows the position you find so difficult. He knows the exercise of your heart, and there He is praying for you.

And not only that, but He is rolling down for us the light and grace that we need, and the guidance—sending out the light and guidance that we need in order that we may discover Him to be our one unfailing Resource. Oh! that God might direct your hearts thus in the midst of every exercise to the wonderful Resource that there is in the Person of Christ.

Newcastle-on-Tyne, Oct. 26th, 1927.
“HOW TO LIVE THE CHRISTIAN LIFE.”

Read Colossians 3. 1-4.

We find it is quite a simple matter to live and to enjoy Christian life on occasions such as these; when we are at meetings, and when we are in the company of those who love the same Lord that we love; but the great problem is—how can we live the Christian life in the home, in the office, in the workshop, at school and in the various spheres in which our lot is cast, and where, possibly, there are none who love our Lord; how are we going to live the Christian life there? In the four very familiar verses that we have just read together, we find the answer to our question.

There are two words to which I wish to draw your special attention, the first one is in verse 1, the second is in verse 4. In verse 1 the word is “Risen with Christ,” and in verse 4 “Christ our Life.” We want to know something of what it means to have died with Christ, to have been buried with Him and, as the second chapter of this very epistle brings before us, and as it is developed in the first verse of this third chapter, to be risen with Him and to know now what it is to be living in the power of a new life, the life of the risen Christ, to understand what it means when it says that Christ is our life.

In the first chapter of this epistle, we have brought before us some of the incomparable glories of our blessed Lord Jesus Christ—His Godhead glory, His Manhood glory, His glory as Head of the new creation—and then we learn that there is something existing in this world to-day, something altogether new, the like of which did not exist in the world prior to the Day of Pentecost, and that something is spoken of in chapter 1 as “His body,” and of that body He is said to be the Head. The epistle to the Ephesians speaks of it as the “one body.” It is a wonderful living organism (not organization, observe) composed of every true believer in the Lord Jesus Christ; it is here upon earth now, but it is united to Christ the living Head of it who is at the right hand of God. It is here on earth that the traits, the beauties, the loveliness, meekness, gentleness, and all these beautiful things that marked the Lord Jesus Christ, might be expressed in it down here in this world.

The keyword probably of the epistle to the Colossians is found, I suggest, in verse 27 of the first chapter, and that is, “Christ in you.” In the epistle to the Ephesians, we who believe on the Lord Jesus Christ are seen in Christ in the heavenlies. In the epistle to the Colossians, Christ is in you down here and to be seen in us in our lives and ways.

We can quite understand that there could be no union for us with Christ in His deity; it is equally plain that there could be no union with Christ in His incarnation: it is perfectly obvious that there could be no union with Christ in His death. He had to come from heaven, die for us upon the cross and rise again from the dead, before we could be united to Him. Our union with Christ is union with a risen, living, glorified Man at the right hand of God. There He is, we are united to Him, He is indispensable to us, and, it seems a very great deal to say, nor would we dare to say it if the Word of God did not warrant it, we are indispensable to Him. He is
indispensable to us, and everything we want in order to carry us on, to maintain us, and to enable us to live the Christian life, we must draw from Him, and what inexhaustible resources there are in Him who is our living Head at the right hand of God.

Now I think we can very easily see further (we are just trying to move on step by step), that if that is the case, and if we are united to Him where He now is up there, then He seeks to draw our hearts and minds after Himself, and therefore we can understand the exhortation with which our chapter commences where the inspired writer says, “If ye then be risen with Christ.” The “if” there is not an if of doubt, but of argument. We might equally well read, “Since ye are risen with Christ.” “If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God.”

That is, we are to seek the things which are above because Christ is there; all our interests are there; our affections are centred there, and that because our treasure is there. All our hopes, all our desires, all our blessing, and all that we are going to enjoy for ever and ever, all are centred in Christ, where Christ is, at the right hand of God.

That which is prominent in the first chapter of the epistle is the supremacy of Christ—the supremacy of Christ, as I stated a moment ago, in every sphere that He fills, the whole system of glory He fills and He fills worthily, but if we have the supremacy of Christ up there, we also want, do we not, to know something about the supremacy of Christ in our heart, in our affections, in our lives, in our everyday walk and ways down here in this world.

I can imagine some person saying, “Well, that is all very nice, and we have heard ministry on these lines over and over and over again, but somehow that does not just help us in our difficulty. We have our domestic cares and our family worries at home; the pressure of things in business crowding in upon us; our difficulties in the workshop as we have to rub shoulders and associate day by day with men who do not know the Lord: all these things sometimes threaten to overwhelm us, and we cannot see—much as we should like to do so—how it is possible to go on with all these things, discharge our duties, go on with the everyday affairs of life, and yet have all our interests centred in Christ at God’s right hand.”

Well now, do you not think, my dear friends, if we may speak just in a very plain, homely, friendly heart-to-heart way about these matters, that when the love of Christ is known by us and there is real affection in our heart for Him; when He becomes the one commanding object of our heart and lives, “The chiefest among ten thousand, and the altogether lovely,” then, do you not think it is possible for us to be living where He is, to be dwelling in the sunshine of His presence, in the joy of His company; and whilst we are no less practical, and whilst we do our work just the same, and perhaps better, because a Christian should do his work better than anyone else, and whilst we go through the daily drudge, whether in the home or office, our thoughts, our hearts, our lives, our interests, our everything are there, because Christ is there?

Let me try to illustrate it, although I quite realize that my illustration, like all other illustrations, comes short of the mark.

I am going along the street to-morrow morning, and I meet a friend, I say. “Why, Smith, you are looking as happy
as though you had had a fortune left you. What has happened?" "Well," he says, "you have just hit it. I got a letter this morning from a firm of lawyers in Australia, and they tell me that a wealthy relative of mine has died and left me a large house, 5,000 acres of land, and £100,000." "Well, congratulations to you; the only regret associated with it is that we shall soon be losing you." "Well," he says, "not for a little while yet. The lawyers tell me that it will take some time to get things fixed up at home, but they will write later on and let me know when they think I might go." "Are you sure it is all right?" "Oh, yes, I think the lawyers thought I should be as sceptical as you are, and as a guarantee of good faith and to enable me to get things cleared up here, they sent me a draft for £1000."

Three months after I meet a mutual friend, and I say, "Have you seen Smith lately?" "Oh," he says, "Smith, since he got word about that fortune left him in Australia, he can simply think and talk about nothing but Australia. You know, he used to be up to the eyes in all the politics and pleasures and things going on in this city. Talk to him about these things now, and he does not show any interest. If we speak to him about pleasure, politics, or anything else now, he listens in a kind of way, and he answers quite courteously, but you feel as though his thoughts and mind are elsewhere. Say 'Australia' to him, it is like winding up a musical box, and he will talk and talk ad lib. about that. Tell him that someone is home from Australia and is living twenty miles away, and he will trek away to that place, and listen to him for hours and hours. Go to his house, and you see his table simply littered with books and papers and pamphlets all about Australia, its people, its customs, its climate, and, as a matter of fact, it seems to me that when Smith gets to Australia, he will not be any stranger there, for he is practically living there just now." How is that? It is very easy to be understood—his treasure is there. Six months ago his treasure was not there, and, therefore, six months ago all his interests and concerns and joys were in this country; now, he has got a treasure in Australia, his heart has gone after that treasure, and all his interests are in that treasure, therefore Australia is already the place where he is living, although he is still doing his business in his native city.

You and I have a treasure, have we not? We have got a treasure in our blessed, adorable Lord Jesus, the one who went to the cross at Calvary and there laid down His spotless life and shed His precious blood that He might have us altogether for Himself; He is there, and we love Him, not only because of what He has done for us, and not only because of what He has secured for us, but we love Him because of what He is in Himself, and where He lives we want to live, His home we want to be our home, our affections now are no longer in this world, our affections, our interests, our all are there because He is there, and did He not say, "Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also"? (Luke 12. 34).

We will not do our work indifferently, nor will we be careless as to our business, we will not be slack in pursuit of our studies, nor in the everyday affairs of life, but whilst we are going through this world, knowing that we have got to get through, our minds, our hearts, our thoughts will be there. Just as Smith set his mind on things.
in Australia and not in this country, we will set our minds on the things that are above, and not the things that are on the earth; and just as Smith sought the things that are in Australia and not in Britain, we will seek the things that are above and not the things that are on earth, because the One who has endearing Himself to our hearts is there, and He is everything to us.

Well now, there is still something more we learn from this. If we know that in some measure in our practical experience, the result of it will be, as my little parable somewhat feebly perhaps illustrates, that we will not only lose interest in things here, we will realize we have absolutely no connection with them.

The third verse tells us, "Ye are dead," and we have no more to do with the things of this world, its pleasures or its politics than a man who is literally dead. "Ye are dead." That means we are content to have no place in this world. If Christ is not the One commanding object of our heart, we shall not understand this. But when He becomes everything to us we shall be content with an obscure place so far as this world is concerned. He is in the obscurity of the presence of God to-day, and so far as this world is concerned, it practically ignores His existence. They may have their exciting times and their controversies and debates about things contained in the Holy Scriptures, but Christ, generally speaking, is hid from the eyes of men to-day, and if we know what it is to be dead with Him, buried with Him, and risen with Him, we will also be content to share His place and His rejection to-day, and we will wait with eager and glad anticipation that day when He shall appear, and be manifested in glory, knowing that in that day when He appears we shall appear with Him also.

We find this illustrated in the familiar story of David when he was in rejection and when those who felt they had a need came to him. They surrounded David not only because they had got their need met, but because they loved him for what he was in himself. But David was in obscurity then; he was in rejection; his home was in a cave and a hold, he was a man who was thought of no account, and those who were with him were doubtless the objects of reproach from Saul's men and followers. "But," they said, "we can afford to be that, and we can afford to stand without, and be in the place of obscurity in company with David to-day. The crowning day is coming." And the crowning day did come; and on the day when David ascended the throne, when the crown was put upon his head, when the sceptre was put in his hand and when he was manifested, his despised followers were manifested with him.

"The crowning day is coming." Thank God for that, and you and I are waiting for the crowning day. We have crowned Him in our hearts and lives already, we who know in some measure (Oh God, give us to know it in greater measure) what it is to have died with Him, to have been buried and to have been raised with Him, and to have Him as the object of our heart; we just want to dwell where He dwells, and dwelling there we shall be walking in separation from the whole course and order of things down here; we will be looking on to that day when He shall be manifested in glory and when it will be our joy, our honour, our inestimable privilege to be sharers of His joy, His honour, and His glory.

Newcastle-on-Tyne, Oct. 27th, 1927.
THE CONVERSION OF JOB.

"As a prince I would go near Him"
—Job 31:37.

A GREAT man was this Job, and strong in his own defence. The talk of his three friends would have crushed and silenced an ordinary man, but it only made him the more vehement in declaring his own righteousness, and he winds up what he thought would be his final speech by a challenge to the Almighty Himself. "Behold, my desire is that the Almighty would answer me" he cries. "I would declare unto Him the number of my steps: AS A PRINCE WOULD I GO NEAR UNTO HIM." That was Job, and as his history was written for our learning we do well to consider him, as God called on Satan to do. Calamity had not broken him, aspersion and scorn could not subdue his proud spirit, he would hold his head erect without fear before the best of his fellow men, and even in the presence of the Almighty he would stand up as a prince. What could a man say after that? That surely was the climax, the limit, and Job felt it so to be, for he added, "The words of Job are ended." But they were not. The Almighty took up his challenge. He had heard all his proud words, and now He answers him and demands that Job should open his mouth again. "Gird up thy loins like a man; for I will demand of thee, and answer thou Me" (chap. 38. 3). Then God's greatness was declared unto him and in chapter 40. Job is compelled to speak, not now to tell the number of his steps, or to say one word more as to his own glory, but to humbly confess: "Behold, I am vile; what shall I answer thee? I will lay my hand upon my mouth. Once I have spoken; but I will not answer: yea, twice; but I will proceed no further." But he must proceed further; he had said before that he would speak no more; he says it again, "Once have I spoken, yea, twice," but no more. Yes, Job, you will speak again, and your third speech will be the truth; having challenged the Almighty you must be brought right down into the dust where He can bless you. So God again demands of him that he shall listen and answer, and so he does, for in chapter 42. we read: "Then answered Job and said, I know that thou canst do everything, and that no thought can be withholden from Thee. Who is he that hideth counsel without knowledge? therefore I have uttered that I understood not; things too wonderful for me, which I knew not." Thus he judges his own eloquent yet foolish talk and turns to God and says, "I have heard of Thee by the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye seeth Thee. WHEREFORE I ABHOR MYSELF, AND REPENT IN DUST AND ASHES." Yes, instead of standing up like a prince, he falls prostrate in the dust before God and confesses the truth; there was neither glory nor goodness in him; and having confessed this he has nothing more to say of himself. But God had something to say of him, and because he took his true place before God, God raised him up indeed, and a prince he became through the goodness of God, but it was God who made him such. God turned his captivity and accepted him and made him a priest before Him and His appointed channel of His blessing to others.

Beware of position without power, principles beyond practice, jealousy about orthodoxy and truth and mysteries, with little personal communion with the Lord.
VariouS WAYS IN WHICH THE WORK OF CHRIST IS VIEWED IN SCRIPTURE.  
(JAMES BOYD.)
No. 4. The Victory of God. 1 Cor. 15.

One might have supposed that the apostle would have begun his letter to the Corinthians with this subject rather than thus leaving it to the last. But we may be absolutely certain that the way of God in this matter which the servant is guided to take is the instruction and spiritual blessing of His saints. He makes no mistakes. His first word, His last, and every word that lies between, is in its rightful place; and the order in which the letter is to be read is in the order in which it has been given.

It was needful that he should bring the cross before those who still thought something of the human mind as contributory to the building up of the soul in the knowledge of God; and at this subtle and dangerous foe it was necessary that the first blow should be dealt. When the ignorance, the stupidity, the folly of the leaders of this world were only equalled by their boastful pride which was manifested in the light of the cross, then he could proceed to unfold to them the gift of the Spirit by whose means the hidden things of God's eternal purpose could be made known to them; things that lay outside the limits of the circle in which the activities of the human mind was capable of moving either in innocence or guilt; also how everything was to be taken up by them according to the divine and perfect order of His house.

This subject is called "The Gospel" is brought in at the end of the epistle, not in a revelatory way, as though they had never heard it before, but in a correctory manner; for though they had both heard and believed it they were being led away by the enemy from the vital truth of it. Hence, though he leads the Corinthians in the faith of their souls beyond all that had been communicated to them previously, he begins by reminding them of the simplest elements of the gracious intervention of God for their salvation.

It is "The gospel which I preached unto you." He had nothing to alter as regards what he told them at the beginning, nor indeed is there anything to-day to be added to, or subtracted from, that which he preached among the nations. It was not to be elaborated upon by the fictitious growth of a higher civilization, nor was it to be embellished by the rhetoric of the leaders of the thoughtless crowd, but it was to be told in its own simplicity in the language that the people knew, stripped of all eloquence of speech. It appealed to conscience and to heart, to the need of the sinner for such a salvation as it declared, and declared the love of the heart of a Saviour God who had brought salvation near to them in Jesus.

And Paul was not ashamed of it. It was the power of God to salvation to every soul that believed. It was unpopular with the world for it made nothing of his civilization, and if possible less of his fancied goodness. It also brought the conscience of the sinner face to face with a holy and righteous Creator and thus roused up the hatred of the natural heart against God. And therefore was it anathematized, mocked and persecuted. It was so at the beginning of the preaching and it is so to-day, and it must continue thus until Christ take the
throne and the reign of righteousness begins.

This gospel to which the apostle draws their attention was a gospel he had announced to them, which they had received and in which they stood. They had believed what they heard from the lips of the messenger of the Lord, as we read in Acts 18., "Many of the Corinthians hearing, believed and were baptized." They threw in their lot with the preacher and were duly received into the company of all on earth who called on the name of the Lord.

Not all in Corinth believed. Still we are told that many did. Neither was it those who led in the affairs of the city who welcomed the divine message. Some of such may have confessed Christ; but the apostle has to remind them that not many wise men after the flesh had been called, for God had chosen the foolish, the weak, the ignoble, and the things that are not, that He might annul the things that are, so that no flesh should boast before Him (chap. 1).

But this gospel was that by which they were saved, if they held fast the word that had been announced, supposing that that word was true. No one can get good by believing a lie. If what they had hearkened to with the hearing of faith had been a baseless invention of evil men, it would have been better for them never to have heard it: and with this bold blasphemy they were being assaulted by the enemy of God and of their souls. Therefore, the apostle brings the gospel once again before them.

He says, "I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received." It had not its origin in the mind of the preacher who had declared it to them. As in another place he avers, "The gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ " (Gal. 1. 11, 12). So here he says he had received it. and he had announced it to them. "By which also," he says, "ye are saved." How needful then that they should hold it fast lest it should slip out of heart and memory.

It was a gospel that he never wearied telling, though as to his outward circumstances it brought nothing but despisal, persecution and imprisonment. Still the joy he had in the proclamation of it was altogether greater than the griefs he endured at the hand of his enemies. This gospel the Corinthians had heard and believed, but now they must hear again. "That Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and rose again according to the Scriptures;" and that He was seen of a multitude of witnesses, the greater part of whom being still alive when Paul wrote the epistle. His resurrection was therefore well authenticated.

Now Christ was preached, that He rose from the dead, and those to whom the apostle writes were professed believers of the preaching. How came it that some among them affirmed that there was no resurrection of those that are dead? No exception can be made on behalf of Christ, for He also died and was buried. He was no less dead than those who were in their graves; He was dead and buried. Therefore, if there is no resurrection of those who are dead, He is not raised; and if He is not raised, then is our preaching vain; your faith also is vain and ye are yet in your sins; and all who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished.

How foolish and self-destructive are the reasonings of the creature even when under the inspiration of the devil! How easily he can be deceived, and
how thoroughly blinded and bewildered is he capable of being when he can be found to embrace as glad tidings that which would be the destruction of all his hope of happiness for eternity! How needful it is for us to be kept in prayerful dependence on God that we may escape the snares of the enemy of our souls and the reasonings of our own minds and be content with the revelation God has given to us in the words in which we have it!

"But now is Christ risen from the dead." The apostles have borne true witness of God; the gospel is His message to ruined sinners; we have not believed in vain; we are not in our sins; they are gone in His death who died for them; all that have fallen asleep in Christ shall be raised in His likeness; He is the firstfruits of all that have fallen asleep in Him, and like to the firstfruits the harvest shall be—Blessed be God!

But I Cor. 15. is occupied almost exclusively with the resurrection of the dead in Christ. Therefore, He says that not only as death came in by man, so also resurrection has come in by man; but "As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." This is more than mere resurrection, for all in Christ partake of His life. Not all that are raised can be viewed as in Christ, but only those who have come under His quickening power.

But each is raised in his own rank: "Christ the firstfruits;" He is already risen. "Afterward they that are Christ's at His coming;" these shall share His reign and glory. "Then cometh the end," the end of resurrections, when the whole contents of death and hades shall be cast into the lake of fire, and that whole condition of things shall have forever ceased to exist. The impenitent but come out of one death to enter into another, which is no more annihilation than the first was. Then having annulled all rule, authority and power, the Son gives up the kingdom to Him who put all things under Him, that God may be all in all.

From verse 20 of this chapter till the end of verse 28 is a parenthesis, in which in the first place Christ is spoken of as firstfruits of those fallen asleep. Our Lord told His disciples, when after being risen He came into their midst, how necessary it was that He should suffer, and be the first to rise from the dead. He had first of all to invade the stronghold of Satan, and there break his might so that He might have complete control in that region, and that He might bring death and hades forever to an end.

But here He is viewed not only as the One who has accomplished the destruction of both death and hades,
but as the one who is firstfruits of those that sleep. Though it is His voice that shall raise both just and unjust He is not said to be firstfruits of the latter; for only the saints are those who have fallen asleep. He is our risen and exalted Head, and of His life we partake, a life that death cannot touch. It has power over the earthly tabernacle for a moment now, but the life which we have in Christ cannot be touched by it. He stands in a special relation to those who shall be in the first resurrection, those asleep.

Here death is viewed as the last enemy that shall be annulled: "He must reign, till He hath put all enemies under His feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. Psalm 8. tells us that Jehovah hath put all things under the feet of this Son of Man. And here the subjection of all things to Him is so universal that the Holy Spirit deems it of necessity to draw our attention to the fact that it is evident He is excepted who put all things in subjection to Him. Then when all has been put under His feet He Himself will give up the kingdom to Him who is God and Father, and God shall be all in all.

But after all that has been said another objection has to be anticipated; "How are the dead raised up? and with what body do they come? Even to-day is this question asked. But even what this fool sowed was not quickened unless it died. Nor did he sow the body that he reaped, but a bare grain, whatever it might be, of wheat or of any other. God gives it a body as He has pleased, and to each of the seeds its own body. It is not wheat sown and barley that is raised, but if wheat is sown wheat is raised, and thus of all seeds sown. Neither has God confined Himself to one kind of flesh. Already are there four kinds—men, birds, beasts, fishes. There are also heavenly and earthly bodies, and their glories varied. One glory of the sun, another of the moon, another of the stars; and star differs from star in glory. Thus also, He says, is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption, dishonour, weakness, a natural body; it is raised in incorruptibility, in glory, in power, a spiritual body. The natural body is seen in the first man, Adam, who was made a living soul; the last Adam a quickening Spirit. This I take to be what was true of Him as risen, though He quickened souls out of moral death when here below and that by the life that was in Himself. But I do not see that He took the position of last Adam until He rose from the dead. The spiritual was not, however, first, that it should give place to the natural; but the natural was first that its unprofitableness might be manifested, and, when this was shown, the spiritual came to light. But when we come to the first and second men, the first is out of earth made of dust, and the second out of heaven. This distinction between the first and second man was quite as true of them down here before redemption was accomplished as after. But not till Christ was glorified could a race after His order be spoken of in contrast with the race deriving from Adam. Now we can contemplate the two races and see the marvellous distinction that exists between them. As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy; and as is the Heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly. And as we have borne the image of the earthly, we shall also bear the image of the Heavenly.

And this is the eternal purpose of God; to have us in the image of His Son, that He might be the Firstborn among many brethren (Rom. 8. 29). Even now we are of the order of the Second Man and last Adam, as far as
life and nature go. As He, from whom we derive our new vital existence and relations with the Father and the Son, is heavenly, so are we heavenly. The cross has judicially made an end of our existence as deriving from our first and fallen head, and now are we a new creation in Christ. The old things can be taken account of as having passed away, and all things have become new. Flesh and blood cannot inherit God's kingdom, nor can corruption inherit incorruptibility.

Before referring to that which is called "A mystery," I would just glance at that which lies between verses 29 and 34. The apostle asks a question impossible for the objector to answer: "What shall they do which are baptized for the dead, if the dead rise not at all? Why are they then baptized for the dead?" Baptism places us on the ground of death, the death of Christ, so that we are privileged to reckon that. As He is dead to sin, so are we. I need not say He never was alive to it in the sense in which we are, for sin dominated us completely. But He had to do with it on earth and to meet it in every human being, and eventually was made sin on the cross; but now He lives absolutely to God. We as having His life are to reckon ourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Him. Baptism places us on this ground administratively, as those who have no life for this world, our life being hid with Christ in God. Why then should we be ready to give up the present life, if there is not to be a resurrection and a life with Christ in a sinless and heavenly home? By the word of the Scriptures and the teaching of Philip, the eunuch of Abyssinia learned that the life of Christ had been taken from the earth, and coming to water he says: "Here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized?" If the life of Christ has been taken from the earth, then he is willing to let his life also go.

Not only that, but the apostles stood in jeopardy every hour. His conflict with men at Ephesus who opposed the preaching like irrational brute beasts was all in vain. It profited him nothing, if the dead rise not. It should rather have been his slogan: "Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die." Alas, some of them were lacking in the knowledge of God.

But if flesh and blood cannot inherit God's kingdom, he will tell them a mystery that will enlighten those who are honestly in darkness, and whose labours for Christ were through this mischievous fallacy in danger of utter paralysis. It is at the resurrection of the just that all service for Christ which has been done down here will be rewarded; but if there is no resurrection, all their labour for Him is in vain. He says: "Behold I tell you a mystery: we shall not all fall asleep, but we shall all be changed in an instant, 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. For this corruptible must put on incorruptibility, and this mortal put on immortality. But when this corruptible shall have put on incorruptibility, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall come to pass the word that is written: death has been swallowed up in victory. Where, O death, is thy sting? Where, O death, thy victory? Now the sting of death is sin, and the power of sin the law; but thanks to God, who gives us the victory by our Lord Jesus Christ. So then, my beloved brethren, be firm, immovable, abounding always in the work of the Lord, knowing that your toil is not in vain in the Lord."
ANSWERED QUESTIONS. 

The Lord Jesus asked a question of the Jews that remains unanswered by them to this day. What think ye of Christ, whose son is He? was the first challenging question. They replied, "The Son of David." Then came the question that they refused to answer then, and have not answered since: "IF DAVID THEN CALL HIM LORD, HOW IS HE HIS SON? (Matt. 22. 45). And no man was able to answer Him a word. Nor have recent writings by great scholars among the Jews honestly faced this question. Those who have believed the gospel know the answer, they have learnt the truth by the grace of God, but it is the will of God that they should know it better, and grow in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ, both in His Godhead and human glories, for both alike shine out in all their perfection in Him. The inspired Word of God and Spirit-given ministry unfold these glories to us.

"Is not this the Son of Joseph?" (Luke 4. 22).

This question raised by the Jews (involving the rightful lineage of our Lord Jesus Christ) has been clearly answered, by the Holy Ghost, in the Gospels.

When, as the anointed One, Isaiah 61. I was fulfilled in Him—in the preaching at Nazareth, they "wondered at the words of grace which were coming out of His mouth. And they said, Is not this the son of Joseph?" (Luke 4. 22 N.T.) Again, after He had fed the five thousand miraculously, when He spake of giving the Bread which abides to life eternal, having come down out of heaven, "the Jews therefore murmured about Him, because He said, I am the Bread which has come down out of heaven. And they said, Is not this Jesus, the Son of Joseph, whose father and mother we have known?" (John 6. 41, 42.) Now God had foretold again and again that the One who was to bring in the promised blessing and glory would be Israel's true King of David's royal line. Psalm 2 said He would be God's Son, and Psalm 45 that He would be God the Son, moreover Zechariah 14. 9 and many other Scriptures point out that Jehovah Himself is to be the "King over all the earth"; yet this glorious distinction is to be taken in the line of David, therefore the New Testament opens with the words, "BOOK OF THE GENERATION OF JESUS CHRIST, SON OF DAVID." This is followed by taking us further back still, and by designating Him, "Son of Abraham," for in that line also was the great Messiah to come; and then He is called Jesus, i.e., Jehovah Saviour; and Emmanuel, i.e., God with us; fulfilling the promise as to the Virgin-born Son, "the Woman's seed." All this, however, is brought to pass in the house and lineage of David.

But what has it to do with Joseph? He was of the royal line. The angel of the Lord addressed him as son of David thus: "Joseph, son of David, fear not to take to thee Mary, thy wife, for that which is begotten in her is of THE HOLY GHOST" (Matt. 1. 20). In obedience to God's Word Joseph took her, "and" (the Holy Spirit carefully records) "knew her not until she had brought forth her first-born Son: and he called His Name Jesus" (25). Joseph was therefore rightly regarded as the legal father of Jesus. In every true sense legally the first-born Son of Joseph's wife was his rightful Heir, and that as given of God according to the promise, that of a
Virgin there should be a child born, and son given (Isa. 9. 6).

He was begotten of the power of the Holy Ghost and His fivefold name = "Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of peace" who should sit upon the throne of David, shows how able He was to take up the question of Israel's salvation and ours also. All who put their trust in Him will prove that they have made no mistake in so doing.

Joseph was a just man and he fulfilled every lawful obligation in regard to circumcision, purification, and the keeping of the passover, and when Cæsar Augustus had decreed a census, Joseph took Mary with him to Bethlehem, where they were inscribed in the census roll, for "he was of the house and family of David" (Luke 2. 4). There Jesus was born, and the great prophecy of Micah 5. 2 was fulfilled.

Fully and faultlessly has the Spirit answered the question, Is not this Jesus, the Son of Joseph? but though He has done this, all the more confirming to faith is the way He guards against any thought of Joseph being the natural father or human begetter of the Christ, as we have seen; and the words of Luke 3. 23 concerning Jesus "being (as was supposed) the Son of Joseph," beautifully confirm what has been pointed out regarding the legal sonship and heirship of the Christ in David's line, whilst guarding the other. Now, although the Holy Spirit shows so vividly the honour and dignity which God has bestowed upon Joseph, the descendant of royal David, He nevertheless soon withdraws Him from our gaze, while Mary, his wife, is kept before the reverent mind right on to the time of the ascension of Christ and the gift of the Holy Spirit.

"Is not this . . . the Son of Mary?" (Mark 6. 3).

It was in His own country where He was well known, that the people said, "From whence hath this Man these things? and what wisdom is this which is given to Him, that even mighty works are wrought by His hands? Is not this the Carpenter, THE SON OF MARY, the brother of James, and Joses, and of Judah and Simon? and are not His sisters here with us?" (Mark 6. 2, 3). The Holy Spirit answers this question in the inspired writings and instructs the believer more deeply, and prepares him for the witness of the apostles.

MATTHEW, who gives the genealogy of the Lord as the rightful King, speaks of an angel appearing to Joseph, LUKE, who speaks of Him as the perfect Man, traces back His genealogy to "Seth, of Adam, of God" (3. 38 N.T.), records the fact of the angel Gabriel coming to Mary and announcing the birth of a Son who should sit on "the throne of David His father" (1. 32). John the Baptist was of the priestly line by both his father and mother (1. 5); Jesus was of the royal line. Elizabeth (of Aaronic descent) spake of Mary as "the mother of my Lord" (1. 43), and Zacharias (of the course of Abia) spake of Mary's Son as "a Horn of salvation" for Israel in the house of David. Just and pious Simeon blessed Joseph and Mary, but, addressing the mother, he spake of her Child as being set for the fall and rising up of many in Israel, and for a Sign spoken against (2. 34). It was Mary who addressed Jesus after He had remained behind at Jerusalem, when he was but twelve years old; and it was she who pondered these things in her heart. It is beautiful, however, to observe the lovely demeanour of this divinely given Son. He went down with "His parents" to
Nazareth "and was subject unto them."

What a salutary lesson is found here for the children of believing parents to-day, when the beauty of natural affection is so fast disappearing, and when disobedience to parents is rife.

What we have said indicates that Mary was of the royal line as well as Joseph, and, comparing this with the genealogy of Luke 3., where Joseph (verse 23) is said to be "of Heli," not "son of"—whereas Matthew 1. 16, distinctly says, "Jacob begat Joseph, the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ"—we conclude therefore, that, according to Jewish custom, the line of Mary, the wife of Joseph, is traced. In this way, although begotten of the Holy Ghost, we have the Seed royal preserved in the Son of Mary, just as the rightful Heirship is found in the Son of Joseph, and in Him Jesus—Jehovah Saviour—all Israel's dignities and distinctions centre, and through redemption are secured on Israel's behalf. MATTHEW speaks ten times of "the Son of David," MARK four times, and LUKE four times, but it is remarkable and significant that JOHN does not once so designate Him, and yet as "the Son" he does so no less than fifteen times, as "the Son of God" twelve times, and "the Son of Man" twelve times also.

All this is encouraging to the faith of those to whom the Saviour is precious, and the realities of His various distinctions become more clearly delineated before our hearts. The mother of Jesus knew and honoured His grace and power. At the marriage at Cana in Galilee, she said to Him "They have no wine"; but here she must stand aside; the exercise of His divine power and the manifestation of His glory must not be directed by her. So He said, "Woman, what have I to do with thee? Mine hour is not yet come." Nevertheless He turned the water into wine, and when His hour did come she stood by the cross of Jesus; and, even amidst the sufferings of that unparalleled time, He thought of her and ordered for her future, "and from that hour the disciple (John) took her to His own home" (John 2. 3; 19. 27). When Joseph, the legal father of Christ, was seen with Mary, His mother, she was always given precedence; and when pious Joseph disappears from the pages of the Gospels, she is still seen, not as an object for faith, but as owning the power of the Lord, and being dependent upon Him.

To be concluded.

FAITHFUL PRAYER.

PRAYER, like Jonathan's bow, returns not empty; never was faithful prayer lost. The golden vials in heaven are full of the treasured prayers of the saints and they are as sweet odours to God and will be answered in blessing in His own good time (Rev. 5.).

No tradesman trades with such certainty as the praying saint. Some prayers, indeed, have a longer voyage than others, but then they return with richer lading at last; the praying soul is a gainer by waiting for an answer.

Some one prayed for you when you were yet unsaved; return that effectual prayer to God's treasury by pleading for others.

Much work and little prayer is hard work. Prayer oils the wheels of the wagon of life; try the effect of it when the wheels creak.
PAUL'S GOSPEL.
Its Object. No. 4.

THERE are two distinct aspects of the body, in I. Cor. the body is viewed as formed in this world by the baptism of the Holy Ghost, complete at any given time and publicly manifested in its unity in partaking of the Lord's Supper. It is viewed as an organization in which "the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal" (I Cor. 10. 17; 12. 7-11). In Eph. the body is presented according to the counsel and work of God, Christ is its Head and the body is an organism instinct with life, and endowed with all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge because of its union with so great a Head. The completeness of this will not be seen until the coming of the Lord. In either aspect ample provision has been made for its support, but there is a difference between the gifts enumerated in I Cor. 12. 7-11; 28, which were related to the outward form of the dispensation, and those spoken of in Eph. 4. 11 in connection with the spiritual work of edifying the body of Christ directly from the Head. Some of the Corinthian gifts ceased when unity was no longer manifest, but the Ephesian gifts continue until we all come to full growth "unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ."

John and Peter both speak of "unity" in view of the saints as "one flock," but Paul, while showing this also, is unique in respect of "union" with Christ the Head in heaven. Our viewpoint is often too low; the breaking of the bond of peace, which should ever characterize Christians as members of a holy community on earth, often looms so large in our eyes that we forget that there is a union of the members of Christ's body which cannot be broken, maintained by one Spirit, in one hope of our calling.

The heavenly intelligences never confuse these things as with wondering gaze they contemplate from the beginning the all-varied wisdom of God. They see unity where we see only disruption, order where we see confusion, harmonies where we hear only discord, power where we are conscious only of weakness. God grant that we also may take our viewpoint of the church from the height of the glory of Christ and so be enabled to understand the object of Paul's gospel, which in one word is "the glory of God."

Nowhere is this more blessedly set forth than in the prayer which closes the third chapter of the Epistle to the Ephesians. It begins with "The Father of our Lord Jesus Christ," the source of the glorious display of Himself, in which the blessing of every family in heaven and earth consists. Redeemed men and elect angels derive all their blessedness from the fountain of eternal love, which has appointed each his place in relation to Himself. Wealth of glory in respect of every divine attribute has been brought to Him by the Son, and glory in result shall be His "in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages world without end." Amen. Great and wonderful is the inheritance, incorruptible and undefiled, which is laid up for us in heaven, but what the riches of the glory of God's inheritance which He will take possession of in the saints? From Christ the Head, through the members of His body, shall flow to "the all things" the knowledge of the love and grace and righteousness of God, returning to Him in a wealth of glory, praise and worship from every created
intelligence to whom God shall be all in all. Countless hosts shall admire the wisdom of God in solving the great mystery of good and evil by the sending of His own Son and will see in the many sons brought to glory the abiding witness of His ineffable love. In what resplendent glory shall the cross then be seen, where He who knew no sin was made sin for us "that we might become the righteousness of God in Him."

The desire of God that the secret might be known, "which is Christ in you the hope of glory" (Col. 1. 27) and the prayer of the apostle, "that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith" (Eph. 3. 17) are correlative. The one is the fact, the other the apprehension of it. The result of this is threefold: (1) It provides an outlook which embraces all saints. (2) It enables the soul to grasp an immeasurable range of glory. (3) It gives the knowledge of the love of Christ, which it is not possible to know to a finish, for it is infinite.

It has been well said that "the whole passage calls the believer away from a mere discussion of words and phrases, to the inner chamber of faith and prayer," for it involves not only a vision but moral conformity to Christ. Just as His holy human body was that by which He showed forth His meekness, longsuffering, gentleness, forbearance and every beautious grace, so the members of His body, the church, are for the expression of the same excellencies, in this world where He once was. If we know that He abides in us and we say that we abide in Him, "we ought to walk as He walked." God is love, His glory is the display of love.

In Christ it is seen and known, and becomes the home of all who receive Him. Stability for ever belongs to such, for they are rooted and grounded in love, and growing up into Christ are filled "with," no rather "into" all the fulness of God. No single soul nor, indeed, the whole church can contain the Infinite, but the fulness in its inexhaustible flow can fill the vessel to its utmost capacity, and no matter how much the outflow may be from the same, the inflow shall never cease, or the fulness be lessened, unto all generations of the age of ages.

The work of the Spirit is to bring to bear upon the inner man the power of resurrection; that same power will presently quicken our mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwells in us, conforming them to the fashion of His body of glory. Glorious end, supreme object, the glory of God. Mighty, indeed, is the power working in all saints to this end. Shouts of triumph shall hail the day when in radiant splendour the Bride, the Lamb's wife, shall be revealed from heaven having the glory of God, and her light like unto a stone most precious. She will be transparent to the revelation of all that is in Christ, "like a jasper stone clear as crystal." "No cloud, no distance ere shall hide, glories that then shall shine." Reader, these things are meant to have a present effect during the "now" in which we wait for Him. May Paul's gospel in its source, power and revelation of the secret of God, produce in us an answer to the love of Christ which shall bring glory to our God and Father, both now and for ever. Amen.

"If one does not know how to conduct his own house, how shall he take care of the assembly of God?"—1 Tim. 3. 5 (N.T.).

A searching word for all, and one which, if it had been heeded, would have kept many troubles out of the assembly of God. If a man is a fool in his own house, he is not likely to be wise in the house of God. If he has failed in that which is least, how can he hope to succeed in that which is greatest?
ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

The Judgment Seat of Christ.

"On pages 32, 33, of February issue of 'Scripture Truth,' the writer makes it appear as though saints and Christ-rejectors will all be at the judgment seat of Christ, which is rather perplexing to a few of us here. If this is according to the truth, who will stand before the great white throne, Rev. 20. 11, 12? "—HAWICK.

IN 2 Cor. 5. the apostle is writing of the time when ransomed saints will be manifested at the judgment seat of Christ; to them and at that time this manifestation will have no terror. for their Redeemer is the Judge, and they will stand there in His likeness, clothed in their house which is from heaven (verse 1). But his mind travelled on to the time when unbelievers would stand before that same Person, and when that same judgment seat would have become the great white throne; hence he writes, "Knowing the terror of the Lord we persuade men." This terror, and the love of Christ which led Him to die for men, which ever was the great constraining force within the apostle, made him always zealous for the salvation of men. The millennium of blessing will come in between 2 Cor. 5. and Rev. 20. 11, 12.

Dispensations.

"Would you be kind enough to answer, through 'Scripture Truth,' the following questions. Is Gen. 12. 1 the start of a new dispensation, and if so, what is the test under it? When does the dispensation of law end, and is the tribulation the end of the dispensation of grace, or is it a new dispensation? I have been talking to a brother who does not believe that promise is a dispensation and who holds that the tribulation is a new dispensation. Hoping you will be able to understand what I mean in these questions, I will close."—KILKEEL.

EVERYTHING depends upon what is meant by "dispensation." It is generally used as meaning the public dealings of God with men as by way of testing them, as your questions suggest. This being so, we should say that when the God of glory called Abram out of his own country and revealed Himself to him and made promises to him, it was a departure from His former ways with men and so a new dispensation. The test in it was faith: "Abram believed God and it was counted to him for righteousness" (Gen. 15.). It is only on this ground that any can please God and stand before Him, so that this was not altogether set aside when the law came in; in one sense it continued, and was God’s resource and the resource of His saints, even during the dispensation of grace. David’s experience and the Psalms that he wrote, are proof of this.

The present dispensation in which grace reigns through righteousness, is not different in principle to that in which Abram rejoiced. The revelation of God is, of course, full and perfect now and all for the blessing of man, to be known and embraced by faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.

We should not call the coming great tribulation a dispensation. It will come upon men because they have failed to respond to God in any of His ways with them in the past and will make way for the dispensation of the fulness of the times in which God will gather together in one all things in Christ (Eph. 1. 10).

Faithful preachers will get no credit from men of the world or from worldly Christians. The religion of the day does not want the Word of God.

"It calls for pleasing pulpiteers,
Modern, and brilliant, and fast;
Who will show how men may live as they list,
And go to heaven at last."

But all was told long before in 2 Tim. 4. 3, 4. But the faithful man will not regard or be moved by the spirit of the day, but will PREACH THE WORD.
WE ask our readers to pay very special attention to the fact that the Bible begins with GOD and ends with ALL THE SAINTS. It is an arresting fact, a fact with a great thrill in it for everyone to whom the purposes and grace of God are of any account, for we may be sure that there is design in this as there is in every part of the Book that lives by the breath of God.

Of course we must think of the saints in the Bible sense of that word. The Romish church has its saints, but they have been dead for centuries; among Protestants the term is commonly applied to people of grave appearance and unblemished and unworldly lives, but the Bible gives it to all who are in Christ Jesus, to all the children of God on earth: they are all sanctified in Christ Jesus and are by calling saints (i Corinthians i. 2). The Bible then begins with God, and at the end of it it embraces all the saints on earth, it does not leave one of them out. A father of a large family, a true father, who loves and cares for all his children without partiality, makes sure that all his children are safely within before he bars the door at night, so the Holy Spirit does not close the divine Word upon a divided family, some inside and some outside, but He enfolds all within the sacred enclosure and puts this great benediction upon all.

As we dwell upon it, we are persuaded that it could not be otherwise. God can have no prejudices, He has no favourites, all His children must be equally precious to Him. To secure them for Himself was His purpose from the beginning. Before He made the worlds by His word He chose them in Christ, and the creation of which Genesis i. tells us had as its ultimate purpose the gathering of them all together in one, it was to be the sphere in which this was to be accomplished. Much had to be done before this great purpose could be realized, for a great enemy kept a ceaseless watch to check every move that God made to His desired end. But step by step God's purpose marched on, and is still marching to its goal, and His triumph rings out in these final words of inspiration, "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with ALL THE SAINTS." And it is a dead heart, and alienated from God, that does not add a fervent "Amen" to that benediction.

But not without cost to Himself has this victory of God emerged; it could not have been gained by power only, God's bright designs sprang forth from His heart of love and He desired to possess all His saints because He loved them, and love must suffer. The greatest principle in the moral universe is that suffering love has a right to the objects for which it suffers, and we shall miss the blessedness of "GOD AND ALL THE SAINTS" if we overlook this. Think of the interpretation that the Holy Spirit put upon the words of the high priest in John 11. And this spake he not of himself; but being high priest that year, he prophesied that JESUS SHOULD DIE ... THAT HE SHOULD GATHER TOGETHER IN ONE THE CHILDREN OF GOD THAT WERE SCATTERED ABROAD." It was to this great event that the ages looked forward, apart from this God must have remained alone—Father, Son and Holy
Ghost—but no saints thronging the courts of light pouring forth their rapturous praise. But in the Cross of Christ we have the very heart of the Bible. God—the beginning, “all the saints”—the end, and the cross of Christ between. Yes, the cross is the heart of the Bible, throbbing with love, and if the lesson has to be writ clearly the cross must not be left out.

**GOD—THE CROSS—ALL THE SAINTS.** That is the order, and in it is summed up the wonderful, divine story. All the saints are grappled to the heart of God by the cross of His beloved Son. Self-sacrificing and suffering love has accomplished the purpose of God. O, wonderful is the story! All the saints are God’s family, from another point of view they are spoken of as “ALL THE FLOCK”—the church of God, and we are told that He has purchased them by His own blood—“or the blood of His own” (N.T.) (Acts 20. 28.)

Is it not a wonderful thing, the veritable triumph of God, that now He can speak of “all the saints”; that they are here now and in this world of which the devil is prince and god, and in which they must have tribulation? We should have looked onward to the consummation of God’s work of grace and talked of “all the saints” in connection with the great home-gathering, when dangers will all be past. But God sees them now and speaks of them here, and the Holy Ghost, who loves them with the same love with which Father and Son love them, says in the last God-breathed word, “The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with all the saints,” and blessed be God, that grace is sufficient.

We have no desire to spoil these blessed facts by any reference to our own narrowness of heart. It is the truth that will set us free, and then shall we be free indeed; and the truth is this, that the Bible begins with GOD and ends with ALL THE SAINTS.

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**“THEY WENT AND TOLD JESUS.”**

“And his (John’s) disciples came, and took up the body, and buried it, and went and told Jesus.”—Matt. 14. 12.

**JESUS** was ever hearing sad news. Read through the Gospels and see and mark this fact. Jairus tells Him of his dying daughter; the sisters in Bethany send and tell Him of their suffering brother; sinners told Him of their sins by their tears, when their hearts were too big with repentance to permit words. We do not read of people running to tell Him of some great joy and to share it with Him. If ever the hand of importunity knocked at His door, it was that a sadder tale than ever might be poured into His ear. Well, had He not said, “Come unto Me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest”? They had heard His invitation, these sorrow-laden people, and they felt that in the wide earth there was none but He; everyone else would fail them, He alone was enough for their need. So it was that if ever a woman was seen speaking to Him, she was pouring out some tale of woe, and if ever a man accosted Him on the road, it was to tell Him of some personal or domestic distress.

And is this nothing to us? Has He not in this shown to us His heart, to encourage us to tell Him all? What could we do without that listening ear?
THE OPTIMISM OF FAITH.

EZEKIEL I, I, "I saw visions of God"; verse 26, "A throne and . . . a man above it." Rev. 4. 2, "A throne set in heaven and One sat on the throne."

Jeremiah in the dungeon for God; Ezekiel in captivity by the Chebar; Daniel in the palace of Shushan; and John in exile by the Ægean Sea—alike become special channels of revelation and communication between God and His people. God-directed separation from man spells special revelation from God.

God’s revelations are not to brains, but to faithfulness and prayer.

We will limit our thoughts to Ezekiel in the Old, and John in the New dispensations.

Since the beginning of the Christian era, until this moment, there has never been a moment so portentous with catastrophe and moral cataclysm. The womb of time is bursting with the fate of a dying age. The end of all things is at hand. The hour glass is nearly run out: Mene, Mene, Tekel, Upharsin, is written in letters of blood and fire upon the dark background of the world’s midnight. Everything of man has failed: every moral code, every panacea, like the Sea of Sodom which is as bitter as ever despite the floods of living water which have poured into it year after year. Even so this old world still remains at enmity with God. The heathen still rage, and the people still imagine a vain thing—for it is a vain thing for any nation or person to think they can do without God. Yet, thank God, this inevitably pessimistic outlook is but the background from which shines out with ever-increasing lustre and brilliancy the Morning Star of the believers’ hope.

EZEKIEL MIGHT WELL HAVE BEEN A PESSIMIST.

His beloved Jerusalem in ruins, his people in captivity, yet we see him kneeling in ecstatic vision beside the Chebar. The daughters of music were brought low—Psalm 137. was being fulfilled—the harps of praise were hanging on the willows. Politically there was not one ray of hope, all seemed lost; yet the Spirit forsakes him not, and so, filled with Him, his eagle vision pierces the gloom and he sees "Visions of God." Unbelief sees under the firmament, but faith beholds the Man upon the throne. Heaven is unrolled before him, the book of God’s decrees is open to his gaze. Beyond all the cherubic agencies and activities at work below, he sees the One who is holding and directing them all. There is seen for the first time a Man upon the throne of the universe, and that enthroned Man is directing, upholding, and bringing to a glorious triumph all God’s purposes for Israel and their beloved land. He sees the glory departing—from Cherub to threshold (chapter 10. 4). ah! so reluctantly—from Israel—and then a greater glory supervening, a glory born out of the captivity anguish and long travail; bringing with it the regeneration, renaissance and repatriation of Israel with a splendour far surpassing the days of Solomon. A Temple rises before his wondering gaze, whose glory is far greater than the former. He sees all the thrilling prophecies of Haggaï and Zechariah fulfilled, and Messiah seated upon David’s throne in Jerusalem, and the glorious land the centre of universal activity and blessing.

EZEKIEL COULD NOT BE PESSIMISTIC AFTER THAT.

But one may reasonably object, We
do not belong to Israel, but to the church. Truly, therefore, the Holy Spirit gives us an exact parallel to the Chebar Throne vision in the case of John at Patmos. Like Ezekiel he is in exile. James, Peter, Paul, and the other apostles have suffered martyrdom. Nero has done his worst. Thousands have sealed their testimony with their blood. Rivers of warm martyr blood beat in wave-like rhythm against the very base of the sapphire throne where He whom they loved, and for whom they suffered, sits enthroned. Never did the kingdom of God appear so distant, or His ultimate triumph less likely. Look where he would, not one ray of light pierced the awful gloom. Darkness thick and impenetrable, a darkness that could be felt, covered the horizon as with a mantle of death. But now there breaks upon his raptured spirit a glorious vision. Heaven opens once more, whilst amid a scene of ineffable light and unparalleled splendour and ravishing beauty, he sees a Throne and One seated upon it (Rev. 4. 2). He sees the One whom he had seen erstwhile, not in heaven but on earth, the risen and glorified Lord, clad in the garb of regal majesty, as Prophet, Priest and King, walking in the midst of the churches.

John was given a foreview of the church’s history. Failure, dismal failure, was for the most part written upon it, illumined indeed by the faithfulness even unto death of the Smyrna period and the loyalty of that of Philadelphia. But, alas! Laodicea looms into view with its worldliness and luke-warmness, so disgusting as to be spewed out of His mouth—who is at last outside the professing church. As Jehovah had the Tabernacle put outside the camp, in Exod. 33., so now if you want to find the Lord of life and the Prince of glory you must go outside the worldly, men-pleasing religious institutions, and come out to Him who is to be found in the midst of the few loyal hearts, attracted by the superior glories of His Person. Bless God if we are outside with Him, according to the type in Exod. 33. 7, and its present answer in Heb. 13. 13.

As Israel had failed, so also has the professing church. But the church, of which He is the Head, which is built upon the rock, which is the truth as to Himself, and purchased with His own blood, shall triumph gloriously. The outburst of thanksgiving upon the shores of the Red Sea, when the proud hosts of the enemy sank as lead in the mighty waters, conveys but faintly the rapture of the apostle as he sees the church rising out of its baptism of blood and hate to the throne of God.

The church as a testimony on earth had become a nauseous, disgusting pretence, yet not for one moment was its rock foundation shaken. John, in the Spirit, has his “vision of God.” The gloom and darkness of human failure disappear in the radiant glory of the Throne vision. The One seated upon the mediatorial Throne is that very Man whom Ezekiel saw, and there before the rainbow-circled Throne are twenty-four seats, representing the aggregate of the redeemed. From Old Testament times and from this year of grace, from Jew and Gentile, twenty-four in all, not twenty-three, for not one is missing. Here is redemption in its totality. Here is the ultimate triumph of our Lord. Here are gathered up all the “shall”s” and “will”s” of the Great Three-One. There can be no failure with God. The Bible is a big historic background of human guilt, upon which is inscribed in letters of blood and gold the sovereign and immutable grace of the Father’s election, the Son’s redemption, and the Spirit’s
regeneration. Over and over again the
gates of hell have assailed, yet never
prevailed against His church. How,
indeed, could they? Is not Christ
Himself both foundation and Head?
And is He not exalted “far above all
heavens” (Eph. 4. 10), “far above all
principality, and power, and might, and
dominion, and every name that is
named, not only in this world, but also
in that which is to come: and hath put all things under His feet” (chapter
1. 22).

Dynasties crash, but God’s throne is
fixed as the stars. We ourselves, like
Ezekiel and John, need the heavenly
vision, but to have it we must be as
they were, filled with the Holy Spirit.
In Psalm 1. we see the blessed man
in fellowship with God. He is both
peaceful and fruitful. Yet he is neither
stoical nor fanatical. What are his
politics? They are to be found in
Psalm 2. We see his eye fixed on
Zion’s King. This is God’s remedy for
pessimism. This is divine optimism.
What is his sheet anchor? It is the
law of the Lord in which he meditates
day and night; the heathen rage, the
nations imagine a vain thing, but his
delight is in the law of the Lord,
whilst his politics are summed up in
three pregnant words, “Kiss the Son.”
And as one enters into the spirit of these
scenes, how infinitesimally small are all
other considerations. To stand well
with all nations, potentates, churches,
or individuals, becomes as nothing, and
to stand well with the One who shall
sit on Zion’s hill becomes—what it
really is—everything.

Oh, blessed Ezekiel, called Ben-Adam
(Son of Man) eighty times—Daniel a
few times only—yet each greatly
beloved. Each had visions of God in
far different circumstances. One a
captive, the other amid the splendour
of an Imperial court. O, happy John;
weeping as he sees the declension of
Ephesus, the persecutions of Smyrna,
the worldliness of Pergamos, the apos-
tasy of Thyatira, the formalism of
Sardis, the weakness of Philadelphia,
and the Christ-rejecting of Laodicea,
yet rejoicing as he sees the twenty-four
occupied seats in glory. Oh, may we
also have visions of God. The rainbow
promise has one end on the throne
of glory and the other on the study
or, who shall object, the kitchen
for the matter of that.

In Ezekiel’s case the visions of chap-
ter 1. become the experience of chapter
2., and there we see Ezekiel with
the vision of God in his eye, the Spirit
in his heart, and the Word of God in
his hand. “Eat this roll,” was the
word, and as the Word of God was
incorporated with his system, the seer
himself is incorporated with God’s plan.

In these few meditations we are in
the presence of a glorious fact. Christ
on the throne of the universe is the grave
of pessimism. And this gives birth to
an inspiring thought—

THE ULTIMATE TRIUMPH OF
CHRIST.

“He must reign until He hath put
all enemies under His feet” (1 Cor.
15. 25).

Ezekiel saw the Shekinah glory
departing from Israel; Daniel the rise
and fall of Gentile rule; and John the
failure of the churches as light-bearer;
yet the glory is with God. Heaven’s
rule has begun. The Kingdom of God
is among us, for the Spirit of God is
casting out devils and building up a new
creation. A glorious optimism is ours,
but only to faith, for the Kingdom
is in tribulation, patience and mystery,
since “we see not yet all things put
under Him,” but “we see Jesus
crowned with glory and honour.” We
see God’s King seated on Zion’s hill:
the Man of Ezekiel, the Son of Man of Dan. 7. 13, and the One upon the throne in John's vision (Rev. 4. 2).

Ezekiel is borne along in spiritual vision until he is awake amid the glories of the Jerusalem of prophecy, shouting, "The Lord is there."

David closes his ravishing Psalm of Millennial peace and splendours, declaring that his prayers are ended. Daniel sees the glorious fifth Kingdom of Messiah rise out of the utter destruction of Gentile rule: all earthly powers carried away like chaff, whilst the stone cut out without hands becomes a great mountain and fills the whole earth. John is carried on through coming scenes of terrible delusion and fiery judgment until he hears a great voice out of heaven saying, "Behold the Tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and God Himself shall be with them and be their God. And there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain, for the former things shall pass away."

Let us therefore, brethren, be of good cheer. The port is in view, nothing need alarm us. Shoals of error, sunken rocks of heresy, the narrows of persecution, the hellgate of rationalism, the bewitching lures of modernism, the contrary winds of Roman Catholicism and Anglo-Catholicism, yea, the very gates of hell and seed of Satan shall be made—

THE LAUGHING-STOCK OF HEAVEN.

For "He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh," and "The Lord shall have them in derision" (Ps. 2. 4).

God's right hand in the objective of faith's optimism.

"ABLE TO SYMPATHIZE."

"For we have not a high priest not able to sympathize with our infirmities, but tempted in all things in like manner, sin apart."—Heb. 4. 15 (N.T.).

HE is able to sympathize. Do you know the meaning of that word? It is to feel with; a sympathizer is one who comes near to you and enters intelligently into your distress, and shares your feeling about it. But there is even more than that in the sympathy of our Lord Jesus, it is the most wonderful and only perfect balm for a broken heart and it has this peculiar quality, it quietens and soothes the spirit and it results in the distress or sorrow taking a secondary place in the thoughts and in Himself taking the first place, until the heart clings to Him, because He has become to it what He never was before; so we believe it was with Mary of Bethany. And such confidence in Him grows out of this experience, that whatever the sorrow may be, it will be left in His hands, and the mind will be stayed upon Him, for He will be seen to be greater than the sorrow.

Let there be no want of confidence, then, between your Lord and you. Tell Him of the trouble at home, of your anxiety about your child, your perplexity about the business and work, and the bitterness that only your own heart knows and that can only be told in sighs and tears. You will not weary Him, for He loves you too well for that, and "He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might He increaseth strength." He knows everything about you, but it is not enough that He knows by omniscience, He asks you to tell Him as though He knew nothing. He wants you to wait upon Him. Try this, put Him to the test, He will not fail you.
NOTES ON THE SECOND COMING. (J. T. Mawson.)

"To Them that look for Him shall He appear."

"Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many: and unto them that look for Him shall He appear the second time without sin unto salvation"—Hebrews 9. 28.

This passage is often used to prove that only those Christians who are looking for the Lord when He comes for His saints will be taken, and that all others will be left behind to go through the great tribulation. We want to show that it teaches nothing of the sort.

It is the APPEARING of our Lord Jesus that is here spoken of and not His coming into the air to catch up His saints according to 1 Thess. 4. 16. 17. The latter event will take place first, the appearing will follow.

While the Epistle to the Hebrews sets forth Christian doctrine, room is left here and there for the blessing of Israel as a people on earth. Several instances of this could be cited, but chapter 8. is a very clear and definite one. The covenant there spoken of is certainly not made with Christians, but is the new covenant which is still to be made with the house of Israel.

Our verse, we believe, has Israel in view. The Lord appeared once in their midst; not then to deliver them from the yoke of their enemies, but to be offered to bear the sins of many. THE SINS OF MANY remind us of the Matthew aspect of the Lord’s Supper, which is decidedly different to the way it is presented in Luke, which has the present period in view. But He is to appear the second time. The thought is the appearing of the High Priest after he had taken the blood of the atonement into the Holiest. Earnestly the people looked for his appearing; they had no assurance that propitiation for their sins had been made and accepted until he did appear.

That is the position, the remnant of Israel, full of sorrow for their sins (see Zechariah 12. 10-14) will wail amid the miseries of the Tribulation for the appearing of their great Saviour. Their faith will not be disappointed; as they look for Him He will appear the second time without sin unto salvation, that is, He will not appear to take up the question of their sins, but to show them that He did that once when He was wounded for their transgressions (Isaiah 53.), and to bring them salvation.

We who have been redeemed of the Lord and are part of His church are not waiting to know whether salvation is ours or not until the Lord comes out of the Holiest; He has gone in in the power of His own blood, and we have gone in with Him, we have “boldness to enter into the Holiest by the blood of Jesus” (chap. 10. 19).

If you would not be blown over by temptation, you must be ballasted by grace.

Why do not men bless the Lord more? Surely His benefits are more than any of us can remember, but we ought not to forget them all.

“When thou hast thanked thy God for every blessing sent, What time will there remain for murmurs or lament?”

Christ sends none away empty but those who are full of themselves.
THE DISCIPLE WHOM JESUS LOVED.

Every true believer loves the Lord. Peter, speaking of the Lord to believers, can say, “Whom having not seen ye love.” In the presence of the proud Pharisee, the Lord can say of the woman who kissed His feet, “She loved much.” Thus Scripture recognizes this love and the Lord delights in it. Moreover, love to the Lord carries with it the promise of many blessings, not the least being the special realization of the presence of the Lord and of the Father (John 14. 21–24).

Yet Scripture recognizes that love to the Lord may be found in very varied measures in different disciples on different occasions. The love of Mary of Bethany, who anointed the Lord with “the very precious ointment,” was surely greater than that of the indignant disciples who said, “To what purpose is this waste?” The love of Mary of Magdala, who “stood without at the sepulchre weeping,” exceeded, on that occasion, the love of the disciples who “went away again to their own home.”

Moreover, our love may wax and wane. Under pressure the love of many may “wax cold.” In the presence of the allurements of the world, this love may become dim, as in the case of a believer of whom the Apostle Paul can say, he “hath forsaken me, having loved this present world.”

Thus while love to the Lord is very precious in His sight and to be cherished and desired by the believer, yet, it is clear, we cannot trust in a love that is so liable to change. The love that we alone can rest in must be the love that knows no change—the love that abides—the love of Christ for His own.

“Our souls thro’ many changes go: His love no change can ever know.”

It is the realization and enjoyment of the love of Christ that awakens our love to Him. “We love Him,” says the apostle, “because He first loved us.” Hence our love to Christ will be according to the measure in which we realize His love to us. Would we then love the Lord with more singleness of heart, let us not turn in upon our own hearts and think of our love to Him, but seek to delight our souls in His love to us.

The effect of the soul thus delighting itself in the love of Christ is blessedly set forth in connection with the Apostle John, in the closing scenes of the Lord’s life. While, in contrast, the same scenes depict the sorrowful effects of confidence in our love to the Lord, in the case of the Apostle Peter. Both disciples loved the Lord with a true and deep affection beyond that of most, for it led them to leave all and follow Him. One disciple, however, trusted in his love to the Lord, while the other rested in the Lord’s love to him. This is the outstanding difference between these two men, so often found in close association in these last scenes.

When the Lord, in His wonderful grace, washes the disciples’ feet, Peter can ask, “Lord, dost Thou wash my feet?” And when he learns that without the feet-washing there can be no part with Christ, immediately he exclaims with a glow of ardent love, “Not my feet only, but also my hands and my head.” A little later, with genuine love to the Lord, he can say, “I am ready to go with Thee, both into prison and to death”; and again, “Though all men shall be offended because of Thee, yet will I never be offended.” Then at the betrayal scene, Peter, in his ardent love for the Lord, drew his sword in defence of his Master. Thus, both by words and deeds, he seems to say, “I am the man that
loves the Lord.’ In contrast to Peter, the Apostle John says, as it were, ‘I am the man that the Lord loves,’ five times, in these last scenes, he describes himself as ‘the disciple whom Jesus loved.’ Blessed, indeed, that His love should have so wrought with us that we should love Him, but far more wonderful that He should love us. In this wonderful love John delighted, and on this boundless love he rested.

THE UPPER ROOM.
(John 13. 21-25.)

The first occasion on which John is called ‘the disciple whom Jesus loved’ is in the Upper Room, as described in John 13. What a scene it is for the heart to contemplate! Jesus is there with a love that can never break down, for ‘having loved His own which were in the world, He loved them unto the end.’ John is there delighting himself in the love of Christ, resting his head on the bosom of Jesus, and describing himself as the disciple whom Jesus loved. Peter is there with real and ardent love for the Lord, but trusting in his own love to the Lord rather than resting in the Lord’s love to him. Lastly, Judas is there, with no love to the Lord—with the bag at his side and the devil in his heart, ready to betray the Lord and pass into the long dark night.

In Jesus we see how very near His love has brought Him to men like ourselves, inasmuch as John can rest his head on the bosom of the One who dwelt in the bosom of the Father. In John we see what the heart of the Saviour can do for a sinner, bringing him to perfect rest in perfect love. In Judas we see what the heart of the sinner can do with the Saviour—betray Him, with every profession of love, for thirty pieces of silver.

The feet washing is over and the time has come for the Lord to utter His farewell words; but for the moment His spirit is troubled by the presence of the betrayer. The Lord unburdens His heart to His disciples, saying, ‘One of you shall betray Me.’ Immediately the disciples look one on another, doubting of whom He spake. Looking one on another will never solve difficulties that arise amongst believers. We must look to the Lord, but looking to the Lord demands nearness to the Lord, and in the circle of the Upper Room, the disciple who was nearest to the Lord, was the one whose feet had been in the hands of the Lord, whose head was resting on the bosom of the Lord, and whose heart was delighting in the love of the Lord, who can describe himself as ‘one of His disciples whom Jesus loved.’ Peter, the man who was trusting in his love to the Lord, was not near enough to the Lord to learn His mind, he must needs beckon to John.

Thus we learn that nearness to the Lord and intimacy with the Lord, is the happy portion of the one who is resting upon the Lord’s love.

THE CROSS.
(John 19. 25-27.)

The second occasion on which John is described as the disciple whom Jesus loved, brings us to the cross. The mother of Jesus is present with other devoted women, and one disciple is there—the disciple whom Jesus loved. Where is now the disciple that rested in his love to Christ? Alas, away in some lonely spot with a broken heart, weeping tears of bitter shame. Where is the disciple who rests in the love of Christ? As at the Upper Room, so now at the cross, as near to Christ as he can be. And what is the result? He becomes a vessel fit and meet for the Master’s use. The mother of Jesus
is committed to his care. Resting in the Lord’s love fits for service.

THE RESURRECTION.
(John 20. 1-4.)

For the third time, John is presented as the disciple whom Jesus loved on the resurrection morning, and again is found in association with Peter. The two disciples, learning from the women that the sepulchre is empty, hasten to the tomb. Then follows the record of what might appear to be insignificant detail, namely that Peter starts first, that both disciples run together, and finally that the disciple whom Jesus loved did outrun Peter. Nothing that the Spirit of God has recorded can be unimportant, though, as in this case, it may be difficult to seize the import of a particular incident. Yet, if we may be allowed to spiritualize this scene, we may learn, what is surely true, that while the man of ardent nature may often take the lead in some spiritual enterprise, it is the man who is leaning on the love of the Lord that finally takes the lead.

THE SEA OF TIBERIAS.
(John 21. 1-7.)

In this instructive scene Peter and John again have a prominent place, and for the fourth time John is referred to as the disciple whom Jesus loved (verse 7). As usual the energetic and impulsive Peter takes the lead. He goes back to his old occupation. He does not ask others to do so, but simply says, “I go a fishing.” However, under the influence of his dominating personality, “They say unto him, we also go with thee.” They went forth, therefore, and toiled all night, and for their pains caught nothing.

When the morning came, “Jesus stood on the shore: but the disciples knew not that it was Jesus.” Having by a question shown them the uselessness of efforts put forth without His direction, He proceeds to show how rich the results when acting under His control. Immediately the disciple whom Jesus loved perceives, “It is the Lord.” The one who is trusting in the Lord’s love is the one who has quick spiritual perception.

"WHEN THEY HAD DINED."
(John 21. 15-22.)

Following upon the scene at the lakeside, the disciples find when they come to land, a fire of coals, fish laid thereon and bread, and an invitation to come and dine. Rich provision had been made for their needs, apart from all their efforts.

When they had dined we have the closing scene in which again Peter and John have a special place, and for the fifth time John is described as “the disciple whom Jesus loved” (verse 20). First we have the Lord’s tender dealings with the man that trusted in his own love. Peter, who had said he was ready to go with the Lord to prison and death, had found that he was not ready to stand before the simple question of a serving maid. But of the actual denial, no word is said in this touching scene. The solemn breakdown had been dealt with between the Lord and His servant in an interview with which no stranger shall intermeddle. All we know of that interview is the statement of the Eleven, “The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon,” confirmed long after by the Apostle Paul, when he wrote to the Corinthians that the risen Christ “was seen of Cephas then of the twelve.” Wonderful love that with tender mercy gave the first interview to the most failing disciple.

If, however, in the first interview his conscience was relieved, in this scene his heart is restored. There the
Lord had dealt with the outward failure, here He deals with the inward root that caused the failure. The root was confidence in his love to Christ, and the threefold question thoroughly exposes this root. It is as if the Lord said, "After all that has happened, do you still maintain, Peter, that you love Me more than these?" With the second question, the Lord says nothing of the other disciples; it is simply now, "Lovest thou Me?" With the third question, the Lord, using a different word, asks, "Art thou attached to Me?" (N. Trans.). By his third answer Peter puts himself entirely into the Lord's hands, saying, "Lord, thou knowest all things; Thou knowest that I am attached to Thee." It is as if Peter said, "I cannot trust my love, or talk of my love, or what I will do, but Lord, You know all things, and You know my heart, I will leave You to estimate my love, and tell me what to do."

No longer is Peter telling the Lord in self-confidence what he is ready to do, but it is the Lord, in infinite grace, telling his restored disciple what He will enable him to do. The Lord as it were, says, "You no longer trust in your love to do great things for Me, you have left it to Me; then go forth and

"Feed My sheep" (verse 17),
"Glorify God" (verse 19), and
"Follow Me" (verse 19).

The Lord seems to say, "Time was when you thought you loved Me more than these other disciples, now go forth and show your love by feeding my sheep that I love. You thought to glorify yourself above others by prison and death, now go forth to prison and death to glorify God, and when all is over down here, still follow Me far into the depths of glory where I am going." May we not say that not the least wonderful of all the wonders of the Lord's life, is the way He takes with a failing disciple?

But what of John? "Peter, turning about, seeth the disciple whom Jesus loved following." The man who trusted in his own love and had broken down, needed restoring grace, and the exhortation, "Follow Me." Not so the man who was resting in the love of the Lord, for he was "following."

Thus, in the disciple whom Jesus loved, we see set forth the blessed results that follow for those who rest in the love of the Lord; such

Dwell in nearness to, and intimacy with, the Lord;
Are ready to be used in the service of the Lord;
Will make spiritual progress;
Will have spiritual discernment; and
Will follow close to the Lord.

May it be our happy portion, like the bride of the Song, to say, "I am my Beloved's, and His desire is toward me." If we can say little of our love to Him, we can safely boast of His love to us. It is the privilege of the youngest believer to say, "I am a disciple that Jesus loves," and the oldest and most advanced disciple can say nothing greater, for all blessing is found in His all-embracing love, that led Him to die for us that we too might go forth, in our small way, and feed His sheep, glorify God, and follow Him into the glory where He has gone.

She prayed, who touched the hem of Christ's garment; ay, and was answered, too, although no word escaped her lips.
A CALL.

WHAT kind of response could Garibaldi, the Italian patriot, expect to receive when, during his stormy, dangerous, and to all appearance losing struggle, he issued his famous call for volunteers in the following words:

"Whoever chooses to follow me will be received amongst my own men, all I ask from them is a heart full of love for their country.

"They will have no pay and no rest.

"They will get bread and water when chance may supply them.

"Whoever likes not this may stay behind, for once outside the city of Rome, every step will be one step nearer death."

What could be the character and the outlook of those who responded to such a terrifying invitation, or subscribed to such extraordinary conditions?

While their leader asked but for one thing—love of their country—there must have been intense loyalty to him, confidence in him, and love for him, too; fearlessness both of danger and death, together with a perfect assurance of the justice and the ultimate triumph of his cause!

Hard as were the terms, the response was immediate! An army of invincible Ironsides, daring to every foe, dismayed by no danger, and shrinking from no exertion, followed their trusted leader.

Such calls are not by any means unique, they have been made all down the ages. Such was Gideon's to Israel. His noble three hundred forsook their own affairs, scorned every opportunity for self-aggrandizement, and refused ease and comfort, lest "the sword of the Lord and of Gideon" should be checked in its victorious searching out of the Lord's enemies. They never turned their backs till triumph crowned their cause.

David's mighty men were of the same order. Valiant, even fierce, they considered no odds too formidable or difficulties too great when his interests were challenged. Whether it was but a cup of cold water from the well of Bethlehem, or a parcel of lentils, or the kingdom and the crown that were in question, no sacrifice was too great to gratify his desires or to defend his rights.

When the Lord Jesus called one and another to follow Him, He promised no creature comfort or privilege, no ease, promotion, or present gain. They were called to leave property, occupation, wealth, and loved ones, with nothing promised but privation, a cross and death!

And none that were called hesitated to follow Him, for while they were deprived of all that is valued in the world, they had that which surpassed all else, the companionship of the Son of God. Infinitely blessed privilege! and though unknown outside that circle, they had an assurance of the approval of the Father and the promise of treasure in heaven. This recompense was far beyond the short-lived pleasures that could be found elsewhere.

The Apostle Paul, in his Epistles to his youthful and delicate child in the faith, held out no other prospect than that offered by the Lord Jesus. He laboured and suffered reproach, was imprisoned and deserted by those that should have succoured him, but being confident that the issue would be blessed and yield an eternal meed of praise, he urged young Timothy to be a partaker of such afflictions and
assured him that persecution would be the lot of those who lived godly in Christ Jesus. He who had suffered the loss of all things, encouraged Timothy to follow the same course.

What can, then, be the secret spring of this call that tended to create fear, rather than following? It is that the spell of attractiveness that the present world exercises over the minds of men in every sphere of its activities, whether in art, science, literature, commerce, politics, will soon be broken by the intervention of God in judgment; its hollowness exposed, and its futility acknowledged; it will vanish into nothingness before the breath of the Almighty, while that for which His followers have suffered, will most certainly be universally owned to have the approval of God, and those that have espoused it will for ever share in the glory and distinctions that Christ has won, by his pursuing an identical pathway.

But to-day that voice is still to be heard. It will continue to sound till the Lord claims all to whom it could be addressed. “If any man serve Me let him follow Me, and where I am there shall also My servant be.” Has it reached you, fellow Christian? Have you heeded it? Then what is your attitude towards it? At the moment of uttering that appeal the Lord was going on to that which so troubled His holy soul that He prayed the Father to let the cup pass from Him. So terrible was the anticipation of the griefs that awaited Him, that the ground was wet with the drops of blood that fell from His brow. It was an hour of bitter amazement and distress, when the waves and the billows of the wrath of God were about to break forth in their full tide upon Him. Yet He faced it! He bore it! He triumphed over it! Ten thousand thanks for that glorious victory, the value of which will fill heaven with songs and joys for ever! And what sustained Him through that conflict? It was for the joy that was set before Him that He endured the cross and despised the shame. It was the full confidence in the outcome.

His call is to all who would serve him. If He went into death He would have them bear in the body the dying of Jesus that the life also of Jesus might be manifested in their mortal flesh. If there be loss here, all is gain there; if sorrow and tribulation here, joys of the Father’s house await there; if misunderstanding now, every right thought and deed will be appreciated then, and the greatest and most fascinating things of time will yield their place to the display of the wonders of the depths of the love of Christ, of Him, who came not to do His own will, but the will of Him that sent Him.

SATISFIED.

“I shall be satisfied.”—Ps. 17. 15.

I SHALL be satisfied,
But not while here below,
Where every earthly cup of bliss
Is wisely mixed with woe.
When this frail form shall be
For ever laid aside,
And in His likeness I awake
I SHALL BE SATISFIED.

“He . . . shall be satisfied.”—Isa. 53. 11.

He shall be satisfied
When all He died to win,
By loving-kindness gently drawn,
Are safely gathered in.
When in the glory bright
He views His glorious bride,
Sees of the travail of His soul,
HE SHALL BE SATISFIED.
“A LITTLE SANCTUARY.”

A Word of Solace for the Sick, the Secluded, the Solitary, the Sad.

Therefore say, Thus saith the Lord God: Although I have cast them far off among the heathen, and although I have scattered them among the countries, yet will I be to them as A LITTLE SANCTUARY in the countries where they shall come.”—Ezekiel 11. 16.

WHEREVER we turn in the Holy Scriptures we find words of comfort for saints in all their varied circumstances and exercises. We are not surprised at this when we remember that our God is “the God of all comfort” (2 Cor. 1. 3); that trial has ever been the portion of those who belong to Him; and that to minister solace to them has ever been the delight of His heart.

In this connection the setting of our text is most interesting. Jehovah had some very serious things to say to His people. Ezekiel exclaimed: “Ah, Lord God! Wilt Thou make a full end of the remnant of Israel?” (v. 13), and there came the beautiful answer of which our verse forms part. There would still be a remnant; they would be scattered, and would share in the suffering of those upon whom God’s hand would be heavy; but, in the midst of it all, He would be to them “as A LITTLE SANCTUARY.” They would have His support; they would be in His secret; they would be brought back to the land; He would give them “ONE HEART;” put within them “A NEW SPIRIT;” they would walk in His statutes; they should be recognized as His people; and He would be known as their God’ (17–20). So much for the interpretation. Now shall we venture to make an application and draw solace for our own heart. We wish to address ourselves specially to those indicated at the head of this paper.

I.—THE SICK.

To what an immense number of God’s dear children does that term apply! Young and old, rich and poor so far as things temporal are concerned. Some altogether confined to bed who spend weary days and sleepless nights. Others whose case is not quite so bad but who cannot leave their room. They see many of their fellow Christians in good health, enjoying the privilege of being gathered around the blessed Lord to remember Him; to wait upon Him in prayer; or to read His precious Word; as well as going to proclaim or to listen to “the glad tidings.” It may be that sometimes they say to themselves, if not to others: “Why am I deprived of all these things?” Satan would like if he could to produce a murmur in the heart and put it upon the lip. “Why such suffering? Why such helplessness? Why may I not taste the pleasure of the Sanctuary?” The Lord does not chide if such questions do arise, “for He knoweth our frame; He remembereth that we are dust” (Ps. 103. 14). What a gracious Lord is ours! Dear invalid brother and sister, He whispers in your ear: “I will be as A LITTLE SANCTUARY.” Precluded as you are from entering in company with those whom He has sanctified into the hallowed sanctuary of His presence, He comes to you, that He may give you to know the retreat, the rest, the refreshment of it, that you may learn His mind, be in the current of His thoughts, bask in
the warmth of His love, drink of the river of His pleasures and lay before Him the tribute of Spirit-begotten worship. Here then is a downy pillow upon which to rest your head, a haven of rest, a Word of true solace, "I will be as A LITTLE SANCTUARY."

II.—THE SECLUDED.

These are not sick, but by reason of advancing years and the infirmities that accompany same they are unable to go out. Year follows year, sometimes they get weary of the journey and ask, "When will the Lord call me home?" At times they say, "I am just a useless log, I cannot do anything for the Lord, therefore I may as well be away."

Rest assured, dear friend, if your surmise were correct, you would be away, for the Lord does not keep "useless logs" here. "But what can I do?" it may be asked. You can, in the first place, hear Him say: "I will be as A LITTLE SANCTUARY."

He will draw near to you, just where you are, He will attract you into the Sanctuary of His presence. There you will forget all about yourself. You will enter into His mind as to His saints, His thoughts as to His varied interests here, and, before you realize it, you will find yourself PRAYING! and PRAYING!! and PRAYING!!! for all that is dear to His heart.

The beloved saints all over the world, and the many who love to serve Him in many different ways, owe a debt to those who live and pray in seclusion that only the Judgment seat of Christ will reveal. The unsurpassed service of Epaphras is one open to every believer, and we rejoice to know many secluded ones who engage in it. He prayed for his Colossian brethren that they "might stand perfect and complete in all the will of God" (Col. 4. 12). What a privilege! What a service! What a God! Go on, dear secluded brother and sister! There is sufficient to keep you praying all the day and every day, and how very grateful will His approval be "in that day."

III.—THE SOLITARY.

These are not sick or secluded, but they find themselves in some distant outpost, sometimes as a direct result of the Lord’s leading. In other cases, through circumstances entirely unforeseen, oftentimes their thoughts travel back to the land of their birth, the home of their childhood, the fellowship with fellow-believers in worship and in service in days that are past, and they feel solitary. It may be they find themselves at times asking, "Why?" The echo seems to answer, "Why?" and just then they feel still more solitary. Natural links are ever dear; the communion of saints is of priceless value; the service of the sanctuary is indescribably sweet. Yet, dear solitary brother and sister, in the far-flung reaches of the British Empire whither you may have gone to earn your bread, in the dark places of the earth to which you have been led in order to work for our peerless Master, the Lord hath need of you. Wherever you are you can live Christ and you can "Speak of Jesus—of that love, Passing all bounds of human thought."

You can be the means of attracting souls to Christ as you give Him the first place, do your work, conduct your business, treat your fellows as a true believer should, and you, as well as those who have devoted their whole life to His service, can count upon His promise. Dear, solitary brother and sister, He has honoured you by entrusting to you a difficult position and He would encourage you by saying: "I will be as A LITTLE SANCTUARY."
IV.—THE SAD.

These are not confined to the sick, the secluded and the solitary. How many fine homes have "a skeleton in the cupboard;" how may smiling faces hide sad hearts! We are living in serious times. In this land there is unemployment on all hands, and where work can be found, wages are low and living is dear. Business men find themselves in straitened circumstances. In how many Christian homes parents who are devoted to the Lord mourn because their sons and daughters have thrown off all restraint, and have plunged into the world with all that means! Daily they carry a heavy burden and their heart bleeds. Some have sorrows of which they cannot speak to their nearest and dearest. What are they to do? Dear sad brother and sister, listen to that "still small voice"—how gently, how tenderly, how lovingly it speaks. Listen: "I will be as A LITTLE SANCTUARY." What does it mean? Just this: there is One to whom you can turn and you can tell Him everything. When the disciples of John lost their Master, they "took up the body, and buried it, and went and told Jesus" (Matt. 14. 12). It seemed the most natural thing to do—did it not?

When "Jesus Himself drew near, and went" with the two sorrowing disciples to Emmaus, having inquired why they were sad they told Him everything and He made them glad. Will you avail yourself of the Lord Jesus in this way? Get into the sanctuary of His presence, pour out your heart before Him, tell into His unwearyed ear the tale of your sadness, and remain there till you become possessed of that of which He spoke as "My peace," "My joy." Oh how real! how precious it is to hear Him say: "I will be as A LITTLE SANCTUARY," and to avail ourselves of the benefit that that offers to us. He would say therefore, to the sick, the secluded, the solitary, the sad, to all who read these lines, let us seek to apprehend the meaning of of His Word. "I will be as A LITTLE SANCTUARY;" let us try to appreciate the matchless love that is behind it; let us gratify His heart who thus spake, and who thus speaks to-day and then let us sing:—

"Jesus! before Thy face we fall,
Our Lord, our life, our hope, our all;
For we have nowhere else to flee,
No sanctuary, Lord, but Thee.

"Through time, with all its changing scenes,
And all the grief that intervenes,
Let this support each fainting heart,
That Thou our Sanctuary art."

THE GOD OF PATIENCE.

God is the God of patience (of patience how great with us all!) and, blessed be His Name, of comfort too. What a name to give to God, perpetually bearing with us, with our stupid, ignorant, and often inconsistent lives, and occupying Himself with all our little trials to comfort us! He consoles those who are cast down, never withdraws His eyes from the righteous, is patient with us even when we are impatient with Him, and comforts us in grace. So have we to walk like-minded one toward another, and receive one another as Christ received us—weak in faith as we were—that we might be to the glory of God.

Prayer should be pillared on promises and pinnacled with praises.

"It must be great mercy, or no mercy, for little mercy will never serve my turn."—Bunyan.
ANSWERS DELAYED DENIED

On a summer's evening, nigh two years ago, I walked into a meeting for prayer. I had longed for such a meeting all the day, for I had thought of those words, "They that wait on the Lord shall renew their strength," and I hoped, when I found this meeting, that that would be my experience, for I felt the need of it. It turned out to be a small meeting, smaller than I had anticipated, for there were only seven or eight persons present, some young, some old and tired looking. The singing was flat and slow, and the prayers disappointing and dull, and I had begun to wonder whether the evening was being wasted, when an old man of more than eighty years spoke up and said to us, "My friends, I should like to share with you a great joy that I have got to-day. I must tell you that sixty-five years ago I knelt by my dying mother's bed and she said to me, 'You are the only one in the family that knows the Lord Jesus as your Saviour. I commend your father and your brothers to you. Pray for them every day until they are saved.' This morning I got this letter from my last remaining brother, and I will read it to you." Then very quietly, he read, "Dear, dear brother, I have the very best of news for you, I have yielded myself at last to God." And the letter, in the simplest language, told how it all came about, and was full of thankfulness to the brother who for sixty-five years had persevered in prayer for him and watched for his salvation.

You will not need to be told that that simple story transformed that little prayer meeting, and that it ceased to be dull and desultory. Eyes became moist and hearts were moved and those who had kept their seats before now bowed their knees. There was thanksgiving first, and then definite and earnest prayer, prayer with a purpose in it, for here was evidence that it was not in vain to pray, and though the answer be long delayed in God's wise ways, yet at last it comes.

Yes, there came into every heart in that little gathering, the consciousness that we were in the very presence of God, that we had received in the old man's story a gracious admonition for our slackness in prayer, and an assurance that God does hear our cries and will answer them at the right time.

We do well when we pray, but sometimes we grow weary when the answer seems long delayed, and we suppose that our prayers have not been heard; and some have even thought that God did not care, and that their matters were too small for His notice. But what is the truth? For sixty-five years one golden vial in heaven had been filling with this dear man's prayers, and as sweet odours they had been to God (Rev. 5. 8). And how rich was the answer when it did come, not only for the one whose daily cries had gone into God's ear, but for us also who shared his joy, and for you, too, who are likely to be discouraged because you have prayed so long with no apparent answer, if this simple incident encourages you to continue in prayer with thanksgiving.

Repentance for the past is never far from the Christian's hope for the future. It is the tear that falls from the eye of faith at the remembrance of pardoning grace. It is the continual turning of the back upon self-will that leads in the way of death that the feet may tread the path of God's will that ends in glory.
VARIOUS WAYS IN WHICH THE WORK OF CHRIST IS VIEWED IN SCRIPTURE.  
(JAMES BOYD.)


The great subject in the ministry of the Apostle John, is the life eternal come into this world, in the eternal Word become flesh. This life was promised before the ages of time, and in the promise of it no other creatures but men seem to have been in view: “In Him was life, and the life was the light of men.” But though the promise was before time began, there could not be the manifestation of it until man was found on the platform of responsibility a fallen being, having previously been tested in every way that divine wisdom could invent, and proved to be un mendably evil, in his very nature enmity against God. Then, and not till then, did this purpose of God come into manifestation, the word of which is now declared in the proclamation of the gospel.

Therefore the brazen serpent comes late in the history of the journeyings of the children of Israel from the brick kilns to Gilgal. And we may rest assured that every item of His ways with them as recorded is deeply instructive for us, and for that very purpose has it been placed on the page of Scripture. “Whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope” (Rom. 15. 4).

In Egypt we have the blood-sprinkled lintel and two side-posts of the houses of the children of Israel, showing how God could pass over their firstborn in the execution of His righteous judgment manifested in smiting the Egyptians. Death lay upon the Israelites as justly as upon the Egyptians, and God is no respector of persons. All were alike sinners. But the blood of the pascal lamb on the lintel and door post was in the sight of the destroying angel as the blood of the doomed sinner whom he was out to slay. In every such case the judgment he was executing had preceded him, and therefore he passed over that house. He could do nothing else.

In the Red Sea we come to the salvation of the Lord: Christ delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification (Rom. 4. 24, 25). The people are out of the dominion of the oppressor, and brought to God in the wilderness. They witness the complete discomfiture and end of Satan in that character, although in another aspect he may still prove a powerful foe.

After this the people had the bitter water to drink: that is the application of the death of Christ to the will of sinful flesh. This we cannot drink until we bring the cross of Christ into it, who took all the bitterness out of it by bearing the judgment of it in His love to us. When we can say: “Who loved me, and gave Himself for me,” not only is the bitterness gone, but the water becomes unutterably sweet.

The sprinkled lintel and the Red Sea are connected with the deliverance of the people from Pharaoh, the oppressor; the bitter water, and, I may say, the smitten rock, with our journey through the desert; the brazen serpent, the springing well, and the Jordan, with our entrance into the land. At Gilgal the reproach of Egypt is rolled away. For us this means that as dead and risen with Christ, the body of the flesh is put off. Flesh has no entrance into
heavenly places. Were we actually in the heavenlies this would present no difficulty, for no longer could we connect ourselves with sinful flesh; but as we have only got this position in Christ, and are still practically in a complex state, partakers of both the life of flesh and the life of Christ, we can only by the power of the Spirit take our true position as dead to the whole order in which we once lived, and now only alive in the risen Christ. In Romans we are to take up the attitude of dead to sin and alive to God in Christ, for we are there viewed as still alive in the world. But in Colossians, where we have Gilgal, we are not alive in the world, nor shall we be until Christ, who is our life, appears, and we appear with Him in glory. Romans 6. is the bitter water, Colossians is Gilgal and circumcision. But I come back to the brazen serpent.

In John 3. the true state of things comes vividly to light. The subject of the chapter begins at the twenty-third verse of chapter two. To those who believed in His name the Lord does not trust, not because He knew not the kind of people He had to deal with, but because He knew all men, and required no testimony regarding man; for He knew what was in man. He may have a fair exterior; his unbelief may have given way before the evidence furnished by the signs wrought for the blessing of men, and a kind of human confidence in the report that had reached them when they were slaves in Egypt, nor for the innumerable mercies they daily experienced at His hand. At the slightest grievance that beset their path they broke out into murmurs against Moses and Aaron; and now when nearing the end of their journey they lift up their rebel voices against God Himself. Their forty years in the desert were one long day of provocation.

“And the people spake against God and against Moses, Wherefore have ye brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? for there is no bread, neither is there any water; and our soul loatheth this light bread.” Their increase in the wickedness and boldness of rebellion is evidenced by their attack upon the God who had borne the burden of the whole thankless congregation for forty years. Where, except in a mere handful of the people, can we see the slightest trait of the divine nature? How justly in the song of Moses is their state described! He says: “They have corrupted themselves, their spot is not the spot of His children: they are a perverse and crooked generation.” It is better to leave out “the spot” in this verse. It is in italics, and therefore not in the original. “Not His children’s is their roof-tree is there one stone that will not, at the least ungentle usage, crumble into powder. Man is utterly undone and lost. There must in his case be a completely new beginning. With him there must be a fresh start, and that from the very outset.

Though by great signs and wonders the Israelites were brought out of Egypt, and though for forty years they were fed and tenderly cared for in their wilderness journey, they made no progress in the knowledge of God, nor did they ever exhibit the least sign of thankfulness for the deliverance that He had granted to them when they were slaves in Egypt, nor for the innumerable mercies they daily experienced at His hand. The slightest grievance that beset their path they broke out into murmurs against Moses and Aaron; and now when nearing the end of their journey they lift up their rebel voices against God Himself.
spot" is best. His children have no spot. Spot is blemish. Their spot branded them as not of God. I have said, His children are without spot (Song 4. 7; 2 Peter 3. 14), and thus shall they be presented, when the day of presentation comes.

In the fiery serpents that were sent among the people in answer to their murmurings, the evil of their fleshly nature is indicated. “By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned” (Rom. 5. 12). “The carnal mind (mind of the flesh) is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God” (Rom. 8. 7, 8). The bite of the serpents brought death: “Death by sin.” Man must learn what he is—a fallen, sinful being.

And the remedy is not the removal of the serpents. The people request Moses to pray Jehovah for this. But this cannot be. To take away evil flesh would only be to cast into destruction the whole human race, for evil flesh is all that man as a child of Adam is. To condemn all that is evil, and to condemn it in the judgment of himself, would be his eternal destruction, for out of that judgment there could be no recovery for him. God’s way is not the removal of the serpents through their destruction, but through the serpent of brass lifted up on a pole. This serpent represents in a typical way God’s judgment of sinful flesh. But that judgment is set forth in the Son of Man lifted up on the cross; for “As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up; that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”

The serpent Moses made was in the likeness of the serpent that bit the people, so was the Son of Man in the likeness of the flesh of sin. It was of brass, and brass is a type of the judgment of God against sin. The altar where the offerings were slain, and their bodies burned, was of brass. So also on the cross was the Son of Man under the judgment of the flesh of sin, abandoned by God, and being dealt with as sin deserved, though He Himself was altogether the delight of the heart of God. Had there been any taint of sin in Him He would have needed a saviour for Himself. But He was holy, spotless and undefiled, always delighting in, and doing, the will of the Father who had sent Him.

God having thus in the sight of the universe given expression to His holy abhorrence of sin, and also of His righteous judgment of it in His cross and sufferings, raised Him from the dead and crowned Him with glory and honour, proclaiming Him life-giving Head for all.

He that hath the Son hath this life. Like the bitten Israelite who, feeling the deadly virus in his blood, looks away from the wound to the serpent on the pole and experiences the joyful thrill of a healthy life enter into and wake up his spiritless being; so I, in a sense of my sinful and undone condition, look back upon that cross of the holy Saviour, and see Him there in the likeness of sinful flesh under a judgment to which He was not personally liable, but to which I well know I was, and by faith I lay my hand on the head of the victim in identification with Him, knowing that the awful judgment that He bore for me has made an end of all that I was in the flesh, and that in Him risen from the dead I live to God in His life, a life that never can be tainted by sin, nor can be overcome by the might of death.
There never was a moment in the history of the human race in which the evil of the flesh was so manifested as it was at the cross, and that was the moment in which it disappeared from the presence of God in His unsparing judgment, and never since that moment has it been regarded by God as in vital relations with Himself, nor shall it ever be. A man is now in relationship with God in Christ, and in Him only. The believer is in Christ, and “If any man be in Christ it is new creation. Old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new” (2 Cor. 5. 17). We have a new life, eternal life, the life of the last Adam.

Our relationships with God are new; Christ’s Father is our Father, and His God our God. And our relationships with one another are new. Christ’s brethren, all believers, are brethren together, and we know no man after the flesh. For us the old order has passed away; and though we still are in mortal bodies, we are only looking for the hour in which mortality shall be swallowed up of life. Then nothing shall remain of the old order, either in us or about us.

The love of God, the love of Christ—the love of Father and of Son—of which the cross is the perfect and eternal witness, is the light, and the atmosphere, and the glory in which our ransomed, restful, and rejoicing souls live, and shall live to the ages of the ages. There in that radiant, sinless, and cloudless sphere of spotless purity and unspeakable joy, surrounded with sons brought to glory, all in the image of the Son of His love, God shall have reached the end He had in view before He began His works of old. And there shall also be the Man of His counsels who glorified Him where He had been by His fallen and rebellious creature terribly dishonoured, restoring what He had never taken away, and laying a foundation in the blood of His cross on the basis of which such a sphere of glory could be brought about, and on which it for ever could remain unshakable. And He will be there with His Bride—the last Adam with His Eve—for whom in the knowledge-surpassing love of His heart He gave Himself.

ANSWERED QUESTIONS. (Concluded from p. 93.) (H. J. ViNe.)

We have seen Mary in various places, but perhaps the final mention of her in Scripture honours her Son, and rebukes the darkening superstitions of Mary’s worship more than any other. She had seen Jesus upon the cross, He had risen from among the dead, and He had ascended to the throne on high after He had instructed His own to wait for the gift of the Holy Spirit; and now “Mary the mother of Jesus with His brethren” were among the hundred and twenty that gave themselves to continual prayer as they waited (Acts 1. 14, 15). Mary thus expressed her full confidence in Jesus exalted to the right hand of God; nor was she herself an object before the hearts of those gathered together in prayer, but was in one accord with the others who were in dependence before the Lord. It is to be noticed, too, that His brethren also were present; and how confirming it is to find James afterwards speaking of himself as the Lord’s bondman (James 1. 1) when he addresses the twelve tribes.

He is not only David’s SON, however, and his Heir with full legal rights through Joseph and Israel’s Messiah Jehovah, but actually DAVID’S SEED as we have just seen. Moreover, He is ABRAHAM’S SEED, bringing for
faith the blessings of righteousness according to unconditional promise (Gal. 3. 16-19; Rom. 4. 1-3). Again, the defeat of Satan was to be brought to pass through the WOMAN'S SEED (Gen. 3. 15), so Jesus took part in blood and flesh that through death He might annul him in regard to the terror of death, setting the children of God free from its bondage, although this brings us also to the truth of the Son of Man in Hebrews 2. (the only place Paul so names the Lord), for it there says, "He does not indeed take hold of angels (by the hand), but He takes hold of the Seed of Abraham" (16. N.T.). This also brings us to the truth of Christ's Priesthood as the following verses show. Israel's high priest must be of Aaron's line, and that is the only earthly priesthood recognized of God. Even Christ's priesthood could only be established in resurrection (Heb. 8. 4), but because of who He is, the order of Melchizedek's priesthood belongs to Christ (see Ps. 110. 4; Heb. 5. 6; 7. 1 -17). He is truly THE ANOINTED, THE CHRIST. This One was to be raised up in Israel—among that people exclusively, though universal blessing results. The KING was to be from among Israel's brethren (Deut. 17. 15), not a stranger. The PRIEST likewise (18. 2), also the PROPHET (18). He came to Israel with full credentials. God's Words were in His mouth, and the signs and works He did showed who He was. Some said, "This is truly the Prophet. Others said, This is the Christ. Others, Does then the Christ come out of Galilee? Has not the Scripture said, the Christ comes of the Seed of David, and from the village of Bethlehem, where David was"? (John 7. 41, 42, N.T). We have seen the answer. Jesus was truly, Mary's Son, born in Bethlehem of Judea, not Nazareth of Galilee, though brought up there. Israel's eyes will be opened soon; but, meanwhile, faith again sings on her glad song of anticipation:

"Kings shall fall down before Him,
And gold and incense bring;
All nations shall adore Him,
His praise all people sing."

"OUT OF HEAVEN."

Finally—having shown the answers given as to the royal lineage of Christ—we will conclude with the Lord's own remarkable answer to the question already quoted from John 6. 42. "Jesus therefore answered and said to them, Murmur not among yourselves. No one can come to Me except the Father who has sent Me draw him, and I will raise him up in the last day." In other words it can be said: questions may be raised and settled satisfactorily, even concerning Christ's genealogy, but unless there be a work divinely wrought in a man, he will never become a possessor of eternal life in Christ Jesus as drawn by the Father to the Son. A man may be religiously minded or otherwise, and be interested enough to examine and be satisfied in regard to the royal descent of Jesus, and yet remain in a state of soul-distance from the Saviour. Those referred to who questioned concerning the Lord, were very religious, but they were in soul-darkness and death. That Jesus should say, "I am come down out of heaven," is what they took exception to. And until true soul-hunger is awakened in a man, he will have no desire beyond what is of the earth, and earthly. The Jews "murmured about Him, because He said, I am the Bread which has come down out of heaven" (41). He had previously said, "I am the Bread of life: he that comes to Me shall never hunger, and he that believes on Me shall never thirst at any time" (35. N.T.). What good news this is for everyone whom the Father has drawn to Him!
ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.
Hymn Wanted.

"Could you help me to locate the remaining verses of Faber's hymn, two of which are:

'How Thou canst think so well of us,
And be the God Thou art,
Is darkness to my intellect,
But sunshine to my heart.'

'But Christ has made the mystery plain,
By grace and love divine;
My sinfulness was counted His,
His righteousness is mine.'

He has put the story of redemption so beautifully that I wanted the whole hymn.'—PHILADELPHIA.

We are afraid that you will be disappointed to learn that the second verse you give is not in Faber's hymn, from which the first is taken. It does not appear in either the first or second edition of his hymns. It may have been added from another of his hymns, but it is more likely to have been added by some other writer.

The hymn you ask for is entitled "Harsh Judgments," and we give part of it, as it may be a help to some who are inclined to be uncharitable in their judgment of others' faults.

"O God! whose thoughts are brightest light,
Whose love always runs clear,
To whose kind wisdom sinning souls
Amidst their sins are dear!

"Sweeten my bitter-thoughted heart
With charity like Thine,
Till self shall be the only spot
On earth which does not shine.

"Hardheartedness dwells not with souls
Round whom Thine arms are drawn;
And dark thoughts fade away in grace,
Like cloud-spots in the dawn.

"I often see in my own thoughts,
When they lie nearest Thee,
That the worst men I ever knew
Were better men than me.

"And of all truths no other truth
So true as this one seems;
While others' faults, that plainest were,
Grow indistinct as dreams.

"All men look good except ourselves,
All but ourselves are great,
The rays, that make our sins so clear,
Their faults obliterate.

"Things, that appeared undoubted sins,
Wear little crowns of light;
Their dark, remaining darkness still,
Shames and outshines our bright.

"Time was, when I believed that wrong
In others to detect,
Was part of genius, and a gift
To cherish, not reject.

"Now better taught by Thee, O Lord!
This truth dawns on my mind,—
The best effect of heavenly light
Is earth's false eyes to blind.

"Thou art the Unapproached, whose height
Enables Thee to stoop,
Whose holiness bends undefiled
To handle hearts that droop.

"He, whom no praise can reach, is aye
Men's least attempts approving;
Whom justice makes all-merciful
Omniscience makes all-loving.

"How Thou canst think so well of us,
Yet be the God Thou art,
Is darkness to my intellect,
But sunshine to my heart.

"Yet habits linger in the soul;
More grace, O Lord! more grace!
More sweetness from Thy loving heart,
More sunshine from Thy face!

"When we ourselves least kindly are,
We deem the world unkind;
Dark hearts, in flowers where honey lies,
Only the poison find.

"We paint from self the evil things
We think that others are;
While to the self-despising soul
All things but self are fair.

"Yes, they have caught the way of God,
To whom self lies displayed
In such clear vision as to cast
O'er others' faults a shade."
The Passover and Feast of Unleavened Bread.

Would you kindly explain Matt. 26. 17, Mark 14. 12, Luke 22. 7. In each of those passages the statement is made that on the day of unleavened bread they 'killed the passover.' In other words, these three passages state that the passover was kept on the day of unleavened bread, which was the 15th. In Exod. 12. 5, 18, Lev. 23. 5, the passover was killed on the 14th, and the feast of unleavened bread commenced on the 15th, Lev. 23. 6.

"Can you explain why in the Gospels the order is not maintained? The Old Testament repeatedly places the passover before the other. Morally and historically it is the correct order. Is it because the people were away from God, the feasts were no longer the Lord’s, but were known as the ‘Jews’ feasts’? The divine order is not followed by the nation, although in 1 Cor. 5. the true order is recognized, ‘Christ our passover is sacrificed for us, therefore let us keep the feast.’"—NEW ZEALAND.

The answer to the question seems to lie in the fact that the passover was used to designate the whole of the seven days of the feast of unleavened bread. In Luke 22. 1 we read, "Now the feast of unleavened bread which is called the passover." In Lev. 23, the distinction between the two feasts is definitely drawn, but we suggest that the reason may be that we have in this chapter the Feasts of the Lord—what they were to Him as setting forth His joy in Christ and the results of His work, which these feasts typified, and from this standpoint we can see that there was that in the passover which was very definitely for God apart altogether from what the people were in their separation from evil, of which the feast of unleavened bread spoke. In Exod. 12., however, where the two feasts were instituted, they are closely identified, for in verse 18 we read, "In the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month, in the evening, ye shall eat unleavened bread until the one and twentieth day of the month in the evening." This we can understand, for here the prominent thought is the deliverance of the people from the judgment of the evil of Egypt and they themselves must be separate from that evil. God could not deliver them from the judgment of the evil and yet tolerate it in them; hence the exclusion of leaven on the passover day, which, as we have said, was a figure of evil. The two must go together.

In Deut. 16, the identification of the two is even more pronounced. In this book we have the words pressed home upon the people of Israel, by which they might be kept in close contact with the Lord after they entered into the land; and speaking of the passover, we read, "Thou shalt eat no unleavened bread with it: seven days shalt thou eat unleavened bread therewith, the bread of affliction" (verse 3). And it is remarkable that in Ezekiel 45., where there is given to us God’s order for Israel when they shall be restored to their own land in the coming day of glory, we have, "In the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month, ye shall have a passover, a feast of seven days: unleavened bread shall be eaten" (verse 21).

We think that it should be evident that the two feasts cannot be separated. None could keep the passover properly who ignored the feast of unleavened bread. Nor could any keep this latter feast who did not understand the meaning of the passover; they go together, and this we should learn from the way they are identified in Scripture. The application of the truth they typified is made to us in 1 Cor. 5. 7, 8. The feast is the passover feast, but it is also the feast of unleavened bread. Separation from evil and holiness of life go along with our recognition of the fact that Christ our passover has been slain for us.

Rejoice in the Lord always and you will always have cause to rejoice.

"In prayer the lips ne’er act the winning part,
Without the sweet concurrence of the heart."
THE LORD'S CHIEF TREASURE.

"Upon this rock I will build MY CHURCH."—Matthew 16.
"If so ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious."—1 Peter 2. 3.

There is that in these words of the Lord that must make a powerful appeal to every heart that loves Him, and only such are in my mind as I write. Let us consider the position as Matthew shows it to us. In chapter 1, the Lord comes into the world as the Heir to David's throne, the rightful King of Israel, and His name is called JESUS—Jehovah Saviour—for He had come to save His people from their sins. But none owned Him or did Him homage but strangers from the East. When Jerusalem, the metropolis of His Kingdom, heard of His advent it did not rejoice, but was troubled along with Herod, the Idumean minion of Roman Emperors, who closed his long life by the massacre of the infants of Bethlehem, in the hope of destroying the Lord. Jerusalem did not want its Saviour, it greatly preferred its oppressor. "He came to His own, and His own received Him not."

But He had another title, greater, more glorious and far-reaching than that of Son of David, King of Israel; He was the Son of Man, this is His title as having the right to the universal throne, and not less than eighty times does He speak of Himself by it; but it is significant that the first time that He uses it, He says, "The foxes have holes and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man hath not where to lay His head" (chapter 8. 20). "He was in the world and the world was made by Him [and every part of it was part of His dominion], but the world knew Him not."

Who was it that was refused His rights when He came into the world? Who was it who was in the world a rejected King and a homeless Stranger? It was your Saviour, Christian, the Son of God who loved you and gave Himself for you. Is your heart not moved as you think of the treatment that was meted out to Him? And is it not a joy to you to know that He has got something that He can call His own, in spite of it all? For it is at this time, mark you, when utterly rejected, when the leaders of the people had decided to kill Him and not crown Him, that He says, "I will build MY CHURCH." Here is something that cannot be taken from Him. It is more to Him than crowns and kingdoms; they shall cease, but this shall abide for ever for the deep joy and unceasing satisfaction of His heart. The words throb with His love for it. He speaks of it as "My church," and we know that "Christ loved the church and gave Himself for it." Is it not a joy to you to know that your Saviour has got this compensation for all His suffering on earth? And does it not add to your joy to know that you are part of it? Yes, you are part of that which Jesus calls "My church."

But we should not be able to appreciate the blessedness of what the assembly is to Christ and our part in it if we had not tasted that the Lord is
gracious. There is great sweetness in the words. They are gospel words, and describe Him who said, "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." They mean that when we came to Him in our sin and need we found Him to be most accessible. He did not spurn us, but made us feel that He was glad to see us, and we tasted that He is gracious, He became then and there indispensable to us. We cannot do without Him. It is all beautifully illustrated for us in Matthew 16.; we see the perfection of Scripture in the fact that the gracious incidents in that chapter are recorded for us immediately before this great declaration of the Lord as to His assembly.

A Sidonian woman cried after the Lord, saying, "Have mercy on me, O Lord, Thou Son of David, my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil." She did not understand that being a Gentile she had no claim upon Him as Son of David, and He made as though He heard her not. He did hear and He meant to bless her, but she had to learn, as we have had to learn, that His blessing is free and sovereign grace, and this she learnt quickly. She would not be said, Nay. She would not let Him go except He blessed her. Then He spoke and said, "It is not meet to take the children's bread and cast it to dogs." Her answer was magnificent, "Truth, Lord, yet the dogs eat of the crumbs that fall from the Master's table." It was as though she said, "I know that you have spread the table for the house of Israel according to all the promises of the past, but your provision is so abundant that that table will not contain it, it must overflow, and I shall be satisfied with the overflow." She got her desire, she tasted that the Lord is gracious.

Then great multitudes came to Him, bringing their lame, blind, dumb, maimed, and many others, and cast them down at Jesus' feet. Every human ill was there in that multitude and His compassion flowed out without reserve and He healed them all; they tasted that the Lord was gracious. That multitude who had followed Him needed bread. He had come from heaven to be the Bread of Life for them, if they would receive Him, but did He care for their physical needs also? Yes, He will "not send them away fasting, lest they faint in the way." They were His creatures and He would show His compassion, His tender consideration for them no matter how careless of His claims they might be. So they did eat of the loaves and fishes and were filled. They tasted that He was gracious.

These instances of blessing serve to show us what He is, how gracious, compassionate, and ready and able to meet the need of all who seek Him, and we have sought Him; weary and burdened we came to Him, and we have tasted that He is gracious. It is not head knowledge with us, not mere theory, I trust. We have taken into our own experience this blessed fact—He is gracious. We cannot do without Him, that is a gospel fact; but He cannot do without us, that is an assembly fact. He is indispensable to us, but we are indispensable to Him. He is gracious to us, we are precious to Him. Thrones and kingdoms He must have, for He must reign until He hath put down every enemy, they are a necessity for the glory of His name and the eternal
supremacy of God, but His assembly meets the need of His heart, in it He shall be satisfied. He cannot do without us. Let this side of the truth fill us with wonder, for only as we wonder shall we grow in the knowledge of its meaning, and worship.

We shall not cease to appreciate and show grace as we take in the truth. For the nearer we get to the heart of the Lord, the more gracious we shall become, for we shall be more like Him and He does not cease to be gracious to us when His glory as Builder and Head of His assembly is revealed to us. The truth of Christ and His assembly is truth for the heart, rather than for the head, it can only be truly learnt by the heart, it is only seen by the eyes of the heart. It is not the wish of the devil that we should understand it, he will be well pleased if we are indifferent about it, and it is a sad thing to have to say, but it is nevertheless true, that there are many who owe their eternal blessing to the Lord Jesus who are utterly indifferent to this that means so much to Him. Where this is the case, the devil has gained a temporary triumph; it is only temporary, for that day is surely coming of which the Scripture speaks, when the assembly shall be presented to Christ, all glorious, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but holy and without blame (Ephes. 5.). It shall appear as a bride adorned for her husband” (Rev. 21.). There will be no indifference then, no sleeping or divided affections. For the wife of the Lamb, which the assembly is yet to be, shall then receive into its heart His love without measure and respond to it without reserve.

But it is the Lord’s desire that we should know His love as a present reality and respond to it now. This desire finds expression in Paul’s inspired words. “I am jealous over you with a godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ” (2 Cor. ii. 2). These remarkable words are for us. Think, O Christian, if you are inclined to be careless as to this, what it means to Christ. Only FIRST LOVE can satisfy Him, but what joy it must give to Him if your determination is to keep yourself for Him and not be turned from Him by any selfish thoughts or worldly ambitions. Against this the devil is continually plotting. But are you going to please Christ or the devil? Because of the danger the apostle poured out his fears to the Corinthians, “But I fear,” says he, “lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve, through his subtlety, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.” Let us fear also, it will cast us more wholly on the grace of the Lord and by His grace only can we be kept.

The truth of the assembly depends entirely upon who Christ is. Hence the Lord asks His disciples, “Whom do men say that I, the Son of Man, am?” The people did not know. They looked upon Him as one of the old prophets returned to the earth, their minds could not rise above what had been, though they might be looking for some advance in it. But they were wrong, as the Father’s revelation to Peter proved. “But whom say ye that I am?” comes the challenge from the Lord. “Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God,” was their answer and the right one. He is the anointed Man, for “the Christ” means this; He is the Man in resurrection, for this was anticipated in “the Son of the living God,” as Romans 1. clearly shows. As “the Christ” He is the beginning of a new creation, the Leader and Head of a new
race of men. This great truth can only be learnt as the Father teaches it, faith only takes it in. As "the Christ" He stands in contrast to Adam, against whom the gates of hell prevailed, for he by his disobedience involved his whole race in condemnation and death, but "the Christ" having accomplished one great obedience has been raised up, the Conqueror of death, and He is the Head of a new race, all who belong to it are in Him, He builds them together into one assembly and it is one and shall be one for ever, the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. What joy and triumph and courage the knowledge of this gives us. Christ's assembly is invincible. It will survive every attack of the enemy. It alone is stable and we who believe are part of it.

"Blessed art thou Simon Barjona," said the Lord, "for flesh and blood hath not revealed this unto thee, but My Father, which is in heaven," and we all have come unto this same blessedness if we know our Lord, as "the Christ, the Son of the living God," for it is the Father's work thus to reveal Him to us. How wonderful it is! We have not only tasted that the Lord is gracious, equal to all our deep need, but the Father in His grace has opened our hearts to a new position, a new calling, a new place of favour, in revealing to us who His Son is. The revelation is from heaven, and God has made it not as the Almighty or as Jehovah, but as Father, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Upon what He is as "the Christ, the Son of the living God," the church is built. And Peter is the name that He gives to all who come to Him, for they are built up on Him, living stones in living and everlasting union with Himself, the living Stone.

**EVEN THE DEATH OF THE CROSS.**

"Christ Jesus who was from eternity in 'the form of God' gave up His glorious position of manifested equality with God in heaven and came down to earth; not as He might have come, in all the dazzling splendour of the eternal God, but in lowly human guise, to live among men a human life; which life, marked by shame and suffering, reached its nadir of humiliation in the death of the cross. Mystery must, to us here below, ever hang about the Incarnation; but no theory which, professing to solve the mystery, impairs either the verity of the divine nature or the reality of the human nature in the Incarnate Christ, can be accepted as an interpretation of Scripture teaching on this great theme. The testimony of the Apostle Paul to Christ in both the divine nature and the human is most emphatic; the mystery of this union he does not pierce, what he most of all draws attention to, with blended delight and adoration, is the magnitude and the mystery of the LOVE that made it possible for the divine One to exchange the glory of heaven for the shame of the cross."

He fares well who feeds upon Christ, and crumbs from God's table are better than the loaves that the world offers. And if we think of bread for our physical needs, well, the cross of Christ is the pledge of to-morrow's dinner if we need it, for, "having spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him freely give us all things?" God feeds the ravens, and it has been tritely asked, "Will He that feeds His birds starve His babes?"
REST.

"There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God"—Hebrews 4. 9.

The biggest word in our vocabulary.

The gospel in a monosyllable. It beggars definition whilst inviting it. It is God's antidote for all the evil wrought by sin.

The above text lifts the Sabbath-keeping (Sabbatiosmos) out of time into eternity: out of an institution given to the Jew alone, into a blessing for all the people of God. Heb. 4. gives a brief summary of this rest. It was proclaimed in Eden (verse 4), prefigured in Canaan (8), purchased for us in Calvary (10), perfected in heaven (9).

IT IS NOT AN EPITAPH FOR A TOMBSTONE, but the goal of a life.

IT IS NOT A DISPENSATIONAL MONOPOLY, but a spiritual state. For some had rest in the wilderness, and others had it not in Canaan. Joshua took Israel into the earthly Canaan but could not take them into the heavenly rest. David exhorted to it (Psalm 95.) but it remained in God's gift until Christ Himself. Christ Himself and His finished work is God's Rest. From legal past to gospel present there remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God.

IT IS NOT ONLY A FUTURE REST WITH GOD, but a present satisfaction in God.

IT IS NOT ONLY A HEAVEN WE ENTER BY DYING, but a heaven which enters us by believing.

IT IS NOT ONLY THE FUTURE REST OF PARADISE, but the present rest of faith. Ne plus ultra: nothing beyond. The Saints' ultima Thule.

It is a present rest. The very first verse of this chapter proves it, for it exhorts the Lord's people to fear lest they should seem to come short of it. None of the apostles exhort believers to fear coming short of heaven, but to full assurance of faith, "for we which have believed do enter into rest," says Paul. (Italics mine every time.) "We do enter," present tense every time. We enter by faith, or we fail (or "fall" verse 11) by unbelief. The Spirit Himself decides it with His own urgent three-fold appeal, "To-day"—"To-day"—"To-day" marking an intensive present.

IT IS NOT CREATION REST (4). That was broken by sin. It is Redemption rest. Upon the door which leads into rest is written, "It is finished." Here then is a glorious revelation, for the rest into which our God calls us to enter is not only a present one, but it is His, "My" rest. He rests in His love." In Christ Himself. In the perfect work of a perfect Redeemer, as that profoundly spiritual poet, J. G. Deck, sings so sweetly:

"Jesus I rest in Thee, in Thee myself I hide, Laden with guilt and misery, where can I rest beside? 'Tis on Thy meek and lowly breast, My weary soul alone finds rest.

"Thou Holy One of God, the Father rests in Thee, And in the virtue of that blood which speaks to Him for me: The curse is gone, through Thee I'm blest, God rests in Thee, in Thee I rest."

"Arise, O Lord, into Thy rest; Thou, and the Ark of Thy Strength... This is my rest for ever, here will I dwell" (Psa. 132. 8, 14). God's rest is ever where the Ark is. Only in that heart taught by the Spirit, and indwelt by Christ (Eph. 3. 17), is God's rest fully known. "We will come unto him and make our abode with Him" (John 14. 23).

God's rest is a "DOWN-REST."
Is it not strikingly suggestive that the Holy Spirit should employ a special adjective of place to distinguish God’s own rest for His believing people down here. It occurs no less than nine times in this section of the epistle. As though He would say, “Now it is not rest in heaven which is your great concern, it is God’s Katapausis (Gr.), God’s down rest. The moment you trust in Christ, it is yours, for He is God’s rest. He is our Sabbath, and the moment I doubt His Word I break the Sabbath.”

Notice further, that—

GOD’S REST IS NOT A SORT OF BUDDHIST NIRVANA, but an eternal fellowship.

GOD’S REST IS NOT THE TERROR OF EXTINCTION, but “the power of an endless Life.”

GOD’S REST IS NOT A LETHEAN RIVER OF FORGETFULNESS, but a perfect capacity to enjoy a perfect life.

Our Lord gives rest to sinners (Matt. 11. 28), whilst saints find it in His company and teaching (verse 29). Rest from the guilt of sin (28), rest from its power (29), rest of conscience (28), rest of heart, or “soul” (29).

Paul refers to God’s rest when speaking to the “heirs of salvation” in Heb. 1. 12, 2. 3. His heart bursting with adoring love at the seven-fold Messianic testimony to the greatness of the Saviour, in chapter 1, he raises his hands in godly alarm, as it were, crying, “How shall we escape if we neglect so great Salvation?” Even as in our chapter he opens with a fear lest, with God’s rest before us, we should fail through unbelief to enter it. The greatest possible disaster, in Paul’s view, was a sinful neglect in seizing this great prize. “How shall we escape if we do so?” he cries. He begs us to remember the oath and wrath of God lest we “fall” by unbelief as Israel did (Heb. 3. 18, 4. 11). Lest we “fall.” That is God’s word and needs no apology from us, for our very enjoyment of God’s Rest may depend upon our heeding these solemn warnings. Satan loves to see the saints ignoring them. The Spirit gives us no less than twelve “Ifs” in this letter, but they appear to be treated with fatal silence for the most part. As well remove the red-lights from a railway system. The “If” of Hebrews is one of God’s great saving conjunctions. Here is the table. Pray for grace to read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest it.

Heb. 2. 3. The “If” of “Neglect.”
   3. 6, 14. The “If” of “Holding fast.”
   3. 7, 15. The “If” of Hearing His voice.
   4. 3, 7 The “If” of Entering in.
   4. 9. The “If” of Joshua.
   6. 3. The “If” of Dependence.
   6. 6. The “If” of Falling away.
   11. 16. The “If” of the Affections.

Paul then with the greatness of this incomparable blessing still in his mind carries us on to Sinai, and Sion. Heb. 12. 18, and gives us a mighty application of present truth in a negative and positive statement.

“YE ARE NOT COME” unto Mount Sinai—Law—he cries, but “YE ARE COME” to Mount Sion—Grace—Not, mark you, ye are coming, as people say, but “Ye are come.” And this application of present truth is extended to verse 28, where he says, “Wherefore we receiving a Kingdom:’ not awaiting, but receiving. “Let us have grace” etc. Present
blessing. In this most necessary application of present truth

**PETER ACTS AS PAUL’S EXPOSITOR.**

Peter throws a clear light upon the present entrance by faith into God’s rest. Read carefully 1 Peter 1. 1–9.

He tells us that God’s elect are born again to an inheritance . . . “reserved in heaven”—clearly heaven above and future; and that we are “kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time.” *Heaven above and future* again.

We rejoice in that, but trial comes in and Peter now turns our eyes to the glorious appearing of Jesus Christ. *Heaven above and future glory once more.* He therefore reminds us that we have not yet seen Him Who is our joy and glory, but that faith brings Him into our hearts so that we actually rejoice with joy unspeakable and glorious, thus receiving the object or end of our faith, which is Christ Himself.

God’s Rest, and God’s so great Salvation. *Here we surely have heaven below.* Here is a true and experimental entering into God’s Rest. What sovereign grace gives, God-imparted faith appropriates.

I would most feelingly exhort my readers to consider the blessed Spirit’s warnings as to the “hard” heart (3. 8), the “evil heart” (12), and the “erring heart” (10). Not one of us can afford to treat them lightly. It is certain that we shall never enter God’s rest—

**THE best will is our Father’s will,**

**What most would profit us He knows,**

There we may rest serene and still;

And never denies aught good to those Who with a single eye pursue

Oh, I would make it all my own,

The right, and only yearn to do

And crave for naught but that alone

Which God doth please.

What God doth please.
SONSHIP.

IN THE EPISTLE TO THE GALATIANS the death of Christ is said to have for its object our deliverance from this present evil age. But before the apostle enters upon this subject, he will let the Galatians know his credentials for the position he has taken up, as an apostle of our Lord. He desires them to understand the divine source of his apostleship, as well as the divine source of the gospel he had preached to them, and through belief of which they had found themselves in right relations with God.

The knowledge of this was of the utmost importance to them, for they seem to have supposed he had got that which he preached from the other apostles who were at Jerusalem, and that therefore anyone who came to them from Jerusalem would be as well, if not better than he, acquainted with the truth. Therefore into this matter he goes at the outset, and in rather an abrupt manner, for his heart was hot within him as he thought of the way in which the devil was puzzling these souls by his wicked, deceitful and false apostles.

He was an apostle, "not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised Him from the dead." It was not a sort of Christian sanhedrim that had made a choice of him as a preacher of the glad tidings, nor was it a delegate sent from the other apostles at Jerusalem that had installed him in his apostolate: he had it from God the Father, and from the risen Christ.

In writing his Epistles to assemblies, he sometimes associates a brother or two with himself, but here he says: "And all the brethren which are with me," thus bringing before them the serious nature of their defection: they were giving up Christianity. Therefore their dangerous condition was not the concern of an apostle of our Lord only, but of all who had believed. They were heart and soul with him in his condemnation of their departure from the truth, and in his effort to effect their recovery.

As to his previous manner of life, these Galatians were not in ignorance. They had heard of his persecution of the assembly of God, because of his zeal for the doctrines of his fathers. But when God who had set him apart, even from his mother's womb, was pleased to reveal His Son in him, that he might announce Him as glad tidings among the nations, he did not wait for the sanction of men, neither did he go to those who had been apostles while he was still a destroyer of the saints, but, as we read in Acts 9. 20, he straightway in the synagogues preached Jesus that He is the Son of God.

The way in which he salutes them is according to his usual formula: "Grace to you and peace, from God the Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ," and then, not as in the other Epistles in which the salutation stands alone and unconnected with what follows, the mind of the apostle hurries on to set before them the object of Christ's death. He says, "Who gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us from this present evil world (age; aionos, not kosmos), according to the will of God and our Father."

Through the preaching of the Apostle, those who believed had come under the power and into the blessing of "God's dispensation, which is in faith" (New Trans., J.N.D.), but the great and tireless effort of the enemy has from the outgoing of the gospel been to negative its effect by linking up with this evil age those who believed it; and the
state of Christendom to-day is the success of that accursed effort.

This age, I suppose, began at Sinai. At that mount there was certainly a new beginning on the part of God with a people He had separated from the nations of the earth, in the midst of whom He set up His throne, and through whom the whole world was to come under His beneficent reign. As regards the blessing of the tribes, we read: "Jehovah came from Sinai, and rose up from Seir unto them; He shone forth from Mount Paran; and He came from the myriads of the sanctuary; from His right hand went forth a law of fire for them. Yea, He loveth the tribes. All His saints are in thy hand, and they sit down at thy feet; each receiveth of thy words. Moses commanded us a law, the inheritance of the congregation of Jacob. And he was king in Jeshurun, when the heads of the people and the tribes of Israel were gathered together" (Deut. 33.).

The law was given to a people redeemed out of the hand of the oppressor, to be established in blessing on the earth, but that blessing to be possessed only on the ground of their fulfilling the righteous conditions imposed upon them by the Lawgiver, from whose right hand went forth that fiery law for them. And though they in the pride of their hearts said, "All that the Lord hath said we will do, and be obedient," they failed utterly, so that the carcasses of all the men that came out of Egypt by Moses fell in the wilderness, never getting into the land at all. And when their children were eventually brought over Jordan and into the land of promise, they quickly turned away from Jehovah and worshipped the gods of the nations whom they were to dispossess, bringing the wrath of God upon them. They slew those who testified of the coming of Christ, and murdered Him when He did come. The ruin of this age is complete. A great mass of mankind has adopted a corrupt form of Christianity, but that does not make things any better. The antichrist has yet to be revealed, a man has yet to be worshiped as God, and the armies of the nations have to be gathered against Jehovah and His Anointed—then everything shall be brought to an issue.

"Whose voice then shook the earth." The protestations of the people against any act of disobedience on their part could not deceive Him who knew the evil and treachery of the human heart. He knew there was nothing but ruin for the age that seemed to open with ready acquiescence of the people in the terms laid down by the Lawgiver. Therefore in giving utterance to those terms the mount quaked so greatly that the people retired from before it and stood afar off. The shaking indicated that nothing that was that day being inaugurated would continue. "But now hath He promised, yet once more, I shake not only earth, but also heaven" (Heb. 12. 26). The devil still has his seat in heaven, from whence he directs his wicked operations on earth. But the day is near in which he shall be cast down to earth, from thence to the abyss, and then into the lake of fire. It is when the Lord comes forth in the thunder of His power that the heavens shall be shaken, and the devil shall be chained in the abyss, until the thousand years of the reign of Christ is over.

And this, "Yet once more, signifieth the removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that are made, that those things that cannot be shaken may remain." This earth that bears in its rocky bosom the fearsome wounds it has received in its adventurous
career, when possibly for the wickedness and rebellion of its prehistoric inhabitants, whatever they may have been, it was made to feel the wrath of a righteous and incensed Creator, must in the end fly from the face of Him who, Judge of all, sits on the great white throne, and it and all its works must perish for ever. The heavens also must pass away with a great noise, the elements melting with fervent heat. Thus shall the end be of this wondrous theatre, in which has been displayed the enmity against God of fallen angels and of fallen men.

We, however, receiving a kingdom that cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably, with reverence and godly fear: for as the God of Israel was a consuming fire, so also is ours. He changes not. The age began with the shaking of the earth and the shaking of both heaven and earth will terminate it, and introduce the advent and kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Messianic age, the habitable world which is to come.

Into the midst of this age of law, which because of man's evil propensities has utterly failed and become the theatre of rebellion against the authority of God, the despisal of His holy law, the worship of demons, the murder of His Son, has been heralded in the power of the Spirit sent down from heaven the glad tidings of God's intervention on behalf of sinful men, His coming to light as a Saviour-God, in sending His Son that by His death propitiation might be made for sins, and that a way of salvation might be available and pointed out, for the whole human race, and that He might deliver us from this present evil age, according to the will of God and our Father.

This dispensation of the grace of God, which is in faith, does not in the least alter the character of this age, but is God's way of delivering out of this age those who believe, and of associating them with the heavenly Man in all the blessed relationships that are His with the Father, which, as far as this Epistle goes, may be comprehended under one word—"Sonship."

Whatever the work of grace might be in the souls of believers in the past dispensation, they never were positionally other than bondslaves. They were under the elements of the world, elements that had all their application to men in the flesh. There were always those that were children of God, heirs of the eternal inheritance, and who had a sense of the favour of God resting on them, but as to the dispensation under which they were, and ostensibly, they were in no other relationship with God than were the children of Belial. They differed nothing from bondmen. They were heirs, but minors; and they had no other standing until faith was revealed as the declared and only principle upon which men could be in vital relationship with God.

But when it was perfectly demonstrated that man was hopelessly evil, and that no power of recovery lay in himself, then, "God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons." When the trial of man was over, then God could manifest the purposes of His own heart. He had always been working His sovereign work of grace in the hearts of those who were the objects of His eternal counsel. The heirs of promise were always there. If He looked down from heaven upon the children of men, and saw all gone aside and become filthy, there was also "the generation of the righteous," among whom He loved to
be (Ps. 14. 2–5). From Abel down to the coming of Christ there had been those who were the subjects of the sovereign grace of God; they were born of God, heirs of promise, but, as I have said, in the position of bondservants. But when the Son came forth and accomplished their redemption, God gave the Spirit of His Son into their hearts, crying, "Abba, Father," thus bringing them consciously into sonship, and sealing them with the Spirit of promise, who is the earnest of the inheritance which we are called to receive.

In this heavenly relationship and glorious position, true liberty is found. A yoke of bondage is utterly inconsistent with the liberty into which sonship introduces us. "Put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground" (Exod. 3. 5), is not the same thing as, "Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet," or, "Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest" (Heb. 10. 19).

But this is not liberty for the flesh; were it so all men might presumptuously intrude into the holy presence of God, as did Uzziah the king, on whom the wrath of God fell for his temerity. Here the flesh has no place. In the cross we, as after the flesh, have been judicially brought to an end, "I am crucified with Christ." He came in the likeness of the flesh of sin, and in the judgment of the cross flesh was removed from before the face of God. If we live now according to God, it is Christ that liveth in us, for He is our life. Our old sinful selves have no title to recognition, nor will they at all manifest themselves if we abide in Him.

We are no longer in flesh as regards our relationships with God, and with one another. We are in Spirit, if indeed God's Spirit dwells in us, neither do we any longer belong to this present evil age. It goes on with a hypocritical acknowledgment of the law by which it was introduced; and that in the face of the gospel of the glory of the blessed God, and in spite of the fact that before their eyes appear the people who received that law by the disposition of angels as scattered throughout the earth without throne, temple, or priest, and without any practical link with God, or acknowledgment by Him except in a small remnant discoverable in the Church according to the election of grace—the Israel of God.

But these along with ourselves are delivered from this present evil age, and are a heavenly people, sons on our way to glory, there along with the Son, our Redeemer and Leader, to enter upon an inheritance that will take in the vast compass of redeemed creation—an eternal inheritance, incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, to enjoy it all with Him, and best of all to enjoy His love that surpasses knowledge, and to bask in the sunshine of His Father and His God, known to us as our Father and our God.

Knowing all these blessings brought to us in the glad tidings of God's grace, we can well understand the fierce anathemas of the apostle against all, whether man or angel, who would preach anything as gospel other than that which he had preached, and which the Galatians had received. May we also be found contending earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints.

Sleepy Christians don't awaken dead souls. We cannot snore men into the kingdom. God gives life by the living.
THE HIGHWAY FOR THE SAINTS OF GOD.

(As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in Him)—Colossians 2. 6.

Prayer and the Word of God go together; we cannot dispense with either if we are to grow in the truth. As we read the Word prayerfully, the Spirit of God will unfold to us the meaning of the words, and we cannot understand them by any other means (1 Cor. 2. 12-14). Now the Word of God calls all Christians on earth SAINTS; we should shrink from that name if God had not given it to us, but since He has called us by it, let us rejoice in it. It means that He has separated us to Himself, and we are not of the world; and further it means for this present time that we are "not of the earth," but ours is a heavenly calling. Our Head, Christ, is in heaven, He is the heavenly Man, the Spirit that indwells us is from heaven. Our hopes are heavenly and not earthly, and OUR WALK in the world must be consistent with our calling and destiny. To benefit by the reading of such papers as the following, we need prayerfully to consider what the Word of God means by the words "saints" and "walk" and "faith."—EDITOR.

The present normal walk of the heavenly saints is given to us in the Colossian epistle, while the character of this walk is stated in 1 John 2. 6, to "walk even as He walked." The standard for the walk of all God's children is as Christ walked here, and such a Father as God is could not have given to His family any less a standard. But our subject is the highway in which we are to walk rather than the standard. "An highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called the way of holiness . . . the redeemed shall walk there, and the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads" (Isa. 35). In such beautiful language the prophet describes the highway in which Israel will yet walk when they see the glory of the Lord and the excellency of their God. It will be sight with them, but in our case, who have not yet seen the Lord whom we love, it is by faith, for we walk not by sight but by faith, and without faith we cannot take one step on the saints' highway, without faith we cannot "walk in Him."

We would call attention first to Malachi 4. 2, where our Lord Jesus Christ is designated "the Sun of righteousness," in regard to His shining forth in His glory, healing and blessing by His beneficent rays the remnant of Israel—the earthly people of God. His rule will secure for them all the abundant blessings promised in the Old Testament; meanwhile we are brought into the faith of Christ, while He is rejected on earth and exalted to God's right hand in the heavens. To walk in Him, therefore, at the present time calls for the constant exercise of faith.

Let us keep in our minds the divinely given illustration of the sun: for, as in the natural sphere, the better the many benefits of the supreme light-bearer are known, the more gladly are they appropriated; so likewise in the spiritual sphere, in regard to the Christ our Lord, the more we apprehend the richness of the blessings which beam forth from Him—the rays of righteousness, love and grace which pour out their unsearchable bounties—the more intelligently and happily shall we be encouraged to steadily and unwaveringly walk in Him, and we shall become also increasingly edified by the true knowledge of God revealed in Him.

Referring again to Israel, it is foretold in Isaiah 60. 1, that it shall yet be said to them, "Arise, shine; for thy Light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee." The Lord will be their Light then. The glory of the Sun of righteousness will be seen
shining upon them; and the kings, the nations and the peoples of the earth will welcome their rising, saying, "Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob, and He will teach us His ways and we will walk in His paths; for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem." Then He will give them rule and guidance, and their instruments of cruelty and strife shall yield to implements of health and peace, for Israel shall then "walk in the light of the Lord." That day has not yet come for this sin-stricken world; it awaits the coming of the Lord; but before it dawns the word of Isaiah 60. is spiritually applied to those who belong to Christ (during this period of His rejection from earth and His exaltation in the heavens), so we read in Ephesians 5. 14, N.T., "Wherefore He says, Wake up, thou that sleepest, and arise up from among the dead, and the Christ shall shine upon thee." In this sense, therefore, we can WALK IN HIM NOW, for living and conscious faith knows the rays of Christ's shining even before He publicly takes up the government of the world through Israel. The sleepy believer needs to be awakened in regard to Christ's glory, as we are told; and the worldly believer needs to be freed from fellowship with those who are still dead in trespasses and sins; for often true saints of God are overtaken by slumber and slothfulness as to our Lord Jesus Christ and His interests, and they may be ensnared by the friendship of a world that can only dull every spiritual sense that they have. To walk in the highway of God spiritual energy must take the place of sleep—HE MUST WAKE UP!—HE MUST ARISE!

When the sun shines in the heavens, no one needs to tell it to shine—it shines! And we may rejoice in the brightness, warmth and energy which flow forth upon us from it—we may walk in it! So also may the believer walk in Him—in Christ Jesus the Lord. The stars of the night do not compete when the glory of the sun shines forth, and when the glory of the Son of God is declared by the Spirit through JOHN so fully to the family of God, apostleship and gifts are not found in evidence; for it is "until we all arrive at the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God" these and other gifts are given (Ephesians 4. 11-13).

Many things may hinder the rays of the sun from reaching us. It is said that the glass of our windows prevents the ultra-violet rays, which are said to possess health-giving virtues, from entering our houses; the polluted and smoky atmosphere of our cities intrudes between us and the brightness of the sun, and clouds may obscure it from us. It is because of the dangers which threaten to rob the true believers of the full good of the assembled rays that shine in the Christ that the exhortations and warnings of Colossians 2. are given. Something of man's manufacture, like the glass of a window—his ritual and ordinances and philosophy—may exclude from the believer much of His wondrous grace; or the city's world-influences, like the murky atmosphere, may rob us of a great deal, and earth-born clouds may be allowed to dim our sight. But, on God's side, there is neither cloud nor veil to hide the glory of Christ from us. He knew the deepest darkness when He suffered upon the cross to secure eternal redemption for us; but He is now exalted to God's right hand, where there is nothing to hide Him from faith, and believers rejoicingly say, "We see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death,
crowned with glory and honour” (Heb. 2. 9).

It is said, we repeat, “As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord,

SO WALK YE IN HIM!”

This word, like another often repeated in the inspired instruction given to us,

“ABIDE IN HIM!”

carries with it the divinely given authority so to do, and the sense that our true well-being is connected with it, and that it gives God pleasure to see us walking in His highway.

He shines as the Light of the world, and those who walk in Him “walk in wisdom toward them that are without.”

“The love of God is in Christ Jesus our Lord,” and those who walk in Him “walk in love.” We know “the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ” and those who walk in Him take character from Him, and their speech is to be “always with grace.” Psalm 19. speaks significantly of the sun “as a bridegroom going forth from his chamber; he rejoiceth as a strong man to run a race. His going forth is from the end of the heavens, and there is nothing hid from the heat thereof.” The energies of the sun are usually known as light, heat and actinic or healing rays; but the One, of whom the sun is but a symbol, shines for faith with beams of unmeasured wealth, by which we may be richly benefited and in which the saved of the Lord may walk. As we do this we walk in Him. HE IS THE WORD—the embodiment and also the expression of the mind of God. He became flesh and tabernacled among us, as the sun finds its tabernacle in the heavens (Ps. 19. 4). HE IS THE IMAGE OF THE INVISIBLE GOD—the visible representation to us of the otherwise invisible. HE IS THE EFFULGENCE OF GOD’S GLORY and the exact expression of His sub-

stance. He sits now on the right hand of the throne of the greatness on high, having first put away sins by His sacrifice on the cross. How great He is Himself! How great the love which fills His heart for us!

When He uses His power to translate us to His glory in the twinkling of an eye, in glorified bodies like His own, we shall see Him actually as He is—not simply by faith as now.

“Then we shall behold all His glory and grace; And heaven be found in the light of His face.”

The fact, however, remains for us to benefit by and rejoice in TO-DAY—Christ is shining! and we may do as we are instructed and strengthened by the Spirit to WALK IN HIM! Let us be free from what hinders. Let our souls accept without question His own Word given in John 14. 6, “I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life,” for while He is the Highway for the saints of God, He is likewise the Life without whom risen life would be unknown to us; and He is the Truth, expressing all that is true, both as to God and man. To see Him is to see the Father (9); and to behold Him in glory and favour is to behold man as predestinated by God (Rom. 8. 29); and did He not say in resurrection, “I ascend to My Father and your Father, and to My God and your God”? When we are with Him, according to the purpose of eternal love, will not He Himself fill with worship the enraptured hearts of all His loved ones?

“For ever on His face they gaze,
And meet the full assembled rays,
While all His beauty He displays,
To the redeemed in glory!”

Yes, unhinderedly and eternally shall the saints worship and adore Him then! No cloud, no veil, no temple—nothing shall hide Him from our rejoicing eyes then! We shall walk, O Lord, in the light of Thy countenance for ever!
THE REVELATION OF GOD. (M. ARNOLD THOMPSON.)

Thoughts on the Parable of Luke Ch. 15.

This parable is a beautiful miniature of the gospel. Originally spoken to a mixed company of Scribes and Pharisees, publicans and sinners, it is now, and has been for centuries, one of the choicest treasures of the children of God. For the message which the sinner believes to the saving of his soul is merely the fringe of the gospel of God, the door into a vast realm of blessing and good things which God has laid up for them that love Him.

The gospel is, in a word, the revelation of what God is for man; therefore, in one respect, the gospel has been the same in every age, since God is the unchanging God. Thus God’s gospel to Abram was, “Fear not, Abram; I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward.” The essence of the gospel which David rejoiced in is seen in his words, “Thou art my portion, O God.”

Yet, on the other hand, the revelation of God has been progressive, some additional attribute being made known to each successive age. For example, to Abraham He was known as the Almighty God, the El-Shaddai, the all-sufficient God. To Moses He revealed Himself as Jehovah, the existing One, the three syllables of this Name having reference to the past, the present, and the future. Then, to take a long step forward, Christianity is the perfect and full revelation of the Godhead in the Persons of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.

Now God—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost—the One True God, while He has been pleased to reveal Himself in a progressive way to men, has never denied Himself, and the Holy Scriptures, from Gen. 1. to Mal. 4., are coloured with hidden allusions to the as yet unrevealed mystery of the Trinity in the Godhead. This mystery was openly revealed for the first time on the bank of Jordan, when the Lord Jesus came up out of the baptismal water, for “immediately,” at that moment, the heavens were opened, the Holy Ghost came down in visible form as a Dove, and the Father’s voice was heard, saying, “This is My beloved Son.”

This was the beginning of the gospel spoken from heaven, the gospel Paul speaks of in Rom. 1., the gospel of God (the Father) concerning His Son Jesus Christ our Lord, declared to be the Son of God according to the Spirit of holiness (the Holy Spirit), by the resurrection from the dead (this being what His emergence from the Jordan was typical of).

Then through the Gospels follows a blessed revealing of the truth. The Son making known the Father; the Father making known the Son; the Son speaking of the Holy Ghost (the promise of the Father), who should come to take of the things of the Father and the Son, and show them to believers and so guide them into all truth (John 16. 13-15).

Among the ways the Lord Jesus Christ took to make known the Father was that prophesied of in Ps. 78. 2, “I will open my mouth in a parable; I will utter dark sayings of old.” It is a most blessed study to work back from the full truth as now made known in Christianity, to some of these wonderful “dark sayings of old.” In doing so we prove the truth of the Scripture, that “whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning.” A few which may be mentioned are: Gen. 1. 1-3, Gen. 18. 1-2, Num.
6. 22-27, Ps. 29, Isa. 6. 1-3. To remark on but one, viz., Num. 6. 22-27. The priestly blessing is called a putting of the name of God upon the people for blessing, and the fact that the name of the Lord had to be repeated three times is evidently an allusion to some as yet unrevealed mystery in connection with the Godhead, which could only thus be adequately represented. The passage now comes to us flooded with gospel light, and translated into New Testament language would read, “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).

With regard to the parable of Luke 15., it will be noticed that it is but one parable—“He spake this parable unto them”—but it is divided into three parts, giving us a picture of the Trinity—Three Persons yet One God.

It needs but little spiritual insight to discern the features of the blessed Son of God in the man who went after the lost sheep, or of God the Father in the father of the two sons; but a word of explanation may be necessary regarding the woman in verses 8-10.

In the East the woman always did her work in seclusion, unseen; this is typical of the work of God the Holy Spirit. Further, the ten pieces of silver were not merely pieces of money: when an eastern woman was married, her husband presented her with a head-ornament composed of a number of silver coins strung together on a chain. This was a kind of badge of matrimony and was regarded by eastern women in much the same way as a wedding ring or a marriage certificate is regarded by modern women.

The loss of one piece of silver was therefore looked upon as a very serious matter, a matter affecting the honour of the woman. The loss raised a question which far outweighed the mere monetary loss.

Now the first two sections of the parable are quite distinct in character from the third. In the first two sections the objects lost and found are not capable of making any moral response to the persons who seek and find them, nor is any response expected of them. The parable plainly declares the joy, not of the objects found, but the joy of the finders.

It has been noticed that the parable was spoken to sinners. Now the sin of man has raised two questions in the moral universe, questions in the minds of angelic beings, fallen and unfallen, and in the minds of men themselves.

The first question is as to the love of God. The second question is as to His honour or righteousness. Man having sinned, will God allow him to perish without an effort to save him? If He does, His love is called in question: but if God receives man back and blesses him, will He be righteous in so doing? Will not His honour be called in question? These are questions which must be answered apart from man altogether. He is in the position of the criminal in the dock; he awaits the judge’s sentence.

The Lord Jesus answers these two questions by asking two more. “What man of you . . . ?” (verse 4), and “Either what woman . . . ?” (verse 8). Did they suppose for a moment that the love of God was inferior to their own love, or rather to their mere humanity? for the type hardly reaches to the thought of love (there is no doubt as to love in the anti-type, however). Or did they think that God’s honour was of less moment to Him than the honour of one of their womenfolk was to her?
The questions are pre-eminently concerning God's own responsibility in His creation. The numbers themselves lead to this thought: ten pieces of silver; ten times ten sheep; the number ten in Scripture indicates responsibility.

Thank God, He has vindicated Himself in both points. First as to His love, "God so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3.16). No room is left for doubt as to His love for sinful man, and this through the work of the Son.

The sinner is here looked at in two ways. Firstly, as a sheep, a wandering sheep gone astray, turning to his own way, a sinner alive in his sins. Secondly as a piece of silver, an inanimate object, a sinner dead in sins.

I have used the expression "mere humanity," but in the words, "What man of you," there is a beautiful reference to the Lord's humanity, become "one of us" indeed, in all things apart from sin, humanity according to God. "His is the human life which does justice to the idea of humanity." Yet He was, to use His own blessed words, "The Son of Man come to seek and to save that which was lost."

The love of God is vindicated by the blood of Jesus, and all heaven rejoices in the fact (see also Rev. 12.11-12), but the righteousness of God was also vindicated by the death and resurrection of Christ, so that God is now declared to be just and the Justifier of him who believes in Jesus.

It is just here that the work of the Holy Ghost comes in. On the bank of Jordan the Holy Ghost came down and abode upon Christ at the moment He emerged from the water, figurative of His death and resurrection which were as yet future, the Father expressing His delight in His blessed Son, a Man here on earth: but as a Man here, He stood alone; there was no other on whom the Holy Ghost could abide; as a corn of wheat He must die if He would bring forth fruit.

In the death of Christ, man after the flesh was condemned, and the old creation judicially set aside by God; but through His resurrection and ascension, and by the power of the Holy Ghost, a new generation has been created, after the order of Christ.

The Spirit of Life which was in the Corn of Wheat has, by death and resurrection, been communicated to those who believe on Him. They are linked with Him where He is now, not where He was before He died. The proper sphere of their life is in heaven. Their citizenship is there, not here.

It is strange that what God has set aside Christendom has taken up. On all sides the gospel preached at the birth of Christ is being vainly promulgated, "Peace on earth," with its accompanying earthly joys, regardless of the fact that from the outset God's proposals for peace on earth were rejected by man himself, and that even before the death of Christ the scene of the expectations of peace in the minds of the disciples was transferred from earth to heaven, and the city which should have been the great earthly peace centre was doomed to destruction (Luke 19.38-44).

There is now a great clamour for peace, and for plenty to eat and drink, but before there can be peace on earth there must be righteousness. In the Holy Spirit's sphere things are settled on a proper basis, "for the Kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Ghost." The first great question threshed out in the gospel of God as presented in the fundamental
Epistle to the Romans is "righteousness."

Then follow peace and joy, but all "in the Holy Ghost." The believer lives "in the Spirit" and is exhorted to "walk in the Spirit," "pray in the Spirit," "sing with the Spirit"; he can only worship God "in the Spirit." All these are characteristics of a living person. Apart from the work of the Spirit a man is dead to God, but in the words of the father in the third section of the parable, "this my son was dead, and is alive again," even as by the work of the Son of God, he who was lost is now found.

But there is a further thought with regard to the Spirit. The Spirit we have received is the Spirit of God's Son, "Whom God has sent forth into our hearts, crying, Abba, Father." This brings us into the third section of the parable, and into the very heart of the gospel.

The work of the shepherd is in view of the joy he will have "when he cometh home." The consummation of the work of the shepherd and the woman is reached when they "call together friends and neighbours" to rejoice with them. There is a deep significance in this word "call together." It speaks of the unity which has been made by the Spirit, the unity of "the one dear love-linked family" in the Father's House. It lifts our eyes to heaven and conducts our adoring hearts through the realms of blessedness unfolded by Jesus in the seventeenth of John, and brings us to rest in the most blissful place that could be known by any creature, the very heart of God.

When introducing the shepherd in verse 4 and the woman in verse 8, the Lord had said, "What man of you . . . ?" and "Either what woman . . . ?" But here He does not begin, "What man of you having two sons . . . ?" but "A certain man." There was one Person and one Person only whom He had in mind, the Father, whom He had come to make known. There is no earthly parallel in man or woman for love like His.

"No earthly father loves like Thee, No mother, e'er so mild, Bears and forbears as Thou hast done With me Thy sinful child."

Passing over the sinful history of the younger son we find that the first thing he gets on his return is not the best robe, but the Father's embrace. He is covered with kisses, and this while he is still in the rags of the far country; but wisdom was justified of her child, for the Father had seen him while he was yet a great way off. He had seen right into his heart, and the first word which fell from the son's lips was, "Father." Then quickly follows his righteous confession of guilt and as quickly the Father's provision of the best robe, the ring and the shoes.

It is very sweet to trace here the lineaments of the gospel as set forth in the Epistle to the Romans. In the first seven chapters we get that which leads up to the putting on of the best best robe, the believers' new position "in Christ," and as the servants looked upon the son thus arrayed, they could say, in the words of Rom. 8. 1, "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus."

Then as the son himself looked upon the ring he could say, in the words of Rom. 8. 38, "I am persuaded that nothing shall be able to separate me from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus my Lord."

Then as to the shoes; a son only could wear shoes in the house, not a servant. He had thought when in the far country to obtain a hired servant's position, but the Father will have no
servile work in His House; He will have the service of sons. The thought of sonship is brought out in Rom. 8, and service in chapter 12.

Then is brought forth the fatted calf and the same is killed, typical of the death of Christ, at once the ground of all blessing for man and lasting glory for God; the display of the love of God in all its fulness to man, and the display of the perfection of Christ as a Man in all its fulness to God; “The One Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus.” Blessed be His holy name for ever!

“Let us eat and be merry!” The Father Himself makes the proposal. Not now is the joy confined to God alone, but we can truly say:

“In Thy grace Thou now hast called us, Sharers of Thy joy to be; And to know the blessed secret Of Christ’s preciousness to Thee.”

“And they began to be merry,” and there was music and dancing. Not music out of a magnificent organ, and a choir with trained larynxes and unregenerate hearts, but the music of the Spirit, the Spirit of God’s Son. Even the servants entered into the spirit of the father’s joy (verse 27).

Someone has said that the Son of God left heaven and went to Calvary, in order that among the sweet sounds that re-echo through the courts of glory, the ear of God might be delighted by the sound of the word “Father.”

We men and women know that the purest and most disinterested of all human love is the love of a father or mother for a child, and the sweetest of all earthly joys is in the response of the child’s love to us.

This is but a type, a mere shadow, of the love that is ours now and shall be our portion for all eternity; but how much more the portion of the blessed God! “Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the children of God!” Love even now shed abroad in our hearts by the Spirit of God, and to bring us to the knowledge of which the Son of God came here in grace.

We may fittingly close this brief survey of the goodness, mercy and love of God, with the last words of the Lord Jesus before He crossed the turbid waters of the brook Cedron, “Father... I have declared unto them Thy name, and will declare it: that the love wherewith Thou hast loved Me may be in them, and I in them” (John 17. 26).

O Captain of Salvation,
   To whom our faith is sealed,
   When compassed by temptation,
   And fain to quit the field,
   Our drooping courage quicken,
   Our ebbing strength renew;
   And when hell’s volleys thicken
   Fix on Thyself our view.

Is not all power given
   To thee above, below?
Hast Thou not backward driven
   In havoc our arch-foe?
   Come, Victor all-prevailing,
   On whom our help is laid,
   Speak when our hearts are quailing,
   'Tis I, be not afraid.

If Christ has said that He means to bring us into the Father’s house, will He be indifferent to us on the way to it? Certainly not. He occupies Himself with us, considers us, nourishes and would continually cherish us, and He wants us to know it.
"THE LORD'S REMEMBRANCERS."" (W. BRAMWELL DICK.)

"I have set watchmen upon thy walls, O Jerusalem, which shall never hold their peace day nor night; ye that are the Lord's remembrancers, keep not silence, and give Him no silence till He establish, and till He make Jerusalem a praise in the earth."—Isaiah 62. 6, 7. (Marginal reading.)

We could imagine no more heartening occupation than to turn to the Old Testament Scriptures and find that God always has been, as He ever will be, unchanging and unchangeable: under all conditions and in every circumstance "The Same." We see—and we have learned it, have we not, in our own experience?—that He is the God of all encouragement, and He is ever ready to cheer and support those who seek to be found in the path of His will.

We read much, very much, that is analogous to the state of matters existing now—declension, departure, darkness, disregard for the things of God. We discover that in the midst of this there were those who sought to stand for God. They were but a small minority; they were probably labelled prophets of evil, weeping pessimists, etc. The persecution they suffered came from those who were professedly the people of God. It was to them, however, that the Lord looked (Isaiah 66. 2), to them He communicated His mind, and for them He illumined the darkness by the prospect of the coming day of deliverance, the fulfilment of all His promises, and the glory that awaited His people. Thus it was in Paul's day in relation to the Church. He lived to see the beginning of the apostasy; his heart was grieved as he laboured among the believers, and for three years "ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears." Alas! for the mass his warning fell upon deaf ears; at length they got wearied of it and turned their back upon him (2 Tim. i. 15). In the midst of it all he had the "good cheer" of the Lord, the fidelity of a few loyal hearts, and the assurance that there ever would be "faithful men." Should not we aspire to be found amongst that number?

The portion to which we invite attention at the head of this paper is one of the instances to which we refer, and the verses which we have reproduced sound a loud call in this day, as they did then, to all who love the Lord. Chapter 61 sets forth the wonderful results following Israel's deliverance from captivity. They were to be raised to a position of prosperity, dignity and joy; the Gentiles should acknowledge them as "the seed which the Lord hath blessed," and the grand object of it all was that "the Lord might be glorified." As the prophet apprehended this his heart overflowed with joy. He visualized that coming day when the people of the Lord, under the beneficent reign of righteousness and in the enjoyment of salvation (verse 1), should be given "a new name" (verse 2), would be "a crown of glory," and "a royal diadem" in the divine hand (verse 3), and brought into a place of nearness which they had never known before; they should be for the delight of the heart of Jehovah.

As the prophet realized this, he set to work and to pray, and to enthuse others likeminded with himself, in order to hasten that day. Thus we can understand the significance of the opening words of our chapter, "For Zion's sake will I not hold my peace, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, until—" (verse 1). Then he says, "I have set watchmen upon thy walls, O Jerusalem,
which shall never hold their peace day
nor night—do not these correspond
to the "faithful men" of the second
epistle to Timothy?—and upon such
is conferred the honour of being "the
Lord's remembrancers." It might be
said the Lord always remembers. He
does, but He loves to be continually
reminded by those whose hearts beat
in unison with His own, who enter into
His thoughts with regard to His people,
and who long to see His name glorified
and His heart rejoicing in their blessing.
The encouragement to all this lies in the
fact that everything will be accom­
plished by Christ (verse 11, in whom
there is no possibility of failure. Now
let us consider what lesson there is in
this for us. We look abroad to-day,
and wherever we look "Ichabod" has
to be written over everything. In
Christendom this is ignored; if atten­
tion is called to it it is denied. We fear
by many who may be a little more
intelligent in divine things it has come
to be accepted as something that cannot
be cured, and must therefore be endured. We admit at once that it
cannot be cured by any human means,
and all attempts at such have only
served to show how utterly incurable
it is. What, then, are we to do? Might we suggest what we should
not do?

1. Do not be occupied with the
failure.

2. Do not engage the thoughts of our
follow-believers with the failure.

3. Do not resort to any man-made
plan for the supposed remedy of the
failure

What then? Let us get near the
Lord; feel the throbbing of His heart;
understand how unspeakably dear His
assembly is to Him; get to know His
thoughts; enter into His purpose; and
learn that He who loves the assembly,
who gave Himself for it, who is inde­
fatigable in His solicitude for it, will
one day present it to Himself a glorious
assembly, not having spot or wrinkle
or any such thing (Ephes. 5. 25–27).
The result will be that (1) In His
presence we will not hold our peace.
For the sake of that which is dearer
than all else to His heart, we will be
ceaseless in our intercession. (2) In
the company of "His own" we will look
out for the watchmen—those who are
zealous for His glory and for the
welfare of His assembly; who never
hold their peace day nor night; who,
as "the Lord's remembrancers," with
holy boldness "keep not silence," and
"give Him no silence till—" And (3)
We will walk in separation—whether
as to worship or service—from every one
and everything marked by indifference
to His name, His holiness, and His
divine purpose. This is the real enthu­
siasm, the God-given energy, the true
exercise that we covet for ourselves
and for our beloved fellow-believers
to-day. How long is it to be main­
tained? Our Scripture says—"till He
establish, and till He make Jerusalem
a praise in the earth" (verse 7). The
prophet and his follow-watchmen lived
in the hope of it and died in the faith
of it. We may do the same. Much
more likely in our case is it that we shall
witness the great consummation, for it
may be that ere another day has run
its course the church—one whole un­
divided, and never-again-to-be-divided,
assembly—will be translated from earth
to the Father's house, and will, as His
purposes are unfolded and fulfilled, be
that in which there shall be glory to
God in Christ Jesus unto all generations
of the ages of the ages (Ephes. 3. 21,
New Trans.). In the light of this let
us go on; be encouraged; make full
use of our privilege as "the Lord's
remembrancers."
THE PERSON OF OUR LORD.

The One who lived in glory with God before the worlds were made, and who, as John tells us, "was God" (John 1.), is the same Person who came to earth, for "the Word was made flesh," and He who dwelt on earth is the same Person who is now glorified in heaven. "And now, O Father, glorify Thou me with Thine own self, with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was" (John 17.), and "God hath made that same Jesus...both Lord and Christ" (Acts 2.). The Pre-historic, Historic, and Exalted Christ is One Person throughout.

"He made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men." His life here, instead of being passed amid the ineffable splendours of divine glory, was lived among men under human conditions, "Though He was rich, yet for our sakes He became poor." He was rich in all the majesty and adoration and service that surround the Godhead, rich in the glory of heaven, but when He gave up these riches and took the place of humiliation in the poverty of human nature and service He did not cease to be who He was before, and now, highly exalted, and with a name that is above every name, He is the same, He is "that same Jesus."

THE BOOK OF REVELATION.

This book is not a problem to be solved, but a revelation to be received. Not a mystery, but an unveiling. If it were a mystery God would not call it a revelation.

It is not an historic puzzle for students of sacred history, but a lucid exposition for all who have the mind of Christ.

It is not a theological arena where doctors may wrestle, but the presentation of a divine Person where all may worship.

It is not a matter of controversy for brainy men, but a display of things to come for the Spirit-filled. The whole book was sent to each of the seven churches whilst church history was still in the womb of time.

There is no need to pass an examination in Myers or Gibbon's "Rise and Fall" and the histories of Mediæval and modern Europe, or make yourself an expert in the Mohammedan delusion—the Romish abomination—Zoroaster, Bramah—Vishnu, and other inventions of Satan. You need know nothing of the conquests of Saracen or Turk. The Book itself is the end of all mystery and baffling chronology to whosoever reads, hears and keeps the things which are written therein (Rev. 1. 3).

"Artificial piety, like flowers of wax, droops not in the hour of drought; but the fair lily of true grace hangs its head if the rain of heaven be denied. True faith, like fire, has its attendant smoke of trials and buffetings; but presumption, like a painted flame, is all brightness. True Christians meet with storms; but mere professors, like galleys pictured on canvas, ride on unruffled ocean. Life has its changes—it is death that abideth the same—life weeps as well as smiles; but the ghastly grin of death relaxes not with anxiety or fear. 'The evil are not in trouble as other men, neither are they plagued like other men.' It were better to ebb and flow for ever like the sea than rot in an endless stagnation of false peace."
ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

"A Bruised Reed and a Smoking Flax."

"I would be glad also if you would give me a little help on Isa. 42, 3, 'A BRUISED REED shall He not break.' I heard a man preach from it and deny the total depravity of man, saying that he is a BRUISED REED and not a broken reed. He said that there was a little good in all. A friend and I were reading it together after, and a well-able Bible Teacher came in and told us that it could mean none other than Christ Himself, using the quotation in support from Matt. 12, 20. 'We were unable to see it and there the matter dropped and now it has arisen again. I should be very glad for a little help.'—SWANSEA.

These figures do not represent men in their unregenerate condition or teach that there is a little good in all. Such passages of Scripture as Rom. 3, 10–18, and 7, 18, are enough to show how false such an interpretation of them is. Nor do they represent the Lord, that is unthinkable; it is He who does not break the bruised reed or quench the smoking flax.

Nothing could be more beautiful than the lowly gracious spirit of the Lord as portrayed in the passage. We get its true setting in Matt. 12; it is introduced at the great crisis in that Gospel. In chapter 11, the Lord had been compelled to pronounce woes instead of blessings upon the Cities in Galilee that had witnessed His mightiest works. They sinned against the light and would not have their King. In chapter 12, the leaders of the people not only opposed, criticized and hated the Lord, but they attributed His works of goodness and mercy to the devil's power and took counsel together how they might destroy Him (verse 14). Their utter blindness and absolute incorrigibility were fully manifested and we should not have been surprised had the Lord turned from them in holy wrath and righteous indignation and left them to the judgment of God. Instead, He was un­changed, the same accessible, gracious servant of God as He had been from the beginning; and when the multitudes followed Him, He healed them all, and sought no glory for Himself in doing it.

It is at this point that God would have us to behold Him. He was God's chosen and beloved One, in whom He delighted. He was not deterred in the path of God's will by the hatred of the leaders and the people of Israel, but He shall show judgment to the Gentiles, i.e., He shall give them light and administer for their blessing, and in His Name they shall trust, and so the word of the prophet shall be fulfilled. He shall not strive or cry, neither shall His voice be heard in the streets. He did not stand up for His own rights, or endeavour to secure the support of the populace by impassioned speeches, as an ordinary man under a sense of injustice might have done. He was calm, quiet, and undisturbed by their treatment of Him. "A bruised reed shall He not break, and a smoking flax shall He not quench." He was gentle and gracious to others, forbearing and full of patience; and what life there might be no matter how feeble would be cherished by Him and not extinguished.

We would suggest a further thought as to the bruised reed and smoking flax. The Gentiles come into prominence here. Israel ought to have been a strong support and a burning and shining light to lead them out of their darkness to God, but they were not this. Think of a weary traveller in the night with nothing for support and guidance but a bruised reed (staff) and a smoking flax (dimmly burning lamp). Such was the plight of the Gentiles, because of Israel's failure. Here and there one, like Naaman the Syrian, learnt that there was the true God in Israel, but the majority blasphemed His Name because of them. And here the Lord steps into the breach. He shall not fail or be discouraged, literally, "burn dimly," or be "broken;" where Israel utterly failed He shall not fail, but "He shall be a light for the
Gentiles, to open blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from prison, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison house” (Is. 42. 6, 7). He will be the strength and light of the Gentiles and their unfailing Leader and Lord; He is this now for all who trust in Him. The whole passage will, we think, bear out this interpretation. And Israel also shall be restored when she turns wholly to Him, and she will be to the nations, during the Millennial Kingdom, a light and support, for she will walk in the light of the Lord, and reflect and radiate it; she will be a means of strength to others, for she will own that the Lord is her strength. She will lean upon her Beloved.

THE BEGINNING AND THE END.

"The guilt of twice ten thousand sins
One moment takes away;
And grace, when once the war begins,
Secures the crowning day."

FAITH counts upon the end from the beginning. This calculation upon the end from the beginning is found in the song of Moses (Exod. 15. 17-19).

The beginning was in Egypt, when, sheltered by the blood from judgment, they fed upon the lamb that had died for them. It was the beginning of months for Israel, they began to live, redeemed by God Himself through the blood and by His power, for He brought them out of bondage. Then sang Moses, and His faith anticipated the end in his song. Such a beginning secured such an end.

Jordan had to be passed before the end could be reached, but new occasions bring out new agencies, other necessities display other resources, but the same Lord; different administrations, but the same Jesus. The arm is not shortened, and the help for Israel at the Jordan is as perfect as the help at the Red Sea. Not a wave of the swellings and overflowings of the river touch the sole of the foot of the feeblest or most distant of the tribes. The Ark stations itself in the very midst of the river, and there it stands till all had gone over. It was the blood that met the judgment in Egypt. The rod of Moses divided the Red Sea; the pillar of cloud and of fire gave guidance in the wilderness; now the Ark of the Covenant is the pledge of safety for all in the passage of Jordan.

The presence of the Ark encourages the people when nature might have had a thousand misgivings, and they all passed over dry shod, the Ark gave them its presence until all was done; it stood in the place of the river's height of pride and strength, and the waters must have first overwhelmed the Ark before they could have touched the foot of the feeblest of the people. And this crowning mercy reaches them without the Lord for a single moment calling to their remembrance a single evil that they had committed all the journey through. He gave unto them liberally and upbraided not.

Everything was done by an arm of conquering strength and by a heart of unupbraiding love, and Israel passed on to their inheritance under the very same God of grace by whom they had passed out from the place of death and judgment. The earliest pledge is redeemed at the last moment. The song, which we sang at first, is sung again with fresh power:

"And grace, when once the war begins,
Secures the crowning day."

These things happened unto them for ensamples for us. But more glorious for us than the type will be the antitype, when, every hope fulfilled, we pass clean over into the inheritance, reserved in heaven for us.
OUR CHANGED CENTRE OF GRAVITY.

"And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me."—John 12. 32.

"For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death."—Romans 8. 2.

The centre of gravity has been changed for us who know that we are loved by our Lord Jesus Christ. Once it was the world. What an attraction its snares and shams had for us! In spite of our continual disappointments in it, it exercised an influence over us that we could not resist; our unregenerated souls had neither the power nor the wish to move outside its influence, and the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—a trinity of evil—made up our lives. We did not know that it was the law of sin and death that held us in this bondage, but it was, and the world which is not of the Father was the centre of gravity for us.

But a new Object has claimed us, and that Object is Christ, and what is so remarkable about this is that it is as being lifted up from the earth that He first became attractive to us. To be lifted up from the earth meant to be put to shame by men and to be accursed of God. The Nazarene, when lifted up and crucified, cried: "I am a worm and no man; a reproach of men, and despised of the people. All they that see me laugh me to scorn: they shoot out the lip, and they shake the head . . . they look and stare upon me" (Psalm 22.), and Galatians 3. 13 tells us that "it is written, Cursed is everyone that hangeth on a tree." Such was the lifting up of Jesus from the earth, and what could there be attractive in that? This is a great mystery; to the Jews it was a stumbling block and to the Greeks foolishness! A glorious Messiah, crushing their oppressors by irresistible might, would have been attractive to the Jews, and a monster that could have enthroned their vices and made their follies appear honourable would have been welcomed and worshipped by the Greeks; but One who "made Himself of no reputation . . . and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross" (Phil. 2. 8) could not be attractive to natural men; to them He was without form or comeliness, and when they saw Him there was no beauty that they should desire Him.

It is plain that this "lifting up" puzzled those who heard about it, for they say to the Lord, "We have heard out of the law that Christ abideth for ever; and how sayest Thou, The Son of Man must be lifted up? Who is this Son of Man?" To be lifted up would in their view of things be an ignominious close to a promising career. Who would follow or put any confidence in one who had been put to the shame of crucifixion? Surely the Name of the One who had been cut off from the land of the living by a malefactor's death would perish for ever, for who would declare His generation? Light was needed to clear up this mystery, and so the Lord, instead of answering their question as they might have expected, warns them to make use of the light while it shone, to believe in the light that they might be the children of the light. Now light is pleasant and it is good to the eyes to behold the sun; so here the Lord cried and said, "I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth in Me should not walk in darkness." All things are plain to faith; and Christ crucified—though to the Jews a stumbling block and to the Greek foolishness—is light to us who believe, He is the wisdom of God and the power of God.
Had these people who were so curious to know who was this Son of Man who was to be lifted up, heard that Jesus had said, "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have eternal life"? It certainly appears as though they had, and if so, why should they have forgotten the other side of the great story, "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life"? The fact is that if it was a necessity because of man's state of sinfulness and utter alienation from God that a kinsman, one made in the likeness of sinful flesh, but sinless, should be lifted up as their substitute and representative, a sacrifice for sin, that a way might be opened for them out of death into life, God Himself has met that necessity by giving His only begotten Son. And the only begotten Son of God is also the Son of Man. The natural man in his philosophical and scientific pride boggles at the incarnate mystery, but how great is the light that breaks into the soul of the one who believes it. It changes everything for us and makes us glory in the cross of Christ, and sing:

"O the cross of Christ is wondrous,
There I learn God's love to me."

Yes, so great was God's love to the world that He must intervene to rescue men from perishing; so great was His love that He must win them for Himself from destruction. He could not endure that they should exist for ever in darkness without any knowledge of His yearnings after them: hence the lifting up of the Son of Man—God's love-gift to the world! How wonderful it is that upon the cross upon which was darkly written the hatred of men to God there should be inscribed the love of God to men! The hatred is the background which throws the love into bright relief, and it is the love that has become attractive to us who believe. God is made known to us in Christ Jesus, and He is brighter and better than the brightest and best that the world can offer us. So our centre of gravity is changed; the Son of God who loved us and gave Himself for us has become the Object of our affections. In Him the love of God shines forth, and has "shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of God in the face of Jesus Christ" (2 Cor. 4. 6). As a star that had wandered from its orbit but had come again under the influence of the centre sun, so have we, once wanderers from God, because under a malign and destructive influence, returned to the Shepherd and Bishop of our souls, and He has brought us back to God.

But it is certain that there must be an affinity between the object attracted and the centre of attraction. However high a man may leap into the air he comes back to the earth, because his body is of the earth; and only those souls are drawn away from the world to Christ in which there is a work that makes them one in nature and life with Christ, and the Scriptures speak plainly of this work. Take John 1. 12, 13 as an example: "But as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name: which were born . . . of God." It is this work "born of God" to which I refer, by it all who are the subjects of it have a new life and nature, and they must gravitate to Christ.

They will do so completely and bodily when their bodies are changed and fashioned like unto His body of glory. I know that the teaching of Holy Scripture as to the dead in Christ
being raised, and those that live and believe on Him being changed and caught up to meet Him in the air (1 Thess. 4. 16, 17) is scoffed at as being a physical impossibility: the law of gravitation would prevent it, it is said. But those who scoff are ignorant of God, and they do err, not knowing the Scriptures and the power of the Lord. It is, of course, a scientific fact that natural bodies are controlled by natural laws, and if these bodies of ours could not be changed, the scoffers would have ground for their laughter. But what saith the Scriptures? Twice we are told that we shall be changed. “Behold, I show you a mystery: we shall not all sleep but we shall all be changed . . . and this mortal must put on immortality” (1 Cor. 15. 51-53), and “He shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body” (Phil. 3. 20, 21). We learn that we are to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven, that mortality might be swallowed up of life (2 Cor. 5. 1-4), and that we are to be caught up to meet the Lord in the air (1 Thess. 4. 16). Now when these natural bodies are changed into spiritual bodies—bodies of glory—will natural laws control them any more? Certainly not. They will then be controlled by spiritual laws. If bodies of earth must gravitate to the earth, bodies of glory will gravitate to glory, and such bodies will be ours by the power of the Lord. When the rapture of the Church takes place not one natural law will be violated or displaced, but we shall be released from the natural law by the change that will take place in us “according to the working of the power which He has even to subdue all things unto Himself” (Phil. 3. 21, N.T.). That is future, it is the blessed hope which lifts our hearts in joyful expectation, and it is as sure as the Word of God.

But I speak of the present. A change as great as that which will take place in our bodies has already taken place in our souls, and Christ has become our new centre. He draws us to Himself in our thoughts and affections. But the flesh is still in us, that old nature that loves the world and the evil things that are in it, and consequently the law of sin and death has the opportunity of operating against us and holding us in its thrall: hence we need to know the power of the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus, for this alone can make us free from the law of sin and death (Romans 8. 2). We have a new object outside of us—Christ once crucified for us but now enthroned in glory, living for us there and making intercession for us; and we have a new power inside of us—the Spirit of life, the Holy Spirit, and the new power works in us in relation to the new object outside of us, and the liberty of eternal life is ours. It is as we mind the Spirit’s things, and this means as Christ fills our vision, for of Him the Spirit speaks, that we experience this liberty of life and peace, but nothing less than this is the true life of the children of God.

It is not brought about by self-occupation, but by occupation with Christ; not by denouncing the bad, but by being occupied with the good; not by any effort of nature, but by the Holy Spirit. The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus will make us free for the happy service of the blessed God after the pattern of the freedom in which Jesus served Him when He was here.

And the Spirit within us is the power by which we set our affections on things above, on Christ Himself where He is, and so He is our new centre of gravity; by His sweet constraining power He draws us after Him, and we know Him as the object bright and fair that fills and satisfies our hearts.
THE GREAT PYRAMID OR THE BIBLE.

We are asked as to the Great Pyramid. We would warn our readers against being deluded by the guesses and speculations that are being made as to the meaning of this structure. We are astonished that true lovers of the Word of God should be engrossed with it. Those who occupy the saints of God with it are doing them a great disservice, for they are turning them from the Word of God which is our only inspired and infallible guide. "ALL SCRIPTURE is given by inspiration of God and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: THAT THE MAN OF GOD MAY BE PERFECT, THROUGHLY FURNISHED UNTO ALL GOOD WORKS " (2 Tim. 3. 16, 17). Those who are sober-minded and who rightly divide the Word of truth need nothing else than the Word for their instruction and guidance, but the unstable and those who love sensations run after other things. Christians ought to be specially suspicious of any deductions drawn from the structure of the Great Pyramid since so much was made of it by the late C. T. Russell of Millennial Dawn fame.

The only thing that the Great Pyramid teaches, as far as we can judge, is that they knew and could do things 4000 years ago that we do not know and cannot do now. It is a great witness to the fact men have not progressed as much as they would like to think.

Two Scriptures are taken from their contexts and quoted by the pyramidists. Jeremiah 32. 20, "Which hast set signs and wonders in the land of Egypt, even unto this day, and in Israel, and among other men," but the next verse explains what these signs and wonders were: they were those that God gave when He brought Israel out of Egypt. They were the unforgettable signs of His power in the land that had oppressed His people. The other Scripture is Isaiah 19. 20, "In that day shall there be an altar to the Lord in the midst of the land of Egypt, and a pillar at the border thereof to the Lord." The Scripture does not say, there IS an altar there, which would have been the only correct thing to say if the pyramid had been referred to, but "There SHALL BE," it shall be there in the day which this chapter foretells, and we have only to read the chapter and see that it is plainly not this day. The Scripture explains itself. It tells of a day when the land of Egypt shall cry unto the Lord because of oppression and He shall send them a Saviour, and in gratitude they shall set up an altar and worship Him (verses 20, 21). An altar is for sacrifice and worship, and the pyramid is certainly not this; and a pillar is a witness, and this God will have in Egypt. There shall be worship upward to Him and witness outward to men as to His righteousness and delivering power. It all refers to the day which lies in the future when the Lord of Hosts shall say, "Blessed be Egypt my people, and Assyria the work of my hands, and Israel mine inheritance " (verse 25). It is a serious thing to tear texts from their settings and make them support our own theories.

The fixing of dates as to future events is a pernicious thing. The Lord Himself said, "But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no not the angels that are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father " (Mark 13. 32). And this was said in relation to "the great tribulation," that some of the pyramidists say has already begun.
To the apostles who have given us the Word of God, the Lord said, "It is not for you to know the times and seasons, which the Father hath put in His own power." And if this knowledge was withheld from them, it has not been given to us. If some extra-Scriptural knowledge had been necessary to our furnishing unto every good work, the Bible would have warned us when and where to look for it. It has not been done, so, and wise shall we be if we rest satisfied with the Word of God, and seek the guidance of the Holy Ghost to rightly divide it. Days, months, years and numbers are given in it, but they have their relation to Israel and the earth, and have nothing to do with this church period. They will come into force after the church has been translated to heaven.

While we wait from the fulfilling of this our blessed hope, let us guard against these snares of the devil, who would turn us from the Word. His intention is to bring the truth of the Lord's second coming and the teaching of Scripture as to the future into ridicule and disrepute, and it is astounding how easily some true Christians fall into his snares.

"FATHER, GLORIFY THY NAME."

"Now is my soul troubled, and what shall I say? Father, save Me from this hour; but for this cause came I to this hour. Father, glorify Thy Name."—John 12. 27, 28.

HE was the life, yet He came to die;
He was light and love, yet rejected and hated as man never knew before, nor will again. The reality of His manhood and the glory of His Godhead in no way hindered His sorrow; His being who and what He was, and perfect in all, only gave Him infinite capacity to feel and fathom what He endured, none the less because He came to endure it all, and had it now before Him in immediate prospect, though none of men saw it but Himself. He had not been perfect man if His soul had not been troubled, so as to feel, "What am I to say?" He had not been Son of God as man had He not in His soul-trouble prayed, "Father, save Me from this hour," and quite as little, "but for this cause came I to this hour," crowned with "Father, glorify Thy Name." To have felt and expressed the first petition perfectly suited Him who was man in such circumstances; to have added the second was worthy of Him who is God no less than man in one undivided Person; to have said both was perfection in both, in sorrow as in joy, as to death no less than life.

W. K.

Rejoice: Pray: Give Thanks.

THAT is the order, according to the will of God, for us. Nothing glorifies God like our praise, and nothing blesses the man who prays more than the praise he offers. A Christian was greatly dejected at the reception of some bad news. He prayed, and yet the darkness was not lifted, when his eye caught sight of a motto-card on the wall, "TRY THANKSGIVING." He did: and in a moment the shadows departed. If we truly trust in God, we shall surely praise Him.

"God nothing does nor suffers to be done
But thou wouldst do thyself;
Couldst thou but see
The end of all events as well as He."
WHAT I have to say to-night may be summed up in the two words "No compromise." This is dead in the teeth of the modern spirit, because among men the best road to a bargain is through compromise. Starting with our thoughts rather widely apart, we can by degrees get together, whereas if you maintain your point of view, and I maintain my point of view, our differences will be irreconcilable. Compromise is responsible for many successful things in the world of business and the world of politics, but it is the secret of failure in the things of God. If you want success there, you have to seek out what is the divine way, and stick to that without a shadow of compromise. You remember that word in 2 Cor. 6. where the Apostle Paul wants the believers to be enlarged, and then you have that most striking passage which begins, "Be not unequally yoked with unbelievers." He had spoken to them with wonderful delicacy about various matters in the earlier epistle. He had given a good deal of personal information in the early chapters of the second epistle. He had found that which encouraged him, because he saw signs of the working of the Holy Spirit, and he felt that he could now tell them what was at the bottom of all their troubles. Why had they been so shaky on the great fundamental points of doctrine? Why this grave immorality in their midst? Why this importing into their assembly the methods and ways of the heathen? The reason was that they had their links with the world very largely uncut. They had broken down in their insulation. Instead of being like an electric cable well charged with heavenly electricity, and insulated from the world, the insulation had broken down and the energy was escaping. They were allowing in their midst many evil things from the world with which they were compromising. I might turn to that verse in Ephesians, "Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them." The Christian has to be uncompromising when it is a question of sin, evil or the world.

We get wonderful illustrations in the Old Testament. The man who stands for God is the one who takes an uncompromising attitude in the presence of the world. Perhaps Enoch is the first great example. We know he lived little more than one-third of the span of human life in antediluvian days. His days were very short compared with his contemporaries, and he walked with God. But when you come to the New Testament you find this man was an uncompromising witness. The world became rather an awkward place for Enoch to dwell in. Did you notice Hebrews 11., "By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death"? I often read that before it dawned on me that it was a remarkable thing to say. In the ordinary course he would have had the expectation of another 500 or 600 years. I believe if he had not been translated he would have been put to death for talking such talk in those lawless days when corruption and violence filled the earth. He told them the Lord was coming with ten thousands of His saints to execute judgment. It is the man of faith and of uncompromising faithfulness who leaves his mark for God. Compare Abraham with Lot, and you have the
thing set before you almost in perfection. Lot becomes a warning, while Abraham is called the "friend of God."

Now in the incident we have had read in our hearing to-night an unnamed man of God is called upon to witness at a great crisis in Israel's history. The division between the two tribes and the ten had just been consummated. Jeroboam, with a good deal of worldly foresight, had said: "After all, religion is a most potent force, and in spite of all the feeling that has been generated by the tyranny of Solomon's day, yet after all anger does not burn for ever. The old links will assert themselves, and the pull of the old relationship, and the hearts of my people will be sneaking back to that king who is of David's line. Most of all, there are those feasts of the Lord, where every male is supposed to go. Can I let them go and come under the influence of the great house that Solomon made? It is not policy to permit it. I must manage somehow to divert them to a new centre."

Therefore he set up the calves in Bethel and Dan. He carried it out very effectively. He says, "Behold thy gods, O Israel." False gods. He made a house—false temple. He made priests—false priests. He ordained a feast—a false feast. He had false sacrifices, a false altar, and false incense. He diverted the minds of his people in the mass to these false things. This was a great crisis. The larger part of Israel were being totally diverted from the true God. God called an unknown man. Mark you, not every prophet is called a man of God. He was no mean individual, though his name is not given. He had specific instructions to eat no bread and to drink no water, and not to return by the way he came. He had to appear like a meteor in the sky, drop in and deliver his message, and
at the prophet’s feet, begging him to ask the Lord that this blight might be removed. The prophet successfully negotiated the storm which arose out of the world’s violence. We may have to stand in the presence of the violence of the world, and very often it puts backbone into us instead of taking it out. I remember a servant of God speaking of a young fellow who had been converted. His old friends to whom he told it shook their fists in his face, and said, “We will take that out of you.” He said, “They tried, but they did not knock it out: they knocked it in.” He was strengthened, and the world’s violence did not move him.

THE SECOND TEST.

A few minutes more, and the prophet has a more severe test. Verse 7 is the world’s patronage. Now that the prophet has established a certain claim on the king by healing him, the situation is changed. The king said, “Come home with me and refresh thyself, and I will give thee a reward.” Now, man of God, take care! He did take care. That brought forth this striking pronouncement, “If thou give me half thy house, I will not go in to thee.” The world is now fawning and smiling upon him. “Come and sit at my royal table,” says the king, “I will give you a reward.” It is a very difficult thing to refuse, yet he did refuse. He stood the test. The world sometimes swings round, and would fain patronize us. It is much more difficult. Many Christians would have fallen where the Apostle Paul stood in Acts 16. A damsel with a spirit of divination came forth and in a moral way patted the apostles on the back. She said, “These men are the servants of the most high God, telling us the way of salvation.” That was a beautiful advertisement from the devil, but the devil’s advertisement will not help the work of God. No servant of God is going to be helped by it. If you were interviewing an employer for a situation, and just then a man with as shady a character as he could possibly have were to drop in and treat you as “hail, fellow, well met,” your chances of employment would vanish to zero. The employer would say to himself, “He is on the very best of terms in that quarter,” and you would not get the job. In the same way, the devil’s patronage is no good to you and me.

THE THIRD TEST.

Now in verse 15 you have the third test, by the old prophet, who repeats the king’s invitation almost in the same words. “Come home with me and eat bread.” This is the test of religious associations. Here is a prophet, a man who shines in the religious sphere, a man who, to take him at his face value, speaks on God’s behalf, yet who dwells serenely in the midst of all this idolatry, as we do not hear that he uttered one word of protest. Maybe in his heart and mind he did not like it, but it is pretty clear he did not say anything against it. One wonders at his going on in the midst of all these things if he had much care for his God. He sends a message to the man of God to come home with him and eat bread. I am religious. I am not an idolatrous king. Once again the man of God resisted the temptation. He stands in the presence of this further test of religious associations. That is a test which comes to us again and again. “It is for a good cause,” they say; “it is religious.” Beware of worldly compromising religion. Once more the prophet has grace to shake his head and say, No. It is not so good nor so strong as the way he speaks to the king. He says to the old prophet, “I may not,” as if
he would very much have liked to. He did not say, “I will not,” as if his will was in it. To the religious man he says, “I may not. It would be very nice, but I am not free.”

THE FOURTH TEST.

He refuses until the old prophet with his wiles says once more (verse 18), “I am a prophet as thou art; and an angel spoke to me by the word of the Lord, saying, Bring him back with thee into thy house, that he may eat bread and drink water.” But he lied unto him. He was tested this time by what was in its substance the very thing he was sent to protest against—false religious imitation. Here was a man who had all the outward trappings of being a true prophet. “I am a Christian, as you are,” they say; “I am quite happy here. I can settle down amongst these people. I have words from the Lord. I have seen an angel.” He was lying. Whether he was consciously lying may be questioned. He may have been the victim of delusions. He did not see an angel that came from heaven. It may have been an angel from the pit. The man of God ought surely to have said, “God never goes back upon His instructions.” He never begins an enterprise not foreseeing all the eventualities, and in the middle countermands His programme. God begins by foreseeing everything, and His instructions at the beginning stand to the finish. He ought to have known that what God begins with He carries through. Taken on the ground of this religious imitation the man of God fell. God intervened, and He used those lying lips to tell the man of God his doom—a doom which fell upon him in the government of God. You find how God at the beginning of things makes a drastic example of somebody. You can find various illustrations of that: Achan in Joshua’s day, at the beginning of the conquest of the land, and Ananias and Sapphira at the beginning of the church’s history. Although the man of God failed on the fourth test, it pleased God in His government to make an example of him, that you and I might learn the lesson of no compromise. Be very careful when the compromise comes to you by the way of religious imitation. It may be someone who was like the old prophet of Bethel. Perhaps they were once true prophets of the Lord but have backslidden, and take a terrible pleasure in drawing aside others. It makes them feel more easy in their minds if they can get others back in the compromising path. You may be tested in this way by some poor backsliding saint, or possibly—I do not want to pronounce on the old prophet of Bethel—someone who only makes a religious profession.

You have heard a good deal of truth and unfolding of the word of God. My appeal to you is this: if you desire to be for the Lord and stand for Him, see to it that you are not sidetracked by the way of compromise. While you go through the world men will say to you, “We know as much about it as you. We are as true Christians as you.” Yet they are going on with the world, endorsing the world, speaking the things the world loves, introducing those false things which are sweeping professing Christianity. By the grace of God, let “no compromise” be our watchword. Be obedient to the instructions that God has given us in His Word. Obedience would have saved the man of God who came from Judah.

Hearing, believing, living: such is the heavenly progressions, the higher biological law, written in all the Scriptures.
"Better than the Angels."

Read Hebrews ch. 1.; 2. 6, 7, 14-16; and 13. 1.

It is remarkable what a great deal the writer of this epistle to the Hebrews, whoever he may be, has to say on the subject of angels—a subject on which many Christians are profoundly ignorant nowadays. Someone may say, "We don't want to hear about angels, we want to hear about Christ." Quite so, but don't let us try to be wiser and more spiritual than the inspired writer of this epistle, who had a great deal to say about angels. Not that he wanted to occupy us with them, but he brings them up as a kind of foil to show up in greater relief, in brighter colours, the glories of Him of whom we love to hear and speak.

Let us very briefly this evening use the angels as the writer of this epistle (Paul, I suppose) does, to extol the glories of the Lord Jesus Christ. People say at these meetings, "I wish he would give us something practical." What can be more practical, what can have—by God's gracious blessing—a more practical effect upon our souls than for the greatness of the grace and glory of the Lord Jesus to be set before us after such a fashion that our hearts, so easily diverted and drawn away after things here, should be recalled from their wanderings and set afresh on Him? That will be practical indeed.

We must remember in the old days of Judaism angels had a very prominent part in the ways of God with His people. The Law, which was the basis of all their religion, was given by the disposition of angels. Myriads of angels were at Sinai (Ps. 68.); the hosts of angels gave a certain glory to that old-time covenant. Again and again angels were used as intermediaries between God and His people of old. To the Jew the existence and the work of angels was a vital part of his religion. And when rationalism began to rear its head among them, one of the first things denied was this doctrine of the existence of angels, just as modern rationalism, when it shows itself in Christian circles, lays its profane hand on the most vital and fundamental of Christian verities.

In connection with the birth and life and ministry and death of our Lord Jesus, God saw to it that there was ample angelic testimony that would weigh largely with those of Jewish birth. The angels announced His birth at Bethlehem. Angels came and ministered to Him in His temptation. An angel appeared strengthening Him in Gethsemane, and after His resurrection testimony was borne to the fact that He was not in that empty tomb by angelic witnesses, who again at His ascension announce that "this same Jesus" would come again. So that the Jews had ample angelic testimony to the One who dwelt amongst them that He was indeed the object of many a glowing promise and prophecy, the long-expected Messiah.

We can well understand that a Jew, invited to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and to go forth without the camp—that is, to leave Judaism behind—would at once raise the objection, "Am I to leave that which was revealed and supported all through by these great and glorious beings?" "Am I to turn my back on that economy which existed by the ordination of angels?" Indeed, in the epistle to the Hebrews the writer anticipates all that and uses it to show how much greater the glory of the One with whom we have to do, and because of that how much more glorious and wonderful is Christianity than anything
in the old days that was connected with the ministry of angels.

The apostle looks right away back to the past eternity and contrasts the Lord Jesus with angels, and then he looks on into the future, the world to come of which he was speaking, and contrasts the place angels will have then with the place that those who are Christ's will have. In verses 1 and 2 of chapter 1. are seven wonderful things said of the Lord Jesus, not one of which could possibly be postulated about the most glorious of angels. When we read these seven wonderful things describing the Person of Christ, we feel there is a greater distance between Him and the loftiest angel than there is between that angel and a grain of dust, for the loftiest angel and a grain of dust are alike creatures, but He is the Creator. We read in the fourth verse "made so much better than the angels." For which of the angels has ever been saluted as the Son of God? To which angel did God ever undertake to be a Father? Instead of angels receiving honour and worship they are the ones that render honour and worship to Him who is the First Begotten.

As to the angels in the seventh verse I think it should be, "He maketh His angels winds and His ministers a flame of fire." Acts 2. tells us that in this Christian day the wind of God and the flame of God are set in motion by the Holy Spirit. He came down as a rushing wind and as tongues of fire. In the old days the flame of fire and rushing wind were set in motion by angelic operation. They are God's ministers that serve in contrast to the One who in verse 8 is addressed as "O God," "Thy throne, O God." Look at these glorious angels: they are but servants. Look at the Son: His glory is the glory of God. He is God. Oh, how much greater He than any angel! Then in verse 13, to which angel did God ever say, "Sit on My right hand until I make Thine enemies Thy foot-stool"? Now we are called away from the distant past to the present. Who is sitting at God's right hand yonder? No glorious angel. To which angel did He ever assign that present place of exaltation? To none. The One who was pierced and despised and spit upon as a man down here, He is the One exalted to God's right hand.

Then in verse 5 of chapter 2, as to the world to come. This is not to be in subjection to the angels. In olden days the world largely was in subjection to angels. When God interfered in the affairs of men it was by angels. But not so in the world to come. I believe that the place of angels in olden days is to be filled in the world to come to a large extent by the likes of you and me. I have no doubt that the actual governors, the rulers, magistrates and judges will be men on earth of Israel's race, but I take it that we, the heavenly saints, shall be used of God to bring heavenly influence to bear on their minds, just as angels in the olden days were used to bring these messages from God to His servants on earth. As it puts it in 1 Cor. 6., "Know ye not that we—saints of the Lord Jesus, of the heavenly place—shall judge angels?" Have you ever thought of that? What can it mean—that you and I shall judge angels? I don't know, but a brother well known and much esteemed has put it this way. In regard to the verse in the end of chapter 1., "Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?" In ways unknown to us, because not revealed (for we are not to be occupied with angels but with the Lord Jesus, whose intercession up yonder means so much to us), yet in
providential, unrevealed ways, angels are serving us and ministering to us day by day. When we get yonder we shall be able to look back and understand how the angels of the Lord encamped round about us, and how He gave His angels charge concerning us. We shall understand something of what it has meant to us that those mighty angels have had us in their care. We are not called to understand it now, but we shall understand it then. And do you think God is going to be indebted even to an angel? And there will be those angels in a secondary place to whom we shall owe so much, and our Lord—theirs and ours—will He not say to us, “Here are these servants of Mine that have been servants of yours. They have ministered to you in unsuspected ways all through the years of your sojourn on earth. What reward shall I give them?” “Know ye not that ye shall judge angels?” Will it be for us to answer that? It has been thought so, and I pass on the thought without comment. So these Hebrew Christians were not leaving behind the ministry of angels in coming into Christianity. They are the unseen, unobtrusive, untiring ministers of the heirs of God, you and me.

Then in verse 16 of chapter 2, we read that the Lord Jesus did not come here to espouse the cause of angels; He did not come to seek a bride for Himself from amongst the elect angels, nor to work out redemption for fallen angels; but He took up, He espoused the cause of the seed of Abraham; and from amongst them He has redeemed those that shall be His brethren, His companions for ever. It was upon men that He set His love, His delights were with the sons of men.

Now in chapter 13., verses 1 and 2, “Let brotherly love continue, be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares.” Of course they have. Do you think, when you receive into your house one of God’s dear children nowadays, you receive an angel unawares? You are certainly not going to receive an angel unawares in receiving a child of God, but the Lord Jesus said to His disciples, “He that receiveth you, receiveth—an angel?” No, “receiveth Me.” Oh, the glory of Christianity! In the old days they might receive an angel unawares. It was a great honour. But now, if you receive one that belongs to Christ—small, insignificant, unknown—if you receive him or her for Christ’s dear name’s sake, you will receive, not an angel, but the Lord of all angels—you receive Christ Himself! You receive one of His loved ones, and He interprets it as receiving Himself.

Oh, the glory of Christianity! How utterly beyond anything that obtained in the old days, anything that will yet obtain! One who is so superlatively great, exceeding in glory every created being, is the One to whom we belong, and His companions we are going to be for ever. We are to be His brethren, to be co-heirs with Him of all the great inheritance of God. This is our portion, our destiny! It simply holds the soul spellbound when we think of it. Oh, the greatness of our calling and privilege and blessing and place! To think that by a bond that no might of earth or hell can sever, we are made the brethren, the companions of One so superlatively great and glorious as the Christ, the Heir of the universe, who was first the Creator of all that He will inherit as the Son of Man: the glorious One whom angels worship, and whom our souls delight to adore. All praise and glory shall be to the God of such grace as that!
OUR STANDING AND ESTATE.

WHEN His Majesty the King bestows his birthday honours he must consider not only the merits of those who are to receive them, but whether they will be able to maintain the new dignity that he wishes to give them. For instance, he would not raise a scavenger to the peerage, for such a man would not have the estate and resources with which to uphold the dignity that such a standing in the realm would demand. A man with a great title and standing but without corresponding resources would be a laughing stock.

Now God has raised all who have believed in Jesus to a place of great dignity. They are "in Christ Jesus," and there is now no condemnation for them. So Romans 8. tells us, and we learn that not only is this their standing, but they are brought into a wonderful relationship in that standing, they are sons of God—heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ Jesus. But suppose that the God of grace, having raised us to this glorious dignity—and it is all grace, free sovereign grace that has done it—had left us without an estate or resources by which the dignity could be upheld, how unequal the matter would have been; why, we should have been the laughing stock of every intelligent creature! But He has not so acted. He has given to us His own Spirit. In the early part of Romans 8. the Spirit is mentioned more than a dozen times, and the Spirit is the estate that corresponds to the dignity; in Him is the power and the resources.

We are in Christ Jesus, and God's intention is that this great standing should not be in title only but in reality, that we should live as those who are in Him, and the Spirit that dwells in us is equal to this. Thus are our standing and state equal. The cause of much failure among Christians lies in the fact that the indwelling of the Spirit is not realized in its full import; in many, alas, He is a grieved Spirit and His operations are thwarted. So that in them we have the sad spectacle of those whose heads have been crowned with the coronets of grace, walking and even grovelling in the mire of the world. No question can be raised as to their title, but their ways are incongruous, they are sons of God living the lives of beggars instead of showing forth His praises who has called them out of darkness into His marvellous light.

If we consider the dignity, "in Christ Jesus," and the relationship, "sons of God," our hearts will surely be greatly moved, we shall be full of thanksgiving to the God of all grace, our Father, who has thus blest us; but our joy in this will not be maintained and increased unless we give the Spirit of God His place, we must mind the things of the Spirit and through the Spirit mortify the deeds of the body, then we shall live in this liberty and we shall prove that when God raised us to this dignity, He considered well as to how it could be upheld and He gave to us His Holy Spirit. A power equal to our position and a state equal to our standing.

I have observed that the cultivation of brotherly love is one of the most powerful bulwarks against division. Where brotherly love is strong all the elements that make for division are weak. Love is the uniting bond. When this bond becomes feeble, we need not wonder if things go to pieces.
THE LOVE OF CHRIST FOR HIS ASSEMBLY.

(Eph. 5. 22, 23.)

IN the epistle to the Ephesian believers the love of Christ is viewed as restricted to His assembly. His work is not contemplated as that which has opened a way of salvation for all men, but as done on behalf of that company which He at this present moment owns on earth. He "loved the assembly, and gave Himself for it."

I need scarcely say here that the word translated "church" means simply a company of people, and not a material building; and therefore in speaking of it I use the word "assembly."

This epistle does not, like the Roman epistle, set forth the compassions of God, let loose for the deliverance of souls from sin's domination, so that they might be free to serve Him with glad and willing hearts, but it presents the wisdom, love, and power of God in activity for the accomplishment of His eternal purpose.

But as the first Adam and his bride occupied the central and conspicuous position in that creation, and as all on earth was set in relation to him, so is the last Adam and His bride to occupy the central, glorious, and supreme position in that universe which will be radiant with that infinite love of His heart, which was displayed in the cross of His only-begotten Son.

The men of this world worship the most profound thoughts of its deepest thinker, the loftiest flights of its most poetic mind, the most cunning movements of its shrewdest diplomat, or the genius of its most popular military commander; but what are all such feeble and perishing sparks struck from the anvil of the human soul when compared with the wisdom of God as witnessed even in this fallen and ruined creation, where everything has suffered from the lawless hand of God's enemies? And may we not ask what glory this creation has, which must certainly pass away and give place to a new heaven and a new earth, that one day shall burst upon our raptured vision with a glory that excels all that ever yet has come to pass, and which shall be a display of the best that divine wisdom and love and power can accomplish?

It is surely an unspeakable privilege for poor creatures like ourselves to be permitted to contemplate the compassions of God manifested in sending His Son to die our death, that we might live through Him; but to be not only called to contemplate but to share in the salvation that He has won, and also to share in the blessings of that universe which is founded on the blood of His cross, and which eye hath not seen nor ear heard, neither hath entered into the heart of man, and to be there as the everlasting companions of Jesus is bliss unspeakable.

It is indeed wonderful that poor creatures like ourselves should be brought into such intimacy with our great and glorious Creator as to be entrusted with the secrets of His heart, so that we have plainly before the vision of our souls the marvellous result to which all His operations tend, and to see that every single detail of His wondrous dealings with His creature man was from the outset only a step in the perfect way that led up to the grand result.

There is neither haste nor hesitancy with God. His movements bear not the least resemblance to the jerky and febrile activities of men. Every action is begun at the right moment, and every work completed the instant it is
required. When the set time has come the old order passes and the new is announced. That which has passed away is seen to have done its work, and that which is introduced enters not clothed with mourning for a defunct dispensation. Nothing is introduced that could be dispensed with, and nothing brought to an end that has not perfectly served its purpose. This earth was in the beginning of the works of God created and endowed with a glory that made the morning stars sing together, and caused the sons of God to shout with joy; and if for millions of years it was made to pass through its cosmos and chaos on its journey to the waste and empty condition in which it is found in Gen. 1:2 there was not a moment of that time when it was not in preparation for a creature to be made in the image and likeness of God, as well as serving a present purpose unrevealed to men. He who inhabiteth eternity does not waste an hour in idleness or in fruitless toil. During the long ages through which this earth has passed, though countless may have been the various purposes it has been made to serve, there was but one grand and glorious goal to which it was steadily advancing. Within its crust is stored a multitude of things that by the unbelieving mind of man is used in his attempts to disprove the revelation given to us of God. These things test and try the profession of Christianity, and are like the fan that winnows the chaff from the wheat. It is well that the tests are there, as they are used to preserve us from all that is spurious and counterfeit.

Man's time is always ready, as our Lord has told us. He is an impatient creature, and a deferred hope makes his heart sick. It is only faith that can lift him above his natural restlessness. If we had more confidence in the wisdom and love of God we would be a great deal more restful. The saints of past dispensations saw in the vision of faith the promised blessings, and were persuaded of them and embraced them, and confessed that they were pilgrims and strangers on the earth; and though they died not having received them, their confidence in God remained unshaken.

We were chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world. As to time, we know something of it, but of eternity we know nothing. But by the light of the revelation God has been graciously pleased to give us we cannot but be persuaded that the counsels of God are eternal, and that they all centre in the person of Christ. And not only this, but the supremest brightness, the highest blessedness, and the greatest glory that ever shall gladden the vision of any creature refer to what has been made known by the Spirit in this dispensation and which is spoken of as "The hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory" (1 Cor. 2. 6-10). We delight to sing:

"O mind divine, so must it be
That glory all belongs to God."

And nothing but the mind of a traitor would dispute such a loyal sentiment. But the glory that shall be ours in the day of all glory will be a glory that He will clothe us with, and which we will gladly own belongs by right only to Himself, as the glory of the moon is but a glory conferred upon her by the sun; for all the glory that is in the solar system centres in that radiant orb.

God could have no other object than the Son of His love, for through Him alone could a universe be brought into existence of which the breadth, and length, and depth, and height would shine with the light of God perfectly
Scripture Truth

revealed. He alone could reveal the Father, He alone could set forth God in His true character, He alone could glorify Him where He had been wickedly dishonoured, He alone could set forth in His life all that was due from man to his Creator, He alone could lay a foundation upon which every thought and counsel of the Father's heart would be fulfilled, and He alone could bring God's many sons to glory. It cost Him reproach, rejection, an ignominious death upon a gibbet, and sorrows unfathomable by any creature, but rather than one thought of His Father's heart should perish He would go through it all.

But this self-surrender on the part of the Son for the Father's glory was not to go without its compensation. If He must be hidden in the heavens for two thousand years before He is publicly vindicated in the sight of this world that rejected Him, and if during that time He must suffer in the persecution of His followers at the hand of this godless generation that put Him to death, He has the joy of seeing that glorious conception, which was the eternal vision of His soul, now being made in secret, and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth—that body the members of which were written in the eternal book of divine counsel, but now in continuance being fashioned into a body and bride for Him, while as far as public interposition in the government of this world is concerned He is asleep. While the deep sleep lasted into which the first Adam was made to sink, a bride was being formed for him; and when he awoke she was there before him, to the joy of his heart: so is the last Adam pillowed on the bosom of His Father, restfully asleep to this world and patiently waiting until the waking moment arrives, when He shall have

His bride. Then He shall awake for the deliverance of His people, and the remnant of Israel shall awake Him (Matt. 8. 23–26; Ps. 44. 23; 73. 20).

He will then awake to the judgment that has for so long been delayed; a judgment that once begun shall not pause until the heavens and the earth have been purified from the presence of sin and its terrible consequences. But before that judgment begins to fall upon this world He will remove to Himself out of the sphere of His indignation that assembly for which in the love of His heart He bled and died. As Enoch was taken up to heaven before the flood of waters were let loose upon the earth, and Noah was left to go through that period of divine wrath, though preserved through it, so will the bride of Christ be caught up to her eternal Lover, while the Jew will be left to pass through the tribulation but will find merciful preservation in Christ, once so ruthlessly rejected by that nation.

He loved the assembly, and delivered Himself up for it. When in the night of His betrayal the enemy came with their lanterns, torches and weapons to arrest Him, they were seen to be absolutely helpless in His presence. He delivers Himself into their hands with this proviso: "If ye seek Me, let these go away." The nucleus of the assembly were there—the few disciples who had been given to Him of the Father—and with His life their lives must be guarded.

To the Christ His assembly is the most precious thing in the universe. It is in the nearest and most intimate place. This gift of the Father speaks of His consideration for His Son, and of His infinite love to Him. The relationship of husband and wife is the closest creature relationship that exists. When Adam beheld Eve he said:
"This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh." She was part of himself, "taken out of man." And: "Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh."

This, the first of the various ways in which Christ and His assembly are foreshadowed, is the most expressive. The man goes into a deep sleep, figure of death; Christ goes into death actually. And though He is risen from the dead, He is still dead to the world and hid in God. But, as I have already intimated, He will shortly arise to take hold of things here, and His bride will rise to meet Him in the air.

I suppose it was the love of Adam for his wife that led him to take part with her in her sinful condition. But this did not help her, it only involved him in the transgression. The love of Christ brought Him into the judgment under which we lay, but He came into it not as a sinner but as a Saviour, and the full weight of that judgment has been borne by Him, glorifying God in the bearing of it; and now both Himself and His own are in the sunlight of divine favour.

He loved the assembly. It had no actual existence when He loved it. But it was a glorious reality to Him. From before the world's foundation it had filled His vision. It was the eternal and secret delight of His heart. The ages that led up to it were all in view of it. It was to be part of Himself. In His forming of the earth and man upon it, this secret of His heart was ever leaking out. It was to be bone of His bone, flesh of His flesh. The love of this Husband for His wife surpasses knowledge. When the time came He sold all His possessions and purchased her for Himself. The field had to be bought for the treasure that was in it.

He had to give a great price for a world that was of little value if He was to have that upon which His heart was set. He esteemed the pearl He had found to be worth all He possessed.

He gave Himself for it. He died for it. But He devoted Himself to this loved object. It was buried in the clay of a fallen world. It had in the first instance to be purchased, then sanctified, separated from all that condition of things in which it was embedded. It had to undergo moral purification by the Word if it was to be presented to Himself glorious, having no spot or wrinkle or any of such things, but holy and blameless—the greatest, grandest, most glorious conception of the divine mind, fit companion for the Man of God's eternal counsels, His bride, taken out of Himself; His body, part of Himself; the fulness of Him who fills all in all.

When here on earth in the days of His flesh He was in quest of it. He knew the "pearl of great price" was somewhere in this worthless world. He was well aware of the "treasure" that was hid in the wide field of a ruined creation; and as Abraham sent his servant to fetch out of Syria a bride for his son Isaac, so did the Father, by the Spirit's power, draw out of this world the elements that would eventually go to form that pearl, that treasure, that bride, that body, that would shine for ever in the redeemed creation resplendent with the beauty He would put upon it.

He was here in quest of it, He was on the cross paying the price of it, He is now before the face of God on its behalf, and in the day when the marriage is celebrated heaven shall rejoice with joy unspeakable and resound with the hallelujahs of the redeemed. Blessed be God!
SERVING THE TRUE GOD.

1 Thess. 1. verses 1 to end.

The Thessalonians were a company of young Christians, converted through the ministry of the Apostle Paul. This was the first Epistle to be written by him. The Thessalonians had been idolaters, but he could write to them as beloved of God, and in Christ; this is true of every Christian to-day.

He is glad to speak of their progress as Christians and of the very good testimony they had borne amongst the people of Thessalonica. What a great thing it is to bear a good testimony where we live.

The Apostle sums up the secret of their progress and good testimony in the last two verses of the first chapter. They had turned to God...to serve the living and true God. This is not something formal, but a very definite operation of the heart, mind and will. Through the gospel, and the infinite mercy of God, we have been brought to know our Lord Jesus Christ, and through and in Him we have learned the living and true God.

Our knowledge of God is that He is a living Person—not some inanimate force—but a Being, who lives and who loves. We learn, too, as we grow in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ, that God has moral attributes, that He is holy, righteous and true, as well as love. He is almighty and all-powerful: omnipotent. He is not confined to any limits of space or anything else; He is omnipresent, and He needs not that anything should be told to Him, He is all wise; He is omniscient. God is light and God is love.

We have learned in the gospel how God has expressed His great love towards us. Our hearts have been won to Him as we have taken in the meaning of the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ; and we desire to know more of this blessed God and to live altogether for Him. To serve the living and true God.

I think the thought of serving which is expressed here, is simply to live for God, in contrast to living in relation to idols.

We see true service to God exemplified for us in the life of our Lord Jesus Christ as given to us in the Gospels; that service of whole-hearted devotedness to God carried with it all the sorrow and suffering of the pathway, and the dreadful experience of the cross of Calvary. He was the true servant of God, the faithful and true Witness. So to be doing acceptable service, we need to grow in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to study His life as given to us in the Gospels, especially the Gospel by Mark. Sometimes we get the idea that service is confined to preaching the gospel, or bringing others to the Lord Jesus Christ. Certainly these are two ways in which God delights to use His own, but I think in every little detail of our lives we should be at His disposal, being used by Him. This was so in the case of our beloved Lord and Master; and also, in measure, in the life of the Apostle Paul and others of the Lord's disciples. The Psalmist, in the 19th Psalm, gives expression to it in the words, “Let the words of my lips, and the meditations of my heart, be always acceptable in Thy sight, O Lord, my strength and my redeemer.”

What a joy it is to know that we are the accepted of the Lord, those whom He calls His beloved, and we are here no longer to live a life which may or
may not be acceptable to God, but a life wholly expressive of His mind and will for us. Alas, how often our thoughts and words are merely our own, with nothing Christ-like in them; sometimes even our words are untrue altogether, as also our actions; this is not serving God.

Well, it is good for us to know that the Holy Spirit of God indwells us for the purpose of revealing the Lord Jesus Christ and His pathway to us; and to be the power in us to live and serve God in the same pathway, in measure, like Him. He occupies us with Christ, so that we think like Him; speak like Him; and in every way testify of Him to all we meet.

But to do this we must be apart from idols of any kind whatsoever. The last words of the Apostle John in his first Epistle are, “Little children, keep yourselves from idols.”

If we have turned to God, it is from idols, and idols are anything and everything which claims our lives instead of God. Accept your work, and all your circumstances as from the hand of God, and live in them to Him, faithfully carrying out all that is committed to you, as unto Him.

We are only waiting now, not dwelling, waiting for our Lord Jesus: that precious One who went into death for us to bring us into this very favoured position before God, and who has delivered us from the wrath to come. Praise His blessed Name. We know He has been raised again from among the dead by God, and He is ascended into heaven, but He is coming to take us to be for ever with Him, and He may come at any moment. While we serve we wait for Him.

What a glorious moment lies before us. The way may be dreary and seem very long; the clouds may be dark and the trials hard to bear, but realizing the dignity of our service, seeing the hand of the living GOD—our FATHER—behind and over and above all our circumstances, and knowing that at any moment Jesus our Lord may call us to Himself, Jesus the Blessed One who trod a path of service that none other has or could ever tread; a path of loneliness, sorrow and suffering! And He is our Deliverer from the wrath to come, whom God raised from the dead.

He is coming—no power can hold Him back, when the moment comes—and may it be that He will find us rejoicing in serving the living and true GOD.

THE MOTE IN THE EYE OF THY BROTHER.

How apt we are to depreciate the worth of others who do not happen to see exactly as we see or who do not belong to our circle, we so often look intently at their faults and become blind to their excellencies. We judge, even though warned of our Lord not to, we form our opinions upon ex parte statements and take no trouble to ascertain the truth of them. This is not Christian charity—the love that rejoices not in evil. We should not leave the heart open to the flying germs of rumour, and we should discount heavily any damaging, disparaging statement of others. We should not allow ourselves to draw inferences, for he who is given to drawing inferences draws largely on his own imagination. We should not interpret others’ motive by our own feelings, nor should we “suppose” too much. And above all we should make sure that there is no beam in our own eyes before we offer to take the mote out of our brother’s eye.
Prayer: Secret and Public.

PRAYER in secret is an essential to Christian living, the neglect of it is the secret of failure to witness for Christ in public. If we pray in secret our Father who seeth in secret will reward us openly. But this is not the only sort of prayer, we must not neglect prayer in fellowship with others.

If two of you shall agree is an encouraging word for us. But who can bring us into agreement? The Holy Spirit is the power for it and the Name of the Lord the attraction, “For where two or three are gathered together unto my Name, there am I in the midst of them.”

“In the secret of His presence I am kept from strife of tongues, His pavilion is around me, and within are ceaseless songs. In the secret of His presence Jesus keeps I know not how; In the shadow of the Highest I am resting now!”

“A man who merely studies the BOOK will be unpractical. “A man who merely studies the SOUL will be unfurnished. “A man who duly studies BOTH will be a good minister of Jesus Christ.”
THE BENEDICTION. No. 1.


PROBABLY no words are more familiar in religious circles than those at the head of this paper. In numberless places all over the land the service would not be considered to be properly closed if the benediction were not pronounced. Be that as it may, we desire that we and our readers should realize some of the preciousness of this golden verse. Benediction according to the dictionary is "the solemn act of imploring the blessing of God."

Here the inspired penman is found seeking a threefold blessing for those to whom the letter was immediately addressed; and surely he desired it for the saints of God in all ages; not least for those of us who propose to inquire into the meaning of such wonderful words. More was written to the Corinthians than to any other assembly. The larger part of the first epistle was taken up with the correcting of various forms of error, sectarianism, laxity, wrong teaching, etc., that were conspicuous in that day, and from which we are by no means immune in this day. It would seem as if this letter had produced the desired effect, and therefore, in writing again, the apostle was able to lead them on to better things, and to engage their hearts with Christ where He now is in the glory of God (2 Cor. 3. 18). Nevertheless, in the exercise of His apostolic authority, he still had to write severely. For this we may be thankful, "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for . . . correction . . . that the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works" (2 Tim. 3. 16, 17). If the Lord in His mercy points out to us where we are defective, it is in order that we may become effective, and thus be serviceable to Him.

Having reached the end of his communication, the apostle sought to encourage those whom he loved so dearly and over whom he yearned. We should like to reproduce verse 11 of our chapter as it is rendered in the New Translation by J. N. Darby:

"For the rest, brethren, rejoice; be perfected; be encouraged; be of one mind; be at peace; and the God of love and peace shall be with you."

We must resist the temptation to comment on this—perhaps if we did we should spoil it—but let us read those words in the presence of the Lord again and again, until they become part of ourselves, and the results that may ensue are inconceivable. Now we come to our text and in this paper ask our dear fellow-believers to consider with us only the first seven words: "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ." At once our minds travel back to the previous occasion in this epistle where we read similar words, and to that verse we must turn if we are to catch the significance of our text. Here they are:

"For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty might be rich" (2 Cor. 8. 9).

How beautiful is the word, "OUR Lord Jesus Christ." If we know Him in this way of holy intimacy, we must know something of His grace. Grace has been said to be, "love in activity," and that is just what we find here. The love that had ever existed, that had never had a beginning, that had
in past eternal ages conceived the marvellous plan by which we “might be rich,” was active indeed, when “our Lord Jesus Christ, who was rich, became poor.” Let us consider how rich He was. He was “in the form of God,” He “thought it not robbery” —or “did not esteem it an object of sapine” (New Trans.)—“to be equal with God.” He was God (John 1. 1), therefore, the power, the wealth, the wisdom, the omnipotence, the omniscience, the omnipresence of God were all His, for He was God. But He who was rich became poor. He “made Himself of no reputation.” He “emptied Himself.” (New Trans.) He laid aside the insignia of His glory, and “took upon Him the form of a servant.” Let us try to measure the stoop from “the form of God” to “the form of a servant” and thus learn just a little of the story of His passing from riches to poverty. “He was made—took His place—in the likeness of men.” The Babe in Bethlehem’s manger was “Emmanuel, God with us.” The wearied Man on Sycar’s well, He who groaned in the spirit and who groaned in Himself at Bethany was “the Everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth” (Isaiah 40. 28). The Jehovah of Sinai became the Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief.” The One by whom all things were made; and without whom was not anything made that was made (John 1. 3) was He who had not where to lay His head (Luke 9. 58). Yet He still further “humbled Himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.”

He, the eternal Son of the eternal God, became Man, a real man in every sense of the word, sin apart, and that without ceasing to be God, and thus we have the holy mystery which we never shall understand, but in which we ever shall delight, that He who is God has become Man in order that He might bring man to God. Thus as we read 2 Corinthians 8. 9 in the light of these majestic words in Philippians 2. 6–8, and as we endeavour to follow “our Lord Jesus Christ” in that mighty descent “from Godhead’s fullest glory,” as we view Him here in infinite grace, as we trace His journey “down to Calvary’s depth of woe,” we are able to apprehend a little of how He who was rich for our sakes became poor. What led Him to do so? His grace. Grace brought Him down, He came into this world “full of grace and truth,” and “of His fulness”—wrote the evangelist—“we all have received, and grace upon grace” (John 1. 16, New Trans.). He is now exalted, a man occupies the highest place in the glory of God, and it is our joy to contemplate “the grace that is in Christ Jesus” (2 Tim. 2. 1). With all this in mind we can understand something of the sweetness of the benediction. “The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ . . . be with you all.” We can understand how party spirit would disappear; how glorying in the flesh would have no place; how a carnal condition would be cured; how worldly ambition would be conquered; how loose living would be prevented; how unholy association would cease to exist; how true fellowship would be maintained; how evil teaching would find no place; how assembly order would be preserved; how we would be kept in the power of divine realities; how practical godliness would be promoted and Christian liberality fostered; how individually and collectively we would be found here well-pleasing to Him if the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with us. We want then, in order to get the benefit of this for ourselves, to transfer this benediction from Corinth to our-
selves; our individual life; our family relationship; our business connection; our fellowship with those saints with whom we habitually associate; our indissoluble link with all the saints in the district in which we live; and with the whole Body of Christ.

We want to translate it into daily practice; to be preserved from pessimism on the one hand or mere fleshly optimism on the other hand; to be saved from the currents and cross-currents of the time in which we live; to escape being "tossed and carried about by every wind of that teaching which is in the sleight of men, in unprincipled cunning with a view to systematized error" (Eph. 4. 14 N.T.).

We want to be characterized by "the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ" in every department of life. We want our thoughts to be moulded by it; our actions to be coloured by it; our words to be sweetened by it; our hearts to be controlled by it; our faces to be illumined by it; our footsteps to be quickened by it. We want, with our whole being filled and thrilled with it, to go forth to tell men and women, boys and girls, wherever we find them, of "the grace of our Lord which is exceeding abundant" (1 Tim. 1. 14). Happy! thrice happy! were those Corinthian saints to have such a benediction pronounced over them. Happy! thrice happy! are we to-day to have such a benediction pronounced over us; and to know that all the power of God is at our disposal in order to make this true and effective in us.

Here we must stop for the present, and seek to pick up the thread on another occasion, if the Lord will. Meanwhile, "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen."

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

"Every Creature of God is Good."

"Should like an explanation of 1 Timothy 4. 4, with help on the whole passage."—DURHAM.

The ceaseless efforts of Satan are directed against every provision that God has made for men, whether they are for the life that now is or that which is to come (verse 8). These seducing spirits are under his control. The special seduction here has to do with marriage and meats: by refraining from them a man may appear to have a sanctity above his fellows, but it is a false one, and one that satisfies his fleshly pride: see Col. 2. 20-23. Thus is he deceived. But these things are God's good gifts to men and they should be received from Him with thanksgiving—they are His creatures and may become the means of communion with Him.

God knows our needs. THE BODY needs the nourishment that meat affords; He gives this to us freely. THE SOUL needs those relationships in which its affections can be exercised and developed, so He has in His wisdom and compassion ordained marriage for our good. THE SPIRIT needs communion with Himself if it is to be satisfied and at rest, so we have the Word of God and prayer. The Word of God directs us as to the proper use of these His gifts; in it He speaks to us, and in prayer we "freely address" Him, which is the meaning of the word prayer here. Hence if these gifts are received in the right spirit, every part of a man is benefited, and God is glorified by the thanksgiving. The seducing spirits would spoil all this.

There is always the danger of these things being abused. But the Word of God and prayer will keep us right on this side. If we give thanks to God for His
gifts, whether marriage or meats, we shall treat them as His gifts, and especially so as we know that we must give account to Him as to how we have used them. It is happy indeed for those who know the meaning of the statement: "they are sanctified by the Word of God and prayer."

Six Hundred and Sixty-Six—the Number of the Beast.

"Can you give me a reasonable explanation of Revelation 13. 18?"—MIDDLESEX.

WHEN the Beast who is described in the first part of this chapter appears, as he will appear after the church has been taken out of the world (1 Thess. 4. 16, 17; 2 Thess. 2. 7-8), those who have understanding will recognize him as the devil-inspired enemy of God and Christ that he is, and they will understand the sinister meaning of this mystic number. They will probably be "the wise that shall understand" (Daniel 12. 10)—a godly remnant among the Jews—and they will refuse to have the mark and number of the Beast stamped upon them, with the ultimate result that they shall live and reign with Christ a thousand years (Revelation 20. 4). "But none of the wicked shall understand," says Daniel 12. 10. These shall be deceived by the Beast and the false prophet, and shall yield allegiance to them, and perish with them.

We do not believe that we can know the full import of that number now; it will be known when the Beast appears. Yet we may learn something from it. Seven is the number in Scripture that stands for perfection; six comes short of this and describes, we believe, the toil and labour of man, indicated in the words, "six days shalt thou labour." In the Beast, man will come to the full development of his power and pride in rebellion against God, but he will not attain to perfection, he will find no Sabbath of rest. He will be the super-man, proclaiming himself to be divine, and will believe that at last he has reached the fulfilment of the devil's lie in Eden, "Ye shall be as gods," but his number will proclaim his failure, his ambition and toil and superhuman efforts to attain to his goal will end in disaster, and all who trust in him and follow him will share his doom.

The benefit to us in having this set before us in the Word is that we are able to rightly estimate all the proud boasting of men as to the progress they are making; we learn what the end of it all will be, and so turn from it to centre our hopes in Christ—the Lamb slain, having seven horns and seven eyes—perfection of power and wisdom; and, linking ourselves by faith to Him and His fortunes, we may be assured that He will not fail us. "If we suffer with Him we shall also reign with Him."

The One Loaf.

"Will you please say whether you think it necessary that there should be one whole loaf at the Lord's Supper, or is a slice enough? Does it matter?"—GLASGOW.

WE think that 1 Corinthians 10. 17 makes it clear that one loaf, or bread, is essential to the Lord's Supper. It signifies the Lord's body which was given for us, and because it is one bread all who partake of it, being many, are one body, i.e., having partaken of the one loaf, it is now in them all, and by their partaking of that which is one they show their unity. That unity, while expressed locally, is the unity of the one body on earth, and the "we" in the passage, "The cup of blessing which WE bless . . . the bread which WE break," is the whole Christian WE. The size of the loaf is, of course, immaterial.
WHERE ARE THE DEAD?

The fact that a leading London newspaper finds it worth while to devote half a page daily to the question of whether there is a life beyond this, proves that it is a subject in which many are interested, and that they are anxious to hear what can be said about it by all sorts of men. So there are published the opinions of scientists, spiritists, philosophers, preachers, priests and politicians, but it is surprising how little all that has been said amounts to—in fact, if we had nothing but these published opinions to go upon we should have nothing at all. How disappointed must those folk be who eagerly looked for some definite pronouncement and have got instead mere inferences drawn by clever men from supposititious or doubtful premises.

The subject is one that must give all thinking persons much concern, it is one that cannot really be ignored, for sooner or later this life must come to a close for all, and we want to have certainty as to what the future may be, if there is a future. But we can have no certainty about it at all without reliable authority. This we must have or be the victims of continual and distressing doubt.

Now it is a fact that there is inborn in the human race the feeling that the shock of death does not kill the soul, but that beyond death individual conscious existence will continue. This and the sense that there is a higher and unseen power have been the most potent instincts in the hearts of men throughout all their generations. The earliest records that have been discovered by the excavators show that this was the dominating factor in the lives of the ancients, the master-thinkers of Greece, before Christ came, incorporated it with their systems of philosophy, and it matters not how degraded men may have become from their primitive dignity, or what they may have lost of the knowledge that their forefathers possessed, they have not forgotten this. The missionary from Christian lands has no need to tell the aborigines of Australia or the cannibals of the South Sea Islands that death will not be the end of them, they know it already. It is a fact that cruelty and superstition are associated with their belief of it, but the secret as to this is revealed in Romans 1. 21, 22: "Because that when they knew God, they glorified Him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise they became fools." The darkness that is the result of turning from God to the devil has deepened about the minds and hearts of these poor wretches as the centuries have rolled on. Yet this remains embedded in their very consciousness, that the soul of a man survives the death of his body.

There always have been, of course, and always will be exceptions to this rule, like the Sadducees of our Lord's day and Sir Arthur Keith of this, whose denial of life after death resulted in the subject being taken up by this London daily paper, and we must confess that there is a considerable amount of consistency in his position, for if man has come down from a beastly ancestry, if he is nothing more than an elevated chimpanzee, why should he not end his days like his progenitors that perish? By what means has he evolved himself into a being with an immortal spirit? If we held this evolutionary theory as to man's origin, we should be compelled logically and consistently to believe
with the President of the British Association that he has no existence beyond the grave, and that his life goes out at death like a snuffed-out candle, and he is no more. The inconsistency is on the part of those who have cast over the Bible account of man's creation and origin, and yet want to hold on to its teaching as to his destiny.

Of this universal feeling science takes no account, it scarcely lies within its province, nevertheless to ignore it or scoff at it is to turn light to darkness, for it has been the candle of the Lord within the souls of men along the highway of the centuries that preceded the coming of the Light. That Light has come: it is Jesus, the only begotten Son of God, who said, "I am the Light of the world: he that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness but shall have the light of life." (John 8.12).

The fact is that we may exercise our minds and pursue our investigations as to the facts and phenomena of our lives between the cradle and the tomb, but if we are to know from whence we came, why we are here, and where and what we shall be, we are dependent upon revelation. God must tell us or we shall not know. Is He deaf to the cry of the heart of His creatures? Is He dumb in the presence of their agony? No. He has spoken and His word is the light of the lives of all those who hear and believe it. In it alone we have reliable authority upon which to base our confidence.

DO THE DEAD LIVE?

In Matthew 22.23-33 the Lord Jesus, in whom God has spoken to us and told us all the truth, answered and demolished the infidelity of the Sadducees. They were the materialists of that day and denied the survival of the soul. They brought to the Lord a story of a woman who had had seven brothers one after the other for a husband. It was a fable of course, but they thought it would serve their turn, and make the idea of survival and resurrection ridiculous. At once the Lord turned them to the Scriptures, and to the Books of Moses, that part of the Scriptures that the evolutionists deny. "Ye do err," He said, "not knowing the Scriptures, nor the power of God." The words of the Lord are wonderful and plain and assuring. He gave to those ancient Scriptures their credentials when he said, "HAVE YE NOT READ THAT WHICH WAS SPOKEN UNTO YOU BY GOD?" Is it a fact that God has spoken to us in the Books of Moses? Our Lord has said so, and that should be enough for us. What God said was, "I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob." And when He said this these men had been dead for centuries. Had they, then, ceased to exist? No, for then would God have said, "I was their God," for He is not the God of the dead, of people who don't exist, but of the living. In this memorable answer the Lord not only showed conclusively that those who are dead to this present life live in the next, but He gave special emphasis to the fact that individuality is maintained. Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, were still Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and were in conscious individual relationship with God.

Romans 14.7-9 also bears witness to this for us, for there we read: "For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself. For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die we die unto the Lord; whether we live therefore or die, we are the Lord's. For this end Christ both died and rose, and revived, that He might be Lord both of the dead and
living." What comforting words are these for those who, having been redeemed by the precious blood of Christ, can cry, "We are the Lord's." Death will not carry us beyond His reach. He will be our Lord still, for He is the Lord of both the dead and the living. And here is comfort for those who mourn for their dead. They have passed beyond your ken, but they are not beyond His, they are no longer in your care, but He has them in His safe keeping, they are still in His kingdom and under His Lordship, even as you are. Think of His words in John 10. in this connection: "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me: and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand." How safe must all those be who are in the hand of Jesus, in that hand that broke the power of death! The dead who have died in the Lord are in His hand, and we who live are in His hand also, and if we die we shall still be there, for death cannot rob Him of us nor separate us from Him, nor from the love of God that is in Him. I am writing now of the Christian dead, and plainly if the Word of God is true, they live unto the Lord even though they are dead to us.

WHERE ARE THE DEAD?

As to this question, the story of the dying malefactor in Luke 23. will help us. He realized, as he hung upon his cross, that his life had been a sinful one. The fear of God came upon him, and he shrank from the future until he recognized who He was who hung by his side, then hope awoke in his heart and he cried, "Lord, remember me, when Thou comest into Thy kingdom." He had no doubt that both the Lord and he would survive that death of shame, and the Lord's answer to his cry made him doubly sure, and must have filled his heart with peace about it all. "Verily, I say unto thee, to-day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise." No one would dare to question the survival of the Lord. He was truly man, but what He was could not be extinguished by death, and we imagine that even Sir Arthur Keith would hesitate to question that. Yet if none survive death, Christ Himself has ceased to be. But to this ransomed sinner He pledged His word that he also should not only live beyond his death but that where He was there also should he be that very day. There are other Scriptures that speak definitely as to where the dead that die in the Lord are. Two shall suffice. "WE ARE CONFIDENT, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord" (2 Cor. 5. 8) and, "For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain, ... having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better" (Phil. 1. 21, 22).

ARE THE DEAD CONSCIOUS?

In order to bolster up the false doctrine that the soul sleeps until the resurrection of the body, it has been said that the punctuation in the Lord's words to the thief has been wrongly placed, that the comma should have been placed after "to-day," and that the words should have read, "Verily I say unto thee to-day, thou shalt be with me in Paradise." But a moment's consideration will show how puerile such a contention is. The Lord could not have said it to him yesterday or to-morrow, then of what use can the word "to-day" be in the sentence at all if it does not describe the time when the thief would be with his Lord? There was no interval, that dying man exchanged the cross of suffering for the Paradise of God that very day.
"Absent from the body, present with the Lord" conveys the same thought, and there can be no doubt at all about the words of the apostle, "to be with Christ, which is far better." The man who wrote these words, "Rejoiced in the Lord alway." No man ever found greater joy in the Lord and His service than did he. Would it have been far better for him to have sunk from that happy life of service for Christ into absolute unconsciousness? No, it would not. His words mean that the highest joy that he had known or could know on earth would be far surpassed by the joy that awaited him in the presence of his Saviour.

IS THE DISEMBODIED CONDITION FINAL?

There have always been those who denied the resurrection, but we are told in 1 Corinthians 15. that these have not the knowledge of God. If we know God we know Him as the God of resurrection, and we shall believe in the resurrection of the dead. We read of THE FIRST RESURRECTION, (Revelation 20.6), a resurrection from among the dead, and "blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection; on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years." And this glorious resurrection is described for us in 1 Corinthians 15. 51-55. "Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?"

COMFORT FOR THOSE WHO SORROW.

The Lord who wept with Mary and Martha at the graveside of their brother is not unmindful of those whose lives have been darkened by the shadow of death. His heart is just as sympathetic as ever it was, for He is the unchanging One. He has put His Spirit into us who belong to Him, and He knows that we also will desire in our measure to sympathize with and comfort those who are in sorrow. He knows also that we must feel how cold and inadequate are the best words that we could command for this, and so He has put words into our mouths. We shall find them in 1 Thessalonians 4. 13-18.

"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."

The 21st verse of Philippians 3. tells us that "Our conversation is in
heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, who shall change these bodies of humiliation and shall fashion them like unto His own glorious body, according to the power by which He is able to subdue all things unto Himself." What a prospect! "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" (1 John 3. 2).

"Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also" (John 14. 1-3).

"THE REST OF THE DEAD."

They were solemn words that came from the mouth of the Lord Jesus, when He said: "And I say unto you my friends, Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. But I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear: Fear Him, which after He hath killed hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, fear Him" (Luke 12. 4, 5). They clearly teach the survival of man beyond the death of the body, and that God is the Judge of his destiny. However men may challenge His authority and please themselves in this life, God will dispose of them according to His own justice in the next life and there will be no appeal from His verdict.

The Scriptures speak of "the rest of the dead" who will not have part in the first resurrection, for they are those that have died without Christ and without mercy. They have not believed that Jesus is He, and so they have died in their sins, and as a consequence they cannot go where He has gone (John 8. 21-24). They will be raised, but at the last resurrection, and will stand at the great white throne for judgment, when their doom will be the lake of fire (Revelation 20.), and this is the second death.

There is one passage only that gives us information as to the intermediate state of these; but we need no more. That is Luke 16. 19-31: "The rich man also died and was buried; and in hell [hades] he lift up his eyes, being in torments." The words of the Lord speak for themselves. We accept them as He spoke them, without either cavil or comment. Love lies behind the warnings that fell from His lips just as truly as behind the wooing words of grace. "In My Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you," He said; and equally true is it, that if there had been no hell to dread and shun He would have told us. He has told us in definite terms about both heaven and hell, and wise are all they who heed His words.

The way to blessing and heaven and God has been opened wide and all may tread that way of peace, but there is one way and only one. "I am the way, the truth and the life: no man cometh unto the Father but by Me." Thus the Saviour said, and His words abide for us until this day.

Finally: from God's hand man came forth at his creation, God is the sustainer of his life as long as he lives, for in God "we live and move and have our being," the spirit will return to the God who gave it at death, then must we give an account to Him. For it is written, "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).
"PLUS ULTRA."

2 Cor. 10. 14-17; Phil. 1. 9-11, 3. 13-14; Ephes. 1. 15-23.

Before 1492, Spain's motto was "Ne plus ultra, i.e. "Nothing beyond," for the Spaniards believed that their land was at the end of the world and that there was nothing beyond it. Columbus proved this to be wrong and the motto was accordingly changed to "Plus ultra," i.e., "More beyond." These two mottoes exactly describe the difference between Judaism and Christianity. The genius of the latter is the desire to go out into the region beyond. The disciples were commissioned to begin at Jerusalem, go on to Samaria and then to the uttermost parts of the earth. In the book of the Acts, the disciples of our Lord are seen breaking loose from the trammels of Judaism and stretching out into the regions beyond and preaching the gospel, first at Jerusalem, then at Samaria, Caesarea, Antioch, next in Greece and finally in Rome, the great capital of the world at that time. And so, since Pentecost, the blessing of the Holy Ghost has been widening out, though the spirit of Judaism still lives and seeks to narrow and hamper it. If the disciples had been content to remain at Jerusalem, where would we have been? From Rome, the gospel came to Britain. Slave children from that country were being sold in the market-place at Rome and the attention of Gregory was drawn to them. He declared that they were angels, not Angles, and on hearing that they came from Yorkshire, then known as Deira, he said they should be rescued "from the wrath" (de ira) of God. He then inquired the name of their king, and when told that it was Aella, he declared that Alleluia should be sung in the land of Aella. And so, indirectly, through Gregory the Great, the gospel came to Britain.

The genuine spirit of our Christian faith is seen in those bold confessors of the faith, the Vaudois who, in their Alpine fastnesses,

"Kept Thy truth so pure of old
When all our fathers worshipped stocks and stones."

Reinarius, the Papal Inquisitor, reported "He who has been a disciple seven days looks out someone whom he may teach in his turn, so that there is a continual increase."

To the first suggestion in the Scottish General Assembly that the gospel should be carried abroad to the heathen, the usual argument was raised that there were still heathen at home, "Rax (reach) me that Bible," thundered the preacher, and with the words of the great Commission, "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel," silenced the objectors. True Christianity is always making increase. We cannot all be missionaries to lands far away, but we should all have missionary hearts. Christianity will stretch out geographically, and if the church will not move that way, it will stagnate. To stand still is not spiritual, it is fatal. The Christian cause can only progress as it moves outward and onward.

This is true also individually and spiritually. Paul never says—"Enough." Many of us get so far and stick there. We say, "Ne plus ultra." The Philippians were a wonderful people and Paul has much to praise them for, especially for their zeal in the gospel, and as he remembered this he made continual prayer for them. Many, like them, are zealous about the gospel and this is good, but they never get any farther. Paul prays for the Philippians that their love might develop into knowledge, and their
knowledge into discernment, that they may approve the things that are excellent—(margin "prove the things that differ"). This is a mark of a spiritually minded Christian. How am I to know what is evil? Certainly not by dabbling in it and being occupied with it. There is no need to eat a whole leg of mutton to know if it is tainted. A young man once went to work in a bank, where he was constantly handling bank notes. It was monotonous work, but one day he came to a note, which he took to the manager, saying, "Is this a good note?"

"Now," said the manager, "you have learned your job." By learning what was good, he was able to detect the evil. But this knowledge leads on to the development of that transparency and blamelessness of character which results from living in view of the day of Christ and to that "plus ultra" of the fruits of righteousness which redound to the glory and praise of God.

Now, what about the great apostle himself? He says, "I count not myself to have apprehended." He was thinking of the spiritual regions beyond. We sometimes sing

"Heights unsearched and depths unfathomed
In Thy wondrous love we see."

Some people accuse Paul of using exaggerated language. This is sheer stupidity. There were times when even the superlatives of human language were inadequate to express the things of which he writes. He had been caught into the third heaven! How could that experience of "regions beyond" be humanly described? And yet, he says that he had not apprehended. If Paul had not apprehended, have you and I? Well then, Paul, What are you doing? "I follow after that I may apprehend," and, "forgetting the things which are behind and stretching forward to the things which are before, I press on towards the goal" (R. V.). How much time we lose by looking at the things which are behind.

Now, turning to Ephesians, we find some of the things "beyond" worth going in for. Frances Ridley Haver-gal's mother thus exhorted her talented daughter—"Pray to God to prepare you for all He is preparing for you." Ephesians is the Joshua of the New Testament. In Joshua, the children of Israel are seen entering into the land, and in Ephesians, the Christian is regarded as entering into the enjoyment of his heavenly possessions. Paul wanted to know more about Jesus. "God sent Mr. Bray," wrote Charles Wesley, "a poor ignorant mechanic who knows nothing but Christ; yet knowing Him knows and discerns all things." Paul enumerates here some of the things that lie beyond, to which we can reach out. "That ye may know:

1. "What is the hope of your calling."

2. "What the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints."

3. And "What the exceeding greatness of His power to usward who believe."

Notice the accumulation of language. How may we know these things? Not by intellect. "Having the eyes of your heart (not 'understanding') enlightened." It is love which begets knowledge. It was the power of God which took Jesus from the depths of the grave to the height of the glory, and it is this same power, which we have working for us to-day.

May we not, then, rest satisfied. Let us never say, "Ne plus ultra," but with "Plus ultra" for our motto, let us reach forth more and more unto these things which are before, till we attain to the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.
THE GLORY OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST.
Heb. 1. 1–14; 2. 1–4.

These verses bring before us some of the Divine glories of the Lord Jesus Christ. In chapter 3. (verse 1) you find the apostle exhorting them as holy brethren to "consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus." In chapter 1. the Lord Jesus Christ is the Apostle: He is brought before us in that character. Chapter 2. brings Him before us as our High Priest.

Everything in Christianity is founded upon the fact that Christ is very God as well as very Man. In verse 1 we read that God had been speaking to His people at sundry times and in divers manners by the prophets. He had sent His servants, the prophets, to make known His mind to His people. Now, in these last days, He is speaking to us in the Son, and so He has given a full revelation of Himself. God the Son became incarnate for this purpose. In Ps. 2. we find Him born on earth, "Thou art my Son: this day have I begotten thee," quoted in verse 5 of our chapter, but when we look back into a past eternity we find Him as the One who was ever in the bosom of the Father: and it is in Him that God is speaking to-day. So we see the force of that exhortation in chapter 2. 1; "Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip." If God has spoken in the Son then He has fully revealed Himself in Him, and the whole mind of God is now set forth. This is a wonderful truth and the marvel is that He has spoken in grace ("Grace and truth came by Jesus Christ"), and not in judgment, though judgment awaits those who refuse to listen to Him speaking in grace.

There are a few things in this chapter showing forth His glories. In verse 2 He is the appointed Heir of all things. Christ is coming into possession of everything, and this is described in Colossians as "things in heaven and things on earth, visible and invisible whether they be thrones or dominions, or principalities or powers." He will be supreme and will share His inheritance with us, His people. We are heirs together with Him, He is also the Creator of all things. Creation is never ascribed to the Father, it is always ascribed to the Son: "By whom also He made the worlds." He is the source of all things. Further, He is the brightness (or effulgence) of God's glory; the outshining of it. It was not reflection but the direct beams of God's glory were manifested in Him. He has made God known fully. God in His own essential Being cannot be known unless He reveals Himself. We read in Scripture that God dwelleth in the light unapproachable "whom no man hath seen, nor can see" (1 Tim. 6. 16). But Christ is the express image of His person or essential Being. This is more than glory, He is what God is in everything. In nature God, yet the man Christ Jesus. He also upholds all things that He has created by the word of His power. Everything is held together in Him. Then He by Himself purged our sins; He came down here to take up the sin question, and the marvel is that He who is the Creator of all stooped to die for His creatures. He who alone knew no sin made purification for sins, and having done the work perfectly, He has sat Himself down on the right hand of the Majesty on high. This is His own act. By right and title He takes the seat where no crea-
In verse 4 we read, “Being made so much better than the angels, as He hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they.” There is One higher than angels, His place superior to theirs. His name more excellent than they. In chapter 1, He is greater than angels: in chapter 3, He is greater than Moses: in chapter 5, He is greater than Aaron: and as far as His work is concerned, Himself the one perfect offering “perfecting for ever them that are sanctified” (Heb. 10. 34). His blood far better than the blood of bulls and goats offered under the law, which only sanctified to the purifying of the flesh (Heb. 9. 13-14).

You will observe that this epistle is written to Hebrew brethren to establish their souls on the fact that what they had as Christians is of far greater value than anything they had as Jews, for what they had in Judaism was only a shadow of good things to come.

In verse 5 we have a quotation from Ps. 2. 7: “For unto which of the angels said He at any time, Thou art My Son, this day have I begotten Thee? And again, I will be to Him a Father, and he shall be to Me a Son?” These Hebrew saints were familiar with the Psalms, and here He brings before them the fact that what they had as Christians is of far greater value than anything they had as Jews, for what they had in Judaism was only a shadow of good things to come.

In verse 5 the foundations of the earth and the heavens are said to be the work of His hands; and verse 11 tells us “They shall perish; but thou remainest.” The whole creation must perish: but He remains for ever. If everything changes He is the same.

In verse 13 another Scripture is quoted: “To which of the angels said he at any time, Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies my footstool?” God never said to an angel that he should sit on His right hand. Only the Son can sit there. This is to show that although the Lord Jesus Christ has been rejected by the nations He is now in authority at the right hand of
God, and He is going to sit there until He makes His enemies His footstool. The time is coming when He will be a Judge. That time is very near. Now He is calling out a people to be associated with Himself in glory. He is bringing many sons to glory. When that work is completed and the church is called home, then that blessed One will come forth, the rider on the white horse, to execute judgment on His enemies (Rev. 19.).

We are told in verse 14 that angels are ministering spirits sent forth to minister to them who shall be heirs of salvation. That is their present work, and you may depend upon it that their work is effective. When Peter was in prison an angel was sent to deliver him. They are not ministering to the saints in such an outward way to-day, but they do minister to the Lord's people in a providential way at the present time. An angel, however, cannot preach the gospel. You will remember that an angel told Cornelius to send for Peter to come and preach the gospel to them. Angels have always had a large place in God's dealings with men and have been ever ready to do God's will in this respect, whatever it may be. The law was given by the disposition of angels and everyone who broke the law came under judgment. If that were so under the old dispensation, how much more in this present time, when the whole mind of God has been made known in the Person of the Son, should we give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard lest at any time we should let them slip.

You will remember that on the mount of transfiguration Peter said, "Let us make three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias" (Mark 9. 5) and immediately Moses and Elias disappeared, and a voice said, "This is my beloved Son; hear Him" (verse 7). God has now spoken in His Son, hear Him. Moses the lawgiver has disappeared: Elijah who called them back to a broken law has disappeared, and Jesus stands alone, God is now speaking directly through His Son, and not through Moses, or Elias, or angels. He is speaking in grace and of salvation. "And how shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?" The word through His Son is final. If men refuse to listen to the Word of grace spoken by Christ there is nothing but judgment for them. Look at Christendom to-day: the grace of God has been preached for 2000 years, but instead of listening to the Word of grace they are refusing it. They do not believe that Christ is very God: they do not believe in the incarnation: they look at Him as a good man, a unique Man, and admit that He was a great teacher, but that is all. They do not believe in the atonement. They do not credit the Scriptures as the Word of God. What will be the result for them? Nothing but judgment, for judgment must begin at the house of God. Let us cleave to what God has made known unto us.

May the Lord establish us more fully in His precious Word, and in the joy of knowing that the One who came from glory to redeem us, has so perfectly accomplished that work that the result of it is that we shall be with Him for ever in that glory. We can thank Him for that.

Hark! we hear a distant music, and it comes with fuller swell 'Tis the triumph song of Jesus, of our King, Immanuel! Zion, go ye forth to meet Him, and, my soul, be swift to bring All thy sweetest and thy dearest for the triumph of the King.
UNWEARIED LOVE.

"Jesus, therefore, being wearied with His journey, sat thus on the well."—John 4. 6.

He had been driven out from Judea by the hatred of the proud traditional religionists, there was neither room nor rest for Him in their dead ceremonies, and could He find rest in the false pretensions of the Samaritans? No, neither in Jerusalem nor "in this mountain" was there rest for Jesus. He sat thus—just as He was—on the well, wearied, thirsty, hungry—how truly Man He was, feeling in His spirit the hatred and rejection of the Jews with a perfect sensibility, and feeling in His body the vicissitudes of life also—the heat of the mid-day sun, the roughness and the length of the way, the pangs of hunger and thirst. And yet He was God, the giver of living water. He was wearied in body but unwearied in His love, and at that well side He found both rest and food in doing the will of Him that sent Him.

Let us sit with wonder at His feet and learn of Him. It is not by the strict observance of rules and traditions that He is pleased, HE CARES FOR SOULS, and the soul of a disreputable woman was precious to Him. What a sight for us to look upon, when rejected and driven out by His own people, He finds consolation and compensation in blessing this wretched Samaritan who had exhausted her life in the vain search for happiness. He spoke to her of the Father, of the Spirit, of Himself, and if He did draw back the veil from her life, it was but for an instant, that one glimpse of it in His holy presence might make her turn from it with loathing to find her rest in what God is—the giving God.

What heavenly light filled the soul of that once ignorant and unhappy woman when He had finished His gracious work with her! Was there ever a more ready or eager witness than she, when she went to the men of the city and cried, He told me all things that ever I did, IS NOT THIS THE CHRIST?" (Ed.)


I arise, and to my Father In His house of love I go, There His Well-belovèd dwelleth, And in Him all love I know.

When the river gently flowing, Draweth near the shoreless sea, When the dawn eternal, glowing, Lighteth up the storm-swept sea, I shall rise and with my Father In His house of love abide, There with many sons assembling, Grace and glory satisfied.
THE BENEDICTION. No. 2.


It might be asked, "Why do we read of 'the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ' before 'the love of God'? Is not the usual order: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost?" The answer to the latter part of the question would be that the usual order is as indicated. The obvious reply to the first part of the query is that the order in this particular case must be right, and therefore we want to discover, if we can, its significance. In our first paper we suggested, borrowing the words of another, that "Grace is love in activity." We can thus understand that if "the love of God" were to be known, the Lord Jesus Christ must come to reveal it. He could come only "in the fashion of a man." That involved the mighty stoop which we have already considered, and in which His grace shone so conspicuously.

Nor is this mere speculation. We turn to the first chapter of the Gospel according to John and there we see it clearly presented. With admiring and adoring hearts we contemplate the glories of the Son as therein set forth. The unknown and unknowable glory of verses one, two, and three (cf. Matt. 11. 27, first clause); yet there His very title as "The Word" at once points to Him as the Revealer of "the love of God" (cf. Matt. 11. 27, last clause). This is confirmed by verse 14, where we read that "The Word became flesh and dwelt among us" (N. T.). Nevertheless, He who dwelt among men was at the same time "the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father." Ponder it, O my soul, and worship! He who is very God has become very Man. He has not ceased to be God, He will not cease to be man. He has brought God to Man, and—blessed be His glorious name for ever—He has brought man to God. As we apprehend this we are not surprised that His first recorded ministry in this precious Gospel is the declaration of "the love of God." We are well aware that our readers know it and delight in it, but we reproduce it that they, with us, may read it and rejoice in it again.

"For God so loved the world, that he gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3. 16).

Who can write of "the love of God"? We quote from memory words which we read somewhere long years ago.

"Could I with ink the ocean fill,
Were every blade of grass a quill,
Were the whole heavens of parchment made,
And every man a scribe by trade;
To write the love of God above,
Would drain the ocean dry,
Nor could the scroll contain the whole,
Though stretched from sky to sky."

God loved, yea, "God so loved," not simply when the Son came to reveal it, then it was that that love was manifested (see i John 4. 9). "God is love." He never was, never could be, and never will be anything else. In the past eternal ages "God so loved." When the great plan of blessing was designed, of which the Cross was to be the central part, "God so loved that He gave." Coming into the region of time we learn from our last-cited Scripture that God loved and "sent." We travel in spirit to "the place which is called Calvary" (Luke 23. 33), and there

"Inscribed upon the Cross we see
In shining letters, 'GOD IS LOVE'!"
This explains the prayer, “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do” (Luke 23. 34); the heartrending cry: “My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?” (Mark 15. 34); the shout of triumph: “IT IS FINISHED” (John 19. 30).

The heart of God has been laid bare, “the love of God” has been revealed, the Declarer of that love sits enthroned in glory and our glad hearts sing:

“In Thy blest face all glories shine,
And there we gaze on love divine.”

We now bring this home to ourselves. We recall the Word: “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 (by grace ye are saved); and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding richness of His grace in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus” (Eph. 2. 4-7). We might write across these four verses: “THE LOVE OF GOD.” He loved us notwithstanding the fact of our “being dead in offences” (N. T.); in His mercy—the selection of love—He chose us that to a wondering universe He might “in the coming ages” display “the exceeding richness of His grace”—the activity of love—“and His kindness”—the benevolence of love—toward us through Christ Jesus. The distance from “dead in sins” to “in heavenly places in Christ Jesus” was one that only “the love of God” could bridge, and from so great a depth to so immense a height have we been translated, transferred from a state of death to a condition and sphere of life, from “in sins” to “in Christ Jesus,” that now in measures and in the coming eternal ages without limitation, we should enjoy “the love of God.”

As to our pathway we have now the conscious knowledge that “The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us” (Rom. 5.5). This has reference to the experiences and expenses incidental to our life as believers in this world. After setting forth our blessing as having peace with God, standing in the favour of God, and rejoicing in hope of the glory of God; and as if he had something still better to tell us, the inspired penman proceeds: “And not only so.” What might we expect after that? “We glory in tribulations also!” (verse 3). Do we? We might well ask: Do we? The lessons learned in the school of tribulations are: “Patience—Experience—Hope.” Are these all that we have to learn? No. We learn that “hope maketh not ashamed” (verse 5). Anything else? Yes. The great end and object of the discipline is that “the love of God shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost” might be realized by us in an altogether new way. The love that secured for us the peace, brought us into the grace, set before us the glory; reconciled us to God, enabled us to “joy in God”; and for this gave Christ to die for us; that love is the solace for our aching heart, the pillow for our weary head, the boast of our care-freed spirit, and the theme of our unfeigned praise—“the love of God.”

Still further do we travel in Romans 8. What can we say about that chapter? “No condemnation;... made free from the law of sin and death”; deliverance from “the things of the flesh”; sonship, relationship as children; divine discipline with a view to our being conformed to the image of God’s Son; foreknown; predestinated; called; justified; glorified; God for us; Christ at the right hand of God making intercession for us; His
love our portion; the Holy Spirit indwelling us. Surely this is blessing "good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over" (Luke 6. 38).

Then we come to the close of our chapter, and we find that the divine Author introduces "the love of God" (verse 39), just as if He took it for granted that we must have been thinking of that as we read every one of the preceding verses. And, indeed, of what else could we have thought? We read, and read, and read again. We sit amazed in presence of a plan of such surpassing magnificence. Those who were in the abysmal depths described in chapters 1., 2. and 3. now seen in the stupendous height which we have just considered in chapter 8. We inquire: Where is the key to the plan? Wherein lies the solution of the problem? There is but one possible answer, and that is: "the love of God."

Then there comes the ringing note of triumph. "For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, not things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from THE LOVE OF GOD, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (verses 38, 39). We must not stop to comment on this, in fact to attempt to do so might be to spoil it. Suffice to say, the writer ransacks the universe, and challenges every power therein, but remains immovably persuaded that no one and nothing ever can or shall separate us from "the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." Now let us connect this with the Benediction. "The love of God be with you all." We have sought, very imperfectly, to present that love in its eternal character; its gift; its activity; its selection; its benevolence; its solicitude; its intention. We have seen that that love is worthy of God and it must be so because "God is love."

As we have thought of this, and have reminded our hearts that from that love we never can be separated, we trust we have rejoiced, and do rejoice, and will rejoice. We recall the vision of Ezekiel 47., with which we presume we are all familiar. The waters to the ankles, to the knees, and to the loins, might be illustrative of our varied apprehension and appreciation of "the love of God" now; "the waters to swim in, a river that could not be passed over" (verse 5), might be suggestive of the coming glad day of eternity, when we shall rest in the unalloyed enjoyment of "the love of God," and shall unhinderedly worship Him whose name is Love. What a desire was that of the apostle for the saints in Corinth in their day, and for all the saints in this day: "... The love of God... be with you all. Amen."

The measure of our faith is the measure of our fruitfulness. It we but half believe in the promises of God or in the eternal realities, then the sinews of our soul are weakened and there comes of us the sad paralysis of doubt. How can we bring forth fruit except we abide in Him? And how can we abide in Him except by letting His words abide in us? But having His words abiding in us, His peace, His joy are ours also; and we who, without Him are poor barren things become strong and fruitful, and the Master Himself will gather His thirty, sixty and hundred fold the fruitage of a whole-hearted faith.
DR. MOFFATT'S NEW TRANSLATION OF THE NEW TESTAMENT.

IT is high time that a word of warning should be given as to this translation.

First of all the attempt to present the inspired Word of God in colloquial language is not a happy one. It robs the sacred volume of its dignity and beauty, and its effect is to lower the Scriptures to the level of what is ordinary and human. It is approaching blasphemy to put colloquial English into the mouth of the blessed Lord, instead of literally translating the inspired words of God into their equivalent in the English language.

Two or three verses only would we allude to. Where we read in the Authorized Version: "Jesus said to him, I am the way, the truth and the life; no man cometh to the Father but by Me" (John 14. 6), Dr. Moffatt translates as follows, "Jesus said to him, 'I am the real and living way; no man comes to the Father except by means of Me.'" What right has Dr. Moffatt to emasculate the words, "I am the way, the truth and the life," and turn, "I am the truth and I am the life," which is the extension of the passage, into two adjectives elaborating "I am the way"? Dr. Moffatt's translation robs us of the truth in a very serious way.

For easy comparison we put John 1. 1 in two columns, the first containing the Authorized Version, the second Dr. Moffatt's.

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." (The Logos existed in the very beginning, the Logos was with God, the Logos was divine.)

Why should Dr. Moffatt, setting himself out to bring the language of the Bible down to colloquial style, use a pure Greek word? What is the old woman in a cottage to make out of the word—Logos? And, further, why should Dr. Moffatt translate the word—theos—as God in the words, "The Logos was with God," and divine in the words, "The Logos was divine"?

Is this not a lamentable weakening of the truth? In Modernistic language to-day the word divine is used in an inferior sense to the word Deity or God. Dr. Moffatt is here poisoning the spring at its fountain head.

Does the reader think this is too strong a charge? It is ever the aim of Satan to wrap up evil so that it is imbibed before its seriousness is discovered. The following shows clearly where Dr. Moffatt's translation is leading to.

The well-known pastor of the City Temple, London, addressed a meeting of the United Free Churches at the Brunswick Wesleyan Church, Newcastle-on-Tyne, at the beginning of the year. He took for his text Ephesians 4. 21, using Dr. Moffatt's translation. The part of the verse in question is hereby contrasted, the first column being the Authorized Version, the second Dr. Moffatt's:

"As the truth is in The real Christ Jesus." who is in Jesus.

Dr. Norwood then preached bald, blatant Modernism from this text, as reported in the Daily Press. He gave utterance to what sounds very like the Christian Science blasphemy.

Let us put Mrs. Eddy's statements and Dr. Norwood's side by side, the latter as reported in the Daily Press; it will be seen what a close resemblance there is between them. Mrs. Eddy's words we will place in the first column, Dr. Norwood's in the second.
Scripture Truth

"Jesus demonstrated Christ; He proved that Christ is the divine idea of Health" (p. 332).

"The word Christ is not properly a synonym for Jesus, though it is commonly so used. The advent of Jesus of Nazareth marked the first century of the Christian era; but the Christ is without beginning of years or end of days" —“Science and Health” (p. 333).

Dr. Norwood could not have extracted such thoughts from the Authorized Version, but he used Dr. Moffatt’s translation as authority for expressing views which completely undermine and shatter Christianity. No wonder the newspaper heading is "NEW CONCEPTIONS OF CHRIST."

Scripture nowhere differentiates between Jesus and Christ as not being one and the same blessed Person, and He is our Lord and God. The meaning of the name, Jesus, is Jehovah-Saviour. Jesus was and is the Jehovah of the Old Testament, a name of God denoting His covenant blessing for man. His name, too, given by prophecy was Emmanuel, which means God with us, and that signifies God in all His fulness and blessedness.

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JESUS EVER A MAN.

It is very important to remember that Jesus is always man. If He were not God, His humanity would have no value; but, being God, the the fact that He interests Himself in us as a Man, as men whom He is not ashamed to call His brethren, is infinitely precious.

He can feel with us, take part in all our circumstances, trials, difficulties, and troubles. He loves us as the Father loved Him, a man, and Son on the earth. His love has divine perfection, but He feels as a man, as a man on the earth, tempted in like manner as we are, apart from sin.

He is ever a man; He thinks of us as One who has passed through all these things with divine love and human sympathy. Not only does He know everything as God, but He has had the experience of a man. Precious truth, unfathomable grace!

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Enough has been said to point out the Modernistic taint of Dr. Moffatt’s translation. It is well for the Christian to be familiar with the grand dignified pure text of the Authorized Version and not vitiate his mind by imbibing Dr. Moffatt’s undignified colloquialisms, and especially refuse to use this translation, in which, as we have seen, deadly error is woven.

Dr. Moffatt, in his introduction to his translation of the Scriptures, clearly states his modernistic views. He says, "Once the translation of the New Testament is freed from the influence of the theory of verbal inspiration these difficulties [i.e., those which confront a translator] cease to be formidable." In view of this can any sound Christian have any pleasure or confidence in such a translator who does not believe in the verbal inspiration of Scripture? The Son of God believed in verbal inspiration when He said, "Till heaven and earth pass, one jot [the smallest letter of the Hebrew alphabet] or one tittle [the mark or horn used to distinguish one letter from another, which closely resemble each other] shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled" (Matt. 5. 18). If this is not a claim to verbal inspiration, when even the very smallest letter used in building up the word is inviolate, what is it?

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"Just catch this thought, that there is a Christ who is greater than the Jesus of history."

"Without losing our hold on the man Jesus, we believe the real Christ transcends Jesus."

Without losing our hold on the man Jesus, we believe the real Christ transcends Jesus.”
WALKING HEAVENWARD.

ENOC had a family of sons and daughters, but these earthly relationships and responsibilities did not hinder him walking in wisdom's ways well-pleasing to God! He was the father of Methuselah, and we are told that Enoch walked with God (after the boy's birth) until “he was not, for God took him.” This is recorded in the earliest pages of the inspired Volume, and in Hebrews 11. 5 the Holy Spirit explains that Enoch did not see death for he was transplanted. He was not found. Elijah at a later date was carried up into heaven by a whirlwind. A cloud received the Lord Jesus from sight when He ascended. Later still, we are told of others, who shall be caught up “in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air at His return. (1 Thess. 4.) In the last epistle of the Bible we are informed that during his earthly walk Enoch testified of the coming of the Lord (Jude 14). Twice the Word of God says he walked with God. It is not surprising, therefore, that before he disappeared from the earth he received testimony that He pleased God.

Is it not the same also with those who walk happily heavenward at the present time? Those who are unsaved,—those who are still in the flesh,—walk in darkness, and they know not whither they go. They are kept ignorant of the fact that the blackness of darkness awaits them. Their walk is not heavenward but hellward. On the other hand, those who are “saved by grace” are “in the Spirit,” and they “walk in the light” on the ground of the atoning blood of Christ. It is possible, however, for a hard-hearted religionist to deceive himself in this, for we read, “He that saith he is in the light, and hateth his brother, is in darkness even until now” (1 John 2. 9). His profession is the same as that of the true children of God, but he has not passed from death into life. It is said, “We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love the brethren.” Everyone that loves Him that begat loves those who are begotten of Him, and love to the children of God is evidenced by our keeping His commandments, which secures for us a happy walk heavenward on this homeward way that our “JOY MAY BE FULL.”

No gloom surrounds us here, nor is the road Made dark, but radiant shines, while God's abode Awaits our coming, and we hasten on To see Thy face, O Lord, where Thou hast gone.

There may be difficulties, trials, weariness and dangers, and dependence upon the Lord with prayerfulness will be needed every day, but Isaiah 40. 31 cheers us on: “They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint.” None need be discouraged! Beginning with mounting above the trials, we may grow stronger still and run through them; and, finally, so learn of Him who “fainteth not, neither is weary” (28), that we, too, may walk and not faint, as we tread the heavenly road with steady steps!

We need to guard the fact that no walk of ours down here can add one jot or tittle to the acceptance which is ours in God's favour up there where Christ is. No walk, however godly in this world, can add to the nearness which is given to us in Christ in the heavenlies, and nothing which we may be enabled to do for Him here can increase the love wherewith we are loved in the Beloved there; although our reward in His kingdom may be
bestowed accordingly. Our acceptance in everlasting favour results from what our Lord Jesus Christ did, from what He is to God, and from what was counselled in divine love. Our present joy of communion results from present consistency in the heavenward walk according to God's Word.

There are two men whose walk in Old Testament days the Holy Spirit places in striking contrast. Jereboam, the son of Nebat, is one, and David is the other. Of the first it is said, he was a mighty man of valour, and, being industrious, Solomon entrusted him with special authority. Of the latter, notwithstanding personal weakness and failure, we are often told, He walked in the ways of the Lord, keeping His statutes and commandments. Jereboam, although valorous and diligent, turned the people from God's appointed centre, and, of those who followed him it is solemnly repeated, they “walked in the way of Jereboam and in his sin wherewith he made Israel to sin.” Of David's successors, however, who walked after his example, it is said, “they walked in the ways of David and turned neither to the right hand nor to the left.” These Spirit-given illustrations speak eloquently of the importance of heeding what is according to the Word of God. The one who did not, sinned himself and turned others out of the way, whilst the one who walked himself in God's statutes turned none from the established Centre, the place of Jehovah's name. David's greater Son is the perfect Pattern for faith to-day, and He could say, “I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love”; and to the believer it is written, “He that saith he abideth in Him ought himself also so to walk, even as He walked” (1 John 2.6). No standard short of Himself is set before God's dear children now.

In writing to the Colossian saints, Paul exhorted them thus, “As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in Him” (2.6). This gives us the normal walk for the subjects of heavenly grace. We will, however, mention some contrasts and details which are so abundant in the writings of the Spirit, given for those who share “the hope which is laid up for them in heaven” (1.5). They will show how the heavenward walk is guarded, and yet made plain before us.

Of the unsaved,—the Word of God shows us,—they are still travelling on the broad road that leads to eternal ruin;—they “walk in the vanity of their mind, being darkened in understanding, estranged from the life of God”;—they walk “according to the age of this world, according to the ruler of the authority of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience”;—they “walk after the flesh”;—they walk “according to their own lusts”;—they “walk in darkness.”

Of those who are saved by grace we are told, theirs is the narrow road which leads heavenward;—they are not in the flesh, they are to “walk in the Spirit,” also “by the Spirit”;—they are not of the world even as the Son of the Father is not of the world, and they are to “walk in newness of life”;—they may “not walk as other Gentiles walk”;—they do not walk in darkness, but “in the light,” on the ground of the blood of Jesus Christ, God’s Son, which cleanseth from every sin;—and 2 John 4. says, “I rejoiced greatly that I found of thy children walking in truth, as we received commandment from the Father”;—finally, 3 John 4 says, “I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth.”

Exhortations, warnings and detailed
instructions are also plentifully given, with great care, because of the besetting dangers which surround our heavenward path. We are told to see that we "walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil" and, in view of this, to "walk in wisdom towards them that are without"; moreover—because of the soon coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, it is said, "work with your own hands, that ye may walk honestly (or becomingly) towards them that are without, and that ye may lack nothing"; again, when some had become carnally minded, instead of being spiritual, it is written, "Are ye not carnal and walk as men?" but to some who were progressing, "Wherefore we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing"; and again (warning them), "many walk,"—enemies of the cross of Christ,—who mind earthly things,—whose end is destruction; therefore the real are "to walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing"; and "walk worthy of God," who has called us unto His kingdom and glory; also to walk worthy of the vocation wherewith we are called; we were sometimes darkness, but being now light in the Lord, we are to "walk as children of light"; and, in regard to earthly callings and relationships, "as God hath distributed to every man, as the Lord hath called every one, so let him walk"; when true prosperity marked the brethren collectively, we read, "walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost" they were multiplied. We are to "walk in the Spirit" as we have seen,—to walk "in the truth,"—to "walk in the light,"—and to "walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us." Truly the standard is very high,—the highest, but no lower standard could be given to those who are loved with such a
great and unchanging love, nor would the children of God desire a lower standard, for none lower could be worthy of the One they worship as their God and Father.

To the elect lady John wrote, "I beseech thee, lady, not as though I wrote a new commandment unto thee, but that which we had from the beginning, that we love one another. And this is love that we walk after His commandments. This is the commandment, that, as ye have heard from the beginning, ye should walk in it. For many deceivers are entered into the world who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh,"—or, "coming in flesh." The new commandment was given,—not simply for us to admire, certainly not for us to avoid, but that we "might walk in it" practically. How happily, then, may we understand the word of our God and Father, in regard to His own gracious walking at the present time,—"I will dwell in them and walk in them." He has saved us by grace through faith, and "we are His workmanship created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained (or prepared) that we should walk in them," as therefore we respond to divine love practically and walk in that, He finds present pleasure in us; "GOD IS LOVE, HE THAT ABIDES IN LOVE ABIDES IN GOD, AND GOD IN HIM." We are told that faith works by love. The truth of this is seen in the practice of those who are truly of the faith of the Son of God,—not of faith in men, or in self, but in Him. It was this which made one poet sing,

"O keep us, love divine, near Thee, That we our nothingness may know, And ever to Thy glory be Walking in faith while here below."

In this way faith rejoices to walk dependently in the heavenly way.
CORRESPONDENCE.
To a Young Man in Soul Difficulties.

We have received a letter from a young Christian—a very poignant letter—who for some years had served the Lord with zeal, but who has been swept on a tide of doubts to the very verge of lost faith and hope. He writes of having “lost every tithe of enjoyment of the things of the Lord,” and of “the barrenness and bitterness” of his life in consequence. The sovereignty of God as revealed in Romans 9, and eternal punishment are the questions over which he has stumbled, those will be taken up in due course in “Answers to Correspondents.” This only we reveal of his letter, and give some answers to it, for it may be that others may be helped as well as he by them.

Dear Mr. Editor,

“With reference to your letter of the 4th instant on the difficulties of a young friend, I may say that faith has no difficulties and it assures us that whatever God has said or done, He will be well able to justify and, although our puny minds may not be able to get everything square according to the accepted rules of logic, that is no proof that God is wrong.

“I was in a desert of admiration of human achievement for nearly twenty years, and God, in His wonderful grace, recovered me to some little sense of the preciousness of Christ. I have studied geology, biology, physiology, mathematics, astronomy, physics, chemistry, and mechanical sciences, and therefore I may be considered as an unbiassed witness. I can testify to the validity of Solomon’s dictum, ‘All is vanity and vexation of spirit’ outside of Christ.

“Your young friend may rest assured that the Word of God is all that is certain and abiding. The physicist discourses learnedly about matter and energy being the only real entities in the universe, but behind all that are the Will and Word of God. Whatever God has wrought in a man’s soul will stand. The sceptical thoughts which arise spring from the father of lies who has constantly from the outset in Eden cast aspersions on God’s fair dealings. So that your friend has not found himself in any unique position. So I would counsel him to addict himself to the apostle’s doctrine coupled with the Throne of Grace, as the only sure support in a day of trouble.

“Trusting that he will soon emerge from the darkness into the light of the presence of the Lord.

“Yours in Christ,

T. Oliver.”

My Dear Brother,

“I find the enclosed letter on the same line of reasoning as are the whole number of those who think themselves competent to criticize the way in which God deals with His creatures, in order that the purposes of His love might be accomplished, and that He might be known in His whole creation. The way which He has taken to reach the end He has in view may seem strange to us, but when we see the end of all we will gladly know and confess that in no other way could that high and infinitely glorious end have been reached.

“It was not by a process of reasoning through which we find that all the ways of God with His creature blended harmoniously with His grace, mercy and love; we arrived at it by faith in the Son of His love; but it was rather because of our discovery of our utterly undone condition, and the judgment to which we were liable, met by the grace of a Saviour God, caused us to seek the salvation that was held out to us by the gospel of His grace. Then Christ became the one precious and adorable object of our hearts. We knew the Father, we knew His love. We knew the truth as far as it related to our spiritual and eternal welfare. It is not only that we believed that the blessings of life, salvation and eternal love, were ours—we knew they were. Whatever problems we might find in the
Word of Truth we could safely and confidently leave with Him who is infinite in knowledge, and who will be justified in His sayings, and overcome when He is judged (Rom. 3. 4).

"As a youth I was infidel—am still as to my natural mind. But one thing has held me with giant might when on the brink of destruction, and turned me away from my natural sceptical reasonings, and that was Christ. Give up one solitary plain truth of Scripture, and you must sanction His murder on Golgotha, and go with the drivelling mass of God's critics to eternal perdition. He has said: 'The wicked go where their worm dies not, and where their fire is not quenched.' Am I to say that these words were uttered when in passion, or that He did not understand the import of His symbolic language?

"The writer of this letter thinks too highly of his cleverness. This shines through his letter from first to last. To give up the truth of eternal punishment is to give Christ up, for He taught it, and no true believer will give Him up.

"Eternal punishment is a terrible contemplation. But what is to be done with people who will not have the only Saviour, the Christ of God? Must God fill heaven with those who hate Him? Who of the saints would wish it?

"I am perfectly certain, from what I know of God, that in the day of judgment God will be seen to be just, and all His critics will be found to be liars.

"Warm love in the Lord,

"J. Boyd."

MY DEAR BROTHER,

"Your letter telling of the distress and darkness of soul into which you have fallen has reached me and I want to assure you of my sympathetic interest in you. First of all, who is the author of this condition in which you are? It is not God, darkness does not come from Him, for 'God is light'; distress does not come from Him, for He is 'the God of peace' and of 'all comfort'; barrenness and bitterness and loss of enjoyment do not come from Him, for He is the giving God, who not only gives the living water that the souls of men may be satisfied and happy, but considers them in every way, and gives 'to all life, breath and all things' (Acts 17. 25), 'filling our hearts with food and gladness' (Acts 14. 17). It is from Satan that this wretchedness has come. From the very beginning he has poisoned the minds of men by hard and false thoughts of God. 'The god of this world hath blinded the minds of them that believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine into them. (2 Cor. 4. 4.) It will help you if you discern this, your present misery is the work of an enemy, of the devil himself.

"But on your side there has been failure, you have failed to use the shield of faith. This is that part of our defensive armour that is most essential to our warfare, hence the Scripture says, 'Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked' (Eph. 6. 16). How can a soldier stand in an evil day if he is sorely wounded? You have been wounded by the fiery darts of the wicked one, and these fiery darts are still rankling in your soul.

"Two questions have to be faced: first, what was it that led up to your present condition? and, second, how can you be restored to spiritual health again? As to the first, I judge that you shouldered far more responsibility in Christian work than your spiritual experience warranted, and that you leaned on your own understanding and trusted your natural ability instead of turning wholly to God for wisdom and strength. I fear that you had not learnt the lesson of your own nothingness as Paul had when he cried, 'Who is sufficient for these things? . . .?' Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think anything as of ourselves; 'BUT OUR SUFFICIENCY IS OF GOD' (2 Cor. 2. 3). This you ought to humbly confess to God, if it is so. All those who engage in the work of the Lord should remember that power from on high is necessary for it. To take up
His work in independence of His grace and of His Spirit is really presumption. It is a slight to the Lord, it is injurious to us, and it gives Satan an opportunity that he is not slow to seize.

"It is an inexorable law that if our expenditure is greater than our income a crash must come; in matters financial it leads to the bankruptcy court, in matters physical it leads to overstrain, breakdown, and invalidism. Can we expect this law to be reversed in matters spiritual? Certainly not. Your barrenness and bitterness of soul is proof that it cannot be.

"Yet it is a mercy, a blessing disguised, that you have discovered this. You might have gone on with your work in a dead mechanical way, and the devil would have let you alone, for in that you would have served his purpose well, for you would have been no use to God and a hindrance to others, but you were too sincere for that, and the devil thought you worth his fiery darts. I do not think that I am wrong in saying that this deep exercise of soul and spiritual sickness is going to eventuate in great blessing to you. It certainly will if you learn by it to distrust yourself and your own ability, and exchange your fancied strength for the power and grace of the Lord.

"If you are to be restored to spiritual health the enemy must be defeated and your wounds healed. He can only be defeated by the Word of God, and the same Word will be as oil and wine to you. 'I have written unto you, young men, because ye are strong, and the Word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one' (1 John 2. 14). Let the Word of God fight the battle for you. You have used your own reason and failed, your carnal weapons are no use against Satan. But the Word will not fail, it is the sword of the Spirit. Do you think that God is less just than you? 'What shall we say then. Is there unrighteousness with God? God forbid' (Rom. 9. 14). Is He less compassionate than you? 'He has revealed Himself in Jesus, and He 'is rich unto all that call upon Him' (Rom. 10. 12). If He is sovereign, it is in compassion and mercy, while judgment is His strange work. We may rejoice and be glad in the former, and leave the latter which we do not understand to Him who will do right in all things.

"Your darkness of soul cannot be greater than that of Simon's, who denied his Lord with oaths and curses. Was he cast off or forgotten by his Lord? No, Satan's triumph was short-lived. For we read that the disciples, in their astonishment at the turn events had taken, were saying to each other, 'The Lord is risen indeed and hath appeared unto Simon' (Luke 24). At first sight there seems very little correspondence between those two facts. The Lord is risen. That was the greatest event of all time, an event that reached up from the depth of death to the throne of God and out into an illimitable eternity, why should His appearance to Simon be coupled with it? Who was Simon? What was he worth, either as a man, a friend, or a disciple? He had shown himself to be altogether untrustworthy, as you have. Ah, but he was precious to the Lord, as you are! And He who had just DEMONSTRATED HIS GLORY by breaking the power of death, DISPLAYS HIS GRACE in appearing to His weak and bewildered disciple and binding up his broken heart. His power was enough to vanquish the greatest foe, and His grace was enough to meet the greatest failure. It was necessary that He should prove both, and He has done so.

"Now will you listen still to the voice of the enemy who has maligned God to you and robbed you of your joy, or will you permit the Lord to manifest Himself to you as the Great Physician who can heal your soul by His grace and restore you to His service again? Let the Lord's ways with Simon encourage you. When George Herbert was assailed by the foe with many questions, he cried, 'Do thou answer for me, O Lord.' Let this be your child-like and trustful attitude, and you will surely be able to sing, 'I will love Thee, O Lord, my strength.'
Lord is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer; my God, my strength, in whom I will trust; my buckler, and the horn of my salvation, and my high tower. I will call upon the Lord who is worthy to be praised: so shall I be saved from mine enemies' (Ps. 18).

"Thus will you be strengthened and restored to your service, with a knowledge of the One whom you serve that you never had before. You will not think less of the needs and miseries of men, but your compassion for them will not spring from your own natural kindness of heart, though that will not be any the less, but it will flow from His heart of infinite love through you to them. Having proved Him for yourself in your own deep experience, you will be able to tell men out of that experience that the tenderest heart in the universe beats in the bosom of Jesus, who is the image of God, and that you know that He is enough for them, for you have proved Him to be enough for you. You will preach that 'God is love.'

"Yours sincerely in Christ,
"J. T. MAWSON."

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Baptized with the Holy Ghost and Fire.

"Will you kindly explain what it is to be baptized with the Holy Ghost, and what it is to be baptized with fire?" Matt. 3. 11.—INSEM.

JOHN the Baptist is here addressing Israel and these words have an exclusive reference to them. The baptism of the Holy Ghost will mean life and blessing to those that receive it, the fire will mean judgment for those upon whom it falls. Verse 12 is an explanation. When the Lord comes to these, His earthly people, He will act with discrimination, there will be a great and final separation between the wheat and the chaff. The baptism of the Holy Ghost has reference to the wheat, and the fire has reference to the chaff.

It may be asked, Was not Acts 2 a fulfilment of this prophecy by John? (Not of Matt. 3. 11.) It was the fulfilment of one of the Lord's own promise in Acts 1. 5, and in John 14. 15 and 16. John's mission had to do with Israel and not the church. Though at Pentecost the difference between his mission and the power of the Lord, to whom he bore witness, was plainly seen. John baptized with water, he could only bring the people into the place of death confessing their sins. The Lord by pouring out the Spirit brought them into life, confessing their Saviour. But were not the tongues of flame the baptism of fire? No. For the Holy Spirit had come as the Spirit of Grace for the preaching of the gospel and not for judgment, though those tongues of flame would indicate that the grace of God did not set aside His holiness. The baptism of fire will take place when the great and notable day of the Lord comes, of which Peter speaks in Acts 2. 19, 20, and that is still in the future.

What is blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, Matt. 12. 31; Mark 3. 29; and Luke 12. 10?

BLASPHEMY against the Holy Ghost as the Lord speaks of it in Matthew and Mark was the attributing of His works to the power of Satan. This is plain from Mark 3. 30, "Because they said, He hath an unclean spirit." In that form this unpardonable sin could only be committed when the Lord was on earth doing His mighty works in the unrestricted power of the Holy Ghost.

Luke 12. 10 gives this sin a wider aspect, for it gives to the apostles the place of testimony that the Lord Himself had had, they were to bear witness in the full power of the Spirit, as verse 12 shows, and those who rejected their testimony and blasphemed in the presence of it, put themselves outside the pale of blessing. An instance of this is given in Acts 18. 5, 6. Paul was pressed in respect to the
word and testified to the Jews that Jesus was Christ, and when they opposed themselves and blasphemed, he shook his raiment and said unto them, "Your blood be upon your own heads. I am clean." There was no more hope for them. But that was apostolic, and we judge that Luke 12. 1-12 as special reference to the apostles.

The Holy Ghost by the laying on of hands.

"Why in some cases was the Holy Spirit given as a result of the laying on of the apostles' hands and sometimes not in the Acts of the Apostles?"—SYDNEY.

The two occasions given in the Acts when the Holy Spirit was given by the laying on of the apostles' hands are Acts 8. 17, and 19. 6, first by Peter and John and then by Paul. They were special and exceptional cases. It has been said, and with this we agree, that the Samaritans had to learn that they could not be independent of Jerusalem. In John 4. the Lord Himself declared in regard to the Samaritans, "Salvation is of the Jews." They had long kept apart and had acted without reference to that which had been God's centre on the earth, they had to learn on entering the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ that independence would not serve them at all, they must receive the Holy Ghost as a result of the prayers and laying on of hands by the apostles from Jerusalem. Their unity with the assembly already formed at Jerusalem was thus evidenced, they were not a separate body, nor independent of those who were in Christ before them. The heavenly character of the assembly had not yet been revealed.

The case of the twelve Jews at Ephesus proved that Paul was not one whit behind the apostles at Jerusalem, and Ephesus became the centre of his work until all who dwelt in Asia—the Roman province so named—heard the word. It was in connection with Ephesus that the whole counsel of God came out through him (see chapter 20), and the assembly there seems to have been the brightest bit of work done in those brightest days (see Rev. 2). We see a connection between the Holy Ghost being received by the laying on of Paul's hands and what followed as to his ministry there. But the usual way was for the Holy Ghost to indwell those who believed the word, as in the case of the household of Cornelius, and passages from the Epistles prove this. The apostles had the power for imparting the Spirit, none others have had this power since their day, but He seals and indwells all who believe the gospel of our salvation apart from all intervention on the part of men. Eph. 1. 13. 1 Cor. 6. 19, 20. John 7. 39.

"Grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ." It takes time to grow, and for us it means putting aside hindrance and resistance, otherwise growth will be arrested and we shall be dwarfs. How are we? Have we more grace in our lives than we had a year ago; a deeper knowledge of our Saviour than five years ago, have the viscissitudes of life opened up for us more of His grace and resources? These are questions we do well to face, it is wise to take stock and see what gains we have in our Christian living.

"To-morrow and to-morrow" is the opiate with which sluggards and cowards set conscience to sleep, and as each to-morrow becomes to-day it proves as empty of effort as its predecessors, and, when it has become yesterday, it adds one more to the solemn company of wasted opportunities which wait for a man at the bar of God. O brethren, time flies swiftly, let us give all diligence, and make haste to add to our faith.
ALL-SUFFICIENT GRACE.

A Sunday Evening Gospel Address.
Read 4th Chapter of 2nd Book of Kings 1-7 verses.

We find the prophet Elisha in many different circumstances, and confronted by many great difficulties, but we do not find him in any circumstance, or confronted by any difficulty, that he was not equal to, he was never baffled, never found wanting. He met all sorts of people in all kinds of distresses—kings, soldiers, lepers, bankrupts and he had just the blessing that each needed. He was God's representative in the midst of a distressed nation, and he dispensed to those distressed sinners, the grace of God—he brought to them the blessing that was in the heart of God for them—in this way he sets forth in figure the Lord Jesus Christ, and I want you to remember that in speaking of Elisha I am only using him as a type of the great Saviour. Christ is my theme, I want to point you to the One who is the great antitype of God's prophet in this second book of the Kings.

It is a moving story of this widow and the way that Elisha met her need. We see the need first of all, then the grace that met the need. It is a picture in which the dark background of the sinners' need throws into bright relief the wondrous grace which is in Christ for them. A widow in the Scriptures is a figure of perfect helplessness and an object of pity, and this widow was a bankrupt; her case was doubly sad, but it portrays the case of every sinner out of Christ. I want you to look at this picture, my hearers, and see yourselves in it, you are bankrupt sinners, and you cannot relieve yourselves of your liabilities, you are "without strength." The Lord Jesus Christ, who always spoke the truth, propounded a parable in the Pharisees' house, in which He spoke of a certain Creditor who had two debtors, who could pay Him not a cent. God is that Creditor and we are those debtors. I address myself to those present who have not yet come in their need to the Saviour, and I ask you, Have you realized your condition of debt and guilt and helplessness? If you refuse to face it in the day of grace, you will be compelled to face it in the day of judgment.

The widow awoke to her serious position when THE CREDITOR CAME TO PUT IN HIS CLAIM. Thank God, He, the Creditor, is not putting in His claim today. Instead, He is offering to relieve sinners of their debts, He is proclaiming forgiveness to all. "God was in Christ [when He came into the world] not imputing their transgressions unto them. and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation."

People in their pride refuse to take their true place before God, they do not like to go down and confess the truth. They delude themselves with the thought, that after all there is something in them that God can accept, and after all they may be able to gain His favour by their works. If you are one of those people, the day is coming when you will be terribly undeceived, when the scales will fall from your eyes, and you will understand, and that right truly, how you stand before God. When will that day be? you ask. It will be when the Creditor puts in His claim. You are drawing near to a terrible hour in your history if you are without Christ. Every pulse of your heart brings you nearer to that hour. You say, what hour?
The hour of your death. The clock of time is ticking out your days, and every swing of its ceaseless pendulum brings you nearer to that hour when you will step out of time into eternity. What is it that makes men who do not know God afraid of death? It is what comes after death. After death the judgment. When you pass out of this world, you will meet God and His judgment on your life. Some tell us that there is mercy after death, but God's Word does not say that. We believe in mercy with all our hearts, God is rich in mercy, He speaks of it in His blessed Book, and offers it to all, but not after death. After death, God says, the judgment—the Creditor will put in His claim then, for "every one of us shall give account of himself to God." Then you who have refused to submit to God and own the truth about yourself will discover that you are bankrupt indeed with nothing to pay. Then it will be justice—then it will be judgment without mitigation.

This widowed woman realized that the creditor was about to put in his claim, and in her need she turned to the man of God. There was one person in the land to whom she could go, and to him she went, and found that he was prepared most graciously to listen to what she had to say. So gracious was he that I can understand her telling him the whole story. He would encourage her to keep nothing back: the full amount of the debt, and how the debt was contracted and how long it had been standing against her. He said to her (and there was grace in the words he uttered), "What shall I do for thee, tell me what hast thou in the house?" But how shall I describe to you the grace of Jesus? I can tell you how He treated me. I came to Him as a needy sinner, and He made me feel that He was glad to see me, I felt that He was my Friend—the Friend of sinners, and that I could tell to Him what I could not tell to any other. As He treated me, He will treat you. If you feel your need, go to Jesus, He never cast out any soul; if you turn to Him, you will find that He is the blessed Man of God of whom our picture speaks. You will find Him prepared to take up your case and meet your need.

Said Elisha to the woman, "What shall I do for thee? What hast thou in the house?" And she said, "Thine handmaid hath not anything in the house save a pot of oil." House-proud she may have been at one time, but piece by piece the household gods had gone, and now nothing was left but a pot of oil, of little or no value in her eyes. Said Elisha, "That is all you need." That simple pot of oil was all that was needed. I want to tell you, that there is close at hand that which would have met your need long ago, if only you had turned to the Saviour, it is that of which the oil speaks—it is the grace of God that bringeth salvation. God has got a wonderful blessing for you—His grace is more than sufficient for you. He can not only relieve you of your debt—He can fill your heart with joy and gladness.

This was olive oil that was so near to the widow's hand, for that land abounded with the olive tree from which the oil was procured. How was the oil procured? The olives grow on the green olive tree, and the olive tree speaks of the Lord Jesus Christ, for He is the One who in the Psalms exclaims, "I am the green olive tree in the house of my God."

Before the oil could be obtained from the berry it had to be pressed and ground in the mills, and before the oil of God's grace could flow for us this
blessed Person, who was the green olive tree in the midst of a barren world, had to go into the mill of judgment. He had to suffer beneath the stroke of God’s justice, for righteousness had to be satisfied, and at the cross of Christ we see righteousness satisfied. There He was made sin for us, He was delivered for our offences, He died for the ungodly. The blessed Christ of God rendered to the claims of justice all that justice could claim. He paid a great price when He gave Himself for us, and as a result the grace of God is flowing freely for sinners to-day.

Then said the prophet of God, “Go, borrow thee vessels of all thy neighbours, EVEN EMPTY VESSELS NOT A FEW, and bring them into the house, shut the door upon thee and thy sons, and pour out into all those vessels.” Away went the widow, believing the word of the prophet, and gathered into the house empty vessels, and when the house was full of empty vessels, and the doors shut, then she took the oil, and to her astonishment it ran and poured and flowed until every empty vessel was full. I have no doubt those vessels were all very different in size, shape and material—they would be among them some small and some great, some beautiful in shape and others rude and rough—they were no doubt very different in outward appearance, but they were all alike in this respect—they were empty vessels. What is an empty vessel? An empty vessel is a vessel out of which you can get absolutely nothing, but into which you can put exactly what you please. Are you prepared to go to the Lord like that—to tell Him you have nothing to give Him,—that you cannot bring anything to Him in payment for the blessing that He is prepared to give to you?

Oh come to Him, and say—

“I am an empty vessel,
Not one thought or look of love to Thee I ever brought,
Yet I may come and come at once to Thee
With this the empty sinner’s only plea, Thou lovest me.”

There are no two sinners exactly alike as to external appearance, character, or circumstances; some are rich, others poor, some learned, some ignorant, some are religious and others profane, these things do not matter, but this does matter—they must be empty vessels. This is essential to blessing. I press it upon you, you must lift empty hands to God if you would have His blessing. You can pay nothing and do nothing and say nothing on your own behalf, except that you need the grace of God.

The oil flowed and poured until all the vessels were full of the oil and there was not a vessel left, and WHEN THE LAST VESSEL WAS FILLED, THE OIL STAYED. That is a serious consideration. If you refuse to take the place of an empty vessel before God, you will surely miss the blessing, for the day is coming when the grace of God will cease to flow or you will be beyond the reach of it. In the New Testament we read that “the door was shut.” Those who had got the oil in their vessels went into the marriage feast and the door was shut. Those who had not got the oil went to buy it, and they found that it could not be obtained. They were too late, the oil no longer flowed, they had neglected this great salvation and were shut out of the marriage feast. Ah, be not like them.

“Make haste, make haste! the blessing is for thee;
The cup of everlasting love is free.”

When all the vessels were filled, the widow hastened away to the man of God and told him what had happened, and what joy must have filled her soul!
Then Elisha said, "GO AND SELL THE OIL AND PAY THY DEBT." Was there sufficient oil to pay the debt? There was sufficient. I can understand some sinner saying, Is there sufficient grace to clear away my debt—is there forgiveness for me? I remember when I came to Christ, I had the feeling in my heart that there could not possibly be anything greater than my sins, but I learned that where sin abounded grace did much more abound. The grace of God was sufficient to pardon my sins and to justify even a guilty sinner like me. The grace of God is sufficient to pardon you. Just as the flood in Noah's day covered the highest mountain, so can God's grace cover the highest mountain of your guilt to-day, and if you come to God, no matter how foully stained with sin you are, He can cleanse you, and can justify you freely by His grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. Then you will look back on the dark past, and say, The debt is paid, the past is all wiped out, God Himself has got nothing against me. He has justified even me.

In the 8th chapter of Romans we read, "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus." If God justifies a man, He is justified and cannot be condemned, for God's verdict must stand. But that does not come to a man because he deserves it. It is a wonderful thing to see that those who are justified are not so blessed because of what they are, nor because of what they have done, but because of what God is and because of what Christ has done. It is what God is that is set forth in His great salvation, He is the God of all grace and He has got a righteous basis for thus blessing us, and that basis is the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. The work of Christ has given God a right to justify those who believe in Jesus, and if you will believe in Jesus to-night God will justify you. It is "To him that worketh not, but believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted to him for righteousness." I ask you, can you refuse to believe in a God like that? Can you refuse to believe in a God who has provided such a wonderful salvation for you, a God whom we see set forth at Calvary? That is the God whom I desire you to know. Upon Him you must believe, and if you believe in Him, then this wonderful blessing is yours.

But that is not all. The man of God said to the widow, "Pay thy debt, and LIVE THOU AND THY CHILDREN ON THE REST." There was a wonderful balance. There was a superabundance enough to keep this woman and her children until the end of the story. So you will find it with the grace of God. The grace of God is not exhausted when it pardons our sins—nor when it justifies us. Oh no! there is the rest of the grace and it is at our disposal until the end. We need the grace of God, and shall need it until our feet stand in heavenly glory—until we pass from this world of difficulties into our eternal home. The grace that is in our Lord Jesus Christ is sufficient for every need. There is no circumstance in which any Christian can be found, allowed by the will of the Lord, but the grace of God is sufficient for him. There is no circumstance into which any Christian can be led by his own folly, out of which the grace of God cannot bring blessing to him—there is grace to restore us when we fall—there is grace to keep us from falling.

Elisha said, "live thou and thy children on the rest," and when the man of God said live, he meant it. To
live means to enjoy life—and it is life that God wants us to enjoy. He wants us to live as those who have eternal life, to live as His children ought to live. He wants us to bask in the sunshine of His blessed love. God Himself is the source and fountain of life to us and Christ is the way the waters flow. And God’s blessing is free. He will not sell it. There are two reasons why He will not sell it. The first is, we are far too poor to buy it, and the second is, He is far too rich to sell it. He gives it, and gives it freely, to undeserving objects, for that is just what grace means. Have we thanked Him for it? And do we show our gratitude by still drawing upon His inexhaustible stores of grace, so that we may truly live, and show forth His praises, who has called us out of darkness into His marvellous light?

How happy is the Christian who knows the grace of God which is in Christ Jesus. Grace has justified him from all the past, he stands in this same grace for the present, and he will be a monument of the exceeding riches of God’s grace for ever and for ever.

“HEREIN IS LOVE.”

"Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins."—1 John 4. 10.

When men turn their backs upon the cross they look upon a landscape all swathed in mists, and on which darkness is steadily settling. Men of this generation for the sake of being “in the swim” and up-to-date and educated are turning themselves to a reasoned pessimism because they will not see that what shines out at the cross is the love of God. At the centre of the universe there is a heart, the heart of God, and it has found a way of blessing us, but that way is the cross. How do we know what a man is? By seeing what he does. How do we know what God is? By knowing what He does. So John does not argue with logic, either frosty or fiery, but he simply opens his mouth and in calm, pellucid utterances sets forth the great truth and leaves it to work. He says to us, “I do not relegate you to your intuitions, I do not argue with you; I simply say, Look at the cross. God sent His Son there; look at that and see that, God is love.”

PRECIOUS FAITH.

Faith is precious because it is the channel by which precious things flow unto our hearts. Suppose a city under siege, dependent upon one pipe alone for its water supply, the preciousness of that pipe is not measured by the price it would fetch if it were put up for auction, but by what flows through it and without which death and defeat would come. And my faith is the channel by which the water of life comes sparkling into my soul. It is the opening of the door “that the King of Glory may come in.”
STUDIES IN THE LIFE OF MOSES. 1. (R. McCallum.)

THE opening chapters of the book of the Exodus carry us back to a most engrossing period in the history of that wonderful land, in many respects the strangest in the world, Egypt. The habitable portion consists of a long narrow strip of fertile soil, maintained against the incursion of the desert sand on each side by the phenomenal annual overflow of the Nile. The ease of life here, no doubt, explains in part the early rise of its inhabitants to that position of cultural pre-eminence which has made Egypt one of the wonderlands of antiquity, but it was conducive to that sensuous indulgence that has made Egypt's influence an appropriate Scriptural type of the soporific effect of the opiate of material prosperity and of the world's spell.

It was in the most choice part of this land that Jacob and his sons settled in the days of Joseph's premiership. The Pharaoh of that day received them in a kingly way, for he was generous in his recognition of the debt that he and his subjects owed to Joseph's services to the state. But those halcyon days had passed. Little over a century had rolled by, yet the king who reigned was ignorant of the labours of him who had not only saved the Egyptian people from extinction by famine, but had changed the system of land tenure to the great advantage of the king's exchequer. Egyptian inscriptions have revealed that at this time, the reigning dynasty of the Hyksos or Shepherd Kings, who had rightly appraised the work of Joseph, was overthrown by a king from the south who set himself upon the throne. We know too that the children of Israel had in the interval increased prodigiously in numbers. God's promise to Abraham that his seed should be as the sand of the shore was giving evidence of possible realization even to unbelieving eyes, for the people "were fruitful, and increased abundantly, and multiplied and waxed exceeding strong, and the land was filled with them." Historians tell us too that just then Egypt was threatened by a Hittite invasion, and the Scriptures assure us that this new king, who knew not Joseph, feared an alliance between Israel and the enemy, so that it is not strange that he viewed the alien race as a powerful menace to their national existence that must be promptly and effectively dealt with. To supervise their activities and to retard their numerical growth the people were made serfs. The tasks assigned to them were the making of bricks for Pharaoh's treasure cities and service in the fields, chiefly, doubtless, drawing water for irrigation purposes. These duties were performed under a broiling sun and under the keen eyes of austere task-masters, skilled in their use of the lash; and at the instigation of a Pharaoh determined to leave to posterity a memorial of his greatness even if built upon the wrecked bodies of the Israelites. All their service was with a rigour soon to become intolerable in severity. But the results were not according to expectations, for the more they were afflicted the more they multiplied, and hence Pharaoh felt compelled to augment the bitterness of their oppression by resorting to infanticide. This was first unsuccess-fully attempted through the mediumship of the midwives, but was subsequently attained by decreeing that every male child be cast into the river.

It is not likely that this royal edict had been long in operation before Moses was born. Certain it is that his three-
years-old brother Aaron was born in
days when childish prattle and merry
laughter in the home lightened the
yoke of their irksome bondage. In
normal circumstances the birth of a
son would have been hailed with
delight, but now, instead of the joy
that dissipated pain, there confronted
parents the agonizing anticipation of a
terrible death and a watery grave.
How the hearts of many in Israel
must have fainted with dread and
asked if God had indeed forsaken His
people!

But the parents of Moses were no
ordinary parents. True, they do not
seem to have been prominent in Israel,
for although of the house of Levi Levi
had as yet only an undesirable reputa­
tion among his brethren. They were,
it would appear, like so many of God’s
élite, of humble origin, but they have
earned a distinguished and abiding
place on the divine roll of honour
because of the faith they exercised in
God. The child himself was a "goodly"
child, "exceeding fair" or "fair unto
God"; that nobility of character which
made itself so evident in manhood
apparently manifesting itself in the
infant’s expression, and marking him
out to the intuition and faith of his
godly parents as destined for service
for God. Despite the seeming impossi­
bility of it, there were those who
realized that the time of fulfilment of
the promise of God to Abraham was
nigh at hand, for had not Jehovah
said, "Know of a surety that thy seed
shall be a stranger in a land that is not
theirs and shall serve them, and they
shall afflict them 400 years. And also
that nation, whom they serve, shall I
judge, and afterwards shall they come
out with great substance." What
comfort for God’s people in days of
harrowing oppression! The time of
man’s supreme effort to impose a
crushing bondage and to destroy the
chosen people of God was to be the
moment of God’s intervention, not only
to liberate His people but to bring
them forth greatly enriched with goods.
Indeed God allowed calamity to over­
take His people to disturb their smug
satisfaction in the land of the Pharaohs
that so they might be willing to leave
Egypt and Egypt’s ways and that in
the wilderness they might learn the
patience, grace and power of Almighty
God. Is not this also, at times, the
secret of His dealings with us?

The deliverer was born, nor could
God’s purposes concerning him be
frustrated by the machinations of
man. When after three months the
child could no longer be hid, the hands
of the mother lovingly wove papyrus
leaves into an ark for him, covered it
with pitch and laid it among the flags
to prevent it being carried away by
the current of the Nile. And this she
did, not in fear and trembling as we
have frequently imagined, but "not
fearing the king’s commandment." She
literally obeyed it, believing that
with the temptation God would open
up a way of escape. When Miriam
was sent to watch, she was not sent to
protect him from harm, but "to wit
what would be done to him." There
was more than an abundant answer to
their faith, for not only was the child
"drawn forth" and spared by Pharaoh’s
daughter, but the very power that had
threatened his life was made the
guarantee of his protection, and the
very palace from which the decree of
destruction had emanated was to
provide him a training which God
had designed should form part of his
equipment for the duties of leadership.

Thus does God make the wrath of
man to praise Him, "the remainder
of wrath" He restrains. Not only was
his life saved but he was nursed by
his own mother, from whom he would receive as earliest impressions those sacred teachings relating to the heritage promised of God to Abraham’s children. Nor can such instruction be lightly committed to another. We can well imagine with what earnestness Jochebed would redeem the time, knowing that very soon the child would be transplanted from the godly atmosphere of the home to the baneful influence of the Court and of Egypt’s religion. The fruit of her instruction was signally manifested in later years and should awaken Christian parents to an appreciation of the importance of early impressions and of suitable teaching commencing with the dawn of understanding. Amram and Jochebed were fully alive to these; Roman Catholics have rightly valued them, but have not we too often neglected and despised them?

Except that he “was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians and was mighty in words and in deeds” we are told nothing more about Moses in the Scriptures until he had reached years of maturity. The delicacies of Egypt were now familiar to him, its illimitable wealth was accessible to him, its culture had made its impress on him, its sciences and its mysteries had been investigated by him, and yet having “come to years” he made the astounding decision to abandon all; to refuse longer to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter; and to identify himself with the oppressed and despised people of God. This decision was not made in a moment of folly or of pique. It was reached in the vigour of manhood after careful consideration of all that was involved, and we read that having “respect unto the recompense of the reward” he refused the splendour which he saw to be tawdry tinsel, and the joys which he recognized as the pleasures of sin which are but for a season, and he “esteemed the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasure in Egypt.” It does not appear that there was any miraculous vision vouchsafed to him at this time, calling him to leave all. But in an ordinary way, as men speak, the conviction of the emptiness of his luxurious and self-pleasing life was wrought in his soul, and by faith he declined to continue in it longer but determined to associate with his brethren, and that at the very moment when their fortunes were at their lowest ebb. From this determination he never retired; his renunciation was complete. There was no temporizing with what he saw to be evil. He might easily have found reasons to justify the refusal of such a drastic step. Had not God, in His providential dealings with him, put him where he was? Could not his position of influence be used to the great benefit of his enslaved brethren? But God had made His claims upon him felt, and to these he answered with wholehearted loyalty. We may depend upon it, our influence over others and our joy in the service of God will be directly proportioned to the completeness of our surrender to what we know to be His will for us.

Faith and courage were displayed when he stepped from his exalted station to share the lot of his brethren. He had yet to learn, however, the folly of relying on his own strength and of adopting means dictated by human expediency, to accomplish the design of God. When he beheld the burdens of his brethren his heart was stirred within him, and on an occasion when he was a solitary witness to the injustice done to one of his people by an Egyptian, after taking the precaution of assuring himself that there was no man to behold his action he
smote the Egyptian and buried him in the sand. Admirable, perhaps, as a display of prowess, but human wrongs cannot be righted by the promptings of man's wrath. His action was ill considered and executed in the pride of his own strength. That it was not working the will of God is indicated by the fact that he was too apprehensive lest it should be witnessed by men. When a man is assured that his work is according to the divine purpose he does not feel under the necessity to look this way and that.

How difficult it is often to abide God's time when one has grasped His purpose! But the right time is just as important as the right way; Moses' intervention was premature. On the second day he learned that he was not only refused as a prince and a judge, not only was his intervention between two of his brethren repelled with scorn, but the deed of yesterday was known. What had been published among the Israelites could not long be hidden from the Egyptians, so rightly anticipating the pursuit of officers of justice he escaped to the desert of Sinai.

May we learn the lesson that we can effect nothing lasting apart from the power of God. It is not what we try to do for Him that is efficacious, but what He does through us as His instruments. And while it is folly to forestall His time, may we not be found to lag behind when He has called us to act for Him?

GOD'S LOVE AND OUR SINS.

It has been taught that the cross of Christ turned the heart of God to a sinful world, that it was the work of Christ that made God love us. It is a caricature of the truth. The truth is that "God so loved . . . that He gave." The love was the cause of the coming of Christ and not the coming the cause of the love. Let us be sure of this, not because Christ died does God love us, but because God loved us Christ died for us. But we learn by the death of Christ that God's love must take account of our sins. A love that does not in the slightest degree care whether its object is good or bad—what sort of a love do you call that? What do you call it when a father shows it to his children? Moral indifference; culpable and weak and fatal. And dare any one transfer that to God?

Is it all the same to Him whether a man is living the life of a hog, indifferent to God's claims or reaching out after whatsoever things are just and pure and lovely?

A love that cares nothing for the moral character of its object is not love, but hate; it is not kindness but cruelty. There is a property in God that is fittingly described by that tremendous word "wrath." God cannot, being what He is, treat sin as if it were no sin; and therefore we read, "He sent His Son to be the PROPITIATION FOR OUR SINS." The question of sins had to be dealt with according to His own holiness and righteousness, and His love has found a way for this, but the only way was the sending of His Son, He had to give Him up to judgment that we might live through Him. Herein is love! It has found a way by which our sins can be blotted out, and the black barrier that separated our souls from God swept away, that the love might flood our souls and reach its purpose and attain its end.
THE BENEDICTION No. 3.


ONE fact that is at once apparent as we consider the language of the Benediction is the intense interest of the blessed and holy Trinity in the beloved saints of God. We learn that the Godhead is active on behalf of those that it has reconciled to itself (Col. 1. 21, 22, New Trans.).

We have already considered the desire that "the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God" should be with such. This is crowned by the unique wish that "the communion of the Holy Ghost be with you all." We find a similar expression in Philippians 2. 1: "If any fellowship of the Spirit," and it calls for inquiry on our part as to what is its precise meaning.

It will be observed that our verse speaks not of communion with the Holy Ghost, but "the communion of the Holy Ghost." Let us remind ourselves in the first place that the Holy Ghost is a divine Person, and that He is an active agent in all that concerns the spiritual welfare of those who belong to Christ. This is not the place to indicate the many varied ways in which He works in connection with our relationship to God as His children; to the Lord Jesus Christ as His body; to our fellow-believers as members one of another; and to the world as those who have been saved out of it and sent into it to be a testimony for our absent and rejected Lord.

The question is in what way can "the communion of the Holy Ghost" be with us? We recall that we have already seen that in "the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ" there is expressed the activity of divine love; and in "the love of God" we trace the source of everything. "God is love" (1 John 4. 8, 16). Let us get hold of this clearly: "God is One" (1 Tim. 2. 5, New Trans.). God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost. God is One, and "God is love." We see therefore that the Benediction invokes for us the blessing of the one God in the different ways that those taught of God would expect. In the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we note how that love has become active toward us. As we meditate upon "the love of God" we lose ourselves in contemplating that which filled—and fills—the heart that conceived for us such marvellous blessings. We could not, however, note the one nor contemplate the other apart from the Holy Ghost. His work is to unfold to us "the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ" and to lead us into the better apprehension and appreciation of "the love of God" as well as to give us to know more of that which grace has secured and love has designed for our present and everlasting enjoyment.

We are familiar with the lovely word in 1 Cor. 2. 9, 10, which is sometimes robbed of its meaning by being quoted only in part and which in its whole is so precious: "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him. But God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God."

"God hath prepared for them" sets forth "the love of God" that sought the very best for the objects of His
love. "God hath prepared for them" clearly includes "the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ" without which we could not have had that which God had prepared, nor would there have been that responsive affection for Him, for all that He has prepared is "for them that love Him." Just here we see the necessity for, and the value of, the work of the Holy Spirit. His office now is to reveal to us what has been prepared; to give us to realize that these things have been prepared for us; to encourage us to explore the wealth of blessing into which we have been introduced; to cause us to appropriate it; and to live now in the practical enjoyment of that in which we shall live eternally. In short, He would seek to conduct us to where He lives, and to give us to know what it means to be

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

All this is beautifully illustrated in the inimitable story of Genesis 24, so familiar to all of us. The great concern of the nameless servant of Abraham, after having found a bride for Isaac, was to communicate to her in ever increasing fullness the love of the father, the wealth of the son, and so to acquaint her with these things that when she got to the other side of the desert and reached Isaac, it would only mean for her a deeper enjoyment of them.

As has often been noticed, Rebekah's damsels "followed the man," but he "took Rebekah and went his way" (verse 61). He took her under his own immediate charge. The interest of the Trinity is in the saints to-day. The work of the Holy Ghost as He charges Himself with our safe conduct to the other side is to preserve us from all the defiling influences of this world, and this He does not by occupying us with such things, but by engaging our hearts with those things in which all heaven is interested, so that when we reach our Isaac it will mean the unalloyed enjoyment of that into which the Spirit has sought to lead us and maintain us while on our homeward journey.

This, we suggest, is what we may understand by "the communion of the Holy Ghost." As we have remarked, it is not communion with the Holy Ghost. We are not aware that Scripture anywhere speaks of such, nor do we think we could speak of such a thing. We can understand, however, how the Holy Ghost, in the exercise of His normal work, seeks to wean us from the carnal to the spiritual, from man's world to God's world, from love of self to love of God, from the "seen and temporal" to the "unseen and eternal." All this shows how Christianity is intended to be a living, bright, everyday reality. Not simply something to be talked about at meetings or on special occasions, but that which will ever come naturally to our lips because uppermost in our hearts. To be in the power of this would prove a remedy for the reluctance on the part of Christians to speak on the precious things of God when they meet in a social way and at other times. Now let us see the exact bearing of the text in those to whom these words were addressed. Therein lay the cure for all their ills—and they were many; the comfort and cheer for their hearts; the cordial for their fainting spirits, and we doubt not there were such; and the complete provision for the remainder of their pilgrim journey and day of testimony. Having learned this, let us bring our text right down to date and get the full benefit of it for ourselves.
It may be we have sorrowfully to own that on all points the deplorable failure of the believers in Corinth has been ours; it should not have been, for we have had the warning of their experience; but it has been, and we can only hang our heads with shame. We find, however, that their God, and our God, is a God of all encouragement.

What a God is ours! He points out our defects; He indicates His desire; He assures us of His love; and we are given the certainty of, “the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost” being with us. One thing more we would accentuate. The inspired apostle wrote not to some saints in Corinth, but to all. Those who had been naughty, whose ways had been displeasing to the Lord; who had doubtless caused grief to their fellow-believers who had the interests of Christ at heart; and who had brought such sorrow to the heart of the apostle himself. He had confidence that his letters, in the good hand of the Holy Ghost, had had the desired effect. He did not say, “We’ll wait and see if their repentance is real”; he evidently did not believe that the way to win is to shun; and that the way to show love is to harbour hard thoughts and indulge in hard words.

The Benediction breathes the grace of Christ; it pulsates with the love of God; it is fragrant with that which only the only Ghost can produce, and be it observed—it is “with you all.” Oh, that we had more of this spirit at the present time! Not making light of sin; not glossing over failure; not ignoring anything that challenges the rights of Christ; not allowing ourselves to be drawn into any association that would in any way compromise our allegiance to Him; but seeking for ourselves and for all saints that which, as we have already suggested, will provide the remedy for that which is wrong, and will maintain us in the path that is right.

We are nearing the end of our journey, the history of the Church upon earth will soon end, and the end will be the manifestation before heaven, earth, and hell of the triumph of Christ as He shall present the Church to Himself “a glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing” (Eph. 5. 27). Well may we sing:

“Our hearts beat high, the dawn is nigh
That ends our pilgrim story
In Thine eternal glory!”

Hallelujah! What a defeat for the enemy! What a victory for Christ! What a day for the Church! Beloved fellow saints, be of good cheer! Look up, take courage, and go forward! He is coming for whom we wait. Till then, “The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all. Amen.”

There is nothing in the belief that I am safe to make me safe. This is often a fatal blunder, all depends upon Him whom you are trusting. The Lord is a sun and a shield, He is the strong tower. Our safety is in Himself. It is not even our faith, but Him in whom our faith is centred, we are safe by trusting Him.

“GOD puts out His hand, and we lay hold of it. It is not the outstretched hand from earth but the downstretched hand from heaven that makes the weak and tottering man to stand.”
THE TRIUMPHS OF FAITH. No. I.


Our chapter tells us WHAT FAITH DOES.

Illustrations all along the line are given of what faith has done in acquiring and retaining what God has made its own; as in defending it when necessary. It is not, therefore, a definition of what faith is, but tells us what it does; a list is then given of the mighty deeds it has accomplished in the illustrious worthies of old, in every stage of the life of faith and in every possible circumstance connected with it. So truly is it a history of faith's deeds that many impersonal acts of faith are recorded at the end of the list.

Faith never goes under, it always comes out top; so that we see the true definition of faith underlies every act recorded. It is this, "He that hath received His testimony has set His seal to this that God is true" (John 3:33). This is the basis of all true intercourse with God, and this is often sealed with the blood of the believer. "I believe God" has meant death to thousands. On the other hand, "I believe God" meant the saving of the lives of all who were with Paul in the shipwreck.

Faith is essentially the principle of this epistle to the Hebrews, it appropriates the testimony of the Holy Spirit to the unseen blessings of the heavenly calling, and sets the soul worshipping in the Holy places even while on earth as to the body, before actually entering heaven, body, soul, and spirit. The position to-day is that of spiritual, heavenly worship on earth, while awaiting the prize of the calling on high, which is to be with Christ and like Him when He comes. He will then usher those who look for Him into the place He has prepared for them, where they shall sit upon thrones and worship God, a royal priesthood for the universe under Himself, the great Melchisedec Priest, throughout the Millennial age. The illustrations given are such as bear upon every circumstance here on earth, for faith's province is only in the region where the promises are not actually in possession. Faith carries the individual on to Christ's coming or to death; God's just men always live by faith in Him; and if it be so, die according to the faith in which they lived. Then faith for them ceases. This, then, is characteristic of faith—it makes substance of things hoped for, and gives conviction of things not seen (verse 1).

This is the effect of faith in the soul, and opens up the range and power of faith. It ranges through the whole of the unseen universe, the realm compassed in the Word of God. It makes all that is revealed substance in the soul; substance so real that life itself, for which a man will give coin upon coin, all that he hath, is not more real. It gives also a second sight, convincing the soul so really of things unseen, that being warned thereby it escapes dangers, or endures trials, or dies to God's glory. This effect of faith in the soul is translated into the life and walk here, producing the faithful man. Faith is a marvellous principle. It avails itself of the power of God as a defence against every adverse power, bringing the soul out conqueror. How much substance of heavenly things have we in our souls? So much faith have we!

Faith not only receives God's testimony, be it that of the Father, of the Son, or of the Holy Spirit, but it also obtains further testimony of God's approval. This is what we have to be concerned about, not what testimony
do I render to God which makes me important, but what testimony do I obtain from God? By faith the elders obtained testimony! It is not "a good report," which may be from others, but "testimony" from God Himself to the soul. For example, Abel obtained testimony that he was righteous; Enoch that he pleased God. May we not ask ourselves again, How much testimony do we, do I, obtain? This is what gives encouragement; and this is what brings glory to God. He who receives testimony will not be backward in giving it as led of God; though not occupied with that side, but with the God from whom he obtains that which he cannot do without.

The elders here are the men of God mentioned in the chapter. We enter now upon the longest list of the deeds of faith that is given in God's Book, and there are many lists; a list in which, although the names are fewer than in some, the deeds of faith are more and greater; stretching from the beginning to the then present time, and reaching on to what lies immediately before.

These examples of faith are arranged in divine order as is all that God does; each part illustrating some principle of faith analogous to that which suited the Hebrews at the time of writing, the "now" time. It shows how vast the necessity of the present time is, as also the infinite character of the resources. What men of faith at any time have needed we may need, and more, for the days are worse. What they obtained, we may obtain, and more, for God is more fully revealed.

The sections of the chapter are four, each one exhibiting an epochal principle of faith, and each helping to build the soul up in faith from the beginning. May we be instructed in what faith does and thus built up in faith as we proceed in its consideration, to the end. These sections are as follows, namely:

1. A short summary is given of the whole range of faith in its application to man's relationships with God. It compasses faith in the testimony of God in creation; faith for the establishment of a new relationship by sacrifice between the fallen creature and God; faith for translation, after a walk in communion with God, resulting in worship and faith for preservation from judgment and for testimony (verses 1-7).

2. Faith for walk, the endurance of faith. Here Abraham, the father of the faithful, provides most of that which is required, in four notable acts of faith. A few additional traits are added in his own immediate descendants, a family of faith. This is subdivided, giving Abraham's crowning act of faith a place by itself, an act which brings in God as the God of resurrection. This section ends in worship, and dying according to the faith while awaiting the fulfilment of the promise (verses 8-22).

3. Faith for service—the energy of faith in testimony. This is exhibited in very remarkable acts of faith in Moses and the children of Israel, on to the deliverance of the Red Sea. A short appendix of the same character on the other side Jordan is added (verses 23-31).

4. Faith that obtained testimony amid the defection of professors. This is the most difficult sphere for the action of faith. Still faith makes substance of the truth and convicts of unseen things, producing overcomers, who obtain testimony and deliverances more wonderful than ever. Names are few here and without acts; while many most worthy deeds are without names—the world was not worthy of them;
their reward is before them. The order is that of merit rather than of time, and energy precedes endurance and is mingled with it. It is faith's deeds in whomsoever it may have acted and the names, though withheld from us on the page of inspiration, are not forgotten of God and cannot be hidden when the scroll of faith is fully made up and openly displayed. These all having obtained testimony received not the promise; a better thing being reserved by God for us in this present time (verses 32–40).

The first section begins with:

FAITH AS TO CREATION.

"By faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the Word of God, so that things that are seen were not made of things that do appear" (verse 3). This is a verse to be noted. It begins at the beginning when God framed the worlds by His spoken word (rhema), though expressed by the Logos (John 1.3). In Gen. 1 we have also the creation of the worlds by God in the beginning; then, when all had been reduced to chaos, the reforming it again as an abode for man. The word in our verse (katatizo) is used for "perfecting," "restoring after dislocation"; properly it means, to reset or replace a broken limb. In Heb. 1.2, The making of the worlds is attributed to the Logos, the Son; but the word used there (poieo) is a general word for make, cause.

From our verse we see the understanding is enlightened by faith, and this in a realm which science claims as its own. By faith we understand. Many there are who refuse to believe what they do not understand, but faith opens the understanding even in this sphere. Christ risen opened the understanding of the disciples (Luke 24.25). The Spirit of revelation opens the eyes of the heart, that the truth of God may be understood and loved (Eph. 1.18). But this is in the region of a higher revelation. Men who do not understand in this region, at last refuse the truth and apostatize. Those who receive not the truth of creation by faith, settle down to make cosmogonies of their own as of old, or stop at second causes as the scientists of to-day, and become agnostics. This verse meets both these cases. We understand by faith that the worlds were framed by the spoken word of God; this settles all the heathen mythological cosmogonies of whatever character. The conclusion from this—so that not out of phenomena came the things seen—fairly demolishes the scientists' doctrine of evolution, so many years their pet. One thing was not evolved from another. But the testimony of two is true, and a verse from the Old Testament forms a dual testimony with this one, "God made every tree before it was in the earth and every herb before it grew" (Gen. 2.5). God spake and it was done; He commanded and it stood fast. Faith in a personal Creator delivers from the vagaries of the human mind, as from the deadlock of those who, refusing the great first cause in the personal God, perish upon the frigid shore of Agnosticism. Would that all such could be warned and quickened by the knowledge faith gives of a God of love—a Saviour God. Faith still surely opens the understanding as to the facts of creation.

This is the first of God's testimonies and we can understand Adam's delighted reception of it, himself the fruit of the work of the same hand and head of the creation he surveyed with God. It is a testimony rendered by God Himself in those days of which we know so little. There could have been no thought of a refusal of it in Adam's
plastic mind, and everything around him spake of the God who came down to talk with him in the garden. Incorporated now in God's word, of which it forms part, how little is it believed to-day.

Even after the fall it remained the universal testimony to the Creator's eternal power and divinity, so that men ought to have known these otherwise unknown things (Rom. 1. 20). Alas! they knew not, and were without excuse in worshipping and serving the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever.

Creation stands as the first testimony in Psalm 19, followed by the law. Then that of Messiah in Psalm 20. The testimony of creation filled up the time between the fall and the law; during this time men were left to themselves, their trespasses not being imputed to them. This is returned to in the closing days to a very great extent, when those who carry the everlasting gospel to the earth-dwellers call upon them to “Fear God and give glory to Him, . . . who made heaven, the earth, the sea, and the fountains of waters” (Rev. 14. 7).

How many lessons creation teaches us to-day! It is a wonderful page of revelation thrown open to faith. Herein lie types of all kinds, which the pious soul delights to apply; types of the great work that was in God's mind from the time it was written in the roll of the book; types of happy Christians living in the enjoyment of God's goodness, consistently with their environments; of goodness which is infinite; of a wisdom unfathomable; of a power eternal; of a Being divine. The discovery of these things draws out the heart in worship and praise to a personal God.

But the resources of God are not exhausted in creation. To Him belongs the right of redemption also; for this the Son became Man that all might behold this greater work. No power of creation itself could restore the creature from the devastation caused by sin, so as to suit a Holy God; therefore, the Creator becomes the Redeemer. A new creation apart from fallen man had been easy, but God is love and will not abandon him who is the masterpiece of His handiwork for earth. This He immediately reveals in the sentences He passes upon the fallen ones and their seducer.

The first voice to announce the recognition of this is that of the FAITH BY WHICH ABEL YET SPEAKS.

The curse upon the guilty pair, with the promise that the Seed of the woman should crush the serpent's head, together with the covering God provided for them, showed four things: the fall; the necessity for atonement; that the devil's power should be destroyed; and that they must stand before God in the righteousness of another. All these things could be brought to pass by God alone who would accomplish them by the woman's Seed; a wonderful unfolding of the nature and counsels of God. This as taught by his parents had its effect upon Abel, who received it by faith, everything around corroborating the truth of it also.

To be continued.

FAITH is the taking down of the shutters that the sunshine may blaze into the darkened chamber.
SALT IS GOOD.

In Leviticus 2. 13 it is said, “Every oblation of thy meat-offering shalt thou season with salt; neither shalt thou suffer the salt of the covenant of thy God to be lacking from thy meat-offering; with all thine offerings thou shalt offer salt”; and the preservative character of what it signifies is clearly emphasized by the Holy Spirit in the precious words of Colossians 4. 6, “Let your speech be alway with grace seasoned with salt.”

In this beautiful God-given type, the meat-offering was mainly in view, the salt in it was the seasoning. So now, graciousness of speech is the main thing regarding those who are saved by grace, but it is to be seasoned with salt, with the moral savour of the truth. This must not be lacking, though it be but the seasoning and the grace principal. Grace and truth subsist by Jesus Christ, our Saviour and Lord; and of His fulness His own have received “grace upon grace.” We can readily see why it reads thus in John 1. 16, and not “truth upon truth.” Men wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of His mouth. To be like Christ, His redeemed ones need to remember that the provision of grace is one thing and the seasoning of salt another. There must be grace in abundance and the powerful salt of the truth, wisely limited, lest it be harmful. A supply of nourishing food may be rendered nauseous by a too abundant supply of the otherwise good and useful salt.

Salt, as we have seen, was to be used with all the offerings of Jehovah’s redeemed people, Israel, and, generally speaking, it was a divinely-given symbol of truth in regard to preservative and moral savour. It was used in the oblation of the meat-offering, and in other offerings (Lev. 2. 13); also in connection with covenants (Num. 18. 19; 2 Chron. 13. 5, etc.); and in judgments (Gen. 14. 3; Deut. 29. 23; Judges 9. 45; Jer. 17. 6). These uses eloquently proclaim the enduring nature of that which is thus strikingly typified.

The words of our Lord Jesus Christ consequently come to us with freshness and forcefulness, making their meaning and connection of teaching pointed and clear. He said, “Every one shall be salted with fire, and every sacrifice shall be salted with salt. SALT IS GOOD: but if the salt have lost his saltiness, wherewith will ye season it? Have salt in yourselves, and have peace one with another” (Mark 9. 49, 50). Eastern salt was different to that which is commonly used now. It was not pure chloride of sodium, but was mixed with vegetable and earthy substances, and, when exposed to the adverse influences of sun and rain, might become savourless and useless. This gives point therefore to the words of Matthew 5. 13, too—“If the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men.” These words, which speak with such wholesome warning, are similar to those of Luke 14. 34, 35, “Salt is good: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be seasoned? It is neither fit for the land, nor yet for the dunghill; but men cast it out. He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.”

We do indeed need to use our ears to hear the truth of God in these days of moral corruption, when social, commercial, political, and professedly
Christian circles are being invaded with influences, principles and doctrines destructive to the truth. Both Mark and Luke record the Lord’s words, "SALT IS GOOD," as we have seen. In the former we are exhorted to have salt in ourselves, and "HAVE PEACE ONE WITH ANOTHER." This is important, and it is what is to characterize us inside—"one with another." Then what is to mark us outside—"toward them that are without"—is given in Colossians 4. 5, 6: "Let your speech be with grace seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man." Among the children of God, self-judgment and peace are to prevail within; while graciousness of speech (preserved by the truth), wisdom and zeal, are to become them without. The salt of the covenant of our God is needful for the maintenance of peace inside, and for the presentation of divine grace outside. It is to be applied to ourselves individually in the first instance, and it is to give a savour to our speech in the second.

An earthly remnant of Israel will bear testimony before men soon when the heavenly bride of Christ, the assembly, has been translated to be with the Lord. This remnant will take the place that the disciples of Christ had when He was on earth, before the Spirit was sent from Christ on high, forming the one body of which He is the Head. Then, as Matthew 5. 13, 14, shows, these godly Jews will be the salt of "the earth" and the "light of the world." Were it not so, all would go to corruption and darkness after the Lord takes up the assembly from the earth; but, as the Word shows, this remnant of the Jews will have "the testimony of Jesus," which is "the spirit of prophecy"; and truly those who are then benefited (just before God’s kingdom is established upon earth) will say, The salt is good! and they will glorify their Father who is in the heavens!

It is now, however, before that time, as we await the coming of our Lord, that we are to have salt in ourselves. The truth in self-judgment is to have its right place in us. Not some sort of morbid censoriousness of others, but the wholesomeness of the truth applied individually, for thus peace will be maintained collectively—"the uniting bond of peace"! What a powerful and practical effect results where the One who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life is truly before us when, self-judged, we sing to Him:

"Learning of Thee to walk in grace
And fellowship with God!"

And when the truth of the offering and sacrifice of Christ deeply affects us, when the song of faith flows from exercised souls to the Lord Jesus Himself,

"Our sins, our guilt, in love divine,
Confessed and borne by Thee;
The gall, the curse, the wrath were Thine,
To set Thy ransomed free."

When self-judgment produces such holy harmony, uniting us before the Lord, whose love went under all our judgment, it can be gratefully said, "SALT IS GOOD." 1 Corinthians 11. 31 says, "If we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged." When our risen Lord had left the tomb and death and judgment behind Him, He said to His own, "Peace be unto you."

Yes, "Salt is good" within, but also without, as we said; for grace and truth bring blessing to men, where the law failed to do so; therefore the glad gospel of God can be told forth to all, with wisdom, zeal, and gracious speech, seasoned with salt.
ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Will there be a further opportunity for those who reject the Gospel?

"Will those who have heard the gospel of God concerning His Son Jesus Christ our Lord and have rejected it, have a further opportunity of salvation under the gospel of the kingdom after the Church has been taken? Also how should one be treated who would seek to bring that perverse line of things in? Would Titus 3. 10 apply to such?"—TORONTO.

The Scriptures alone are the authority for anything that can be said on this subject, and they are so clear as to it that those who accept them as the inspired Word of God can have but one answer to this question. No further opportunity for those who reject the gospel is even hinted in them; on the contrary, Heb. 2. 3 asks, "How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?" and chapter 12. 25 says, "If they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from Him that speaketh from heaven."

Instead of an opportunity being given to Christ rejectors of accepting the gospel of the kingdom which shall be preached for a witness to all nations (Matt. 24. 14), we are told, "Because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. 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" (2 Thess. 2. 10, 11, 12). They "shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power" (2 Thess. 1. 8, 9).

The Lord did not say, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall have a further opportunity," but "He that believeth not shall be damned" (Mark 16. 16). "Now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation" (2 Cor. 6. 2), and this salvation is offered freely to all who hear the gospel. Why should men want another opportunity? Is not this one, which is God's best, good enough for them? To finally reject it is to seal their own doom.

If a man said, "I do not understand this subject, and because I don't I will say nothing about it," he ought to be treated with forbearance, but if he persisted in pressing his views which are so contrary to the plain declarations of the Scriptures, he ought to be treated according to Titus 3. 10, 11, "A man that is an heretick, after the first and second admonition reject; knowing that he that is such is subverted and sinneth, being condemned of himself."

The Claims of the Church of Rome.

"There are many interpretations of the words 'On this rock will I build my church' (Matt. 16.). Some say that the rock was Peter's confession of Christ, others that it referred to Christ Himself. But these interpretations seem forced upon the passage to avoid the main difficulty in the interpretation that Roman Catholics put upon it, that the rock was Peter (their first bishop according to their claim). It is easy for Protestants to accept the first interpretations and reject the last, but are they right in this?"—CORNWALL.

Peter is never called the rock, but a stone, and every believer on the Lord Jesus is as much a stone as he, for each believer is a part of the superstructure that Christ is building upon the rock, as Peter tells us in his first
Epistle, chapter 2. How could anything that was to resist the onslaughts of Satan's power and abide for ever, be built upon a sinful man. Why, Peter immediately after his confession fell before a subtle attack of Satan and became his mouthpiece in the effort to persuade the Lord not to go into death (Matt. 16. 23). We may be sure that it is not without a purpose that the Scriptures record for us this incident, and Peter's denial of the Lord with oaths and curses, and his action at Antioch, even after he had received the Holy Spirit, by which the very truth of the gospel was jeopardized. The Spirit of God foresaw that Christ would be displaced for Peter by a large body of the profession of Christ on earth, and these incidents in the life of the apostle seem to be recorded to show the folly of such a thing.

The confession that Peter made of the Lord was the Father's revelation to him, hence his blessedness—he was highly favoured of the Father in this. But what was it that was important, the one to whom the revelation was made or the revelation itself? The revelation itself, surely. The Father was making known who and what His Son was in contrast to what the people thought Him to be. They supposed Him to be no more than one of the prophets (verse 14), everyone of whom had failed to effect any permanent good in the earth, and this not because they were not faithful men, but because of the material upon which they had to work and the dispensation in which they laboured.

But the revelation that the Father made to Peter showed Christ to be entirely different from all that had gone before; He was "THE CHRIST, THE SON OF THE LIVING GOD." That old dispensation in which all blessing depended upon men who were never able to achieve it, was closing, and a new work was to begin that would depend entirely upon CHRIST, RAISED UP FROM THE DEAD, for this is the meaning of the title by which Peter confessed Him. He was to be victorious over death and the gates of hell, and "declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead" (Rom. 1. 4). The rock is the truth as to Himself in this character, it is Himself, and it is a sure and immovable foundation. Upon it He has founded and is building His church, and it will never be overthrown, not only because it is built upon an unshakable foundation, but because every stone in it partakes of the rock; the life and nature of the foundation is the life and nature of every stone in the building. And it is here that Peter comes in, for when the Lord said to him, "Thou art Peter," He meant, Thou art a stone for the building and so is everyone else that confesses the Lord as he did. This is plainly taught when Peter writes on this great subject. He tells us that we, Christians, have been begotten again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead (chapter 1. 3), that we are new-born babes, and, having come to Christ, the living Stone, we are built up as lively stones into a spiritual house. The life of Christ is in every stone of the building.

It should be clear that this building is not the church of Rome, nor any other church of man's design in which there is a conglomeration of good and bad, but it is the one church of Christ—His assembly, composed of every one who has tasted that He is gracious and that has come to Him, the living Stone, the risen Son of God. No one can point to it now and say, There it is; nevertheless the building of it is going
on, and at the coming of the Lord it shall instantly appear in all its beauty to abide for ever.

Notice further that in this church of Christ all who come to Him form a holy priesthood to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God by Christ Jesus. There is no such thing as a division between priests and laity, such as the church of Rome has made. All the new-born babes who have tasted that the Lord is gracious are holy and royal priests (1 Peter 2. 5 and 9).

We may thank God that the foundation of the church is Christ. God could build on nothing else, and happy are we if we rest upon this foundation of God that stands sure.

The Ways of God in Sovereignty.

A correspondent in a long letter, but with the utmost sincerity, we believe, expresses the difficulty that he finds in reconciling such solemn truths as incorrigibility of man's nature, his responsibility to believe the gospel, the sovereignty of God and His judgment of those who reject the gospel.

You raise points and ask questions in your letter that we cannot answer. They are as much beyond us as they are beyond you, for now we see through a glass darkly and only know in part (1 Cor. 13: 12), and you and we must leave these questions confidently with God until "the mystery of God is finished " (Rev. 10. 7), then we shall see face to face and know as we are known, and God will be justified in His sayings and overcome when He is judged (Rom. 3. 4). Yet the revelation that God has given to us is enough for life and godliness, and that we may know Him, and knowing Him, trust Him about everything in time and eternity.

The consideration of the doctrine of God's sovereignty as it is given to us in Rom. 9. has filled you with doubts and bitterness, and robbed you of all joy in the things of the Lord, and this specially so as you have thought of the multitudes who have not been chosen for salvation. It had a very different effect on the Apostle Paul. See how it affected him when he had considered it from every possible angle. Ordinary language was not sufficient to express his feelings and he broke out in song, "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and the knowledge of God! how unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past findings out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been His counsellor? or who hath first given to Him, and it shall be recompensed unto Him again? For of Him, and through Him, and to Him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen" (Rom. 11. 33-36.

And this great doxology winds up that section of the Epistle to the Romans which begins with that remarkable statement: "I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost, that I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart." He had sorrow and the heaviness of heart about his own people in their graceless condition until he found the solution of the difficulty in the ways of God in sovereignty, then his sorrow gave place to admiration and worship, and there burst this song of praise from his heart, for he learnt, and proves with divine logic that the only ground upon which anyone, whether Jew or Gentile, could be blessed, without challenge or change, was that of the sovereign mercy of God.

We must not read into any Scripture what is not there, or exaggerate one
side of the truth at the expense of another. Romans 9. is given to prove that God has the right to act in SOVEREIGN MERCY, and this specially in view of the fact that the Jews objected to His blessing going out to the Gentiles. He had always acted in this way, and if He had done otherwise Israel would have been cut off from blessing long ago. This is the point of God's word to Moses, "I will have mercy upon whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion." He said this when all Israel had bowed down before the golden calf and so forfeited all claim to His favour. If God had dealt with them then according to their deserts, He would have cast them off for ever, but He fell back on His own sovereign mercy, upon His right to act in grace and compassion, and to forgive.

But your difficulty does not lie so much in the "MERCY" side of the question, though this is the subject of the chapter, but in the fact that it is not only stated that "He hath mercy on whom He will have mercy," but because it is also stated, "whom He will He hardeneth." You fly too quickly to the general statement and overlook the particular and pattern case which is given. Was Pharaoh's heart a soft heart, and did God change it into a hard heart? If so, there is unrighteousness with God. But the story in Exodus shows what a hard heart he had from the beginning; there was no pity, no mercy in it. And when first the demand came that he should release the people whom he so wickedly and without cause oppressed, he not only defied the Lord who made the demand but increased the miseries of his victims, as Exodus 5. shows. Then God hardened his heart, so that he continued in his chosen course without fear of the consequences, for God would show that He was against such a man and his conduct, and that none could oppose His merciful designs and succeed. Pharaoh was raised up that it might be declared to the whole earth and to all generations of men what the power of God is. But God did not make Pharaoh what he was, though He well knew beforehand what he would be.

Then there comes the simile of the potter and the clay, and it is shown that the potter has the power to make any sort of vessel he pleases out of the clay, and a hasty reading of the passage would lead to the conclusion that God has made some into "vessels of wrath" and some into "vessels of mercy." But it is not so stated. It is true that of the "vessels of mercy" it is said that "He had afore prepared them unto glory," and how readily we who know how richly we deserved His judgment will admit that this sovereign mercy of God was our only hope; but of the "vessels of wrath" we read, "He endured them, with much longsuffering," ere He showed His wrath and made His power known against them, when by their conduct they had proved, as Pharaoh did, that they were fitted for destruction and not glory. Will any who come into this dread category be able to complain? The whole chapter, we believe, proves that they will not.

There are some questions that arise out of the objections that may be raised as to this solemn and difficult subject. What would you substitute for the sovereign mercy of God? Could universal judgment take its place? If it did, His nature, which is love, could not be known, and none could be saved, and being what He is that is impossible. If, on the other hand, He made light of sin, and if He permitted rebellion in His universe to go on unjudged, there would be no
Correspondence

witness to His wrath and power. Then His supremacy and His holiness and justice would cease to be.

But suppose it could be proved that the sovereign mercy of God or His judgments are inconsistent with the great principle of righteousness in which His throne is established. If men could raise and sustain a case against God, what then? If God is unrighteous in showing either mercy or wrath, then could there be aught but chaos and ruin? No, His ways must not be questioned, His power must not be challenged. God must be supreme, and the very fact that He is God calls for the submission of His creatures to His will, otherwise in principle they dethrone Him. Let God be true and every man a liar; give the glory to Him and remember that if any man will do His will he shall know of the doctrine.

God's gospel goes out to all, and whosoever will may be saved, and yet we believe that if He did not intervene in sovereign mercy none would heed His word. How His sovereignty and man's responsibility in this matter are made to harmonize for His glory we do not know, but we do know that He will do right, and that heaven will be filled with His praises and the whole earth with His glory, while the lake of fire will be an everlasting witness to His power and wrath and indignation against sin.

"Behold, I stand at the Door."

"Will you kindly let me have your thoughts on Revelation 3. 20, 'Behold I stand at the door and knock: if any man hear My voice, and open the door, I will come in to him and sup with him, and he with Me'? I take it that 'the door' does not refer to the human heart but to the door of the profession—the church. A friend, a sincere believer, holds that it is an individual matter, and that there is in it no ground for suggesting separation from unscriptural systems of religion."—MIDDLESEX.

The door is the door of the individual heart and not of the church. It is the individual response to the voice of the Lord when the great mass of profession is regardless of Him. To understand it and that part of Scripture in which it occurs, we must see that the Addresses to the Seven Churches give a foreview of the downgrade career of the church in its responsibility on earth. You will notice that the promise or threat of the coming again of the Lord Jesus comes in to each of the last four addresses; this teaches that those phases of things that they describe will be found in the church when He comes.

Thyatira is clearly popery, with its corruption and idolatry.

Sardis is protestantism, perhaps more particularly in its State church character, a baptized profession, having a name to live, yet dead.

Philadelphia describes a condition of things with no pretension to greatness or strength, but marked by love of the brethren, which Philadelphia means, and faithfulness to the Name and Word of the Lord. It is a return in heart to what was at the beginning when Paul could give thanks to God and the Father since he heard of the faith of the believers in Christ Jesus and their love to all the saints (Col. i. 3, 4). To answer to this must be the earnest desire of all who truly love the Lord Jesus.

Laodicea describes the last and worst phase of all, a state of things which has developed very rapidly of late, in which men are boastful of their progress and learning and influence,
but are indifferent to Christ; they are rich and increased in goods and have need of nothing, while the name of the Lord, His authority and Word are of little or no account. Laodicea means the rights or customs of the people, and what pleases the people and not what pleases God is the test. Since they pay the piper they will call the tune. They are not under the domination of the priesthood, nor will they have their beliefs or the ceremonials of what they call their worship laid down for them by the State, much less do they regard the Word of God. They claim to have outgrown it, and have become its critics instead of allowing it to criticize and direct them. "They will not endure sound doctrine: but after their own lusts they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears" (2 Tim. 4. 3). The state of this Laodicean church describes the pleasure-loving, boastful, modernistic Christendom of our day.

The Lord who sees it all will judge it at its coming. He will spue it out of His mouth as being most obnoxious to Him, and this would indicate that there is no hope of a general revival of it to devotion and faithfulness to Him; nevertheless He calls to the individual heart to give Him room within it. While the majority have no heart for Him, He does appreciate the love of the individual and will recompense this by His presence and the joy of communion with Him.

Separation from this condition of things does not enter into the passage (though there are many calls in the Word to those who own the Lord to separate from evil), for in one sense it is Christendom in which we all are, and shall be, until the Lord comes. Yet those who open their hearts to the Lord will surely be drawn to each other because they have a common object in Him, and being drawn together they will be like those of whom we read in Malachi 3. 16, "Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another: and the Lord hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before Him, for them that feared the Lord, and that thought on His name." Having opened their hearts to the Lord they may be truly described as having pure hearts, and they will "follow righteousness, faith, charity and peace" with those who are like-minded (2 Tim. 2. 22). There may be but few of them, but there is always encouragement in the Lord's own words, "Where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them" (Matt. 18. 20). And thus without any pretension to being anything at all, and of no account in the world, they may bear in the eyes of the Lord the Philadelphian character in the midst of a Laodicean condition of things.

**Salvation** is not the reward of faith, or a *quid pro quo* for it, for faith is but the weak hand that is stretched out to the mighty Saviour, it is the acceptance of what God offers; the salvation was there before waiting for us, faith is our recognition of this, and our acceptance of what God gives.

It is your Lord that says to you, **My grace is sufficient for THEE.** Himself at one end of the sentence and you at the other, and His grace, all-sufficient between. But how modest He is! My grace, that is the ocean! for you—that is the thimble! The ocean sufficient for the thimble!
THE HYGIENE OF THE SOUL.
Life, Health, Growth.

Scriptures read—1 Pet. 1. 23; Jer. 8. 22; Psalm 107. 20 (first clause); 1 Pet. 2. 2; 3 John 2.; Jude 20–25.

I DESIRE to-night, by your prayers and the help of the Lord, to say a little on “The health and hygiene of the soul as the secret of true usefulness and real happiness.”

Last night, outside the door of the lounge at 10.30 after the singing and prayer, I remarked to a brother, what a splendid thing it was to see such a company of young people so sincerely happy in the things of God, to which he replied, “It is indeed splendid, and, better still, to know that theirs is a happiness that leaves no sting.” To this we might add—and leaves no stain. Can such be said of the happiness that is found in worldly circles or in the pursuit of pleasure? Most assuredly not, and as I thought of the strenuous day, starting early and finishing late, a day spent in the presence of our Lord and His people and in His service, I thought of the words in Psalm 84—“A day in Thy courts is better than a thousand.” Dear young Christian with a secret hankering after the world and its pleasures, if such there be here to-night, tell me, could the world provide such a day of real happiness as we had yesterday? You know it could not. For the true Christian every indulgence in worldly pleasure leaves behind it a sting, an indescribable pang of regret at the heart for misspent hours. Not only so, but a stain upon the soul. You find thoughts have got into your mind that persist in obtruding themselves upon you, especially when you seek communion with your God.

I am sure it is the desire of all present, that this week spent at Swanwick may leave its mark upon us in such a way, that when we return, it may be to school, or college, office, workshop or factory, people with whom we come in contact may obtain a true impression of what Christianity is, not a namby-pamby weakly sentimental kind of thing, but that we find it good to be alive in this world in the enjoyment of the things of God and His happy service. The Scriptures read give us—

1st.—LIFE by the Word of God (1 Pet. 1. 23).
2nd.—HEALTH by the Word of God (Psalm 107. 20).
3rd.—GROWTH by the Word of God (1 Pet. 2. 2).

LIFE.

I wonder if there is anyone present still unsaved, perhaps a young laddie or a young lassie or older person who finds no real pleasure in that which fills the believer with joy. What is the reason? It is this, you have not as yet that new life, the only capacity for the enjoyment of divine things. You have not yet been born again. How is this new life imparted to us? The verse tells us, “Born again . . . by the word of God,” and verse 25. of 1 Pet. says: “And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you.” What is, then, the gospel, the reception of which effects this wondrous change? It is a gospel that points us back to the centre cross of Calvary and tells us of redemption by the blood (1 Pet. 1. 18). We know that in much of the preaching of the present day, unwittingly or designedly, the precious blood is omitted, yet it is still precious to God, and precious to us. In spite of
what the modernists tell us, we sing,
and shall continue to sing—

"Precious, precious blood of Jesus, shed on Calvary,
Shed for rebels, shed for sinners, shed for me."

Accept the Saviour now, and trust His precious blood, rest on the work He finished, and this new life will be yours.

HEALTH.

Let us now consider the question of soul health. Someone may say, I know I have been born again, but still there is something wrong. I remember when I was a young fellow, I had a very pale face, and looked rather delicate, in consequence of which I received a great deal of sympathy to which I was not entitled. I remember once, after a meeting, a strong sailor brother gripped my hand like a vice, and asked, "Do you enjoy good health, dear brother?" I might have replied, "I did until you shook hands with me," but I felt he asked in a kindly way, having my interest at heart. Let us ask ourselves, dear fellow Christians, is there the spiritual health with us that should be,—the desire for prayer, the healthy appetite for God's word, the longing for the companionship of other Christians, and delight to serve the Lord for the salvation of others?

Departure from God, and soul decline in Old Testament times, is likened to ill-health (Jer. 8. 22). As the Lord looked down upon His people, and pitied their condition, he says through the lips of His prophet, "Is there no balm in Gilead? Is there no physician there?" Why, then, is not the health of the daughter of my people recovered? Thank God, there can be recovery if such is the felt condition. We sometimes sing to sinners, "The Great Physician now is near, the sympathizing Jesus." The name of the Great Physician for sinner and saint is Jesus, the healing balm, His precious word (Psalm 107. 20). The One who gave you life by His word, will restore you health by His word. Get down before Him, ailing Christian, tell out your symptoms in His ear. The remedy is safe and sure. He will search your heart and life, He will diagnose your case, and restoration is absolutely certain.

I remember hearing of a young brother who had begun to slacken off in the things of God. One day, his watch having gone wrong, he took it to an old watchmaker, who also was a Christian. "My watch," said the young fellow, "has been losing time recently." The old watchmaker opened the case, and put his magnifying glass in his eye and peered into the works, and told the young Christian to leave the watch in his hands, as it required cleaning. Then he hung the watch on the hook, and looking intently and lovingly into the young brother's eyes, said only these words: "You, too, have been losing time recently." The words were enough. The young Christian went home to his room, and kneeling down, gave "utterance" to words like these: "O Lord, it is true, I have been losing time; set me right." This is the way. To change the figure, put yourself into the hands of the Great Physician, and all will be well.

How does He work? He works for restoration by His Spirit and His word.

There are two links, the one quite distinct from the other. We are His for ever, bound by the link of Relationship, a link eternally strong. There is, however, another link extraordinarily fragile—the link of communion. The Holy Spirit's normal work is to take of the things of Christ and show them unto us, but if our life and ways are displeasing to Him, the link of com-
munion is broken, and must be restored before real health and happiness of soul is ours again. It is by the word of God in the power of the Spirit that this takes place. The Spirit brings the word to bear upon us, pointing out what is wrong and what is God's will. It is not always sins of commission, but sins of omission will interrupt communion and mar Christian happiness.

Perhaps your lack of real joy may lie in the fact that as yet you have failed to respond to the desire of your Lord on that night of His betrayal, and repeated from the glory that He should be remembered during the time of His absence in partaking of the Supper instituted by Himself: "This do in remembrance of Me." Someone may say this is not a command but a request. The fact, however, of its being a request to the one who has become a subject of Divine grace is more binding than a mere command would be. Besides is not a request of an earthly sovereign equal to a command? How much more then the express desire of our Lord.

GROWTH.

Let us consider now the first two verses of 1 Pet. 2. Verse 1 enumerates some ugly things that spoil our health, mar our happiness, and hinder our growth. Many preachers select certain sins in warning young Christians, and because a person is free from the one or two sins mentioned, he may flatter himself that he is all right. Let us thoughtfully and prayerfully consider these things we are warned against—"malice, guile, hypocrisies, envies and evil speakings," and seek by God's help that they have no place in our lives. How many friendships have been severed, how many missions have been ruined, how many assemblies have been broken up by the allowance of these very things. Now for the positive side. How may spiritual growth be encouraged; 1 Pet. 2. 2, tells us by "the sincere milk of the word." Milk, we know, contains all the essential elements of a perfect food. Infants, adults, invalids and the aged, can be supported by milk. Nowadays great consideration is given to food values, that what is eaten may provide the vitamins necessary, and so for the nourishment of this new God-given life there is provided the sincere milk of the word which is really the ministry of Christ to our souls, that feasting upon Him, His character may be reproduced in us.

For forty years, God carried that great multitude across the wilderness from Egypt to Canaan, and fed them by that wonderfully sustaining food, manna. That tiny grain that lay upon the dew contained the vitamins so essential for life. The manna is a figure of Him who is the food of our souls. You remember there are at least four things said descriptive of the manna. It was small, white, sweet, and round. Let us ask what feeding on Christ really means, and how the Spirit works to make us more like Him. It seems to me something like this. For example, there is none of us but who could do with being more humble than we are. To correct this tendency to self-esteem, the Holy Spirit would direct our thoughts to such a Scripture as Phil. 2., how small He made Himself, the One who, being in the form of God, came down, down, down unto the death of the cross. Let us feed on Christ thus humbled, and seek that somewhat of His character may come out in us.

Take, now, the whiteness, bringing before us the holiness of Christ and the purity of His life. The desire for these in our lives will not be produced by self-occupation but by feeding on
Him. The same with the sweetness and roundness. Sweetness of character and evenness of temper will be seen in us as we feed upon the lovely perfections seen in Jesus.

Let us heed, then, the exhortation, and as healthy children of God desire the sincere milk of the word. A certain food has been advertised as the food to build bonny babies. As we look back on Christian history, and think of the boy martyrs and girl martyrs, men and women, too, who have by fire and flood suffered death for the Name, we are convinced that this heavenly food builds brave boys, grows graceful girls (graceful in its true sense), makes mighty men and works wonders with women. If we look down the chapter I Pet. 2, we shall see some result of this growth in soul as holy priests, verse 5, we shall have something of praise and worship for God, and as royal priests, verse 9, something to exhibit before the eyes of men. What is it, or, rather, who is it that we present to God and show forth to men? It is Christ, precious to God, verse 4, and precious to us, verse 7.

We turn to 3 John, and there we find in Gaius and Diotrephes concrete examples of the healthy and unhealthy Christian respectively. Let us take the latter first. I remember overhearing a remark by a little girl to her brother in the outspoken manner that seems to be the special privilege of sisters addressing their brothers in certain circumstances. "There is too much ego in your cosmos." It was so with Diotrephes, self was the centre and circumference of his world, he is marked by three sad characteristics: he was egotistical, hypercritical, dictatorial. What havoc has been wrought by men of this stamp in all circles. Gaius is a beautiful example of a healthy Christian. The apostle, in verse 2, desires that his health of body may be equal to his health of soul. Most of us look fairly well in body, but what about our soul condition? I am afraid that if by some fairy touch the face should become the indicator of the state of soul, some of us would get a shock when we looked in the mirror. There are five features that mark the healthy Christian as seen in Gaius. First. He was orthodox, the truth was in him, he held it fast. Second. He was consistent, he walked in the truth. Orthodoxy and consistency are not always combined in the same person. It was said of one preacher that he preached so well in the pulpit that people said he should never come out of it, but out of the pulpit he practised so badly that people said he should never go into it. Third. He was loyal, i.e., faithful to his brethren. Fourth. He was loving. The brethren could bear witness of his love. Fifth. He was liberal, he helped others on their way.

In concluding, let us turn to Jude, verse 20, "Building up yourselves." Good feeding, "Praying in the Holy Ghost." Breathing exercises. Prayer is the breath of the soul. "Keep yourselves in the love of God." This may be called true sun-ray treatment, banishing before its health-giving rays coldness of soul from which we suffer so often, and sending us forth with renewed love to our fellow believers and sinners as well. A home to be healthy should have a bright outlook, not on to a brick wall, but on to the green fields or blue sea. Our outlook is bright indeed, because it is an uplook. "Looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life." This is our prospect, dear fellow Christian. The coming of our Lord, when He in His mercy will sever for us the last link with the old creation, and in bodies new and glorious, bring us in to the full enjoyment of eternal life.
SELF-occupation makes for ill-health and invalidism. This is an inexorable law of the spiritual life. A self-centred person cannot be either healthy or happy. If we are to be kept in spiritual health and vigour we must have an object for our hearts and aims outside of ourselves. And I think that we shall all readily admit that being God's creatures He Himself ought to be that object; if He is not, we are living sinful and empty lives. That God may have His right place in our lives, He has revealed Himself to us, not by writing now upon tables of stone but by sending His well-beloved Son. The stern law would never have attracted and won us, but who shall describe the attractiveness of Jesus, our Lord? God was in Christ. "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father," He said. And He who has revealed the Father rightly becomes now the object of our hearts when we know Him. But how does this come about, how does our Lord Jesus displace self and fill our hearts Himself instead?

JESUS COMING.

First we learn that we are the objects of His heart. He sought us before we sought Him. We read, "John saw Jesus coming unto him." What a moment that was for John, and what a moment it is for us when we see this great sight. We sing,

"I came to Jesus as I was,  
Weary and worn and sad.  
I found in Him a resting place,  
And He has made me glad.

Yes, thank God, that is most blessedly true, but before we came to Jesus like that He came to us.

Unlovely and sinful as we were He came to us.

John saw Jesus coming unto him, and he cried, "Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world." This was the first public testimony borne to the Lord when He appeared in this Gospel. This first chapter of it opens with a recital of His divine glories. He is God, the Creator, the Source and Giver of life, and the Only-begotten Son which is in the bosom of the Father, and it closes with the prediction of glories yet to be, for He is the King of Israel and the Son of Man; but not of those glories that never had a beginning nor of those that are still to be revealed did John now speak. It was JESUS that he saw coming to him, the lowly Nazarene, the Man of sorrows; and of Him he said, "Behold the Lamb of God."

We also have seen Him coming to us as the Lamb of God, the One who died for us, so great was His love! He has come to us as the One who poured out His blood that our sins might be cleansed and our souls saved from hell and that He might redeem us to be His own for ever. This was the measure of His love! He came to us and we met Him first as the Lamb of God who suffered, who was the great sacrifice to make atonement for us, who was wounded for our transgressions and bruised for our iniquities. O children of the family of God, it is not because there shine upon the sacred brow of your Saviour crowns of imperishable splendour that you love Him, but because He first loved you and gave Himself for you. As the Lamb, holy and spotless, He endured and exhausted
the judgment that your sins called for, as the scapegoat He has carried those sins far away, even into the land of forgetfulness, and He has come back without them; and as He showed to His disciples His hands and His side, wounded and pierced for them, so now He shows them to us. He has come to us pouring out His love in suffering and sacrifice that He might redeem us from all iniquity and win us for Himself for ever.

Yes, He has come to us full of grace and truth, He has come from the height of His glory to the depth of our misery to save us and sanctify us and glorify us with Himself for ever.

"How wonderful I that He the Son has come, And here for us as Lamb of God has died. Our sins were laid on Him, He did become Our substitute, when He was crucified"

JESUS WALKING.

Now I must speak of Jesus walking. "The next day after John stood, and two of his disciples, and LOOKING UPON JESUS AS HE WALKED, he saith, Behold the Lamb of God." Seeing Jesus coming has saved us, beholding Him as He walked will sanctify us wholly according to His own desire (John 17.). But I would have you notice that between verses 29 and 36 the Holy Spirit comes in. "This same is He that baptizeth with the Holy Ghost." I cannot emphasize too strongly the importance of this. If we are to enjoy vigorous spiritual life, and health, two things are necessary—an all-sufficient, all-absorbing object outside of us, and a patient yet all-victorious power within us. The object outside is Jesus, the power within is the Holy Ghost. But when we think of our Lord and Saviour as "He that baptizeth with the Holy Ghost," it is in other circumstances

than those that we have considered. When we think of Him as the Lamb of God we remember Calvary and its suffering, the thorn-crowned head bowed in death and the precious blood flowing from His side; but when we consider Him as "He that baptizeth with the Holy Ghost," we look away from Calvary and earth and the grave, we look far above the stars and we see this same Jesus enthroned. Yes, blessed be God, He has put Him there. I ask you, babes in Christ, does it not thrill your hearts to know that your Saviour, once despised and rejected of men is now at the right hand of God? Does it not make you glad and rejoice when you "see Jesus crowned with glory and honour"? It is from that exalted place that our Lord has sent down the Holy Ghost to dwell in us that we might follow Him without faltering and be in living communion with Him who is the very spring of our life and health. How far heaven seems from earth, who can measure the distance? And Jesus is there in heaven and we are here on earth, yet the Holy Spirit within us can make our Lord and Saviour as real to us as if He sat by our side and talked with us face to face.

If we look upon Jesus as He walked, we shall follow Him as the disciples of John did; and He has come to us for this purpose, not only to seek and save us, but to lead us out of the place where He found us. We were dead to God, trying to make ourselves happy amid the glamour and in the filth of this world, and He came into it, Himself holy and pure in the midst of all its moral putrefaction, that He might separate us to Himself and draw and lead us out of the world. He works out His great design by love. He does not drive us, but He binds us to Himself by cords of love. He becomes
attractive to us, and then we follow Him. O look upon Him as He walked! How wonderful were His footsteps from the manger to the mount of glory, from thence to Gethsemane, then on to Calvary, through death to Emmaus and the upper room in Jerusalem, then out to Bethany and up to the Father's right hand. We do not wonder that the disciples gazed steadfastly into heaven as He went up. We follow Him this night with our eyes, and the challenge comes home to us, Shall our hearts and our feet follow Him also?

Of course we must face things. We do not move an inch upon this path of God's will for us apart from exercise of heart, and we must make decisions, we must choose and refuse; and tonight, and at this crisis in our spiritual history, we must choose between self and Christ. Did you ever look at yourself in God's light? A celebrated American man of letters was offered £10,000 for his Autobiography. He turned down the offer and wrote, "A man cannot tell the whole truth about himself, even if he is convinced that what he writes will never be seen by others. I have personally satisfied myself on that. You cannot lay bare your private soul and look at it; you are too much ashamed; it is too disgusting. For that reason I confine myself to drawing the portraits of others." As far as I know, that man was only judging of himself by a human standard, how much deeper will be our abhorrence of self if we see it in God's light. One look will be enough.

"Who knows thee well, will quit thee with disgust,
Thou selfish mass of animated dust!"

If we quit self, we have Jesus instead; we cannot find a fault in Him. The worst that His enemies could say after the closest scrutiny was, He is the friend of sinners. But He was not only free from all evil, He was full of all good. He is the Lamb of God; the gentleness and meekness of Christ were His as He walked, His sympathy and divine compassion were seen in all His ways. If you are depressed and sad, behold Him as He walked by the side of those two disciples that journeyed to Emmaus (Luke 24). If you have been stricken by a great grief, behold as He walked with the tears upon His face by Mary's side to the grave of her brother. If you have backslidden from His ways, behold Him saying to Simon the son of Jonas, "Follow me."

If you would have your heart filled with worship: see Him as He says, "But that the world may know that I love the Father; and as the Father gave Me commandment even so I do. Arise, let us go hence" (John 14. 3). Look upon Him as He walked; He took that way of deepest sorrow to accomplish the will of God, and that will was that we, being firmly attached to Him, might be led by Him into the knowledge of the Father's heart and home.

JESUS DWELLING.

I want you to notice that John stood, and Jesus walked. John had led those disciples of his as far as He could. He must stand now for One greater than he had come, One whose shoe latchet he was not worthy to unloose, and He had come to be the Leader of the flock of God, and His sheep hear His voice and follow Him. But as John stood He spoke, and those that heard him followed Jesus. It is right that you should listen to the servants of the Lord as long as they point you to Jesus and move your hearts to follow Him.

This is what happened in our story, and this was what our Lord desired;
for this He had come, and a great joy must have filled His heart as He turned and saw these two disciples following Him. In response to His question, “What seek ye?” they replied, “Master, where dwellest Thou?” It is as though they said, “It is yourself we want, and only you.” Their eyes had seen His beauty and they could henceforth be satisfied with none but Him. And when they saw where He dwelt they abode with Him. And who think you had the greatest joy in that dwelling that day? They of course were supremely happy, how could it be otherwise since they were with Him? But who can tell how great His joy was? His is a love that cannot be satisfied without the company of the loved ones. He cannot endure that His loved ones should be far from Him and that is why we have the feet washing in chapter 13. He wants us to have part with Him in His own dwelling.

If we follow Him, He will lead us out of the degradation of our sin and the misery of our selfishness into His own place, and tell us that that place is ours. In the Gospel of John He often uses the possessive pronoun. He speaks about things that are His own: “My Father,” “My Father’s house,” “My peace,” “My joy,” and so on, and we might well sit entranced as we hear Him, and feel how worthy He is of all that He speaks of, but how great is our wonder when we find that all that He has He shares with us. We read not only of Jesus coming, and Jesus walking, but of Jesus dwelling also, and if we inquire, “Master, where dwellest Thou?” He answers, “Come and see.” And where He finds His home and rest, even in the Father’s love, there we may rest, for He tells us, “The Father Himself loveth you because ye have loved Me.” The Father’s house will be our home for ever, the Father’s love is to be our dwelling-place now, because it is the dwelling-place of His beloved Son, and He is not ashamed to call us brethren and to declare the Father’s Name to us.

If we dwell with Him we shall be like Him, His compassions will fill our hearts, and we shall seek others for Him. Andrew must have learnt how the heart of his Master yearned for others, and so the first thing that He did on the next day was to find his brother Simon and bring him to Jesus. This Andrew was no self-centred invalid, he was vigorous and active, but the spring of his activities was the Christ whom He had found. “We have found the Messias” was his exultant and effective message. Being delivered himself, he delivered others; being attracted by Jesus, he attracted others to Him. He became by following Jesus and dwelling with Him a sanctified vessel, meet for His Master’s use.

Would you, my hearers, enjoy spiritual health? Then let Christ be supreme in your affections. Behold Him, follow Him, dwell with Him and spend your life in self-forgetful services in His Name in this devil-driven and needy world. May the Lord make these things true of us all in the power of the Holy Ghost.

We ought to be greatly impressed by the fact that the Holy Spirit dwells in us. It means that we belong to God. He paid a great price for us, the precious blood, and now He has taken possession of that which He has purchased by the indwelling of His Spirit. Our body is the temple of the Holy Ghost, and if God dwells in us, His grace and ways ought to be seen in us, so we read, “glorify God in your body, which is God’s.”
ENTHUSIASM FOR THE TRUTH.

Scriptures read: Psalms 132., 133., 134.

It may be asked, "Why not say enthusiasm for Christ?" Certainly Christ is the Truth. We feel, however, that there is a danger against which we need to be warned. A person may say, "I know Christ is my Saviour, I am seeking to live for Him, trying to serve Him, and I know that in virtue of His precious blood I shall spend eternity with Him. It seems to me that that is all that matters. Other Christians may seek to know more truth and some may be able to expound it, but after all that is not vital."

That is an altogether mistaken idea. The more we love Christ we will desire to know more about Him, and to explore the vast range of truth of which He is the Centre. Then the Holy Spirit has been given to us and indwells us in order that He may guide us into "all truth" (John 16. 13). We want to know it, to hold it, to see that it holds us, to embrace it as the patriarchs did the promises (Heb. 11. 13); and to have such enthusiasm for it that we shall be able to enthuse others. The two outstanding examples in Scripture of men who were enthusiastic for the truth are David in the Old Testament and Paul in the New Testament. We have only to read Paul's letter to that young man, his son in the faith, Timothy, to see that. Note the language that he uses in the last chapter of his first epistle: "FLEE!" "FOLLOW!" "FIGHT!" and observe the touching appeal with which he closes as he writes, "O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust!" (verses 11, 12, 20). Then it is interesting to observe that in the case of both David and Paul they had enthusiasm for the House of God. In David's day, a material house—a temple made with hands (Acts 7. 44)—in Paul's day, "a spiritual house" (1 Pet. 2. 5), and of that house—as set forth in that chapter—every true believer forms part. We need to understand that that which will enable us to live a life well pleasing to God will be our apprehending the fact that we are going to heaven, not as so many independent units, but as part of one great whole, and that our individual conduct affects not only ourselves but all our fellow-Christians everywhere.

To come now to the Psalms which we have read; we remark

DAVID'S LOVE FOR THE HOUSE OF THE LORD.

The language of verses 2 to 5 inclusive affords abundant evidence of that; while the opening verse of Psalm 122. shows how he loved those who loved the House of the Lord: "I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go up into the house of the Lord."

He lived for that house, spoke of it, sang of it, wrote of it, thought of it. Some might say it was an obsession. Anyhow it claimed his interest and his affection. In verse 6 we ascertain where David learned about it. It may be a debatable point whether Ephratah was his birthplace or not. Be that as it may, it is a fair inference that he learned this when he was young, probably tending his father's sheep. How he learned it or who taught him we are not told, suffice to say that what he learned when young governed the whole course of his after life. Failure there was, and sad failure at that, but in the main he lived for the
interests of the house of the Lord. Shall we see to it then that we learn while we are young? There is a solemn word in Judges 2. 7-10 (please read it), where we are told that the people served the Lord all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders that outlived Joshua. Joshua succeeded Moses, just as, in a certain sense, Timothy followed Paul. No successor was appointed to come after Joshua, nor was anyone appointed to succeed Timothy. After Joshua there were the elders. After Timothy, “faithful men.” “Another generation” arose, however, “which knew not the Lord.” We could imagine them saying, “Of course we are Israelites, and in that sense we are supposed to be distinct from the nations around us. We think, however, our forefathers were too narrow-minded. Why should we not intermarry? Adopt some of their customs? And our associating with them might be for their good.” They did so, and the Book of Judges is a sad story of declension and departure from the Lord. So to-day there is the danger of the rising generation saying, “We meet with those who profess to walk in the Christian path of separation from the world, both religious and profane; but we think those who have gone before us were too severe and bigoted. We want a wider path with more toleration.” If that leads to anything that the Word of God does not sanction, and that is therefore inconsistent with the truth, then in that way lies disaster. Now let us consider some characteristics of that House: (1) HOLINESS. We do not find the exact word in the Psalms that we have read except in the marginal reading of Psalm 134. 2, “Lift up your hands in holiness”; but we cannot think of the house of the Lord without realizing that holiness is its chief characteristic:

“HOLINESS BECOMETH THINE HOUSE, O LORD, FOR EVER” (Psa. 93. 5). We all have sincere aspirations after holiness, and doubtless the question arises: How are we to attain to it? Let us see how we will not do so. (a) Not by rising to our feet in some large meeting, nor, under the stress of some strong emotion, raising our hand, and thereby indicating that we consecrate ourselves to a holy life. (b) Not by making a resolution and saying, “After these meetings our life will be different.” It is right to make decisions, but you may find that all such resolutions may only end in smoke. We will attain to it as we learn that we belong to One who is holy and true (Rev. 3. 7), and that we form part of that house over which He is Son. If we could imagine such an impossible thing as our being introduced into the house of Windsor and having the same place as the Prince of Wales in the Royal House, our first concern would be to know how to comport ourselves in a way worthy of that house. To illustrate it from another point of view. In our prison work we have met men who were not “jail-birds.” Men who have occupied good positions and who have been brought down by gambling, etc. Greater far than the punishment of their incarceration has been the hourly reflection that they have brought dishonour upon their house and have disgraced an hitherto untarnished name. Let us get hold of it, we form part of God’s house, and we will regulate our conduct in relation to that. It may be said, “That is calculated to make us legal and is suggestive of a joyless Christianity.” It will not make us legal. We do not trouble ourselves day by day as to whether our conduct is such as becomes our own house. It is natural to us to conduct ourselves in a way worthy of it, and only if we were
to turn aside from that would we be concerned about it. Similarly we belong to God’s house and it is natural to us as those who do belong to God’s house to shape our lives accordingly. As for it being joyless, it is joyful. Read verses 9 and 16 of Psalm 132. and there we find another characteristic (2) JOY. Those who dwell there “shout aloud for joy” : so in Psalm 84. 4 we read : “Blessed (happy) are they that dwell in Thy House ; they will be still praising Thee.” To dwell there means to be filled with joy, and our full hearts will find relief in praise. Rest assured when our hearts are filled with joy and that joy is reflected in our faces, then we may expect sinners to be saved as we speak to them of the One whose glory we have beheld in the house of God.

We see further (3) UNITY. We cordially endorse Psalm 133. 1. What a miserable house that is where there is no unity! What a happy house is that where unity prevails! This is something that we want to preserve. When some of us were young and wanted to pursue a certain course we were perhaps impatient with our older brethren who in their desire for our spiritual prosperity offered a word of counsel. We thought they were old-fashioned, and our own notions better than theirs, but this only spoiled the unity. We older brethren need to have patience with those who are younger, remembering that we were young once upon a time, otherwise we shall spoil the unity. It is where the unity exists, “there” the Lord will command the blessing (verse 3). Where such happy conditions obtain (4) WORSHIP must result. We are morally fitted for the service of the sanctuary, and there we lift up our hands and bless the Lord (Psa. 134. 2). Thank God for all the dear young men who preach the gospel, and for every Christian who engages in the happy service of our peerless Master; may their number be greatly increased; but we long to see more taking part in the service of this verse. In the divine Presence we give God His portion and offer to Him that worship that is agreeable and acceptable to Him. The result will inevitably be (5) BLESSING to us. We go into the sanctuary not to get but to give, but we may be quite sure we will not give without getting, for He ever must have the pre-eminent place, and “it is more blessed to give than to receive” (Acts 20. 30), hence we read : “The Lord that made heaven and earth bless thee out of Zion” (verse 3).

May the Lord bless His word to us and make that which we have been considering to be a real, living, practical, everyday reality to us for His name’s sake.

WE do not feel that it would be right to use the adjective “subordinate” in respect to the Holy Spirit. It is true that He has come as the servant of the Lord’s glory, and that He was sent by the Father in the Name of the Lord Jesus, and that He does not speak from Himself, but what He hears He speaks. Yet this does not imply any inferiority, for in His own power and sovereign right He has proceeded from the Father, and He is not one whit less in glory than the Father and the Son, for Father, Son and Holy Ghost are one. For the carrying out of the counsels of the Father’s heart He is here dwelling in the children of God, God’s servant and theirs, yet in taking the servant’s place He has not relinquished His own proper divine glory, nor could He.
THE TRUE GRACE OF GOD.

We have just been considering some of the main features of the house of God as it exists on the earth to-day. The previous speaker has been like an architect conducting us on a survey of a building and assisting us in our appreciation of its excellent points. I want, on the other hand, to be rather like a navvy who takes pick and shovel that he may uncover the foundations, and enable you to realize how great and solid they are, how well able to sustain the great superstructure that has been reared.

The Apostle Peter reminds the converted Jews to whom he wrote that they now stood in the grace of God. Formerly their relations with God had been upon the basis of the law, and upon that basis they did not stand at all; they fell. These converts were scattered all over the various provinces of Asia Minor, and though Peter was the apostle to the circumcision they had actually been evangelized by the Apostle Paul. Peter carried out his commission in regard to them by pen and ink, and wrote this letter to them, in which he corroborated the testimony that had reached them through Paul's lips, saying, "This is the true grace of God wherein ye stand."

Some of the strangers to whom Peter wrote were domiciled in Galatia, and turning to Paul's epistle to the Galatians we find that through receiving the gospel from his lips they had been called by God "into the grace of Christ" (Gal. 1:6). Like the believers at Rome they had been justified by faith, and now had access by faith into "this grace [or, favour] wherein we stand" (Rom. 5:1). It is a most wonderful thing that we should stand in the favour of God at all. It is a still more wonderful thing that the favour in which we stand should be the favour of Christ. We are accepted in the Beloved.

Now all this Peter confirms. You notice what he says, "I have written briefly, exhorting,"—and you can see for yourselves how much exhortation there is in the latter part of the epistle—"and testifying that this is the true grace of God wherein ye stand." His testimony to this grace is found in the earlier part of the epistle. Let us note a few details that are brought before us.

First of all, there is God's electing mercy, which is mentioned in verse 2 of chapter 1. This is followed in verses 3 and 4 by His abundant mercy which has begotten us again unto a living hope and to an incorruptible and undefiled inheritance by the resurrection of the Lord Jesus from the dead. The Jews had an inheritance which soon got corrupted; they had hopes, but there came a moment when those hopes died. What bright hopes burned in the hearts of the disciples when they accompanied their Master on the occasion of His triumphal entry into Jerusalem! It looked, indeed, as if the world were gone after Him. Surely the moment was now arrived when He would assert Himself, crush the Roman Empire and take His glorious throne. Then came the dramatic turn in events, the revulsion in popular feeling. His cause waned, to all appearance He fell a Victim, crushed between the upper and nether millstones of the religious machine existing in Judaism and the civil and military might of Rome. Hope died in the hearts of the disciples!

This is illustrated in Luke 24. Can you picture to yourself the two disciples going to Emmaus? I think I can see them. Utterly dispirited, hopelessly weary, they slowly stagger forward,
hardly able to proceed in a straight line. Then Jesus joins them, and their steps are quickened, and then at last the little home over the hills is reached. Then Jesus enters, and there is the revelation of Himself as risen from the dead. Then and there they were like men born into a new world! A living hope as deathless as the risen Christ took possession of their hearts, and there was a new spring in their footsteps on the return journey to Jerusalem, which made the three-score furlongs seem but a little way! As they burst into the upper room that night amongst their fellow disciples, they might well have joyfully cried, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to His abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a living hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead."

The mercy that chose us, and the mercy that has called us to such an inheritance, bring before us the grace of God the Father. Verses 18 to 20 of the chapter bring before us the grace of God the Son. In the due time He was manifested for us as the Lamb of God and shed His precious blood for our redemption. We have been redeemed as the fruit of His work done for us. Notice that the last two words of verse 20 are "for you."

The end of the chapter brings before us the grace bestowed in connection with the Spirit of God. It is through the Spirit that our souls have been purified, being born again by the living and abiding word of God. The new birth is a work wrought in us and not for us, the Spirit being the Operator and the word of God the agent which He uses; but all of it is the fruit of the grace of God.

The earlier part of chapter 2 shows that we who formerly were not a people have now obtained mercy, and that mercy has constituted us a holy and a royal priesthood. Such is the grace in which we stand.

And in that grace we stand. We are there by an act of God. In that grace He has set us irrevocably and for ever, since that which He does He does for ever. Hence, in that connection there is no such thing as falling from grace.

Yet the Galatians were upbraided by Paul for not continuing in the grace of Christ; they were bidden to "stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free," and they were told plainly that they were "fallen from grace" if they pursued the lines they were adopting. Though they were securely held by God in the place wherein He had set them yet they might fall in their own thoughts and inner consciousness from that place.

As an illustration of what I mean, take the parable of the prodigal son. When he returned to his father broken-hearted and repentant he was received in the fulness of grace. He deserved absolutely nothing, yet he was welcomed, robed, shod, treated not only as a son, but also feasted upon the fatted calf as an honoured guest. In such grace as that he was set. But suppose that on the following morning he had suddenly imagined that though his reception had been in this fashion, yet that if he expected to retain the favour of his father he must set to work to show that he deserved it. Why, he would probably have descended into the kitchen regions that he might undertake duties like a hired servant! And a very poor hired servant he would be, as must be any young man whose more recent occupations have been either the wasting of money in riotous living or the tending of a herd of filthy pigs.

But what would be the father's attitude in the matter? He would call his son up from the servant's
quarters, and say to him, "My boy, however much you allow these unworthy thoughts of me, the effect of which is to make you fall from the grace in which I set you as far as your understanding of things is concerned, I intend to stand by my thoughts. Not your understanding of things but my understanding of things is going to prevail. I shall not adapt or conform the high thoughts of my grace to the poor low thoughts of your legal mind. Come up out of the kitchen and take up the place that is yours as a son in my house."

In the true grace of God we stand whatever may be the state of our minds. Some of us, perhaps, do not realize this. We may have fallen into the snares of imagining that what we are or what we succeed in being or doing for God determines what He is and does for us. This is a great mistake. It is, of course, the root principle of law that man has to obey and that what God does for him depends upon his obedience. But grace works just the other way round. God acts on our behalf, and out of that flows what we may be or do for Him. God is what God is whatever we may be. Let us firmly lay hold of that!

To lay firmly hold of it will be the greatest possible help to us, for nothing is easier for us than to slip away from it in our thoughts. As believers in Jesus we stand before God in His favour whatever the state of our thoughts and feelings. A well-known servant of Christ once quoted the words by a Christian poetess,—

"They that trust Him wholly
Find Him wholly true."

And added, "that is wonderful, is it not? Yet I know something much more wonderful than that." He paused as the folk sat up and looked at him with astonishment. Then he resumed, by quietly saying, "I know something much more wonderful than that, and it is this; that they who do NOT trust Him wholly also find Him wholly true!"

Is this to put a premium upon a small and defective faith? By no means: it is rather the knowledge of the full and unalterable grace of God which will increase our faith. It is to put a premium upon the fulness of the grace of God. The God of all grace has called us to His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, and we stand in that true grace of God while we await the appearing of the glory. It is just the firm maintenance of this which will perfect, establish, strengthen, and settle us in our souls to the glory of God.

THE Holy Spirit has not come to turn our thoughts inward and to occupy us with ourselves, or even with Himself, but to make Christ everything to us. God has made "this same Jesus both Lord and Christ," and the Holy Spirit has come to maintain the Lordship of Christ in our lives. It is as we are subject to the Lord, saying, "What wilt Thou have me to do?" that the Spirit is ungrieved within us and able to take of the things of Christ and show them to us.

ONE great distinction between the believer and the world is, that the believer knows and receives the Comforter, the Spirit of Truth, while the world neither knows nor receives Him. Notice this difference in John 14. 17. The Lord greatly emphasizes the "you" in contrast to the world. The world walks by sight, and because it cannot see the Holy Spirit it cannot receive Him, but the believing "you" walk by faith and they know the fact that the Spirit dwells in them and may realize the power and the joy of it.
THE PURCHASE OF GOD.

Acts 19. 2.; 20. 28-32; Ephesians 1. 23; 2. 7; 3. 10; 5. 25-27.

When one considers the importance of the subject to which we would seek to direct attention to-night, no apology is required for addressing a meeting of young people upon it. It is well in days of societies and organizations of different kinds to consider the methods adopted and the preaching and teaching of that great Apostle-Missioner, Paul. We might consider what he said when he arrived at Ephesus, what he said and did during the years that he lived and laboured there; further what was the theme of his conversation when he was bidding farewell to the elders of Ephesus who were not to see him again in the flesh, and finally what was the subject of his communication by letter after he had left them. “Did ye receive the Holy Ghost since ye believed?” Such a question must have fallen strangely upon the ears of those who had to confess that they had not heard that the Holy Ghost was given, but the importance of the question must have impressed them, and being the first question addressed to believers at Ephesus, shows in what light the apostle regarded the gift of the Holy Spirit.

The disciples there had received the baptism of John, which as we all know was in view of Him who was to come, but now He had been here and was rejected and had gone to heaven whence the Holy Spirit had been sent down. A new epoch in the ways of God had arrived, and as a condition precedent to the enjoyment of all that which was connected with this new dispensation the reception of the Holy Ghost was necessary. Questions have been often raised as to when a believer receives the Holy Spirit. In this connection regard must be had to what is believed. In one of the verses which we have read together the apostle refers to “the gospel of your salvation,” which involves faith in One who has died and is now raised from the dead and glorified in heaven. You will observe from a consideration of the text that on the further good news being made known to them they received the Holy Spirit.

Long and arduous were the labours of the Apostle Paul at Ephesus, working during the day, and when other men slept labouring during the night; moved oftentimes to tears as he went about his untiring work, preaching to those who were unconverted the necessity of repentance towards God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and declaring the kingdom of God and “the whole counsel of God.” Without doubt the affections of the apostle were entwined round the Ephesian believers, and on their part they loved their great teacher with true affection. The time arrived when he sent for the elders of the church and the touching farewell took place. What shall be the outstanding words in this final talk of the apostle? On the day of his conversion a light above the brightness of the sun had eclipsed everything on earth, so that thereafter things here were viewed by him as seen in that heavenly light: as he fell smitten to the ground, the words which he heard from the glory revealed to him that in persecuting the people of God he was persecuting Christ.

Consideration of his writings there-after will show clearly that the great thought which runs through them all is the association of believers on earth...
with Christ in heaven, and the association of Christ in heaven with believers on earth. The key to the great work of the apostle is found in the expression which we have read: "the church of God which he has purchased with the blood of His own" (N.T.). The truth regarding the church of God is not to be found in the Old Testament.

We are reminded that the mystery had been hid from ages and generations. Deposited like a precious jewel within a casket upon which no other eye had rested save that of its possessor, the mystery had been in the heart of God waiting for the suitable time when in the light of redemption it should be exposed to the eyes of men, when that which had been formulated in the mind and heart of God should be revealed so that all might know His prime thought in creation and the result which was to be achieved through redemption. "Purchased by the blood of His own" sets forth the great value which God set upon His church and the care with which He would safeguard it right down the centuries, in order that all his counsels regarding Christ and His church should be given effect to, and that at last it should be manifested in all its glory as that which would be a perfect manifestation of all His thoughts and a return for the great purchase price which had been paid.

The apostle in his farewell reminds the elders of the perils which would be encountered, but he does not suggest to them that in any wise human organization or the wisdom of men should be put forth to meet any breakdown which might appear. He commends them to God and the word of His grace. Perfect in His wisdom and perfect in His love, God will in His power safeguard this cherished possession and the word of His grace shall be sufficient for every emergency which may arise. The opening words of the apostle on his arrival at Ephesus indicated the power whereby all should be given effect to. It is the power of the Holy Ghost and that alone that shall carry out everything for God and for the good of His people.

Time has passed by, and now the apostle is writing to the saints and faithful whom he loved so well. What shall be the subject of his letter which stands out in the New Testament filled with wonderful writings? As you turn over the pages, you feel impressed with the greatness of the theme. The Holy Spirit and Christ and His church shall fill the thoughts of the saints as they filled and thrilled the heart and thoughts of the apostle. In passing, let us remember that they had received the Holy Spirit, the seal of God, as proof of His proprietorship, and that same Holy Spirit was the earnest to them until the redemption of the purchased possession. We shall now consider some particular verses in this letter, and for convenience we might put them under the following heads:

1. The church as a body to be Christ's complement (chap. 1. verse 23).
2. A vessel formed to display God's lovingkindness (chap. 2. verse 7).
3. A book to teach His all-varied wisdom (chap. 3. verse 10).
4. A church to voice His eternal praise (chap. 3. verse 21).
5. A bride to satisfy Christ's loving heart (chap. 5. verses 25-27).

A BODY TO BE HIS COMPLEMENT.

At the close of this first prayer you have the position which God has given to Christ when, the power of death being broken, He is raised from the dead and set at God's own right hand. Every opposing force has been
subjugated, and the One who has done the great work and carried out God's will is now placed in this high position of glory, everything to be under His feet and He the head over all things to the church. By the indwelling of the Holy Spirit the believers, both Jew and Gentile, are formed into one body, and that body is the fulness or complement of Him that filleth all in all. A person's body is the vehicle by which effect is given to all that passes through the mind, and the body carries out the directions of the controlling head. So Christ has a body composed of all believers from Pentecost until His coming again for His people, and that body will be the means by which Christ shall carry out His pleasure not only in the glorious millennium but in eternity according to the thoughts of God. And even now the gracious features of Christ are to shine in His body on earth, as Colossians 3 shows us.

A VESSEL TO DISPLAY HIS LOVINGKINDNESS.

When the verse to which we refer is fulfilled, it might well be asked, Whence came they who form this great display? They once were dead in trespasses and sins, once moved and dominated by a power in opposition to God; but, wonder of wonders, the grace of God has wrought by means of the cross, and now against the dark background of the former condition there is brought out an example of God's workmanship and evidence of His lovingkindness, a vessel that through all eternity will declare to all the heart of God.

A BOOK TO TEACH HIS ALL-VARIED WISDOM.

We are apt in our day to think of the confusion and breakdown which is, alas, too manifest; but notwithstanding all this, there is still the declaration in this present dispensation of all that which is according to God; God's object is, even now, that the principalities and powers may know by the church the all-varied wisdom of God. One day, when we are delivered from that which interferes with our seeing things in their true proportions, we shall be able to trace the all-varied wisdom of God in His way with His people right down the centuries.

A CHURCH TO VOICE HIS ETERNAL PRAISE.

In the second prayer of the apostle he introduces us to that domain of glory, where we can gaze upon its breadth and length and depth and height, and then, lest even the greatness of the glory should overwhelm us, he adds, "and to know the love of Christ, that passeth knowledge." The apostle is next concerned with the power for grasping all that he has been describing, and this leads him to commend the believers to the One who alone is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, and he closes his prayer with the words which we have read, and we there see that a church is formed, and from that church there shall arise unto Him glory by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. There has come forth from the mind and heart of God that which is according to His mind, and there shall arise to Him throughout the eternal ages, praise and worship as a consequence of all that He has wrought.

A BRIDE TO SATISFY CHRIST'S LOVING HEART.

We are here given to know the great thought that was in Christ's heart long before we were created. We read in Proverbs of the Son's delight when creation's work was being carried out, but here you have the controlling
Scripture Truth

thought long before time began, and when time shall be no more this shall abide to His eternal satisfaction: for nothing that God has purposed can fall to the ground and not a single iota of His counsel can fail to have effect. In these simple words, "Christ loved the church and gave Himself for it," we have the secret of the down-stoop and of the journey which led through Gethsemane and Calvary. He gave His life that He might secure this for His heart's delight. He lives on high to preserve this object of His love right through the changing years of the history here. He comes again to present it to Himself without spot or wrinkle or any such thing. Nothing that speaks of defilement or decay or change shall be manifest then. All that will be manifest will be the result of the sacrificing love of Christ and of His great power to conserve the chosen object of His love, and it shall then be to His heart that which He shall consider full compensation for His great giving and shall be the carrying out of all that which was in His heart before we had a being and before sin entered. In conclusion, it is well for all of us to have this great subject before us, and all who seek to carry on the work of Christ or to be here for Him should be governed by that which is the thought of God, and which will deliver all of us from the mechanism of an organized religion, and will cause us to carry out that which is for God according to the power which He has given, in keeping with the word which He has written, and in accord with the great object which He has before Him.

RITUALISM AND RATIONALISM: THEIR CHARACTERISTICS AND CURE.

(Read Matthew 16. 1-20.)

Wednesday, August 29th

BOTH Ritualism and Rationalism are the fruits of the fleshly mind: on the one hand taking refuge in forms and ceremonies, the attempt to get into touch with God through sensuous means—proof that the true vital knowledge of God and of His revelation in Christ are unknown; on the other hand refusing to believe anything that the fleshly mind cannot grasp. How true it is "that the natural man understandeth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him, because they are spiritually discerned" (1 Cor. 2. 14).

Such a statement as this will lead us to understand how men of strong intellect, university education, and culture can commit themselves to all the empty forms of ritualism on the one hand, and on the other hand to the blank negations of rationalism.

Of course both these extremes unite, as extremes always do, in opposing the truth. In truth they move in different directions to the same point.

So in this Scripture we get the Pharisees and the Sadducees, the Ritualists and Rationalists of their day, uniting in the attempt to tempt the Lord with their request for a sign. These rival sects among the Jews were fiercely antagonistic, but their hatred of the truth was deeper than their hatred of each other. Hence their uniting in this attack.
We have said that these extremes move on to the same terminus. That terminus is the rejection of the Son of God. We shall see that the only cure for these departures from the truth is the true knowledge of the Person of the Son of God.

The great German Professor Delitzsch was once addressing his students at the time when Modernism was just beginning to gain ground. He said, "Young gentlemen, the battle is now raging round the Old Testament. Soon it will pass into the New Testament field—it is already beginning. Finally it will pass forward to the citadel of your faith—the Person of Jesus Christ. There the last struggle will occur."

How truly prophetic was his utterance. Well might he call the truth as the Person of the Son of God—"the citadel of your faith." The attacks have proceeded on the lines he indicated. We are in the last struggle to-day.

Just as the rival sects in the Lord's day united in tempting the Lord, so we see prelates in the church on the one hand going in for forms and ceremonies of the most elaborate nature, believing that by some magic power spiritual gift is imparted by what Mr. Spurgeon aptly described as "the laying of empty hands on empty heads," believing that the pronouncing of a few words by the priest over the emblems of the Lord's supper has power to change the elements into the very flesh and blood of the Lord, and on the other hand publicly and without shame giving up the very fundamentals of the Christian faith, and these two extremes leading on to the same point of attack.

Ritual is largely copied from that of the Old Testament, which was divinely ordained, but connected with an earthly system, and therefore elaborate and ornate. There were a number of ordinances in the service of the gorgeous temple, which were shadows of the coming of Christ, of His Person and His work. He was the glorious Substance. Now if religious men revive the shadows, is that not a clear proof that they do not understand the Substance? If men light tiny tapers when strong sunlight is flooding hill and dale, would we not suppose they were mentally afflicted or something of that sort? Is not this mimicry of vestments and millinery in the same way a very travesty of the truth—a lighting of the tapers in the light of the sun?

And when we come to rationalism, we come to something even worse. Why should men gird at the miraculous? Is not Christ Himself the greatest of all miracles to us mortals? If there were no miraculous, no insoluble mysteries in the Christian faith, it would not command our belief. In truth the rationalist believes more incredible things, as men speak, than the Christian. He believes in mighty effects flowing from utterly inadequate causes. How can men deny the virgin birth, the sinlessness of the Lord, attribute to Him the limitations of ordinary men, deny even the resurrection, and yet account for Christianity? It has been well said: "Do you deny that Jesus existed? Who then invented Jesus? It would take a Jesus to invent a Jesus."

The Pharisees and Sadducees asked for a sign. The Lord would give them none, wicked and adulterous generation as they were, but the sign of the prophet Jonas. But what a sign was that to give. Imagine the unwilling sailors throwing the runaway prophet into the boiling sea. That surely was an end to him. And in those days news of a sensational nature had a way of quickly spreading over large tracts
of country, and becoming the gossip of the bazaars. Such an occurrence as the storm that would not abate till the prophet was flung overboard was just one that would spread from mouth to mouth. How the angry waves leaped to overwhelm their victim, and then as if satisfied dropped to rest. How this must have startled those who witnessed it.

And then suddenly they hear that Jonah has reappeared on dry land. What a miracle! No wonder that the Ninevites repented when they listened to a messenger who had reached them by such miraculous means.

And this was the sign given, a sign that was to foreshadow—dimly, indeed—a far greater miracle, even the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. It is the failure to see the stupendous miracle of the resurrection that is at the bottom of the rationalist's unbelief.

True, the resurrection of the Lord was at the time He spoke in the future, for He had not then died. But we pass on. If the Son of God was what He claimed to be, then the resurrection is easily understood. If religious rationalists fail to understand who He is, and reduce him in their minds to the level of a man, it may be the very best of men, even the very flower of the human race, if they get no further than that, how can they understand the resurrection?

So after the Lord had warned His disciples against the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees, we find Him asking His disciples what men said of Him. They replied that some thought that He was John the Baptist. That surely showed that they were hard put to to account for the unique personality of Jesus. To resort to the supposition that a distinguished servant of God, such as the Forerunner was, had risen from the dead, showed that they recognized the greatness of Christ. Others went further back, and said He was Elias or Jeremias or one of the prophets. But though they could not deny the greatness of Christ, they had not a ghost of an idea of His true greatness.

But all this was immeasurably short of the truth of the matter. So the Lord turned to His disciples with the pointed question, "But whom say ye that I am?"

Simon Peter answered, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God."

_The Christ!_—The Anointed of God, the One who was called of God to carry out all His will, and who was competent to do it, nay more, the Son of the living God, a Divine Person, "the mighty God, the everlasting Father," as Isaiah prophesied, was the answer that the erstwhile fisherman from Galilee gave. What an answer to give as He stood face to face with Christ! As men speak, here was a Man, His Godhead glory veiled, nothing outwardly to mark Him from His fellows, and yet here is Peter confessing Him in His true Person.

No wonder that the Lord replied, "Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but My Father which is in heaven." Please note how the Lord addressed him, not by the new name, Peter, that He had conferred upon him, but by the old name, Simon, son of Jona.

It was as much as to say, Simon, you did not learn this by what you were naturally, neither did you get it through your father, Jona. It might be elaborated into present-day language, the halls of Oxford and Cambridge did not, and could not, furnish you with this knowledge. Intellect, education, the dead languages, nothing human ever taught you this, Simon. This
knowledge only came through REVELATION, the revelation of the Father to your soul.

Nay, more, you cannot get this knowledge through the mere reading of the Scriptures. True it is that we must read the Scriptures. But it is when the letter of the Scripture becomes spirit to us that it will be really ours, and command our souls.

Nay, further, the Lord now addresses Peter by the name He had conferred upon him. "And I say also to thee, That thou art Peter (petros, the stone), and upon this rock (petra, the great rock foundation), I will build My church; and the gates of hell (the machinations and plottings of Hades, in this case of the underworld) shall not prevail against it."

The Lord never said that the church would be built on Peter. What an unstable foundation that would have been. The foundation is on the confession of the truth of Christ's Person, in other words on Christ Himself. One sees that the knowledge of the Son of God in His own proper Person will give us a corresponding appreciation of the character and value of His work. We shall only in this way understand the true meaning of His resurrection.

From the human side how sad is the contemplation of the history of the church, but on the divine side how glorious is the prospect. When Nehemiah was building the wall of Jerusalem, the enemies came along, and wanted under the plea of assisting in the good work to help to build the wall. When their offer was refused, they came out in their true colours, and Tobiah, the Ammonite, taunted the godly with the sarcastic words, "Even that which they build, if a fox go up, he shall even break down their stone wall" (Neh. iv. 3). Nothing looked more feeble on the human side.

Even so with the church on the human side. But on the divine side how wonderful is the outlook. It is what the Son of God is building, and what He builds can never be assailed, it is indestructible. What a comfort this is amidst all the wreck of things in Christendom to-day. We see men covering up their real poverty in the things of God by organizations that set aside the Spirit of God, by the multiplication of forms and ceremonies, and we find all this insufficient to hold the mind of man, and seeing things are so weak and poverty-stricken they drift into rationalism, the denying of the very verities of the Christian faith.

But what is the remedy for all this? The enemy is very astute. Patiently he has engineered the attack on the outer ramparts, but he had the citadel in view, as Professor Delitzsch described it, even the truth as to the Person of the Son of God. Satan sees well that that is an impregnable fortress, and the soul who once gets into its mighty recesses is safe. That truth understood in the soul is the cure for both Ritualism and Rationalism. How tawdry and childish does the former appear in the light of the knowledge of the glorious Person of the Son of God. And in that same knowledge how puerile and contemptible are the vapourings of Rationalism.

We have just heard a good deal about the church. I would like every young Christian to take a deep interest in this subject. "Christ loved the church." Say to yourself, "And I am part of it." "And gave Himself for it." Say to yourself, "And I am part of it." He is going to present it to Himself, and how soon that may be. Say to yourself, "And I am part of it." "The gates of Hades shall not prevail against it." "And I am part of it."
REJOICE IN THE LORD.

Read Philippians 4. 4; 1 John 1. 4; 1 Peter 1. 8.

Thursday, August 30th

ONE of the keynotes that has been struck during our gatherings together has been that of happiness and joy, and one longs that what we carry away from Swanwick shall be joy in the Lord.

First of all we will look at the way in which the three apostles from whose writings the Scriptures have been read speak of joy. PAUL exhorts us to rejoice in the Lord always. We might wonder where Paul got his joy from. We recall the incident at Philippi where the very saints to whom he was writing lived, and we think of him with his feet in the stocks in the inner prison, his back bleeding, singing, not the ribald songs of the drunkards who may have been incarcerated with him, but praising God. What was the source of his joy? It was in the Lord; he was suffering for His sake. Most of us here are searching for joy in something or other. I remember being at a business men’s meeting some time ago, when a number of hard-headed business men began to compare notes of how they spent their time, and from what they derived their main pleasure. About ninety per cent expressed themselves as finding their chief pleasure and joy in their business. I confessed myself that my business was of great interest and pleasure to me, but there was a greater joy in getting away from it and serving my Lord, the Lord of Glory. Thus Paul, who had much of this world’s advantages in his grasp, as set forth in the third chapter of Philippians, could say that he counted all these things as dung and dross for Christ. He had learned the lesson that I would long to learn, that to him to live was Christ. What a recital we have in 2 Cor. 11. of what Paul went through—stoning, shipwreck, scourging, and yet able to say to these dear saints, “rejoice in the Lord always.” The whole secret, however, was that his joy was “in the Lord”; he had found One who filled His heart to overflowing, and he longed that others should have their joy in the same blessed person.

JOHN was one who knew something of the deep love of the Lord. Again and again he is found in the Gospel of John in nearness to the blessed Lord, even leaning on His bosom, and he had found all his joy in Him. He would direct our attention specially to the Word, as that which will bring to our knowledge what will produce full joy. There is the conflict, and John directs the attention of the saints to the threefold power that is opposed to all that will cause us true joy, the devil, the flesh and the world, and we learn of the threefold power on our side, the Son has been manifested that He might destroy the works of the devil; the Spirit, we know, opposes the flesh, while the Father is the One who is in opposition to the world. What power there is on our side and how, in consequence, we can rejoice, for greater is He that is in you than he that is in the world.

PETER directs our attention to the glory. He had experienced, as perhaps none other had done, what we often speak of as the “ups and downs” of life, and had realized the loving sympathy and priestly grace of His Lord. In writing to the saints scattered abroad he can direct attention to the One, whom not having seen they loved, One in whom they had believed, thus giving the character to their joy as unspeakable as they were filled with the glory. It was the thought of what the glory would be that caused such unspeakable joy, for that was their goal,
to be with the One they loved, in the glory.

It is well to consider the Source of our joy, and I would like to show this by analogy from the Scriptures. In Luke 2, we have the birth of the blessed Lord, unnoticed by the crowds who thronged Bethlehem, unconsidered by those who might have had some interest in the fact, but recognized by the angels, who brought to the Shepherds the tidings of GREAT JOY. When by the precious gospel message you were first brought to the Saviour, and learned the blessedness of your burdens gone, your sins forgiven, there was great joy in your heart. Little did you realize that there was such blessing, and you walked as it were on air; to you the message had brought great joy. By analogy, again, we find that the joy we have is an EVERLASTING JOY. In that lovely passage in Isaiah 35:10, we are told that the people of God, the ransomed of the Lord, shall return to Zion in the recognition of their Messiah, knowing Him now as their true Deliverer, with songs and everlasting joy on their heads, obtaining joy and gladness, sorrow and sadness fleeing away. When we come to know the Lord Jesus, owning and confessing Him as Lord, the sadness and sorrow of our sin all gone, we can enter upon that joy that is everlasting, for through all eternity it will be ours to praise Him who has redeemed us to God by His blood. Then, again, we have that beautiful verse, Jude 24: "Now unto Him who is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy." The pathway over, maintained all through by His power and grace, we find ourselves in His own place, suited to God’s own thoughts, realizing the joy that is truly His, the mighty Deliverer, in presenting us there, fruit of His triumph.

Then our joy springs from the work of the Spirit of God. It is one of the fruits of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22). He delights to take charge of us in such fashion that we can produce fruit for God, love, joy and peace. There is an abundance of joyless religion in the world; e.g., there is nothing of joy in ritualism or rationalism and such like forms of religion, but when we have the Spirit in activity within us He occupies our hearts with that which produces a joy which gives character to our profession. Again, our joy is found in the Word of God. How often we hear from young people and older ones as well, of how little they get from the Word of God, what a dry book the Bible is, and how little they understand it. There is that most interesting passage in the prophecy of Jeremiah, chapter 15, verse 16, when the prophet states, that "Thy words were found and I did eat them; and Thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of my heart." He had learned the preciousness of the Word of God and it was food to him. We need spiritual food and when we, like Jeremiah of old, regard it as the one essential part of our spiritual life, we know the joy of it to our souls. It ceases to be a text-book or a reference for guidance in difficulty, but becomes a living factor in our lives, creating joy and gladness each time we turn to it. Yet again joy flows from communion with the Lord Jesus. There is no joy like the joy of the presence of the One who loves us and whom we by grace have learned to love. Again and again this is brought before us in the Word. I would instance as one example the time when the two disciples on their way to Emmaus had the company of the Lord Jesus. They thought they had lost the One they loved, and yet as He walked with them by the way their hearts burned and when He was revealed to them in the breaking of
bread, no tiredness or other consideration kept them back from returning to Jerusalem, there to declare the glad tidings of how He had appeared to them. It tells us that while they believed not for joy He spake to them. How blessed the communion is that we can only enjoy when in His company.

Joy follows weeping as we are told in Psalm 30. 5. Weeping may endure for a night but joy comes in the morning. How little do we realize the need for entering into the thoughts of our blessed Lord, the rejected One. His heart longing over the scene of His rejection, but for the joy that was set before Him, He endured the cross, despising the shame. In Acts 5. the disciples tasted a little of the persecution that is the portion of the godly and may bring the weeping, but how do we see them coming from the Sanhedrim? They rejoiced that they were counted worthy to suffer for His name’s sake.

Joy follows sowing, and that lovely verse in Psalm 126. 6, “He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall, doubtless, come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him,” surely brings before us the joy of service. There is a joy in serving the Lord, which cannot be found in any other occupation, and in whatever way we are exercised as to service, so long as it is for Him and we know something of the weeping, the true real joy of winning souls for Christ is very precious. Oh! to have more of this joy in the little time we have in which to serve Him, the One who has made Himself so precious to our hearts.

Joy follows seeking. Take, for example, the lovely pictures in Luke 15.; the Shepherd goes after the sheep until He finds it, and when He has found it He calls upon His friends and neighbours to rejoice with Him over the glorious fact that the lost has been found. Equally so is it the case with the lost piece of silver, the finding of which caused so much joy to the finder, and others shared in the joy; then, again, in Matthew 13. in the picture given to us by the blessed Lord of the treasure found in the field, which for joy thereof caused the finder to sell all that He had in order to buy the field. What joy, indeed, to our hearts follows seeking. There is much to find, and if by the Spirit of God we are able to discover some of the hidden treasure, how great the joy of discovery.

Then the joy of the Lord is our strength. You will remember how, in Nehemiah’s day, when the discovery of the law of Jehovah caused the people of God to weep and mourn, Nehemiah, in chapter 8, could say, “Go your way, eat the fat and drink the sweet, and send portions unto them for whom nothing is prepared; for this day is holy unto the Lord; neither be ye sorry; for the joy of the Lord is your strength.” What joy restoration brings, but it is the joy of the One who has effected it all that is the strength we need, and which is so graciously and willingly vouchsafed unto us.

In Psalm 51. 12, David asks the Lord to restore unto Him the joy of His salvation. How often we need to pray for this. In the sorrow we so often feel in failure and departure from the Lord we come to Him in whom are all our resources, and cry out for that joy which is so precious to our hearts as day by day rolls round, the joy of His salvation. This is beautifully set forth in the Epistle to the Hebrews, where He is presented to us as our great High Priest, interceding on our behalf, and maintaining us in the path of His blessed will in spite of the many breakdowns and the failure on our side.

Lastly, there is the joy that flows from the satisfaction that He gives us
in Himself as leaving us here in this scene of sorrow waiting for His sure and speedy return. In John 16. 20, the Lord said to His own, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, that ye shall weep and lament, but the world shall rejoice; and ye shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy." The day is not far distant when our joy shall indeed be full, when with Him and like Him for ever, but even now by the Spirit of God we taste that joy of anticipation, waiting and watching for Him whose return we truly long for.

May our hearts indeed know more and more of the true joy in the Lord which should be our portion in spite of all the tribulation and sorrow through which we may have to pass until that bright day when we meet in the air the One whom not having seen we love.

BE STRONG.

Read Eph. 6. 10-11; Joshua 1. 6, 7, 9 and 18; Acts 11. 22-23; Daniel 1. 8; Phil. 3. 13-14.

I WOULD like to preface my remarks by reading the breathings of God with regard to His earthly people Israel, where he says in Deut. 7:

"For thou art an holy people unto the Lord thy God: the Lord thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto Himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth. The Lord did not set His love upon you, nor choose you, because ye were more in number than any people, for ye were the fewest of all people."

And then, as though scanning the universe for a reason for His love towards them, He can only add, "But because the Lord loved you."

And then, as though scanning the universe for a reason for His love towards them, He can only add, "But because the Lord loved you."

It seems to me that we have a parallel to this in the New Testament in the Lord's own words—Matt. 13.—where, in speaking of Himself as the Merchant seeking goodly pearls, He says, "Who, when He had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that He had and bought it"—thus securing for Himself that upon which His heart was set. By His grace we are called into and form part of "the church of God which He has purchased with the blood of His own" (Acts 20. 28, N.T.), and are now awaiting that day when Christ will present it to Himself—all glorious—without spot or wrinkle or any such thing. Yes, we are waiting for the fulfilment of the Lord's last words to His church: "Surely, I come quickly."

We are objects of His love, and as forming part of the church for which Christ died we have been called out of this world and separated unto Himself, and whilst awaiting His coming we ought to be characterized by certain things to which I would like to call attention, and which, if true of us, will give tone and character to our lives, and we shall be here for Him in the power of the Holy Spirit.

With regard to Israel—in the purpose of God they were called out of Egypt to go into and possess the land of Canaan, but because of their disobedience and naughtiness of heart they had to wander in the wilderness for forty years; there to learn for themselves their own hearts, but there also to prove all along the patience of God and that He was sufficient for every need.

In Deut. 31. we find Moses on his 120th birthday conscious that his days are numbered, and that he is about to lay down his service, gathering the people together, and in view of their going in to take possession of the land,
exhorting them to "Be STRONG and of a GOOD COURAGE," and then to Joshua, who had been chosen as his successor, he again says, "BE STRONG and of a GOOD COURAGE," and so again as we turn to the Book of Joshua, chapter 1., we find that no less than four times there is the same exhortation, "BE STRONG and of a GOOD COURAGE."

In following up this subject it is most interesting to notice how, though time after time in the history of Israel the same exhortation is urged, in each case it is not with a view to casting them upon their own resources but upon God Himself.

"HE it is that cloth go with thee."
"HE will not fail thee."
"HE will not forsake thee."

So that instead of going forth in their own strength to take possession of the land, as to which God had said—

"EVERY place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon, that have I given unto you"—they were assured of God's presence— which to them was to be the secret of their power. In Joshua 1., God's great leader Moses is dead. The children of Israel, in spite of all their wilfulness, had seen and recognized in Moses God's great leader, and their hearts were no doubt sad, they wept and mourned his loss and might well have said, "What shall we do now? Our leader is gone, Moses is no more "; but God in His wisdom was equal to the occasion, and as He had appointed Moses to His service so now He appoints Joshua to lead the people into the land to possess it, and again "STRENGTH AND COURAGE" were to mark them.

So with regard to us—our sins have been forgiven. We have been redeemed by the precious blood of Christ, and as the children of Israel had to be delivered from the bondage of Egypt so we have been delivered from the bondage of sin. The land was their inheritance—so we have an inheritance in Christ—"An inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that fadeth not away reserved in heaven for you" (1 Peter 1. 4).

Into this inheritance we are now by faith brought. It will be ours with Christ in actuality by-and-by, but He would have us enjoy the good of it now. With Israel, the enemy was in the land, and had to be displaced if they were to take possession, hence the exhortation so often given, "BE STRONG and of GOOD COURAGE." Is it not true also with regard to ourselves that the enemy's design is to hinder our enjoyment of the inheritance which has been made ours in Christ and revealed to us in His word by the Holy Spirit of God? Surely this is so, and Satan is no little foe; but let us lay hold of this fact, beloved brethren, that Satan is a defeated foe. Our Lord and Saviour has been into the stronghold of the enemy and annulled the power of him that had the power of death, and has come forth the mighty victor, and now JESUS LIVES. He has triumphed gloriously.

It makes one's heart ache as one enters some of the villages of England to see a shrine erected in the form of a cross bearing a figure representing a dead Christ. Away with all such, for JESUS LIVES! and He is all-powerful. What is our resource? Where do we turn for strength? With notes clear and plain would come the exhortation: "Finally, my brethren, BE STRONG in the Lord and in the POWER of HIS MIGHT" (Ephes. 6. 10).

We are cast wholly upon God, but He again proves His all-sufficiency, for into His presence we are invited, and
must come, for there only can we on the one hand be stripped of our own strength, and there only can we put on the “whole armour of God” that we may be able to stand! Under God’s good hand His truth has been maintained to us through many dark periods, and many have gone to the stake for the sake of it. It is ours to lay hold of and enjoy, and it is God’s desire we should, but this can only be done as in His presence we are stripped of self and equipped with the complete armour, which fortifies us against the wiles of the devil. Each separate part and the whole of this armour is needful; and, withal—signifying our need of dependence and casting ourselves upon God—the apostle adds “PRAYING always . . . and WATCHING” (verse 18).

Let us therefore take to ourselves the exhortation so needful in our day, “BE STRONG and of GOOD COURAGE,” realizing that God is for us, and so we shall in measure be here for Him.

In our next Scripture (Acts 11. 22–23) we find Barnabas exhorting the saints at Antioch, “that with purpose of heart they would cleave to the Lord.”

If this were needful in their day, how much more to-day! And if we are to be here for God, I am sure of it we must be characterized by PURPOSE OF HEART.

To “desire” is very, right and proper, and we may indeed have God-given desires, but do not let it rest there! Solomon, who was endowed by God with wisdom, declares (Prov. 43. 4), “The soul of the sluggard desireth, and hath nothing,” so desire only is not sufficient. Let us rather go on the lines of the Psalmist (Ps. 27. 4), “One thing have I desired of the Lord and THAT WILL I SEEK AFTER.” He had desires, but with purpose of heart he pursued; and so, my dear brethren, it may be that as the result of these meetings this week we may now have God-given desires, but are we going to let it rest at that? Rather, let us with purpose of heart follow after, so that the truth of God may be ours in enjoyed and practical possession—that it may lay hold upon our hearts and affect our lives to His glory.

As we turn to the book of Daniel—a Scripture so well known—we see what it meant in his case, in the teeth of so much that was against him.

He was young—probably in his early teens.

He was deprived of his privileges when taken away from the temple.

He was in captivity.

He was of the seed royal, and he might well have resented being under the control of a Gentile king.

But what do we find? Though young in years, he was from the very outset characterized by unreserved and uncompromising faithfulness to His God—the God of Israel—and from thence onward He was marked by PURPOSE OF HEART. In every circumstance he was a man who trusted God, evidenced by the fact that he was a man of prayer, believing that God was able to answer prayer—and the result was that understanding was given to him as to that which God alone could reveal.

I am sure we all desire in our hearts to be here for God and true to our absent Lord, but this can only be done as we are characterized by purpose of heart and are before God in prayerful dependence.

We have spoken much this week of being indwelt by the Spirit of God, of being sealed as God’s property, and of being filled with the Spirit, and though some of us may not understand the full meaning of these things, I am sure that
prayerful waiting upon God will bring us into that condition of soul when they will be revealed to us. It is there our difficulties will be cleared, and our hard questions solved and answered, and thus we shall be able to stand, at all times realizing that God is for us.

In Phil. 3. 13, 14, we see how the apostle all along His Christian pathway had at all times THE END IN VIEW. I would like to read these two verses from Mr. Darby’s translation:—

“Brethren, I do not count to have got possession myself; but one thing—forgetting the things behind, and stretching out to the things before—I pursue, looking towards the goal, for the prize of the calling on high of God in Christ Jesus.”

This was written from the prison cell at a time when he had to say with a heavy heart, “All seek their own and not the things which are Jesus Christ’s.” How dark were those days, but he had the end in view, and was able to say, “What things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ,” and he adds, “Yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, that I may win Christ,” and so with this all-glorious Person before him, and as one who by his life showed he was “strong and of a good courage” and one characterized by purpose of heart he could speak of “one thing,” and that one objective in his life was CHRIST.

May I, in the name of my Lord, challenge your heart and my own? Are these meetings to mean nothing more to us than a week spent together in happy fellowship and enjoying the things of the Lord? Or, on the other hand, are we prepared to turn into the presence of God and allow Him to turn full upon us His searchlight, to expose to ourselves our hearts and anything in our lives that is unworthy of Him or grieving to Him, and then with grace supplied to let them go and be done with them, and so as we seek to pursue the heavenly pathway, that we might be with those who know something of what it is—

1. To be strong and of good courage.
2. To have purpose of heart, and all along to have
3. The end in view.

“Saviour, we long to follow Thee; Do Thou our hearts prepare, To count all else, whate’er it be, Unworthy of our care.

“Oh, teach us so the power to know Of risen life with Thee; Not we may live while here below, But CHRIST our life may be.”

We need to learn the lesson that the Lord taught His disciples when He told them to tarry in Jerusalem until they received power from on high. They were energetic men, men of purpose and enthusiasm, but they could do nothing until the Holy Ghost came. The divine work that had to be done could only be done by a divine Person and in divine power. Wonderful grace chooses to do the work through human vessels, but the excellency of the power must be of God. It would be well for us to wait more upon God, that in His presence we might learn our own nothingness and so be more ready to be self-emptied and filled with the Spirit.
I feel quite sure that there is in all our hearts a longing desire to glorify God in a fuller and deeper measure than ever before. I should like to say something in this closing meeting that may help to foster in us real devotedness to our Lord Jesus Christ. We see in John the Baptist a remarkable servant, and we may find it helpful to consider what produced such devotedness in him; yet in drawing attention to him I would like to remind you that he was not just in the same position as we are. As we see him in that lonely and loathsome prison, he seems to have fallen into a state of depression and that in spite of the wonderful manifestation he had had of who the Lord Jesus Christ was.

I used to think that if only I had had some wonderful vision such as John had I should have been a more devoted Christian. Mine was not a striking conversion, and indeed there was not at first much evidence of life, my faith seemed so feeble; yet, thank God, it was a good conversion because that feeble faith was in the Lord Jesus Christ, and as the years have passed and I learned how worthy the blessed Lord is of my confidence, that feeble faith has grown stronger. So, young believer, go on with Jesus and you will find how entirely worthy He is of your trust. John sends two of his disciples to ask Jesus, "Art Thou He who should come or look we for another?" It would seem that John had expected Jesus to be received and take His place as King of the Jews, and looked for a place of honour with Him, so that when he found himself in prison and Jesus did not come to his aid, faith gave way. How kind was the answer sent by the Lord. "Go and show John again those things which ye do hear and see ... and blessed is he who is not offended in Me" (Matt. 11. 4–6). And then Jesus turns to the people saying, "Among them that are born of women there has not arisen a greater than John the Baptist: notwithstanding he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he" (verse 11). So that wonderful servant as John was, as great as Moses, David, Samuel and others, yet the youngest Christian here is greater than he. As a servant? No. But surely in privilege as having been brought into such close relationship to Christ that we form part of His church. We have had it pressed upon us that each of us is part of that church which Christ has purchased with His own blood. Then what should our service be like if we were truly working with this place of nearness in mind—what is going to be our response?

The way John the Baptist is introduced to us is very striking. "There was a man sent from God whose name was John." You say, "I don't think that applies to me," but I would ask you to consider what the Lord said when praying to His Father for His disciples. "As Thou hast sent Me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world." (John 17. 18). And again when He came into the midst of His own after His resurrection, "As the Father hath sent Me, even so have I also sent them into the world." (John 20. 21). Surely, then, each of us has an individual call from God, and I believe that it is because this is so little realized by us that there is often such weakness in our own service and meetings. We hang too much one on another, and if perchance the one we rely on most is removed, we break down, because each
fails to have the sense of his personal call. God “hath saved us, and called us with a holy calling” (2 Tim. 1. 9). Not only saved but called. We are viewed as having been taken out of the world and sent back into it with a commission to tell of the Father and of the Lord Jesus Christ. “A man sent from God.” Let us then take up our commission. A brother said in the Bible-reading one morning, “It is well to have the chart, the compass, and the power in the ship, but if we have not a definite port for which we are making, nothing is accomplished.”

Again we read that John was filled with the Holy Ghost from his birth. That was exceptional, but I do hope that our readings on the subject of the Holy Ghost may have filled us with a deep desire not only to know the doctrine but to have the experience, and may our young brethren not defer their devotedness until they are older, but rather seek God’s grace that they may be filled with the Holy Ghost from the earliest days of their faith in Christ, not to display themselves but to show forth the grace of God.

John, too, had a very definite belief in the deity of our Lord Jesus Christ. You say that he had a special revelation. Yes, but he held fast to it, and we must hold fast to that which is revealed to us by the Holy Ghost in the Word. It is the way of overcoming. “Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?” (1 John 5. 5). What greater honour than to be linked up with One so great? He is in rejection now, but He will yet assert His power. Like John, we may have to suffer even to imprisonment, and find that apparently Jesus does not intervene on our behalf, but if we believe that He is the Son of God, we shall have the vision of that day of glory that is coming when we shall be associated with Him; thus only shall we be able to turn our backs on the world—be overcomers—glad to wait the day of display. Some seem to expect that after conversion all should run smoothly, little realizing that their Saviour is in rejection and that He said, “If they have persecuted Me, they will also persecute you” (John 15. 20). Have you then had the vision of who He is and of His coming glory? How could we go on with the world if that were so? How could we seek a place in the world that cast Him out? You love Him do you not? Then take the place the world has given Him!

The Jews sent to ask John “Who art thou?” He replied, “I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, make straight the way of the Lord” (verse 23). Christ spoke of John as one of the greatest of servants. John says, “I am a voice.” What beautiful humility! Did you ever see a voice? I never did! John was willing to testify and remain out of sight. He had low thoughts of self because he had high thoughts of Christ, as the Son of God, so that he considered the smallest service a dignity set upon him, saying, “whose shoe’s latchet I am not worthy to unloose” (verse 27); he felt that even a duty usually performed by a slave was too great an honour. Some seem to think that a little act of service, say the giving out of a tract, is beneath their dignity. Should we not rather consider, is He worthy of such a service? What worthiness have we? We came to Christ because, like the prodigal, we were not worthy.

Finally, John knew how to contemplate Him, until with eager words he points out His Lord and Master. We read, “Looking upon Jesus as He walked, he saith, Behold the Lamb of God!” (verse 36). How moving was
the testimony of his worshipping heart, for "the two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus" (verse 37). Are we "Looking upon Jesus as He walked?" How can we do that you ask, for Jesus is no longer here? May we not do so in reading the divine record of His life. May I suggest that, without neglecting other parts of Scripture, we should more constantly read the Gospels, until the sight of His lovely walk bursts upon our raptured vision—till we are impressed by the quiet dignity of His holy Person, hear His wondrous words, see His touch of compassion and power as He cleansed the leper and dispelled disease, see the look of pity as the outcast came to Him, hear His word of power as He called Lazarus from the grave, see His loving welcome of the dying thief in the midst of His own agonies, and after His resurrection hear His loving message to Peter, His erring disciple, leading to his restoration. Yes, look upon Him as He walked until your soul is so filled that there springs from your lips the expression of a full and worshipping heart, so that someone who hears your word is impressed with what you have found in Jesus and begins to follow Him too.

"COUNTING THE COST."

(David Ross.)

Friday, August 31st

Read 2 Samuel 24. 24; Matt. 16. 18, 21-28; Luke 14. 26-30; Phil. 2. 16-17.

Last night we began our meeting with the confession of a business man that his chiefest joy was found not in the pursuit of wealth, but in the service of the Lord. To-night I want you to come with me into the counting house in order to see what it costs to serve the Lord, and I venture to suggest the true method of measuring and estimating the cost.

"Measure thy life by loss instead of gain,
Not by the wine drunk, but by the wine
poured forth;
For love's strength standeth in love's
sacrifice,
And he who suffers most has most to give."

Count the cost of the Christian life and see if you are prepared for the loss which will issue in eternal gain.

"Which of you, intending to build
a tower, sitteth not down first and
counteth the cost, whether he have
sufficient to finish it?" At Matlock
I saw a building on a hill which the
builder had left unfinished, standing as
a monument of his folly. Our blessed
Lord said, "I will build My church,
and the gates of hell shall not prevail
against it." As we look around to-day
and see the broken and divided condi-
tion of the church of God, we some-
times wonder if the devil has prevailed,
and if this also has not proved to be
"folly." But when we realize that the
speaker is none other than "the Christ,
the Son of the Living God," faith is
reassured, and we know that all the
assaults will fail as surely as the first
attack of which we read in this chapter.

Before He set out to build His
church and found His kingdom, He
counted the cost. "He must suffer
many things." All that is for God is
founded upon the cross, upon the death
and sufferings of our adorable Saviour.

The first attempt of Satan to hinder
this building came through the Apostle
Peter, when he, shocked at hearing
"the cost," protested in the words,
"Lord, pity Thyself, this shall not be
unto Thee." Had He pitied and saved
Himself, there could have been no church of the redeemed. Life could be given to us only through the sacrifice of His life, and "He who suffers most, has most to give." "Get thee behind Me, Satan." With these words is the attack repelled.

Then we view Him on the Mount of Transfiguration in all the glory of His blessed Person. One step and He could have made His "exodus" into the glory of the heavenly place, but He has counted the cost, and his conversation with Moses and Elias is about another "exodus." He has another hill in view, the hill called Calvary, and from the hill of glory He descends into the valley to undo the works of the devil.

See Him as He moves onward with His face set steadfastly for Jerusalem, and something in that set, determined face, "as a flint," filled the disciples with amazement and awed them into silence. He has counted the cost, and is prepared to pay it. Then He comes to the upper room and says, "I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom shall come." Not the wine drunk, but the wine poured forth, His precious blood of which the cup speaks. Next we see Him in Gethsemane—

"A form of prostrate grief, Fallen, crushed like a broken leaf"—facing the cost of the cross in an anguish which wrings from Him the blood-like drops. We can only wonder and worship.

"Behold your King, with His sorrow crowned, Alone, alone in the Valley is He! The shadows of death are gathering round And the Cross must follow Gethsemane. Darker and darker the gloom must fall, Filled is the Cup. He must drink it all. Oh, think of His sorrow that we may know His wondrous love in His wondrous woe."

"He who suffers most has most to give." Only at Calvary can we learn the depths of suffering as we hear the cry, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" and what it cost to found this wonderful building which is to be for the eternal glory of God, and of which, by His grace, you and I form part. The forces of hell were there marshalled against Him, but in vain. He "spoiled principalities and powers, He made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it" (Col. 2. 15).

We are here as those who profess to be His disciples. Let us hear His word. "If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow Me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it, and whosoever shall lose his life for My sake shall find it." Let us measure our lives by loss, not gain, and see if we are really worthy to be the disciples of Him who counted and paid the cost.

On Tuesday we heard of two enthusiasts for the House of God: David in the Old Testament and Paul in the New, and I want this evening to show how these men were willing to pay the price. All of us here would, I believe, like to be good Christians, to have happy feelings, to be successful servants of God, but are we willing to pay the price, to count the cost?

David had it in his heart to build a house for Jehovah. It was a right desire, a desire that God commended and that pleased Him. Perhaps, as the result of these meetings, there has been stimulated in our hearts the desire to do a little building. "I will build," thought David. "I will build," perhaps you are thinking, but let us see to it that the emphasis is on the word "build" and not on the word "I," otherwise if we fail to "deny ourselves" we may find ourselves destroying instead of building. David was not allowed to build. He had already learned through an awful
judgment that the ark of God was holy, and must not be touched by careless hands. He has now to learn that the House of God cannot be built by hands stained with blood. Young men, I speak to you in particular. You want to help in the building of God's assembly to-day. Remember it requires clean hands and a pure heart. Do not touch the sacred ark with unclean hands. Oh, how precious in His sight is "the church of God, which He purchased with blood of His own." How then can we act carelessly in relation to it? In a house where I was a guest, a beautiful vase was shown me worth several hundred pounds. The thought that crossed my mind was not, as you might have supposed from my nationality, the desire to possess it and turn it into hard cash. No! it was thankfulness that I was not the servant maid who had to dust it. Had I, instead of being content to be a guest, begun like Mr. Hole's prodigal son to "upset the kitchen department," my clumsiness might have resulted in the smashing of this precious vessel. It is not enough to mean well, to desire to help, but there must be the condition of soul: cleanliness, carefulness and deftness, otherwise we shall destroy and not build.

David had to "deny himself" and take up his cross. He wanted to build, but he had to yield this privilege to a younger man, his son. How often has this refusal to "deny oneself" in Christian service damaged the assemblies of God. We profess the desire to build when our real motive is the desire to be prominent. Thus has the older man often failed to yield to his more gifted junior, and the younger man refused to acknowledge the riper experience and wisdom of old age. Were Christ's interests before us instead of self, we would rejoice like David to do what we could. He was refused the privilege of building, but he rejoiced to provide the material for the building. "But who am I, and what is my people, that we should be able to offer so willingly after this sort?" If we cannot be builders, are we willing to be the builder's labourers, to carry the mortar and the bricks for the more skilled workman of God? Are we willing to accept our limitations, physical, spiritual, intellectual, and to strive for our Lord's commendation—"She (or he) hath done what she could"?

David provided also the site on which Solomon afterwards built, and his noble spirit is manifested in his reply to Araunah's kindly offer of the ground for nothing. "Nay, but I will surely buy it of thee at a price: neither will I offer burnt offerings unto the Lord my God of that which doth cost me nothing." Quite recently I sat listening to the story of a brother as he described to me the exercises by which the Lord led him into the truth. He wept for joy because of his gain, and also for sorrow as he recollected all it has cost in the way of loss, and he concluded, "It can never mean so much to my son." Is the truth costing you anything? "Buy the truth and sell it not." With many of us the truth is a glorious heritage, it cost our fathers something. Let us not sell it.

Is our aim in life to have an easy time? Come with me to Calvary, and perhaps the spirit which animated the little London cripple may be seen in us. Converted to God but confined to his bed in a miserable hovel in the slums, he sought to serve the Lord, and by doing so contribute something to God's building, by writing gospel texts and throwing them out of the window that passers-by might read them. Kind Christian friends offered to remove him
to the country that his last days might be made easy. He refused to go, saying, "I don't want to die easy since He died hard." Yes, He died hard, and from cradle to cross He lived hard. To his would-be disciples He said, "The foxes have holes and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man hath not where to lay His head."

God's House was built by Solomon on Mount Moriah, the place where Abraham gave such wonderful proof of his devotion to the will of God by offering up his dearly loved son Isaac. The spirit of sacrifice here shown also by David when he purchased the threshing floor must be the basis and foundation of all acceptable building for God. The Apostle Paul was a wise master builder. He had built in Philippi, and in order that his work in the Philippians might not be in vain, he was ready to be poured out as a drink offering. Is this sacrifice a joyless duty? Evidently Paul did not think so, for he says, "I joy and rejoice with you all." These words are almost identical with those of the messenger who ran from Marathon with the news of the great victory which had saved Greece from the Persian hordes, and as he reached Athens fell dead with these words on his lips, "Rejoice and let us rejoice."

Is it not possible that the reason why we know so little of joy is because we know so little of suffering for Christ's sake. A missionary in China whose arm had been broken in an anti-Christian riot said, "I never knew such intensity of joy as when suffering physical violence for Christ's sake." The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church. A young Christian slave in North Africa was offered the alternative, to deny his Lord or to be built alive into the wall at whose building he was employed. He chose the latter. He paid the price. Harder, wasn't it, than coming to Swanwick? Measure thy life by loss. Paul says, "What things were gain to me those I counted loss for Christ." He paid the price, he suffered the loss that he might have the gain. "That I may have Christ for my gain." Listen to him as he measures the loss by the gain. "I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. Our light affliction which is but for a moment worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." Read 2 Corinthians, chapter II., to see what he means by the word light. Would not our short-sighted minds call them unbearably heavy? But Paul weighed them in the light of Calvary and the glory. And that glory is near.

Late on Monday night I reached Pye Bridge Station. Dead weary from twenty-four hours' travelling, sick from sea voyage, with a bag too heavy for me to carry, I felt my heart sink when I found no means of conveyance to Swanwick through the dark and stormy night. I was able to get into telephonic communication with my destination. And what do you think I heard? The sound of your singing in the lounge, and my heart leaped in anticipation of the comfort and Christian company which awaited me. Presently I heard a cheery voice saying, "Just wait a little while, and we shall send a car for you." Brethren, we have been during these meetings in touch with heaven and heard its music. The latest word from that place is the cheery message of our Saviour: "Surely, I come quickly. Amen." And our reply is "Even so, come, Lord Jesus." "A little while, and He shall come." What is loss in this world, when compared to the reward of that day?
CORRESPONDENCE.
The Way of Peace.

WE have received the following letter from a correspondent: "I have been so troubled in soul that when I read your letter to 'A young man in soul difficulties' (August Number), I felt I must write to you to tell me what is wrong. I professed conversion years ago, but I always felt that something was wrong with my experience. Others seemed to possess something I lacked. I prayed earnestly that I should be what God wanted me to be, and I have a desire to win men and women for God, but such an awful fear has come over me. I believe in God and love Him, but the thought keeps coming to me that I am not saved. I said for years that I was, but I am ashamed to say it now. I heard you speak on 'The all-sufficient Saviour,' and cannot forget it. If I only possessed that wonderful peace I feel that it would be life to me. . . . I do not mind what I have to go through if only I have God's peace."—TROUBLSED.

My dear Friend,—

We will not talk of your experience, or your earnest prayers, or your desires to win men and women for God, or even of your love to Him, for not one nor all these things can save you or be the ground of your peace. Your whole letter convinces us that you are the Lord's, yet our convictions cannot be enough for you; what you need is an unimpeachable and absolutely reliable word that shall dispel your fears. We often tell of a young woman who was troubled as you are. She was lying ill in an infirmary, and a friend, knowing of her distress, sent her by post a Scripture text card. She eagerly read the words on it, which were, "Jesus said, My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me, and I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of My hands" (John 10. 27, 28). "Oh, if only I could say that I was one of His sheep," she said, "I should be happy." But she could not say it, and almost in despair she threw the card upon the bed. Then she saw that there were words that she had not noticed on the other side of the card, and she took it up again, and read: "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners" (1 Timothy 1. 15). That wonderful verse of Scripture let the light into her heart, and she said, "If I'm not a sheep, I'm a sinner, and Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, and so He came to save me." Now that was the reasoning of faith:—

1. Christ Jesus came to save sinners.
2. I'm a sinner.
3. So He came to save me.

Go over that, take it to yourself, and give thanks to Him for coming to save YOU. You will be on solid ground if you do, for you have that wonderful bit of news on the authority of the word of God who cannot lie.

It is only by the gospel that we can be saved, and there are two great facts in it: 1st, Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures; 2nd, and He was buried and rose again the third day according to the Scriptures (1 Corinthians 15. 1-3). For your offences He was delivered to judgment and death. So that you can say, He was there for me. He was wounded for my transgressions and bruised for my iniquities, the chastisement of my peace was upon Him and by His stripes
Now you have several God-given facts:—

1. You are a sinner, needing a Saviour.

2. Christ Jesus came to be your Saviour.

3. He suffered on the cross for your sins, and shed His blood there for your redemption.

4. God has raised Him from the dead and given Him glory, and this is proof beyond question of the completeness and perfection of His work.

5. God justifies all who believe this gospel concerning His Son, they are saved for ever.

Go over these facts, say as you go over them, Yes, I believe that, and that, and that, until you come to the last one. Be careful about this. Remember that it is the same God who tells you of the coming of Jesus to save sinners that tells you that all who believe in Him are justified, and that from all things (Acts 13. 39). This means you. You have believed what He tells you about Christ, then do not question what He tells you about "all that believe" in Christ. The work of Christ makes you safe. The Word of God makes you sure. The FACTS come first, then FAITH in the facts, and the happy FEELINGS follow the knowledge of the facts.

J. T. Mawson.

EVIL things, of course, grieve the Holy Spirit, but that which must grieve Him first and most is indifference to Christ. He has come to take of His things and show them to us and to glorify Him; if we lose heart and ear for these things He must be grieved, then any evil thing is possible in our lives. Then He has to grieve us by showing us our folly and making us feel how unsatisfactory and unsatisfying are the things that have diverted us from Christ. Thank God, He does not leave us, He loves us too much for that, and nothing can change the fact that we are God's property. We are sealed unto the day of redemption.
ACCQUAINTANCE WITH OUR SAVIOUR.

From a letter.

"A sentence in one of the addresses impressed me very much; it was, ‘God’s great desire is to make us LIVELY ACQUAINTED WITH OUR SAVIOUR WHERE HE IS.’ Now I believe that everyone who knows the Lord at all, wants to know Him better and better, to come into real living touch with Himself and to feel the warmth of His love. The only means to this end I know of is the written Word of God in the power of the Holy Spirit, but sometimes we read the Word and do not get that living touch we long for. I read in the Gospels the beautiful story of the Lord’s life on earth, His love and compassion, His grace and His patience, and then I think of Him where He is, but that does not seem to bring Him near enough. IS IT MENTAL EFFORT THAT IS REQUIRED FOR THIS ACQUAINTANCE WITH OUR SAVIOUR WHERE HE IS?"—Young Believer.

No, acquaintance with our Saviour where He is is not achieved by mental effort, nor necessarily by reading of His life in the Gospels, though we cannot neglect this if we are to know Him. But acquaintance with Him is much more than knowing something about Him; it is knowing Himself, and this must be where He is and as He is, for it is a present and personal knowledge. We arrive at it by a spiritual journey, which may be long or short according to our purpose of heart and appreciation of Himself and His love.

We began by learning that He had done great things for us, our deep need as sinners made us glad to hear about Him. It was good news to us when we heard that He was our substitute when He suffered on the cross, and that there He put away even our sins by the sacrifice of Himself. The relief was great, our burdened consciences were purged, we were forgiven, and had peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, and we were very grateful to Him for it all. But there was more than that in the gospel story. It told us that it was His great love that made Him die for us, and a love for Himself, deeper than our gratitude for blessings received, awoke in our hearts, so that even though we have not seen Him we love Him, and while still not seeing Him, yet believing, we rejoice in Him. But these two things, faith and love in and for the Saviour, do not spring up in the mind but in the heart, they are not the result of mental effort or growth but they are the fruit of the Holy Spirit’s work within us.

But if we have not seen Him we long to, and if He has won our hearts by His love we want to know Him. Knowing about Him is not enough, nor will a mere acquaintance with Him satisfy us, the word is too cold to describe that for which the heart longs; nothing short of an intimacy of love without distance or reserve is the goal of love’s desire. But this must be with Him where He is, not a looking back to where and what He was—though without the knowledge of the past we could not know Him as He is—nor a looking forward to where and what He will be—though without that our knowledge of Him would be faulty—but a present and continuous intercourse with Himself; and that as to His present position, activities and love. It is well expressed in the well-known lines—

"Oh, Lord, make Thyselv to me
A living, bright reality;
More present to faith’s vision keen
Than any outward object seen,
More dear, more intimately nigh
Than e’en the dearest earthly tie."

To that we would add that the Spirit of
Truth which proceedeth from the Father has come from heaven to dwell within us that the desire may become a realized fact.

But where is He? "Whither is thy beloved gone, thou fairest among women? Whither is thy beloved turned aside? and we will seek Him with thee" (Song of Sol. 6. 1). Yes, where? He is not here, for His life was taken from the earth; and the meaning of this is not always readily learnt. The Ethiopian learnt it. He was reading those words, than which none can make a greater appeal to the Christian heart: "He was led as a sheep to the slaughter, and like a lamb dumb before his shearers, so He opened not His mouth. In His humiliation His judgment was taken away: and who shall declare His generation? for His life is taken from the earth." From that Scripture Philip preached unto him Jesus, and as he listened to the story of the utter humiliation, the rejection and crucifixion of Jesus, the glory of this world lost its lustre and faded from his eyes, and another Object filled his vision—Jesus, whose life was taken from the earth—and he cried, "See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized?" He would follow Him, he would turn his back on the world that had rejected him, he would be identified with Him in His death as far as this world was concerned; even self and all its former aspirations must go in death. He was eager for it, nothing must stand in his way. It was as though he said—indeed, he did say by this act: Good-bye, world, Jesus for me! Good-bye, old life of sin and sinful ambitions, Jesus for me! Good-bye, self and selfish hopes, Jesus for me!

That I believe is the first true step to living acquaintance with Christ where He is.

But how could we surrender the life of sin and self, which every true disciple must do (Luke 14. 27), if we did not know that we have a new life? We have been born again into a new life, it is the gift of God to us, and the Object of the new life is Christ, and it must seek Him wherever He may be. He is not on earth but in heaven, a real, living Man there. Stephen being full of the Holy Ghost looked up steadfastly into heaven and saw the glory of God and Jesus (Acts 7. 55). And Saul of Tarsus heard His voice from that same glory (chap. 9.). And we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour. On earth He was crucified, in heaven He is enthroned; He was hated here, He is adored there, and the knowledge of this reveals the world's true character and makes us turn away from it and set our affections upon things above where Christ sitteth.

But there is another side to the question. The Lord is active in loving service towards us in the place where He is, and our need makes us look up to Him. We feel that we must have daily succour and strength which in ourselves we do not possess. From whence can it come? It comes from our Lord in heaven. "Seeing then that we have a great high Priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God." We look up to Him in our countless needs and become acquainted with the tender sympathy of His heart. It is good to see how His compassion flowed out in constant service to needy people when He was on earth, but that is not enough for us, we need that compassion of which His heart is ever full for ourselves. He does not withhold it, and we learn as we draw near to Him that He is touched with the feeling of our infirmities, yes, even with ours. So we come boldly to the throne of grace, for
He sits upon it, and we have no fear of drawing near to Him; from thence we obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need. It was thus that Paul the Apostle knew Him when he sought the Lord thrice that the thorn in the flesh might be removed from him. How overwhelmed and satisfied he must have been with the answer: "My grace is sufficient for thee, for My strength is made perfect in weakness."

There Paul gained a deepened acquaintance with his Lord, not only as his great high Priest who fully sympathized with him in his distress, but as his Lord, who is the great Administrator of heavenly grace and power, and he was glad to have the thorn since it put him into such complete dependence on the Lord and yielded such sweet communion with Him. It is well to know where our resources are when great demands are made upon us, and if our needs and distresses become the opportunities for a fuller knowledge of the grace of our Lord, we shall be helped by them in our acquaintance with Him.

But Paul shows us another side of his life in Philippians 3. He tells us that he had abandoned every advantage that natural birth and achievement had to give him for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus his Lord. He had gladly cast them all away, as a man would cast away a useless and putrid load, for present acquaintance with Christ in glory. It was not his need now, but Christ Himself, brighter and better than the brightest and best that earth could offer. The wonder of that acquaintance had a most remarkable effect upon him, it filled him with determination to actually reach his Lord where He is; nothing should hinder him, suffering and death would be as nothing to the desire that filled his soul, but like a hound at full stretch on the track of its quarry, he reached forth and pressed onward toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. Such a concentration of spiritual energy fills us with amazement, and yet that was the effect of a present acquaintance with Christ upon the pattern Christian.

The Spirit of God who dwells in us is indispensable to this acquaintance with our Lord where He is. Who could have conceived that the Father would have sent the Spirit to indwell us, but He has done so, for, using your quotation in your letter, "God's great desire is to make us livingly acquainted with our Saviour where He is." The Spirit has been given to us with this in view. By Him we are joined to Christ where He is, and He is our means of communication with Christ; He it is who takes of the things of Christ and shows them to us, and gives to us the capacity to understand them and the power by which we reach our Lord in our faith and affections now. The Holy Spirit leads us along the spiritual journey that we must take if the desired acquaintance with our Saviour is to be realized. There is nothing mysterious about this, the simplicity of an undivided heart is really all that is needed on our part, then we are ready to turn away from the world, and to say, No, to self, for the treasure we have found in our Saviour's love.

Now, as to reading the Gospels. They will certainly increase our knowledge of the Lord as we read them, and the more we know of Him the more we shall love to read them. If there are persons in our lives whom we dearly love, we desire to learn all we can about them, every detail of their lives is of interest to us. It is so in our reading of the Lord's life here, and the more so because what He is was displayed in all His ways and words; what came out in revelation then abides in Him.
to-day, and what we read of Him becomes food for our souls, for it is Himself. Our love for Him finds in these God-inspired records that in which it delights, and by which it is increased and nourished, and what we learn as we read them becomes the substance of our worship and our communion with the Lord. In the Gospels we have the word of Life revealed and declared to us that our fellowship might be with the Father and the Son, and that our joy may be full.

But we need the Acts and the Epistles also, in them we learn that the One who has become so attractive to us is now exalted in heaven. God has made this same Jesus both Lord and Christ. He has highly exalted Him and given Him a name that is above every name; He has become the centre of attraction for us, and we see Jesus not receiving honours from men but from God, and we are willing to let the world go by and have Christ for our gain, to think of Him, depend upon Him, commune with Him and become like Him.

Much ought to be said on this deeply important question which your letter asks, but this must suffice for this paper.

IN THE HOLIEST.

"Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus. . . . Let us draw near."—Hebrews 10. 19-22.

GOD is present with us—let us fall and worship,
    Holy is the place;
God is in the midst, our souls are silent,
    Bowed before His face.
Lord, we kneel before Thee,
    Awed by love divine;
We of Thee unworthy
    Own that we are Thine.

Gladly cast before Thee all delights and pleasure,
    All our hoarded store,
Lord, behold our hearts, our souls and bodies,
    Thine, and ours no more.
We, O God, Thine only,
    Nevermore our own—
Thine the praise and honour,
    Thine, and Thine alone.

Thou who fillest all things, in Thee living, moving,
    Evermore are we;
Shoreless sea unsounded, mystery and wonder,
    Sinks my soul in Thee—
I in Thee—no longer
    Bound in self's dark prison,
And the life that moves me,
    Fills me, Christ arisen.

Steegen.
THE fear of Moses that the wrath of the king would be kindled against him was fully justified, for "when Pharaoh heard this he sought to slay Moses." But Moses fled to the land of Midian. Here his sense of justice was again outraged, and his noble but passionate spirit once more asserted itself as he beheld the inhumanity of man. While he sat by a well of Sinai, a fugitive, the daughters of the priest of Midian approached and drew water and filled the troughs to water their father's flocks. Their arduous labours ended, they were about to enjoy rest and to watch the flocks satiating their thirst when some uncouth sons of the desert appeared and unceremoniously appropriated the supply of water for their sheep. But Moses defended the women against such contemptible tyranny; drove off the intruders and saw that the flocks of the weaker sex were watered first as right demanded. Nor was their conduct merely a lapse, for the surprise of the father at the early return of his daughters shows that those churls had made a practice of evading the toil of drawing for themselves. His intervention gained for Moses a very practical expression of appreciation from Reuel, who called him to his house to receive his hospitality and "Moses was content to dwell with the man." Nor did the episode end there for Reuel gave Moses his daughter Zipporah to wife. And here, in the Providence of God, Moses was destined to remain for the next forty years, a stranger in a strange land, pining at first, as the name of his firstborn indicates, for the company of his brethren whose emancipation had been so dear to his heart. But the day of opportunity had apparently slipped by, and to the unenlightened eye it appeared that God did not care. It would seem, however, that the clouds of depression were rising from his spirit when his second son was born, for surely faith was evinced when he called him Eliezer—"God is my help." "For the God of my father, said he was mine help, and delivered me from the sword of Pharaoh" (Exodus 18.). A genuine spirit of thankfulness to God for past mercies is invariably accompanied by the spirit of trust in present circumstances and for future emergencies.

Now, while Moses was serving his father-in-law, it transpired that Pharaoh died. Then were the hearts of the down-trodden Israelites raised to God in a mighty groan that bespoke their grief, and that was the only adequate expression of their appeal to Him for relief. But immediate divine intervention there was none, nor was the new king more humane than his predecessor. Yet God was not indifferent. He never is to human suffering. Yea, a sparrow does not fall to the ground and He observes it not. "And it came to pass, in process of time (or literally, after these many days) . . . they cried, and their cry came up to God." How many such days there had been even since Moses had fled, all of them days of unmitigated agony and humiliation for God's chosen people. But God had kept count of them, and He heard their groaning and remembered His covenant with Abraham, and God looked upon the children of Israel and had respect unto them. God is ever true to His promises, faithful—not because of merit in the recipients of them—but because He is God. Had He not sworn to Abraham by two immutable things—Himself and His Word? And although the fulfilment
had waited long, it could not tarry beyond the appointed hour. Those seemingly futile years spent by Moses in Midian were years spent in the school of God in view of the moment of deliverance and all that it entailed for this chosen servant. The humble, patient, exemplary service rendered by him there was the best possible training for the leadership to which he was to be called.

We are all familiar with the manner in which God appeared to Moses at the burning bush. Here was a strange sight indeed—the humble shrub of the desert, the acacia, "burned with fire and the bush was not consumed." Here was a mystery that called for investigation! It was no mere natural phenomenon, however, but a miraculous sign given to Moses, and it was to be the occasion of suitable instruction from God to His servant. The response of Moses to the call of God in the words, "Here am I," was the commencement of a communion between God and him which has probably been unsurpassed in intimacy in human experience, and which only death brought to an end. The sign, presumably, was in itself a prophecy full of encouragement for Moses, and setting forth Israel, small, and of little account among the nations, yet the people in whom and through whom God was to be made known. The fire was the emblem of divine judgment, and surely one of the greatest enigmas of all time is that Israel survives. Crushed, made captives, persecuted, peeled, scattered under the governmental dealing of God, this ancient people has, nevertheless, preserved its identity and has not been consumed. Yes, Israel, like the burning bush, presents a problem that demands the serious consideration of all thoughtful men, and a problem that only finds its solution when approached in the attitude of humble, reverential obedience to God's Word. How gratifying to Moses must have been that remarkable announcement from the bush, when God declared to him the loving interest which He had constantly taken in His people and His gracious purpose concerning them. "I know their sorrows and I am come down to deliver them... and to bring them up out of that land unto a good land and a large, unto a land flowing with milk and honey." Sweet intimation that, to Moses! But surely we may enjoy some of its comfort, for here is cheer enough for sorrowing ones in all ages! God knows our sorrows and the day of His deliverance from them approaches; a deliverance which will mean not merely cessation from cares and sorrows and tears, but our introduction to a land full of joys ineffable, to an inheritance beyond the blight of sin and the reach of death, and to a sphere where Christ shall be supreme. "I am come down to deliver them," says the Lord (verse 8); "Come now therefore and I will send Thee unto Pharaoh" (verse 10). Do not the two declarations appear incompatible at first sight? Yet is it not just this call to service coupled with the assurance that the work will in reality be effected by God Himself that makes the difference between ineffectual and disappointing effort and true success in the service of God. It is the consciousness that he is merely an instrument that makes the labour of the servant easy and free from anxious care. God has foreseen the end and the means; the servant need only be willing to do His errands in His way and at His time. It will then be his to stand still and see the power of God—a power that can cleave a pathway in the midst of the sea or spread a table in the desert, sufficient for the needs of a nation.
But now that the call of God has come to Moses in the most unmistakable way, he demurs. His disinclination to accept the task assigned to him by God is most pitiable, for it is tantamount to telling God that He does not know His business, and that His selection of a leader for the Exodus is a wretchedly bad one. As we have seen, under the impetus of a self-made suggestion and personal desire he had gone in haste to effect emancipation for his brethren by the strength of his own right arm, but now that the proposal is distinctly from God he recoils from obedience. While realizing how improbable it is that such conduct would be the invention of men, in depicting this unique servant we appreciate, do we not, how true it is to nature? Again, let it be emphasized that while a sober evaluation of oneself in the sight of God will produce an estimable humility there is not infrequently the expression of a depreciation of oneself, when called to serve, which is quite inconsistent with a belief in the Omniscience and Omnipotence of the One who calls. And Moses still demurs in spite of God's assurance: “Certainly I will be with thee.” He anticipates difficulties: “Behold when I come unto the children of Israel and shall say unto them the God of your fathers hath sent me unto you; and they shall say unto me what is His name? What shall I say unto them? And God said unto Moses, I am that I am; and He said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I am hath sent me unto you.”

If the people, reduced to despondency and despair, were to be re-animated it must be by a message that would declare to them the true nature of God. It is just this that is revealed in the name, “I am that I am.” It is the assertion of His absolute and essential Deity; the constancy of His attributes; the immutability of His purposes. Without beginning or end of days, the First and the Last, He knows no change. He cannot abandon His choice, He had not forgotten His people in Egypt.

But in case the people should still doubt his God-sent mission God furnished him with evidence of a most spectacular nature that would work conviction. That evidence consisted of three signs given to Moses and to be performed in view of the people in the event of unbelief. These signs were not merely miracles to convince the people that God was with Moses; but, primarily, no doubt, they were intended to convey salutary lessons to the servant himself. Firstly, then, “The Lord said unto him, What is that in thine hand? And he said, A rod, and He said, Cast it on the ground. And it became a serpent, and Moses fled from it. And the Lord said unto Moses, Put forth thine hand and take it by the tail. And he put forth his hand and caught it and it became a rod in his hand.” The serpent wriggling on the ground was probably emblematic of Egypt's power which had already exercised its terror over him and before which he had become a fugitive. But at the command of God he fearlessly grasped the venomous creature by the tail and it became a harmless rod again, and thus did God assure him that if he would but act in faith and in dependence upon Him the power of Egypt would be annulled. Yet, possibly, there is a more personal application. We all have something in our hand, capacity of some kind, which yielded to God will be used by Him for the accomplishment of His designs, but which, should God be renounced, is full of powerful and sinister possibilities. Let us ever remember that “Every good gift is from above.” What is called natural ability is God-given ability.
and, if sanctified to the Master's use, can be employed to glorify Him. The rod of Moses became the "rod of God."

The second sign, doubtless, taught him that although there was within him moral pollution that might well convince him of his inability to serve God, yet God in His grace could make Him clean and bless him.

And, thirdly, He showed Moses, how quickly, what man rests upon and regards as his greatest ally and resource, can be speedily turned into a fearful scourge. The waters of the Nile, Egypt's life, could at God's word bring forth death and corruption.

Despite all this, Moses still pleads for exemption from God's call, this time on the ground that he lacks eloquence. Is this excuse extinct? Is God's reply any less potent to-day than it was then? "Who hath made man's mouth? . . . Have not I the Lord?" And while it is no pretext for illiteracy or indolence, it is the greatest possible encouragement to every servant to feel assured that "I will be with thy mouth and teach thee what thou shalt say." With such a promise who could decline to go? No wonder, then, that at long last the anger of the Lord was kindled against Moses as he suggests once more that a different choice would have been fitter. God now divides the responsibilities of leadership between him and harm, but before returning to Egypt to plead with Pharaoh God has to lay his hand upon the former, who is brought nigh to death. The one who will serve God publicly, and in things evidently great, cannot be permitted to be remiss in things apparently small and hidden from public view. How easy it is to dishonour God in the domestic circle? Probably in deference to the views of his wife he had culpably omitted the rite of circumcision—God's seal of relationship with his chosen people. This wrong must be put right, and it was, although with considerable ill-grace on the part of Zipporah.

Here we come to the end of that part of the history of Moses which is marked by vacillation and lack of confidence in God. Henceforth he is steadfast, unmovable and shining as a bright light in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation. So like ourselves in the days of his hesitancy and doubt, may God grant to us to be like him in the simple dependence and prompt obedience which characterize him in the times in which we have yet to consider him!

"He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for My sake shall find it" (Matt. 10.39).

DOES anyone ever now speak of Sir John Kelynge? He was the brutal, cynical judge who thrust John Bunyan into Bedford gaol and kept him there for twelve years. If he is remembered at all it is only for that infamous act. But his victim, what of him? Out of his sufferings there grew the Pilgrim's Progress, and none but the Lord knows how great has been the blessing that that book has been to His heaven-bound pilgrims. The man who was prepared to lose his life for Christ's sake found it indeed, and that life that he found has overflowed in blessing to thousands, while the godless, time-serving, pleasure-loving man of the world who thought he had found life lost it for time and eternity.
A LESSON ON SEPARATION.

Swanwick, Sunday Afternoon, August 26th.

Leviticus 18. 2, 3: "I am the Lord your God. After the doings of the land of Egypt wherein ye dwelt shall ye not do; and after the doings of the land of Canaan shall ye not do; neither shall ye walk in their ordinances."

Leviticus 20. 24-26: "I have separated you from other people."

Things "which I have separated from you as unclean."

"I have severed you from other people that ye should be mine."

There are one or two general remarks to be made to start with. In chapter 18. 1-5 we have brought together certain instruction with regard to the lands of Egypt and Canaan.

The land of Egypt is characterized in Exod. 20. 2, and Deut. 4. 6, as a house of bondage. The Egyptians may not have experienced it to be such, but the people in whom God was working for blessing found it to be such. The mercy of God brought them out of it. The Exodus was for them an entire change of condition. Instead of Egypt and bondage they were brought to God as God's redeemed people.

Canaan, the land of milk and honey, was pre-eminently the land of blessing, the territory promised to Abraham and his seed.

There was a negative side and a positive side. (1) Negative, in their deliverance from bondage. (2) Positive, in their being brought into the enjoyment of the land which He had purposed for them.

In chapter 20. 22-26, which speaks of the inheritance of the land, we see that—

a. Separation was with a view to the blessing that God had determined for them (verse 24).

b. Separation was with a view to the purity and holiness of the people of God, already enriched (verse 25).

c. Separation was with a view to intense and utter devotedness to the Lord.

I purpose to take up these three things, and urge them upon our spirits this afternoon. We have been brought out of bondage with a view to our blessing, to be holy as He is holy, and to have our hearts so brought under the sway of His grace and love that it is real liberty to be for Him and His delight alone.

On the score of obligation alone the redeemed people of God ought to be wholly set for God's pleasure, apart from every other influence. Over and over again—some twenty-five times, I think—in chapters 18., 19. and 20., is emphasis laid upon the fact that the One who spoke to them was Jehovah their God. A right sense of who He was and of the sovereign favour He bestowed upon them would lead to great exercise that they should be pleasing to Him, and be absolutely clear of anything diverse from His will for them. They were not brought out of Egypt to be a disorderly rabble, nor even to devise for themselves the best way to order their conduct or movements; they were to be a consolidated nation under His rule and direction. He who delivered them promised to give them the land of blessing, and would bring the nation in.

As to ourselves, once sinners of the Gentiles, we were under Satan's bondage, but we have been delivered through the death and blood-shedding of Christ, and brought to God. Some of us, if we look back, are amazed at the amount of wickedness and sin which we crowded
in, in the time we were unconverted. God only knows what would have become of us had He not arrested us and intervened. But He brought us out of bondage. We became miserable in our sin, and because of our sins; the sight of our wretchedness was hateful, we wanted to flee from ourselves, as well as to escape the deserved judgment of God. Thank God we were set free. In Christ we have found the Antitype of the Passover and the Red Sea; the judgment of God is past for us in the death of the Passover Lamb, and the power of Satan and our links with the world as the sphere of Satan’s power are broken in the Red Sea deliverance of Christ’s death and resurrection. We find ourselves to be God’s people, redeemed in His own way and by His own work; brought to God, the subjects of His eternal favour and love in Christ Jesus our Lord.

But not only so. He has a plan for us. While heaven and the Father’s house and glory with Christ are our ultimate destiny, I think we must take the land of Canaan as set before Israel to be the type or picture for us of what God wants us to enjoy now. As there was a land from which we have been delivered, so is there a land set before us for our present possession and enjoyment. The Lord Jesus who has died here has gone back to heaven, and having strangely won our hearts by His love expressed in death, has sent down the Holy Ghost to draw us after Himself in spirit, and to bring us into the realization of all the heavenly blessedness He has won for us even while we are still physically on the earth.

Now the present application of this is as follows. Had the church taken full possession in a practical way of its heavenly calling, had there been no failure and no departure, the heavenly life of our risen Head and Lord would have flowed unhindered through those associated with Him on earth; and holiness, unity, and love would have marked all. The power of Satan would have been overcome in spite of his determined opposition; the heavenly blessings and the heavenly calling would have been realized on earth. As Israel would have been a nation for God’s pleasure and God’s true witnesses on the earth, had they carried out God’s will, so would the church have been an amazing expression of Christ in His beauty, love, and purity here on earth, and a mighty and blessed witness to the grace of God to the world, during the period of Christ’s absence and rejection.

But Israel failed. There were two main snares, idolatry and lawlessness. In Samuel’s days there came in a third, a desire to be like others and to have some visible head or leader other than the Lord. Jehovah had certainly said they were not to do after the doings of the land of Egypt. But He also added, “after the doings of the land of Canaan whither I bring you shall ye not do” (chap. 18. 3).

“The doings of the land of Canaan” actually became a variable factor as time went on. The first phase was encountered when the nation entered in Joshua’s day, dispossessioning the wicked inhabitants the baseness of whose lives needs only to be known to see how justly God acted in ordering their extinction as men on the earth. But as succeeding generations of Israelites were born, so did they come into different phases in the “Canaan” of their day. I may name, for instance, the days of the Judges, to which further reference will be made in a moment. Or again, the days of Rehoboam, when frightful division followed the brighter days of David and Solomon, and the
people had to choose between the divine centre (and the weakened testimony associated with it) and centres that were not divine (1 Kings 12.). Later still, in the days of Hoshea (2 Kings 17.), when the ten revolting and idolatrous tribes were removed, and the "Samaritans" took their place, what a mixture followed; and what different "doings of the land of Canaan" had the faithful Israelite now to face! Later still, when Judah also had failed and had been carried captive, but through God's faithful goodness a remnant were brought back, "the doings of the land of Canaan" were still their danger and their snare. Finally, in those days when the Son of God appeared, how peculiar the path of His followers, when those "doings" culminated in His rejection and crucifixion.

Now all of these phases have their lessons for us, and indicate phases of difficulty which we meet after we have got our spiritual footing on divine ground. We first are to learn what God's purpose for us is, and the heavenly calling that puts us into association with the risen and heavenly Christ. Against this Satan will fight with might and main. The moment he finds a Christian who wants to enter into and enjoy all God's purpose for him (being not content with his individual salvation, but earnestly set to be here for the will and pleasure of God in the full light of Christ's heavenly position and glory), he will use every endeavour to divert him, or to discourage and to oppose him.

Alas! many a Christian meets the second phase as we have it set out in the book of Judges. Briefly, after the death of Joshua and the elders who outlived him, the first sign of losing touch with God was relaxation in the forward movement (see Judges 1. verses 19, 21, 27, 29, 30, 31, 33). The Lord was with those who went on (verses 2, 4, 19, 22), but it is solemn to notice how many flagged, and the growing persistence of the enemy may be seen in his determination to keep a footing among them. In verse 19, "they could not drive out the inhabitants of the valley because they had chariots of iron." In verse 27 "the Canaanites would dwell in that land." In verse 28, "they could not utterly drive them out." In verse 29 "the Canaanites dwelt in Gezer among them." So in verse 30. And sadly it goes on—"the Asherites dwelt among the Canaanites, for they did not drive them out," and "Naphthali dwelt among the Canaanites, the inhabitants of the land" (verses 32-33). Finally you have the "Amorites forced the children of Dan into the mountain, for they would not suffer them to come down to the valley"—a humbling position for Israel, tantamount to defeat for them, and leaving an undisturbed and unbroken frontier for the enemy.

Dear friends, it is very sad indeed if there come a time in our Christian experience when things begin to slacken, if we lose zest and cease to thirst for the Lord's things. When that is so, and if it be so, I beg any brother or sister to get before the Lord to search out the cause. Should any here have ceased to press on to the apprehension of the heavenly calling, may God arrest you to-day.

First, then, we have relaxation. In Judges 2. 2 we discover negligence and disobedience. One thing leads to another. If there is not energy to go on steadily to learn more of the Lord, and there be negligence of His word and will, you may soon get direct disobedience. Then in verse 10 is a further step—forgetfulness of what the Lord had done for Israel. The popular
idea to-day is that we are the summing up of all the wisdom of the past ages, to belittle what has gone before in the applauding of what we think and do. (What a mercy it is that we are constantly reminded in the Lord's Supper of what Christ has done, and of what God has done for us in Christ! But is there not a danger as one generation gives place to another to "pooh-pooh" that which God has taught saints in ages past?

By-and-by, as the Israelites became more self-satisfied and complacent, the Lord became displaced altogether. The next step was idolatry (verses 11-13). Forsaking Jehovah, losing the sense of grace that had delivered and blessed them, they followed what one might call the craze of the day. Baalim and Ashtaroth, with all the orgies of sensuous indulgence attending, took the place that the living God had at one time possessed, and God's discipline in government became heavier and heavier upon them. From time to time the Lord raised up judges (verse 16) as in mercy the Lord now raises up faithful men from time to time, to stem the tide and help His people; and there were local movements when He caused exercise. But verse 19 of our second chapter of Judges shows the continued drift. The judges passed, and then they resumed the down-grade. "They ceased not from their own doings nor from their own stubborn way." That is a terrible stage. No remonstrance touched them. It is a serious thing when a man, though going in an entirely wrong course, sinning against God and misleading his fellows, stubbornly goes on in it. Stubbornness is the last stage in that chapter. It seems to fittingly lead to that solemn verse, the last in the book (chap. 21:25) when the principle of independence was openly adopted: "In those days there was no king in Israel, every man did that which was right in his own eyes." It was the crowning sin in that dreadful book, the climax among God's people, when every man made his own individual judgment the test of right and wrong, and — be it noted — did that which was right in his own eyes. It would be a mistake to render it, "he did what he knew to be wrong."

We are all liable to these sins of departure. Through all Israel's history the one unchanging guide, the Word of God, was always sufficient to show them the good and right way. Spoken or written, it was the one sure guide for the faithful soul. Neglect of it was always weakness, and surely led to disaster; attention to it, subjection to it, giving the Lord His right place, meant light and help and recovery. Some conditions could be altered, some could not be altered. The faithful ones, if delivered at all, were invariably exercised and recovered by prophetic ministry, by the word of God, to that which was the mind of God for the moment. And even when the time was passed for recovery, the presentation of the Person and glory of the coming Christ sustained their faith and fed their souls — and at last He came; and so will come again.

Now to come back to Lev. 20. verses 22-26. In verse 24 we read of "a land flowing with milk and honey." On the authority of God's word and promise it was set before Israel, "I have said unto you." They were the people of God's choice, "Ye shall inherit their land." The Lord of heaven and earth it was who bestowed it upon them, "I have given it unto you." They were the people of God's choice, "Ye shall inherit their land." The Lord of heaven and earth it was who bestowed it upon them, "I have given it unto you." And though enemies had to be dispossessed and there would be conflict, the mighty God guaranteed His intervention in their favour, "Ye shall possess it." Moreover, it was an inheritance well worth
obtaining, whatever exercises were necessary to get the good of it, “a land flowing with milk and honey.” A definite locality was set before them, the land of Canaan; and blessing full and overflowing in that locality. For the blessings in the Old Testament were of an earthly order and connected with an earthly centre. In the Gospels of the New Testament we read of Christ, their promised Messiah, presented to them to see if they were ready for Him to fulfil all God’s promises on their behalf. But they were not ready. They disbelieved Him and would not credit His mission. They dubbed Him “that deceiver,” took up stones to stone Him, mocked Him, condemned Him as a common malefactor, crucified Him, pierced His side, and His life-blood poured on the earth was the witness to His rejection here. But God raised Him from the dead; and—alive now to die no more—He has been exalted to the highest glory and transferred from earth to heaven. God is detaining Him there for a certain period, this present dispensation, during which He is working out a secret plan that was in His mind from all eternity. He said nothing about it to the Old Testament prophets, so that it was a mystery until now. It is a very elementary lesson, but a most important lesson for us to learn, that we who believe in Christ as our Saviour, though enjoying His love here and now, are blessed with heavenly blessings, not earthly as the Jew. We are called with a calling that is centred in a heavenly Christ in the heavenly place.

No one can overestimate the importance of this, or the need for young Christians to understand the character of the blessings brought to us. In our case the very nature of our blessing detaches us from man’s present world in which he boasts so much. It has become to us an Egypt from which the grace of God has delivered us. But the place where Christ has entered in risen and triumphant life has become the Canaan of which we are to take possession by the leading of that Spirit who is Christ’s Spirit, delegated to lead us into the enjoyment of the place where Christ is our life and portion, and the delight of the heart of God. The mass of Christians seem to know very little of this. The great slogan of man, and of Christians whose ideas lean towards the betterment of the present world, is “Leave the world better than you found it.” But the truth of God is as stated in Acts 15. 14, “Simeon hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles to take out of them a people for His Name.” Ours are spiritual blessings not seen or handled, nor centred on the earth, though enjoyed here; they are spiritually discerned. And because that is the case God has sent down His Spirit in order to create us anew, to indwell us, and to lead us into all the truth. The natural man receives not the things of the Spirit of God, neither can he discern them. If that elementary truth were learned it would be a great start.

But further, even during this dispensation, as succeeding generations of Christians take their places in the present testimony, the phases of their experience vary just as we have seen to have been the case with Israel. The Canaan of Joshua’s day was one thing, the Canaan of Rehoboam’s day, or of Nehemiah’s day, or of the day of the Lord’s life on earth, were all different. Yet, as it remained true throughout, “after the doings of the land of Canaan wherein ye dwell shall ye not do,” so is it incumbent upon loyal Christians to-day to test all that goes on religiously around them in Christendom by the infallible word of God, and
by the truth of the calling wherewith they are called. Satan will not leave us alone any more than he would leave Israel alone. The most favoured Christians, if they become self-centred and self-complacent, are liable to deceive themselves in the most disastrous ways, such as we find exemplified in the different forms of Israel’s failure.

The first reference to separation is then in view of the blessing that God has in view for us.

The second reference is in Lev. 20. 25. This is separation in view of purity or holiness. In this case, as will be noticed, it was not a matter of one nation being separated from other outside nations. It was rather a moral education for those who were already in that path of outward separation from the world. In the land of Canaan, where God was so wonderfully known, it was still necessary that God’s people should be a people of exercised consciences and minds, and especially in relation to the character of God and the associations which were compatible with that character. Hence the remarkable chapters in Leviticus which form the centre portion of the book, i.e., from chapter 11. to chapter 17. Our verse tells us, “Ye shall therefore put difference between clean beasts and unclean, and between unclean fowls and clean; and ye shall not make your souls abominable by beast or by fowl or by any manner of living thing that creepeth on the ground, which I have separated from you as unclean.” This is a serious part of our spiritual education. No one could think of a camel, a coney, a hare, or a pig, as being creatures morally wrong. The same could be said of fishes, fowl, or creeping things, prohibited by divine law as food for the Israelite (chap. 11.). But for certain wise reasons, one of which was their typical application for our learn-

ing (Rom. 15. 4), Jehovah separated from His Israel certain creatures as unclean, and also added certain natural functions as bringing about conditions in which communion with Himself was interrupted. There is no gainsaying this. The animals referred to were His creation, each perfect in its own way and form, yet for Israel they were set aside as unclean. We may or may not see why: the fact is there. The Apostle Paul in the light of Christianity says, “I know, and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus, that there is nothing unclean of itself” (Rom. 14. 14), i.e., that even the animals spoken of and prohibited under the law were not inherently unclean, not essentially so; but for wise and, as we see, typical reasons, were forbidden. God had His people’s moral education in view in forbidding either contact or assimilation.

As confirmation of this, it is known that in the garden of Eden the Lord God planted a garden, and made to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food; the tree of life also, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil. All were His work. Yet for moral reasons He forbade the eating of the last-named tree. And He was wiser than His creature, and knew what He did this for.

So with the unclean beasts, or fowls, or creeping things: they were His own creation, His own work. Yet for causes already considered, and to test His people as to their submission and loyalty to His will for them, He separated these things from them as unclean. They were unclean for those to whom God had forbidden them.

I consider it as evident that, while there is much in Christendom which is the work of God, and that we have to thankfully recognize it and pray for it and bless God for it, there is often found
with it something of worldly admixture from which we are led and taught (led by the Spirit and taught by the Word) to keep apart. It would be utterly wrong to say that the work of God is unclean, but it would be equally wrong to justify or to associate with the worldly conditions condemned of God, under which this work is sometimes done. A certain relation to God makes certain things unclean to His people; not intrinsically unclean, for they are His creation, yet separated from them as unclean, to develop and strengthen their sense of the holiness of His presence and the delicacy and sensitivity of the communion to which He has called us. People who are not separate will not understand this, but those who are truly separated to Christ in the full light of the Christian calling will see it, and recognize the propriety of it.

The third reference to separation is in Lev. 20. 26. After all, the greatest object of our separation is not our blessings (verse 24), nor our purity (verse 25), but for that we might be wholly for Him. He wants our affection, He wants us entirely for His own heart's pleasure. "Holy unto Me" is His language here. "I have severed you from other people that you should be Mine." Could anything so operate in our hearts as this? In Titus 2. 13, 14, we read of "the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ who gave Himself for us that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a people for a possession"—that He might have us for Himself.

The death of Christ separates us from all that which God has separated from us.

The love of God and the love of Christ separate us in affection, so that the separation becomes hearty and not legal.

Separation is no difficulty if our hearts are satisfied in the joy of knowing God, and in the love and glory of Christ. It is when we hanker after popularity, or ease, or gain, that separation becomes distasteful.

If you are saved and yet have no affection for Christ, there must be something wrong. A few days ago I heard of a woman who will have it that she is saved. She says she has heard people talk of affection for Christ, and though she cannot explain it, says she never had affection for Christ. I wonder if there is anyone here like that.

Oh, may God bring it home to your soul: "The Son of God loved me and gave Himself for me." May God give you to search and see any defect in this utter separation to Christ, and bring you near to Him. And may the affection of all of us for Him be deepened.

HAVING believed the gospel of our salvation we were SEALED in Christ with the Holy Spirit of promise, which is the EARNEST of the inheritance. To be sealed means that we ARE property. We belong to God who has sealed us. • The Spirit as the earnest means that we HAVE property. His indwelling is the pledge of this. We are heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ Jesus, and by the Holy Spirit we may draw a revenue from the inheritance before we enter into it. This has been described as enjoying home comforts before we reach home.
THE LAMB IN THE MIDST OF THE THRONE.
(L. R.)

The story of the Lamb that was slain is woven into the very texture of Holy Scripture. In the Pentateuch we read of the first lamb that was offered—Abel’s lamb by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts (Gen. 4. 4). Here the question is first asked, “Where is the lamb for a burnt offering?” and answered, only to be fully understood when centuries had rolled away, “God will provide Himself a lamb” (Gen. 22. 7, 8). Here also we read of the Passover lamb, wast with fire, emblem of judgment. We see the blood put on the lintel, the protection from judgment without, and the lamb ordained the food of those who were within (Exod. 12. 7, 8). Again, the countless lambs on the altars of the tabernacle and later of the temple all bore their witness to the coming One.

Prophets and apostles bear their testimony to the Lamb. Isaiah tells of a suffering Lamb, brought to the slaughter, dumb before the shearsers (Isa. 53. 7). John the Baptist cries, “Behold the Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world” (John. 1. 29)—the full and perfect answer to Isaac’s question, to the question which all the burnt offerings and sin offerings had mutely asked. Peter the apostle adds his witness, “Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold . . . but with the precious blood of Christ as of a lamb without blemish and without spot” (1 Pet. 1. 18, 19).

For the Apostle John, the disciple whom Jesus loved, when a lonely exile in Patmos, was reserved the vision of the glory of this once suffering Lamb. He saw Him, highly exalted, given a Name above every name, the Centre of heavenly glory in the midst of the throne. He saw elders fall down and worship Him, myriads of angels acclaim Him, and every creature in heaven and in earth and under the earth and such as are in the sea, join in that chorus of praise to the Lamb that had been slain. It is the Lamb who takes the book and opens the seals to execute judgment—His strange work (Rev. 5. 7); it is He before whom those who came out of great tribulation stand, having washed their robes and made them white, and it is He who feeds them and leads them unto living fountains of waters (Rev. 7. 13-17).

Thus the beloved disciple leads us from glory to glory. He gives us a glimpse of the Lamb on Mount Sion with those who follow Him whithersoever He goeth (Rev. 14. 1-5); then he shows us the marriage of the Lamb and the bride arrayed in fine linen, clean and white, meet. companion for Him who gave Himself for her (Rev. 19. 7-8). Again he moves on and unveils to our adoring gaze the holy city which hath no temple for the Lord God and the Lamb are its temple, which needs no light of sun nor moon for the glory of God doth lighten it and the Lamb is the Light thereof (Rev. 21. 21, 22). He shows us the street of the city wherein those walk whose names are in the Lamb’s book of life, and the pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. No curse is there, no night, only the throne of God and of the Lamb, and those who shall reign with Him for ever and ever (Rev. 22. 1-5).

Beloved, your heart rejoices in the contemplation of these glories; how gladly you add your Amen to the honour given by God to this once
suffering but now exalted Lamb! with what joy you anticipate the day when He will call you to be sharers of His glory! how gladly then will you follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth! But now, to-day, here, where He is still despised and rejected of men, never more so, I ask my own heart and yours, is there with us that loyalty of soul that counts it

"Our only grief to give Him pain, 
Our joy to serve and follow Him"?

Let us humbly pray, "Blessed Lord Jesus Christ Who hast redeemed us at such a cost, grant us this grace for Thy Name's sake. Amen."

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THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF THE LAW FULFILLED IN US.

(J. T. MAWSON)

"That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit."—Romans 8. 4.

Our text does not say fulfilled by us, but in us, and there is a great difference between the two. An illustration will make this difference clear. We are at a boarding school for boys, and at half-past six on a dreary December morning the school bell clangs insistently. It says, "Get up, get up," and one hundred sleepy boys slip reluctantly from their beds. They hate the sound of that bell at that hour, and obey its command with great reluctance and only because they must. The law of the school is fulfilled by them, not because they love it, but from fear of the consequences of disobedience.

But at half-past twelve on that same day that same bell rings again, and its ringing is just as much a command as it was in the early morning, but how different is the sound of it to those same boys. It is now as pleasant to them as before it was hateful; they have been longing to hear it for more than an hour, and everything is dropped with which they are engaged and a rush is made to the Dining Room. The command of the dinner bell is fulfilled in them, for there is that in them that gives an instant response to it.

If the righteousness of the law is to be fulfilled in us, there must be in us a nature that responds to it. When we were "in the flesh" i.e., in our natural unregenerated state, we had no such nature and we did not and could not please God, our very nature was enmity against Him, as our chapter tells us. But now, having believed the gospel, we are "in Christ Jesus." What a change! And the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus can make us free from the law of sin and death, so that we may delight now in the law of God after the inward man, and find a power in the Spirit to fulfil it. The law said, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God," and we do love Him, for He has first loved us. He has com­mended His love to us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us," and we belong to those who in this chapter are called "them that love God." The command to love Him is not grievous; we delight in it, and as we live in the love of God, just as the lark lives in the sunshine, we enjoy the liberty of the Christian life; we know what it is to be on the wing, set free, and our lives will be full of the praise of God.
A WORD TO THOSE WHO PREACH. (SAMUEL LEVERMORE)

"THE LITTLE BOOK."
"Give me the little book. . . . Take it, and eat it up. . . . Thou must prophesy again."—Revelation 10. 9-11.

"A LITTLE book open" (2). "The little book which is open" (8). Our Lord as the Lion of Judah and the Slain Lamb opens the seven-sealed book in chap. 5., and here as the "Mighty Angel" He keeps it open. Satan's business is to keep it shut. A little book, not the whole Bible, but prophecy. Here we have the great pre-requisite of preaching, i.e.,

SPIRITUAL ASSIMILATION.
It must be eaten. "Take it and eat it up" (9). Then (11) "Thou must prophesy." Eat, then prophesy. This is God's order. As in Ezek. 3. 1, "Eat this roll, and go speak to the house of Israel." Eat, and speak. In John 6. 57 our Lord says, "He that eateth Me, even he shall live by Me." Adam ate and died, the believer eats and lives. Life always first. Then comes testimony. Eat and speak.

"Eat it up." All of it. No picking and choosing. No pet themes or favourite topics.

"Eat that I give thee." Not that which you think best, but that which He gives. Eat it up. Assimilate it. Make it your own, so that it permeates and controls the entire being. This implies heart work. "Thy words were found and I did eat them and Thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of my heart." My heart first, then others. "My heart"—heart work.

Job found it to be a daily necessity, for he said, "I have esteemed the words of Thy mouth more than my necessary food" (23. 12).

David also, "Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against Thee" (Psa. 119. 11). The best possible thing—"Thy word"—in the best possible place: "my heart"—with the best possible results—"that I might not sin against Thee."

How like this is Deut. 30. 14, "But the word is very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart, that thou mayest do it" (Italics mine). The seed is the word, and the prepared heart the germinating soil whence it springs into the life of obedience and God-pleasing. Now comes

SPIRITUAL MEDITATION
David said (Psalm 39. 3), "My heart was hot within me, while I sat musing the fire burned: then spake I with my tongue." Musing or meditation—then burning or illumination, then speaking, or declaration.

The heart on fire must precede the tongue of fire. The Holy Ghost insists upon this, for He saith yet again in David, "My heart is inditing—or bubbling up—a good matter. I speak of the things I have made touching the King" (Psa. 45. 1). I have made, not other people's experience, but my own. Not dry stubble, but green pasture. An overflowing heart must precede an experimental witness. Not what others say about Christ, but what I know of Him.

BEWARE OF UNDIGESTED FOOD.
In these days of Bible Schools and Blackboard teaching there is a grave danger of getting the mind surcharged with material to be given out as it was, perhaps, taken in, without prayer and meditation, or assimilation, undigested food. The brain may take in many times more than the spiritual system can digest. A busy brain with a slothful spirit. A grasping intellect
with a poverty-stricken soul. Hence, alas, in many cases the cold, passionless and ineffective preaching so prevalent to-day. Let us fight this monstrous unreality with earnest prayer and ceaseless meditation.

Read prayerfully I Cor. 2.

“And I took the little book... and ate it up... And he said unto me, Thou must prophesy again” (Rev. 10. 10, 11). “Eat this roll, and go and speak to the house of Israel” (Ezek. 3. 1).

“Lord, speak to me, that I may speak
     In living echoes of Thy tone:
     As Thou hast sought, so let me seek
     Thy erring children, lost and lone.

“O lead me, Lord, that I may lead
     The wandering and wavering feet,
     O feed me, Lord, that I may feed
     Thy hungering ones with manna sweet.

“O use me, Lord, use even me,
     Just as Thou wilt, and when, and where;
     Until Thy blessed face I see,
     Thy rest, Thy joy, Thy glory share.”

HOW ARE WE TREATING THE BIBLE?

How are we treating the Word of God? Some scorn it, others criticize it, some cut it in pieces, choosing that which pleases them and rejecting the rest. But we do not belong to any of these cults, we accept it as it stands, we believe that it is divinely inspired. The Bible is to us the veritable Word of God to be accepted wholly as such. Yes, but how are we treating it? The architect draws his plans not that they may be prized and applauded as wonderful pictures but that they may be built up into visible and useful homes. If you were a builder and had received the plans for a building from an architect and you framed them in gold and hung them in the best room in your house, would that satisfy him? Would it be treating him well? Would it not be dishonouring him and his work? Surely he would resent your treatment of them and demand to have them returned that he might give them to some other builder who would put them to that use for which he laboured on them.

Do you see the point of the parable? What wonderful plans there are drawn out for us in God’s Book. In it is set before us every line and detail of a life that will please Him; by taking heed to it we may build up, upon a solid foundation, gold, silver, and precious stones, a veritable temple for God. But are we so treating the Word of God? Being doers of it and not hearers only? We make much of the Bible, we read it, we circulate it, we say we believe it, but do we do it? If not, we are framing it in gold and admiring it as a thing of beauty, and our admiration of it is hypocrisy and our loudest applause is our loudest lie. (Adapted.)

Preach with the Fear of God.

It is not the sermon in your head, or the notes in your notebook, that will enable you to carry the word of life to men, but as you receive the word from God. Pass not by His door on your way to your service. Spend time in His presence, for the preparation of the heart and the answer of the tongue are from the Lord.
ANOINTING, SEALING, EARNEST.

II. Cor. 1. 19 - 22.

THE commanding object and theme of the preaching of Paul and his companions in labour, was “the Son of God.” On this sure foundation the truths they announced remained in absolute stability. No question of “Yea and Nay,” no uncertainty as to whether circumstances might alter the result, or personal considerations change the outlook, could be entertained for a moment. In the supreme excellence of the person of the Son of God everything is “Yea.” But the thought may arise that while this is unquestionable on His side, is there not the possibility of doubt on our side? No, and for the following reason: we are “in Christ.” This is not a matter of promise, but a present reality, ever abiding, a finality which nothing can change. “In Him” is the position which the grace of God has accorded to us in Christ who is “the Yea.”

Then He is also “the Amen,” securing the final result, and already by the Spirit, producing in the heart and life the affirmation to the revelation of the truth, corresponding to the high and holy position granted to us. God made promises to Abraham, David and others, and pledged Himself by word and oath to make them good, but long years have passed and this He has not yet done. For there was something more in the mind of God than merely to give to these objects of His promise certain things, and make them possessors of wealth and dignity. He desired to display Himself, for in this the full blessing of every creature consists, not simply in being blessed but in the knowledge of the Blesser. It has pleased Him to postpone the fulfilment of His promises in order to show at the same time the riches of His grace, and reveal the eternal purpose of His heart, in forming in new creation the church, which stands in relation to Christ the Son of God as His body and His bride. Hence, says the apostle, all the fulfilment of the promises shall be “to the glory of God by us,” for in Christ and the church shall be known to all ages the unsearchable love of God. To this end God has already firmly attached the saints to Christ. In this there is no question of feebleness or failure, for He who binds us fast to Christ is God. Love has established a bond that is unchangeable and eternal. But further, God has also anointed us (lit., put Christ upon us).

The Holy Spirit poured out upon the members on earth was first upon the Head in heaven, thus imparting the mind and character of Christ to the whole body. Not only apostles and prophets, but the very babes in Christ share in the anointing which teacheth us all things (1 John 2. 20). Feeble may be our apprehension of that which God has done, but nevertheless this is the favour He has bestowed upon us. Accepting it by faith we are lifted out of the region of man’s reasoning and thoughts into the pure light of God, and there is opened to us the treasures of divine wisdom and knowledge which are in Christ the Head.

To make assurance doubly sure it is added, “Who also has sealed us.” God only seals that which He approves, and which, suited to Himself, He claims as His own possession. This involves for us the whole question of redemption by the cross of Christ. God the Father sealed His Son (John 6. 27), for in Him was all His delight, and that same
good pleasure now rests upon those who, purchased by His blood, are accepted in the Beloved. The seal of God is the Owner's mark—it is for Himself; and the knowledge that this is upon us, is blessed security for our hearts. But further, the Spirit is “the earnest,” the pledge and token of all that will be ours when we dwell above.

It would not satisfy the heart of God only to make known to us the wonder of the place and position in which we are set, but already the same Spirit is the earnest of our inheritance, bringing to us the foretaste of the glory to follow, and the love that fills the Father's home. Blessedly is this known, in the abiding of the Father and the Son with him who walks in obedience to the commandments of Christ. It is to this last we must give heed, if we are to know the present values that are “in Christ.” In the attaching, anointing and sealing, we contemplate what God has done, but how far are we living upon the Earnest and ever drinking deeper of that fountain of living water which springs up unto eternal life?

“BEHOLD, WHAT MANNER OF LOVE!”

CONSIDER this love of God that has called you one of His sons. Look, and look upon it until it warms and fills your heart. Let it occupy your thoughts and feelings. It will not be real to you unless you think about it. If you had a friend at the other side of the earth and never thought about him, it would be all one to you as if he were dead. If he were really dear to you you would think about him, and the degree in which you think of Christ and see in Him the love of God is a fairly accurate measure of His preciousness to you and of your Christianity.

You will have to look away resolutely from the dazzling gauds of the earth if you are to see the far-off lustre of the heavenly love, and if it has to become to you a living bright reality. There are people who will light a candle in a thunderstorm so that they may not see the lightning, so many Christians have their hearts filled with the twinkle light of some miserable tapers of earthly care and pursuits, which, though they may be dim and smoky, are bright enough to make it hard to see the silent depths of heaven, though it blaze with a myriad stars. If you hold a sixpence close enough up to the pupil of your eye, it will keep you from seeing the sun. And if you hold the world close to your heart and mind, as many do, you will only see, round the rim of it, the least tiny ring of the overlapping love of God. What the world lets you see you will see, and the world will take care that you see very little—not enough to do you any good, not enough to deliver you from its chains.

If you have ever had some glimpse of that wondrous love, and have ever been drawn by it to cry, Abba, Father, do not let the trifles which do not belong to your inheritance draw you away from it. Turn away your eyes from beholding vanity and look upon the things that are not seen. Look to the unspeakable, incomparable, immeasurable love of God in giving up His Son for our salvation. “Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us that we should be called the sons of God.”
ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

"This Day Have I Begotten Thee."

"In the paper contributed by W. M. Rule on Hebrews 1., in your August number, it is stated (page 176) that the words, 'Thou art My Son, this day have I begotten Thee' (Ps. 2.), refer to the incarnation of the Lord. Is this correct? In view of Acts 13. 33, it would appear that this refers to His resurrection. I would be glad of help."—M., GLASGOW.

WE believe that our contributor's exposition of this passage is right, the statement refers to the Lord in incarnation, according to the angel's message to Mary: "That holy thing that shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God." The heathen raged at His presence here in the world, and the rulers took counsel together against Him, and "the princes of this world crucified the Lord of glory." But their rage and plotting were all in vain, for God's Son, despised and rejected of men as He was, is by God's decree, as well as by His own right as Heir of all things, to have universal dominion. Resurrection, of course, was necessary for this, for all God's purposes and decrees are established in resurrection.

The same passage is quoted from Ps. 2., as you point out, in Acts 13. But here again it is incarnation, and not resurrection, that is in view. God fulfilled the promises made to the fathers, by raising up Jesus; the word "again" should not be in verse 33. (See J. N. D.'s and other translations.) As God had raised up Joseph, Moses and others to be deliverers of His people, so He raised up Jesus, of whom they were but types, and as the fathers rejected these God-sent deliverers at first, so had Jesus been rejected and laid in a sepulchre; but God raised Him up from the dead (verse 34). From that verse onward the raising up again is resurrection. But God was faithful to His promise to the fathers by first presenting Jesus to their children as the Messiah; they refused Him, and on the ground of responsibility forfeited all claim to blessing, but God did not fail. He raised up Christ from the dead and offers blessing on the principle of faith, which could not be obtained by law (see verses 38, 39).

The Sojourn of the Israelites: was it 430 or 400 years?

"Is there any explanation to the following: Gen. 15. 13, 'They shall afflict them 400 years'; Exod. 12. 40, 'Now the sojourn of the children of Israel, who dwelt in Egypt, was 430 years'; Acts 7. 6, 'And God spake on this wise, That His seed should sojourn in a strange land; and they should bring them into bondage, and entreat them evil 400 years'; Gal. 3. 17, 'The covenant, that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law which was 430 years after, cannot annul'? I want to give an intelligent and helpful answer."—SOMERSET.

THE 430 years' "sojourn of the children of Israel" of Exodus 12, evidently commenced at the call of Abram. From that day he and his seed were sojourners in Canaan, Egypt, etc. The Septuagint renders this passage, "And the sojourn of the children of Israel [while they sojourned in the land of Egypt and in the land of Canaan] was four hundred and thirty years." Galatians 3. 17 agrees with this, for the covenant of which it speaks was made with Abram when God called him, and the law was given soon after the Exodus. The term "children of Israel" (Exod. 12. 40) is a generic term and includes Abram, Isaac and Jacob.

The 400 years of Genesis 15. had in view the history of Abram's SEED.
The prediction was specially made in regard to the promises made to him of an heir and inheritance. The history of the seed could not begin until the seed appeared, and was recognized as such. The recognition of Isaac as the seed or heir took place at the time of his weaning, when Abraham made a great feast to celebrate the event; then Ishmael, who up to that time had occupied the place of heir, was superseded and cast out. The history of the strangership and suffering of the seed began then and lasted 400 years, when God in fulfilment of His word brought them out of bondage to the inheritance that He had reserved for them. Martin Anstey, in his book, "The Romance of Bible Chronology," gives these periods as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period Description</th>
<th>Years</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>From the call of Abram to the marriage of Hagar</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From the marriage of Hagar to the birth of Ishmael</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From the birth of Ishmael to the birth of Isaac</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From the birth of Isaac to his recognition as the Seed, and the casting out of Ishmael</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From the weaning of Isaac to the going down into Egypt</td>
<td>185</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From the going down into Egypt to the Exodus</td>
<td>215</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>430</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Children's Bread Cast to Dogs.

"Would you kindly give some light on Mark 7. 24–30 particularly verse 27?"—SURREY.

This incident must be read in the sequence of events as they are recorded in Matthew's and Mark's Gospels. These Gospels have very definitely the presentation of the Lord to the Jewish nation as their character, and so are more dispensational than the other two. In the progress of events it is evident that at this point in the record the Jews and their leaders would not have the grace that Jesus had brought to them, they were determined to hold on to their law-keeping and traditions, external things only, regardless of their corrupt inward condition. Read chap. 7. 1–23.

Consequently the Lord withdraws from the land for a time, indicating a crisis in His relations with the nation. Then appears this Grecian woman and cries to Him for help. In Matthew's Gospel we are told that she appealed to Him as Son of David. On that ground she had no claim upon Him at all. He had been sent to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, they stood nationally in the relationship of children to whom the bread that they despised had been sent. She was outside all that; her place was that of a dog without a claim. Would she take this place and cast herself upon the unmerited, uncovenanted, sovereign mercy of the Lord? Yes, she does both.

It was as though she said, "I know that I have no rights; I am outside Israel and Israel's blessings, but the mercy that You have brought is too great to be confined to Israel, the table must overflow because of who You are, and the overflow will satisfy me." She got all she desired, and the Lord rejoiced in her faith (see Matthew 15. 28). It was an indication that the Gentiles would accept the unmerited mercy that the Jews rejected. A beautiful illustration of Ephesians 2. 11, 12, 13.
Investments.

"Ought a Christian to lend out his money either to an individual or a bank for interest? Is it consistent with the teaching of Scripture to deposit money collected at the Lord’s Table in a bank for interest? Does Amos 2. 6 give any help on these questions? —PERSIA.

There is no Scripture that we know of that would forbid a Christian from lending his money, or investing it in any legitimate business, or putting it in a bank for interest. He may do this with a good conscience if he is satisfied with legitimate returns and is not making haste to get rich. It is simply using the world but not abusing it (1 Cor. 7. 31).

We should say that money collected for the work of the Lord ought to be put into immediate circulation for the object for which it was collected, but if it were a question of money taken to meet expenses as they arise we should say that it would be better and safer in a bank than anywhere else. No, Amos 2. 6 has nothing at all to say to such a matter. It describes the avarice of the leaders of Israel, who had no care for the souls of God’s people but only thought of enriching themselves and of their own comfort, for which transgression God’s judgment was to come upon them.

TOGETHER.

"Jesus should die . . . that He should gather together in one the children of God that are scattered abroad” (John 11. 51, 52).

Where two or three are gathered together in My name there am I in the midst of them” (Matthew 18. 20).

‘Stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel” (Phil. 1. 27).

“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).

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

“Wherefore comfort one another with these words” (1 Thess. 4. 16–18).

“Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another: and the Lord hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before Him for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon His name” (Malachi 3. 16).
THE CLOSING TESTIMONY.

An Address on the Coming Again of the Lord Jesus.

"I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and Morning Star. And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely."—Revelation 22. 16 and 17.

I HAVE good news for you, my friends, the best of news—the One who loves us and who died for us is coming back again. This is not good news to everybody. A very religious young lady once said to me: "The doctrine of the second advent seems to give you pleasure; it fills me with horror." Ah, but that was because she did not know the One who is coming. If she had known Him as He speaks of Himself here, she would not have been afraid. He says, "I JESUS," and there are no terrors in that Name to those who believe. The New Testament begins with Jesus. It is the book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the Son of David, the Son of Abraham, and in the first chapter of it in our authorized version, this precious name occurs in capital letters. It is the title of the Book. "Thou shalt call His Name JESUS, for He shall save His people from their sins." And it is the same Person whose first coming is recorded for us in the beginning of the Testament, who tells us of His coming again at the end of it.

His name, given at His birth, means Saviour. It is the most precious and glorious of all names, but He had to make good His title to it if He was to bear it for ever, and this He has done, not by His words of grace and works of compassion, though these could only have been uttered and wrought by Him, but by His death upon the cross. The reason for His death had to be declared, the charge against Him had to be written, and so we read, "And when they were come unto a place called Golgotha, that is to say, a place of a skull . . . they crucified Him . . . and set up over His head His accusation written. THIS IS JESUS THE KING OF THE JEWS." And then they reviled Him, wagging their heads, and saying, "If Thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross." And the chief priests and leaders of the people joined in this mockery, and said, "He saved others; Himself He cannot save. If He be the King of Israel, let Him come down from the cross, and we will believe on Him." They did not understand the meaning of His Name. Because He was Jesus He could not come down from the cross, for if He had done so He must have relinquished His Name, He must have denied Himself, for He could not have been Jesus any more. How blind were these foes of His, their hatred of Him had so darkened their minds that they could not understand that He could not save Himself because of the Name He bore. If the Name of Jesus was to be set above every Name, and if He was to carry it up to the throne of God and bear it for ever as the sweetest name our ears have ever heard, then He must die, for only by His death could He be the Saviour of those who lay under death's power.

He could not save Himself and His apparent weakness became the jest of the Pharisees. "He cannot save Himself," scoffed they, and their jest passed from lip to lip in Jerusalem, and the mocking crowd laughed long and
But no malice or mockery could turn Him from His purpose. His love was stronger than their bitter hatred. He had come to be the Saviour, and so He did not, He could not, save Himself.

"Himself He could not save,
Love's stream too deeply flowed,
In love Himself He gave
To pay the debt we owed.
Obedience to His Father's will
And love to us did all fulfill."

But God hath raised Him from the dead, and made this same Jesus both Lord and Christ "that at the Name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth: and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of the Father" (Phil. 2.). But whether lying in the manger, or impaled upon the cross, or exalted to the throne, it is the same Jesus.

"I, JESUS HAVE SENT MINE ANGEL."

Yes, Jesus is the Lord of the angels, they obey His will and do His bidding. This Angel was so great and glorious that John the Apostle had thought him divine, and would have rendered divine honours to him (chaps. 19. 10; 22, 8), but he had restrained him, saying, "I am thy fellow-servant." John and he served one Master, and that Master was Jesus. He says to the angels, "Go! and they go." They are under His command, who died for us. Consider, I pray you, my friends, the greatness of our Saviour, He is supreme in heaven, all obey Him there, and soon He will be supreme on earth, for He says:

"I AM THE ROOT AND THE OFFSPRING OF DAVID."

This title means that He is the divine, incarnate King, that all power and majesty and dominion on earth belong to Him. The Old Testament glows with many prophecies and promises as to peace and blessing upon earth, and every one of them shall be fulfilled when He reigns in righteousness. He is the One who made the promises, for He is the root of David, and He is the One who will fulfill every promise He has made, for He is David's Son. It was of Him that David thought when he sang: "David the son of Jesse said, and the man who was raised up on high, the anointed of the God of Jacob, and the sweet psalmist of Israel said, The Spirit of the Lord speak by me, and His word was in my tongue. The God of Israel said, The Rock of Israel speaks unto me, He that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God. And He shall be as the light of the morning, when the sun riseth, even a morning without clouds; as the tender grass springing out of the earth after rain. Although my house be not so with God, yet hath He made it not to grow" (2 Sam. 23).

In this title divine and human glories unite. JESUS IS DAVID'S LORD AND DAVID'S SON. And this is the great test for every man, for no man has a right to the name of Christian who denies either one or the other. You will remember that this was the test that the Lord put to the Pharisees when He was on earth. "What think ye of Christ? Whose son is He?" They said, "He is 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? They were dumb and had no answer to
this great mystery. It is a mystery to us also, for we cannot explain it. But what we cannot explain we can believe, and in the Person of Jesus we see God and Man, the Root and the Offspring of David.

David was a foreshadowing of our Lord Jesus Christ. He was the warrior king and established his kingdom by power, and so it will be when the Lord comes to reign, as the 19th chapter of this book clearly shows. We are all acquainted with David's story, than which none more enthralling was ever told. When Goliath of Gath tyrannized over Israel, and when no man was found who dared to fight with him, David stood forth and made short work of him, he closed his boastful mouth, and laid his huge carcass dead in the dust. He delivered Israel from the great foe and proved himself to be God's anointed and the true king of Israel. But his rights were not acknowledged by the people, for Saul, the man of flesh, held the throne, and David was forced into exile, a king indeed, but a king rejected, and his rights refused. But there were some who joined themselves to him during the time of his exile. They were a motley crowd. Some were in debt, others were in distress and all were discontented, but David became captain over them, and moulded and fashioned them according to his own will; and they became David's men. They knew that he was the rightful king, and so they threw in their lot with him, that wherever he was, whether in life or in death, there they would be.

This is the time of the true King's rejection. The world has said of Jesus, "We will not have this Man to reign over us." But we have believed on Him as our Saviour, and know that He gained a great victory for us over the power and the devil and death when He died for us, and we have owned Him as the rightful King, while the world rejects Him as Lord. We may have been as strange a people as were David's men when first they came to him. Indeed, we were debtors, with nothing to pay, and we were distressed, for our sins lay like a heavy load upon our souls and we were afraid of God and judgment to come, and we were discontented, for the world had failed to fill our hearts, but when we came to Jesus we found that He was able to meet all our needs. He eased our distress, and He frankly forgave our debts, satisfied our hearts, and so we sing to Him:

"Now none but Christ can satisfy, No other Name for me; There's love and life and lasting joy, Lord Jesus, found in Thee."

He has done much for us, and what has been our response? Have we, like David's men, thrown in our lot with Him? And are we ready to suffer with Him if need's be, and to be scorned and rejected for His dear Name's sake? If that be so we shall have the opportunity of rejoicing that we are counted worthy to suffer shame for His Name, like the apostles in Acts 5.

Now David's men looked forward to the crowning day, and they did not look in vain, it came at last, and when he went up to Hebron, and was acknowledged as king by the men of Judah, we are told, "And his men that were with him did David bring up, every man with his household (2 Samuel 2.). We also may look forward to the crowning day, when our Lord shall have His rights, and shall be universally owned. This is a hope that maketh not ashamed, it will not disappoint us. "For yet a little while, and He that shall come will come, and will not tarry." What a thrill it gives us as we think of the day of His glory, that in the very world..."
where He was dishonoured and executed He shall receive homage and praise. In that day He will not forget those who have been loyal to Him in the time of His rejection, for “it is a faithful saying, If we suffer, we shall also reign with Him.” But before He shines forth as the Sun of righteousness with healing in His wings, before all the world beholds the splendour of His majesty, He will reveal Himself to His redeemed and watching church. He is the root and the offspring of David, and as such He has title to universal dominion, and will take up all that He has title to. But He is more than that. He is

THE BRIGHT AND MORNING STAR.

He will bring in the day of glory, but before the dawn of it He shines as the bright star of the morning, and as such we shall see Him. May we not say that even now He has shone into our hearts, and we are looking with an eager expectation for Him? Let us not fear the darkness of the night, more dense than ever, it may be, but the day is coming, and before it comes, the morning star will shine forth for us. “For the Lord, Himself, shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and the trump of God, and the dead in Christ shall rise first, then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air, and so shall we ever be with the Lord.”

THE SPIRIT AND THE BRIDE SAY, COME.

Could it be otherwise? The Spirit ever desires His glory and His labouring ceaselessly with that in view, but the blood-bought bride desires it too. And another desire fills her heart, she longs to see Him whom she has not yet seen, for His love has won her heart, and to see Him as He is, and to be with Him, before His glory shines for the deliverance of this groaning creation, this is her hope and desire, and it shall be fulfilled. But what a triumph of God is this, that the hearts of His ransomed pilgrims should be brought into such complete consonance with His own heart, that the Spirit’s cry and theirs is one. Yes, we can sing—

Shine forth, O Lord, Thou bright and morning Star!
Come, quickly come! Thy people waiting are
To see Thy light dispel the deepening gloom:
Waiting the power that vanquishes the tomb.
Shine forth, O Lord, and drive away our fears,
Fulfil our hopes, and give us joy for tears;
Shout, shout the word that bids Thy dead arise,
And calls Thy saints to meet Thee in the skies.
Shine forth, O Lord, come soon for Thy redeemed,
For those on whom Thy tender love has beamed;
Thy pilgrim saints oft weary in the way
Cry out for Thee—Star of the coming day!
Shine forth, O Lord, by sorrow oft baptized,
We quit the world, and all things by it prized,
Shake ourselves free from every earthly care,
And onward press to meet Thee in the air.
Shine forth, O Lord, and claim Thy blood-bought bride,
Put forth Thy power and raise her to Thy side.
We wait the hour when our glad shout shall be—
That death is swallowed up in victory.
Shine forth, O Lord, and bring to pass the day
When every clime shall own Thy rightful sway.
When all mankind before Thy throne shall fall,
And heaven and earth shall crown Thee Lord of all.

AND LET HIM THAT HEareth SAY, COME.

Let no heart be silent. If any amongst us have been sleeping, like the virgins in the parable, let us awake, for, “Behold, the Bridegroom cometh!” Many are praying for revival. This is the revival we need, a revival
of fervent love for Christ that shall make us long for His coming, and cry out for it. No heart is right that is not right here, to be indifferent to this is to have left our first love. Nothing can make up for the lack of this, nothing will satisfy the heart of Christ but this, and from this it is always Satan's endeavour to seduce the saints. Awake, sleeping Christian! Hear the word. You have been espoused to one husband, that you might be presented as a chaste virgin to Christ. His coming draweth near, He says to you, I am the bright, and morning Star. Oh, hear His voice, and as you hear unite your voice with that of the Spirit, and cry, Come.

AND LET HIM THAT IS ATHIRST COME. AND WHOSOEVER WILL, LET HIM TAKE OF THE WATER OF LIFE FREELY.

If our hearts are right Christward they will be right manward, if they are full of affection for Him they will be full of compassion for the weary and thirsty world. The glorious hope of the Lord's Second Coming will not make us mere mystics, shutting ourselves off from the needs of the world as though they were no concern of ours. No, as our hope grows our activities will increase, and, thank God, we have good news for thirsting men. It is that the water of life is free. God's offer goes out in its fullness and freeness to whosoever will take it. It is His last offer, His last appeal. How wonderful it is that in the closing words of this Book of Judgments there should ring out this silver gospel note, so clear, so blessed. God grant that it may be more continually upon our lips.

The Book closes with the last words of our Lord to His church on earth. "Surely I come quickly, Amen." Then comes the response of the church to that last word. "Even so, Come, Lord Jesus." Then the Holy Ghost gathers up all the thoughts of God's heart for us in this present time into one comprehensive benediction. "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with all the saints." Nothing more can be added to that. The glory shines before us, but until we enter into it and are satisfied with Jesus for ever, His grace—the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ—will be upon and with us all. Amen.

LET US NOT SLEEP.

"Let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober."—1 Thess. 5. 6.

The saint's sleeping time is the devil's tempting time. No temptation is so weak but it is strong enough to overcome the Christian who has been lulled into a false security. Samson slept and lost his strength. We are not long off our watch before the devil hears of it; he watches if we don't.

The watching is for Christ, and it is the heart that watches; and we are to watch because we know not the hour when He will come. How foolish are those who fixed dates for this great event. If the date were known then might we go to sleep and awake in time for it, but that would not suit the saint that loves the Lord: his heart is awake and longing for his Lord's return.

We need the armour of light; the breastplate of faith and love must be buckled on to protect the heart from the snares and assaults of the darkness, and the helmet, the hope of salvation, to preserve our minds from numbing influences of the world. The passage shows us the Christian—alert, energetic, wholehearted, triumphant!
LOVE.

"He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love" (1 John 4.8).

God is love, with the accent upon the holy Name. It expresses totality and is the sum of all the attributes. Justice is as truly a manifestation of God's love as is the red ray in the solar spectrum a phase of pure sunlight. God is love unchanging, whether expressed in rolling thunder or the "still small voice." The Spirit does not say that love is God, neither does He say that "God is love and nothing else," but He does say "God is Light." Light is the sphere where love is displayed. Light was ever there, but in Gen. 1.3, Love turned towards chaos saying, "Let light appear," and light was. Dual perfection, "Light" and "Love."

Everything which perfect light demands, perfect love supplies. Love is God's great dynamic, and is behind everything He says and everything He does, His words and His works. Behold His

PERFECT LOVE BEHIND CREATION.

In Psalm 8. David considers creation, and cries, "Why?" "What," and the ready answer comes, "Man" and the "Son of Man"; and Solomon in Proverbs 8. lifts the veil of time and reveals Jehovah's Fellow—the One by Whom God created all things—in sweet counsel with Himself, whilst we hear Him describing His pre-creatiorial fellowship and equality, "rejoicing in the habitable parts of His earth, and His delights with the sons of men."

Think of it! Rejoicing in the yet uncreated earth, and in the "sons of men" before there was a man; thus introducing redemption from the fall, because until man fell there were no sons to redeem. Therefore love found its delights in the sons of men, whom He foreknew, predestinated, called, justified, and even glorified in His immutable purpose, when there was no earth, and when there were no "sons of men."

God's almighty love hid the church in the womb of time and in His book of life, every member, every name, "while as yet there was none of them" (Psa. 139.16).

"Father, 'twas Thy love that knew us, Earth's foundation long before: That same love to Jesus drew us, By its sweet constraining power, And will keep us safely, now and evermore."

THE ELECTION OF ISRAEL WAS MOTIVATED BY THE LOVE OF GOD.

As He tells them so sweetly in Deut. 7.7, "The Lord did not set His love upon you nor choose you because ye were more in number than any people, but because He loved you" (italics mine throughout). And again, chapter 10.15, "Only the Lord had a delight in thy fathers to love them, and He chose their seed after them . . . even you above all people." He loved and chose, and chose because He loved, and made with Abraham His great seven-fold everlasting "by faith" and "by grace" covenant. Compare Rom. 4. and Gal. 3.

COVENANT LOVE.

Behold the actings of covenant love which foresaw those four hundred years of hard, bitter and grinding bondage in the enemy land and provided for the deliverance of His people whom He loved. Israel forgot "but God remembered His covenant" (Exod. 2.24), and reaffirmed it with seven verbs at the bush in those touching words to Moses, saying, "I have surely seen the affliction of My people . . .

(Samuel Levenmorf.)
I know their sorrows... and I am come down to deliver them, and to bring them out unto a good land."

Not to make them His people, but because they were. He did not redeem them that they might be His people, but because they were already the objects of

**REDEMPTIVE LOVE.**

Again He says to Pharaoh, "Israel is My son... let him go" (Exod. 4. 23). Not that he may become My son, but because He is. Redemption was not first, but ownership and relationship. So also with the Christian in 1 Pet. 1. The Holy Ghost does not begin with redemption, but with the Father's election and foreknowledge of His people before time, and then the work of the Spirit in time, setting them apart to obedience and sprinkling of the blood. The Spirit does not put our belief of the truth first, but last. So that the Passover was not the beginning of Israel's salvation, but only of their experience of it, nor even the covenant given in Genesis 15. and confirmed at the bush; nor even the Passover lamb. We must go back to God's Lamb "Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world," etc. (1 Pet. 1. 19). Electing love is behind redeeming love. First things first. Electing love made them His people and redeeming love brought Him down to deliver them.

It is the same with the church for which Paul felt bound to thank God for the Thessalonians (2 Thess. 2. 13) because they were first "beloved of the Lord" who from the beginning chose them unto salvation: (as it is in Ephes. 1., every blessing—their predestination, adoption, acceptance, and redemption being "according as He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world"). So also with the Thessalonians, "chosen unto salvation through sanctification (setting apart) of the Spirit and belief of the truth, whereunto He called you by our gospel." Blessed and everlastingly precious is this three-fold cord of the salvation of God. Elect by the Father, redeemed by the Son, and set apart by the new birth of the Spirit.

In Jer. 31. 3 we have in a most beautiful setting

**GOD'S EVERLASTING LOVE.**

"The Lord hath appeared of old unto me, saying, I have loved thee with an everlasting love, therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee." Loved in eternity past, and drawn in the gospel present. Our Lord tells us (John 6. 44) that only such can come to Him. But note that sweet word drawn, not driven. God draws, Satan drives. Drawing spells liberty, driving bondage. Drawing belongs to the kingdom of God's dear Son, but driving to the kingdom of darkness.

Jehovah, in one of the very sweetest of all His many heart-revealings, whispers forth the seven-ply cord of eternal love in Hosea 11. 1-4, starting, as always, with love, the great cause. Then, in turn, come love's effects, for Israel is "called"—taught—led—healed—drawn and fed; carrying our thoughts onward to that heavenly scene in Rev. 7. 13-17, when "The Lamb that is in the midst of the throne shall feed them and lead them unto living fountains of water." The Lord draws us because He loved us.

As the Spirit-taught Dr. Doddridge so sweetly hymns it:

"Drawn by such cords, we onward move,
Till round Thy throne we meet;
And captives in the chains of love,
Embrace our Saviour's feet."

And from the same pen,

"Tis done! the great transaction's done
I am my Lord's, and He is mine;
He drew me, and I followed on,
Glad to confess the voice divine"
“He drew me.” Everlasting love in the past drawing me with loving-kindness in the present.

And what heart is so hard as not to be touched by the familiar words:—

“I’ve found a Friend; oh, such a Friend! He loved me ere I knew Him; He drew me with the cords of love, And thus He bound me to Him.”

Cause and effect again. Blessed gospel for aliens and enemies.

LOVE INCOMPARABLE!

What illustration drawn from nature or circumstance dare one compare with the cup which His Father gave to His beloved Son? (John 18.11). What suffering is comparable with His when “He made His soul an offering for sin”? His “soul,” mind you. His material or physical sufferings were only a tiny drop in the boundless ocean of His soul’s agony. For in that cup He drank, was found the indignation of God’s wrath against every sin of every one of His children. A hell in every sin.

As Kelly so worthily expresses it:—

“Jesus the curse sustains!
Guilt’s bitter cup He drains!
Nothing for us remains—
Nothing but love.”

And again,

“God is its blessed source,
Death ne’er can stop its course,
Nothing can stay its force,
Matchless it is.”

The cross is the grave of all comparison.

Our Lord puts the limit to human love in John 15.13. “Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lays down his life for his friend.” That is its limit. “But God commendeth His love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us” (Rom. 5.8).

Love divine operating in David says, “Is there not yet any of the house of Saul that I may show the kindness of God unto him?” (2 Sam. 9.3). The kindness of God: only such would suffice. The kindness of David is seen, not in comparison, but in contrast, in the next chapter where he says, “I will show kindness unto Hanun the son of Nahash, as his father showed kindness unto me.” Quid pro quo. Something for something. Human love can go no farther.

A nurse told me that she was in the Absolute Ward of a certain hospital, i.e., the ward for incurables. We surely have God’s Absolute Ward in Rom. 5.

Here are some of His patients: Verse 6, “ungodly”; then verse 8, “sinners”; verse 10, “enemies”; verse 18, “condemned”; and verse 19, “disobedient”: five-fold absolute ruin. But absolute grace prevails over absolute ruin, and so sin’s absolutes become God’s eligibles.

Philanthropy—the love of man—must not be mistaken for Philo Christy, or the love of Christ. This is expressed by the Spirit in Rev. 1.5, 6, as He alone could, in that doxology, “Unto Him that loved us, and loosed us from our sins in His own blood, and made us kings and priests to God and His Father, be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.”

LOVED!—LOOSED!—LIFTED!

Love, God’s great dynamic, then loosed and lifted, because He loved us.

The gospel concerning Christ (Rom. 1.16) is the perfect expression of God’s love and His dynamic to save all believers. That is the text, and the whole New Testament is the sermon. Thus Paul speaks to Timothy of “The gospel according to the dynamic of God, Who hath saved us, and called us, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began” (2 Tim. 1.8,9). And again to Titus of the
hope of eternal life, which God that cannot lie promised before the world began, but manifested through preaching. Love, timeless, dateless, everlasting as its source.

LOVE'S TREASURY

is found chiefly in John's first Epistle, and is an extensive and intensive commentary upon John 3. 16 (possibly the most abused of any verse in the Bible).

IN TIME OF TROUBLE.

THERE is an old proverb, "He that would learn to pray let him go to sea." The meaning is that storms will make men turn to God, and it is well when they do. Yet it is better to pray before the storm, for then has a man a sure anchor when the storm breaks upon him. I called to see a stricken woman, for many years she had lived without any illness at all, but an accident had laid her upon her bed an helpless invalid for life. It appeared to be a sad case, and one calling for pity and sympathy; but what did I find? I found her radiant instead of depressed, giving thanks instead of murmuring. Yes, the calamity had not shaken her faith. She knew whom she had believed, and when the trouble came she had a Friend and refuge. She had walked with God in the bright days and she knew that He would not forsake her in the day of trouble.

God will not fail, even if we do, for His mercy endureth for ever,—and He has said, Call upon Me in the day of trouble. And He hears when we call. But I am setting before you a more excellent way: to call upon Him before the trouble, to make His acquaintance at once and let it be renewed daily. We are exhorted to learn of the ant that gathers its meat in the summer time; it does not neglect its opportunities and consequently when they fail and the winter time withdraws supplies it is not impoverished. Let us make the most of the present opportunities and gather in a store of spiritual blessing in an increased knowledge of God, so that when winter comes we shall have food, and when the storm breaks we may have a refuge, or a strong anchor, and have time not only to pray because of our need, but have time to praise also, because of the One who is greater than our greatest need could be.

If you would have Bible incidents to illustrate this, enquire of Daniel, and learn how that when the decree went forth that meant death to him, he opened his windows and kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God as he did aforetime (Dan. 6. 10). And then enquire of Paul and Silas in the jail at Philippi, and learn how that when they were made to suffer the most outrageous injustice, they spent the hours in prayer and praise to God (Acts 16.). These things have been written for our learning, and what lessons they teach, and what a Teacher God is, and what He was to Daniel and to Paul, He will be to you and to me, even though we be the most obscure and weakest of all His children.
STUDIES IN THE LIFE OF MOSES—III.  (R. McCALLUM.)

THERE is real dignity on the part of Moses and Aaron as they enter the royal presence and confront Pharaoh with the divine mandate, “Thus saith the Lord, let My people go that they may hold a feast unto me in the wilderness.” Although there is no discourtesy in the message, there is nothing obsequious in it, and the great Pharaoh is moved to indignant wrath because he is presented with a command and not with a cringing petition. Human weakness would have dictated a formulation of the divine request less odious to the recipient and one which would have pandered suitably to his distinguished station, but as faithful servants of the Lord they declared His message as they had received it—short, precise, imperative. How easy it is to tone down the commands of God, lest they should insult and injure human pride, until they have lost not only their poignancy but also their power!

It is clear from the narrative that the demand was first of all for a short respite from their tasks in order that they might go a three days’ journey into the wilderness to sacrifice to God. This was no mere subterfuge to effect a permanent escape from slavery, for such an artifice would be condemned by righteous men, and therefore could not be approved of God. True, it did not represent Jehovah’s full or final purpose for Israel. He would deliver completely and for ever from Egyptian bondage. Nevertheless the request as made was a bona fide one and its design is evident. It was just such a respite that was demanded as was long overdue, and was so pre-eminently just and modest that it should have commended itself to the sense of right as developed even in a despotic Pharaoh. Think of it—a century of unremitting toil, requited only with the lash, with-

out even a break to worship the Lord their God, has been rendered to the Pharaohs, and yet they are denied their reasonable request. Combined with this brutal and inhuman treatment there is the persistent, scornful and wilful refusal to recognize the claims of God which brought upon him in due course condign and irrevocable judgment. Yet God is gracious even when He is most unmistakably revealed as a Judge, and there can be little doubt that His dealings with Pharaoh were designed primarily to dispel His ignorance of Jehovah and to demonstrate the wisdom of rendering obedience to such a God. Had this lesson been learned the extreme severity of God would have been avoided and His mercy tasted. “Who is the Lord that I should obey Him?” Proud, obstinate, foolish Pharaoh, thou shalt yet be taught!

The interview had not only poor success but proved disastrous to the people. It was with the utmost contempt that he inquired, “Wherefore do ye Moses and Aaron let the people from their works?” and commanded, “Get you unto your burdens.” And so God’s intervention through His servants secured for the people this additional burden. Straw would no longer be provided them; they themselves must gather stubble instead of straw, yet the tale of bricks must not be diminished. Such a proposition proved hopelessly unworkable in spite of the lash laid to the backs of the officers of Israel, who, at length, ignoring the services of Moses and Aaron as representatives and leaders, went personally to make their protest to Pharaoh. “But he said, Ye are idle, ye are idle: therefore ye say, Let us go and do sacrifice to the Lord.” And so as they came from the palace,
disconsolate and embittered, they taunted the two aged servants of God with the ill-service they had rendered to their brethren. Judged by results the mission of the two brothers had been a colossal failure, securing only a more acute bondage for the people, but apparent failure is no criterion where faithfulness to God is in question. One may be doing God's will faithfully and yet may earn the reproach of his brethren. Is there anything harder to bear than ingratitude and reproach from those whom one has served? Did not Moses feel it? In such circumstances there is but one resource for the man of God: it is where Moses found his. He will find the necessary and sufficient encouragement and support by unburdening his soul before the Lord in prayer.

Once more the assurance of ultimate triumph and of constant succour is conveyed in the declaration of His name. "And God spake unto Moses and said unto him, I am the Lord (Jehovah). And I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob by the name of God Almighty but by my name Jehovah was I not known to them." Critics have made merchandise of the fact that God was previously known as Jehovah, and that now it appears that that name is revealed for the first time. But the meaning of the name disposes of the difficulty and also illumines many a verse in the Old Testament which is otherwise obscure. Again and again we find as a conclusion to divine commands or threats, "I am the Lord" or "I am Jehovah," an ending which becomes solemnly impressive if we bear in mind that Jehovah bears the meaning "He who shall cause it to come to pass." It was as the One who would bring all His promises and purposes to perfect fruition and expose the futility of human obstruction that He made Himself known to Moses now. The form of the declaration intimated that there was about to be such a manifestation of the sovereign power of God in realizing His intentions regarding Israel as would make all former displays of His power appear insignificant. Has it not been so? The Exodus by way of the Red Sea, His sustaining care of the people during their sojourn in the wilderness, and their conquest of the Land of Promise have afforded a revelation of God as the Covenant-keeping One, without parallel throughout all the ages preceding His intervention in the days of Moses. Moses and Aaron are reminded, however, that the results promised will not materialize immediately. "But Pharaoh shall not hearken unto you, that I may lay my hands upon Egypt and bring forth Mine armies and My people, the Children of Israel, out of the land of Egypt by great judgments. And the Egyptians shall know that I am Jehovah when I stretch forth Mine hand upon Egypt and bring out the Children of Israel from among them."

The controversy which ensued was not merely between God and Pharaoh but was a conflict between the one true God and Egypt's false deities in which Pharaoh had a sublime trust and behind which there were the workings of Satanic power. By the sign preliminary to the plagues, Pharaoh was shown what the outcome of the conflict would be, for while the magicians of Egypt—the spiritualist adepts of that day—could counterfeit the God-given sign by transforming their rods into serpents, the end of every force that opposes itself to God was powerfully demonstrated in the complete extinction of their rods which were swallowed by Aaron's. While their achievement was calculated to
destroy the impression made by the sign given by God, this startling sequel was intended to arouse misgivings and inquiry. God was speaking and seeking to persuade him of His indubitable superiority to every hostile power, but Pharaoh resisted His striving and with the utmost imprudence refused to capitulate even to the Omnificent One.

This initial hardening of the heart against God paved the way for recurrences of such a folly, and we have afforded us in the history of this king a permanent beacon warning of the danger of ignoring God's commands. "He that being often reproved hardeneth his neck shall suddenly be cut off and that without remedy." There is a limit to divine forbearance, and the presumption of trading upon the goodness of God will not go unpunished for ever. The man who repudiates God's claims and has the temerity to harden his heart against the appeals of divine power and grace will find himself the object of God's judicial judgment and the subject of a process of hardening which we may fail in measure to understand, but which we recognize must be divinely just. "The very sun that melts the snow, congeals the clay."

There were nine plagues which preceded the last act of swift and terrible judgment, and these nine arrange themselves in three sets of three, the sets displaying an increasing intensity of judgment. In the first triad the comforts of the people throughout the whole land are affected; in the second triad their property is touched, but those in the land of Goshen enjoy immunity, and in the third all outside that favoured part of the land experience the blight of death and terrible destruction. Moreover, in the first two of each set there is an intimation of coming evil given to Pharaoh, but in the third of each the judgment comes without forewarning, teaching the lesson so wholesome to men, that the warnings of God when slighted are invariably followed by swift and unexpected judgment. It is interesting to notice, too, that in the two cases where the magicians were able to work like miracles they also proved their incompetence to reverse the processes and remove the scourges. The great, sinister, Satanic powers at work which alone account for the "black art" of these magicians, like all evil forces, operated to augment the curses and could do nothing to ameliorate the lot of men or to alleviate human suffering.

What consternation must have seized the Egyptians as they beheld their sacred river flowing as a tide of blood, until a week was fulfilled, while the fish of its waters perished and filled the air with hateful odours! The abominable transformation of water into blood was wrought in pools and in vessels of wood and of stone, and only wells sunk to collect, most probably, supplies from springs secured drinkable water for the people. Yet did not the heart of Pharaoh succumb. Probably soon afterwards there followed the renewal of the divine demand, and upon refusal God sent the plague of frogs. The frog was revered as an emblem of one of Egypt's goddesses. To kill it was sacrilege. And now frogs were to be found swarming everywhere: in the beds, ovens, and kneading troughs, and even before Egyptian eyes veneration must have given place to intense disgust. So great was the horror of this hideous visitation that it wrought in Pharaoh the first sign of relenting. "Then Pharaoh called for Moses and said, Intreat the Lord that He may take away the frogs from me and from my people, and I will let the people go that they may do sacrifice unto the Lord." Swift to show mercy
God removed the plague, according to
the request of Moses, but divine grace
was conceived as weakness, and “When
Pharaoh saw that there was respite he
hardened his heart.”

Confronted by the third miracle the
magicians have to admit defeat, and
they acknowledge that now the “finger
of God” is clearly seen, as the dust of
the earth is turned into lice. They
tried, however, to obtain life from that
which is inanimate but they failed.
Failure has marked every similar
endeavour, but alas! too few of the
experimentists have had the candour
to admit with them that this is the
work of God. Notice is taken in the
record of the fact that the lice were
upon man and beast. While it must
have been odious to the cleanly
Egyptians to have lice upon their
bodies, it ought to have shaken their
confidence in their deities to see even
the sacred bulls, which were kept
meticulously clean, infested by these
pests. Yet did Pharaoh remain
adamant.

Whatever the nature of the flies
mentioned in the fourth plague, their
disastrous rôle is recounted in the
words, “The land was corrupted by
means of the swarm of flies.” So
terrible were their ravages that the
flinty Pharaoh is again impressed and
suggests a compromise to Moses, the
first of four which it is instructive to
follow. Here, he says, “Go ye, sacrif­
ce to your God in the land,” and the
proposal is at once rejected. But
under the pressure of argument he
relents to the extent of saying, “I will
let you go that ye may sacrifice to the
Lord your God in the wilderness, only
ye shall not go very far away, intreat for
me.” It is the old story, so often
repeated, “Yes, yes, of course there
must be a margin of separation, but
you must not carry things too far.” It
is the plea for that amount of moder­
ation which so often spells disloyalty
to the Word of God, and which because
of an apparent reasonableness is most
seductive. Thirdly, he proposes that
the men should go but that they would
find it to their advantage to leave their
little ones. We cannot make our
desire to be occupied with the things
of God an excuse for unconcern about
the environment and influences which
bear upon our dependents, and many
a parent would have been spared a
sore heart had he taken the little ones
with him when he went to tender to
God the sacrifice of praise. And
lastly, he proposed that they should
go with their little ones, but that they
should leave their cattle. Their
property was to be committed to
Egyptian hands and used in Egyptian
ways. We are told on all hands to-day
that “Religion is religion and business
is business,” and that the two must
of necessity be divorced from each
other. But Moses replies, “There
shall not an hoof be left behind.” The
decisiveness of this answer worked
Pharaoh into a fury unapproached by
the effects of any of the plagues, but
to the infuriated king, Moses, calm and
collected, now declared the intention
of God regarding all the first-born in
the land, and having fulfilled his
mission before Pharaoh, “He went out
from Pharaoh in a great anger” and
sought no further interview with the
king. It is clear that verse 4 of
chapter II. is a continuation of the
discourse in chap. io., and the first
verse of chap. II. should read, “And
the Lord had said unto Moses, yet
will I bring one plague more upon
Pharaoh.” Moses and Aaron did go
once again to the palace, but in respon­
ses to Pharaoh’s urgent appeal, and the
details of the solemn event which led
up to that climax require special con­
sideration.
A WORD ON THE MORAL POWER OF CHRISTIANITY.

Is there not great need to-day among evangelical Christians, and especially those who are seeking earnestly to "contend for the faith once for all delivered to the saints," to recognize and seek to maintain and manifest the moral power of Christianity? A zeal for orthodoxy—whether of doctrine or ecclesiastical order—may not spring from pure love to God nor be an evidence of spiritual life in activity, as we see from the Pharisees of old; though surely if love to God and spiritual life be active there should and will be zealous concern for all that relates to His will and glory. We want the truth, but we want to have the love of it (2 Thess. 2. 10), and the power of it (2 Tim. 3. 5). Let us consider, then, what is signified by the moral power of Christianity.

First of all, we may remark, we are all part of a moral universe. "He who built all things is God"; and He is the living God, and for His pleasure they were all created (Rev. 4. 11). And just as the physical universe is founded upon laws, principles of action, which are the direct outcome of His eternal power and Godhead, so in the moral order of things there are laws conditioning the being, life and destiny of every created intelligence. These laws or principles are as unchanging as God's throne, and as inviolable as His divine attributes upon which, indeed, they are founded. Not that they are always patent to observation or open to direct discovery as are the "laws of nature." There are dark shadows and awful mysteries connected with the vast creation scheme and with the providential order (as it now appears to us). In this respect it is still true that "clouds and darkness are round about Him" (Ps. 97. 2). The "mystery of God" is not yet finished (Rev. 10. 7). In the world of human life and history it is by no means obvious that "God ruleth all things well"; that is the conviction of faith. Nevertheless deeply rooted in the moral instincts of mankind is the idea that God is, that in some way He is over all; and that all things are moving to some foreseen goal: and faith knows that this is so. The universe is founded upon moral laws and exists for moral ends.

And man himself is conscious that not only is he part of things physical, but that he is also a part of the moral order of things. As far as observation goes, universally he is possessed with that inward sense of "oughtness," the intuitive conviction that he is accountable to One above and that he is out of harmony with that One. The standards under which this sense—conscience—act vary immensely, as everyone knows, but the sense of right and wrong is there and constitutes man a moral being.

And the Bible, which abundantly attests these two great facts mentioned, is a moral Book throughout. It is not a handbook of information, a text-book of science (though all it says will necessarily be in accord with the findings of true science), nor does it undertake to answer all the problems; but it does both reveal the needs and answer them in such a way as to demonstrate that it is God's Word. It is His revelation and message to man, setting forth in progressive measures and by varying methods (Heb. 1. 1) the need and the remedy, and all with a view to man being brought back into right relations with his God, into adjustment with His will and glory.
The sacred volume embraces, it need scarcely be said, a great deal more, but this feature characterizes it right through all dispensations. God is God—the I AM, the unchanging One; and man is man until the end. And as another has said: wherever you dig in the Bible, if you dig deep enough, you will find at the bottom, Do right! In other words there is no part of God's word which is unrelated to character and conduct; it is a moral book.

"In the fulness of the times God sent forth His Son"; and with the coming of Christ we have in some real sense the climax of revelation; when God speaks in His Son—it is His last word. The death of Christ is said to be "in the end of the world" (Heb. 9. 26)—"the consummation of the ages" (N.T.). Stamped upon Christianity is the mark of finality. All the shadows of the past now find in Christ their substance; the types their Antitype; all the avenues of the Old Testament reach in Him their glorious destination. This being the case, should we not expect to see in still clearer light the truth now before us? Christianity is moral and spiritual. If we study its history we see that there has been a constant tendency to lose sight of this fact; either to dogmatize it on the one hand, or sentimentalize it on the other, either tendencies being destructive of its moral power. Let us consider a little how the New Testament demonstrates this moral power.

Is it not seen first of all in the fact that Christianity is a "faith," which supposes a revelation? It is not a system of philosophy or of religion, though it is really the very highest philosophy and contains the essence of all true religion. Christianity is living in character; the product of the wisdom, love and power of the living God; dependent upon a living Person, our Lord Jesus Christ, in heaven; embodied in a living Word (Heb. 4. 12); producing living faith and affections in human hearts by the power of the Holy Spirit; and evidencing itself in reproducing in human lives the life and character of Christ to the glory of God.

In accord with this we find that its message to mankind is designated a "gospel," and that gospel is "the power of God unto salvation . . .". Its essential aim is not to make people more intelligent or more religious, but to bring them salvation. And how its glorious triumphs in this have been seen in every age in many climes! And why is the gospel power unto salvation? "For therein is the righteousness of God revealed . . ." (Rom. 1. 16, 17). The very first note of its message is that God must be right; God must be just (Rom. 3. 26). And before the glorious remedy is elaborated the desperate need is exposed (Rom. 1. 19; 3. 23). "Repentance towards God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ"—let us note the order—proclaims the same truth.

It may be asked, Is not the gospel the gospel of the grace of God? To be sure, or else it would be no gospel to such as we are! But grace "reigns through righteousness"; it is righteousness that has put grace upon the throne; and of that what a witness is Calvary! Grace does not mean, as some seem to think, that God has become more kind and lenient; it does not mean that He has changed one particle of His character, or that He has foregone one tittle of His claims, or withdrawn any of His holy requirements, but that now through Christ crucified and in Christ risen He is able and delighted to give what He requires! What a beautiful word was that of a saint of olden time: "O Lord, give what Thou commandest and command
what Thou wilt!” Are we prepared to say that?

The great blessing of righteousness (justification) bears out this same truth. Again and again it is said to be without works; but it is nevertheless unto good works. “It is faith alone which justifies, but the faith which justifies is never found alone” (Moule). Again, Is the gospel contrary to the law? was a question often raised in New Testament days; and how is it answered?—“that the righteousness of the law should be fulfilled in us who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit” (Rom. 8. 4), and “Love is the fulfilling of the law” (Rom. 13. 10). We died with Christ to its claims and its bondage, but the essence of its requirement is met in the “love” which is the “law of Christ.” Can it be doubted that the gospel should and does produce those who love God and love their neighbours?

Let us take another blessing of the gospel—eternal life. How this most precious truth has been dogmatized by some and sentimentalized by others as to lose its beauty and power for many! Nothing, thank God! could be plainer than that eternal life is the possession of the simplest believer: “He that believeth hath eternal life.” “He that hath the Son hath life.” Positive and precious declarations! Yet, let us not lose the force of John’s reiterated present tenses: “believeth,” “drinketh,” “eateth,” “cometh.” It is true that in a number of passages the initial act and entrance into blessing is supposed or suggested, e.g., John 6. 53, but the emphasis throughout is on the present. The only sure proof of reality is continuance. God keep us from leaning on a past faith! “My sheep hear my voice, and they follow me, and I give unto them eternal life.” Are we hearing His voice? Are we following? Again, eternal life viewed as a future blessing through the gift of God’s sovereign grace, is at the end of a holy life (Rom. 6. 22). The precious truth of the eternal security of believers is always stated in Scripture in a moral way; and never in a manner to leave room for carelessness or apathy. It is by the power of God we are kept, but through faith. God ever strews around our pilgrimage His welcomes and His warnings; His satisfactions and His searchings. He mingles His encouragements and His exhortations, and we need them all. The truth of “assurance” is not to act as an opiate upon the soul, but as an operative power to holiness and diligence. God’s comforts are not intended to be sedatives but stimulants.

Is not the moral power of Christianity also seen in the characteristic descriptions of Christians which we find in the Word? How our habitual thoughts as to what a Christian is find us out! To many he is a “believer” and little more. What a pity to think habitually according to the minimum of requirement and not the maximum of privilege! Do we not need more faith and humility to “think God’s thoughts” about ourselves—the thoughts of His grace as revealed in the Word? This is not the place to consider the Christian in His standing and state in Christ—all important as that is—but it is germane to our subject to consider some of the ways in which the Christian is characteristically described.

He is one who has the Spirit of Christ (Rom. 8. 9). It does not say the Spirit of God, though it is the same blessed Person in view; but it is the Spirit of Christ who characterizes the Christian by His presence within Him.

He is led by the Spirit of God (Rom. 8. 14).
He is one that feeds upon Christ (John 6. 54, 57). There is, as already mentioned, the initial act of appropriation, but this appropriation is a vital thing; and all vital processes are continuous. The "eating" is the proof of life as well as the means of its sustainment. We must have the life to be eating; and it is only by eating we live. Feeding on Christ characterizes the Christian.

A Christian is one who walks in the light as God is in the light (John 1. 7). This is not the same as walking according to the light which is a matter of measure and degree. The only alternative of being in the light is to be in the darkness; and these are mutually exclusive. It is where we walk; and "walking in the light" characterizes the Christian.

A Christian is one who does the will of God. "He that doeth the will of God abideth for ever" (1 John 2. 17).

A Christian is one who does good, for it is such who will by the voice of Christ emerge from the grave to the resurrection of life—"they that have done good to the resurrection of life" (John 5· 29).

A Christian is one who loves God (Romans 8. 28).

Lastly—though by no means exhaustively—a Christian is one who is looking for Christ. "To them that look for Him shall He appear the second time without sin unto salvation" (Heb. 9. 28).

Gathering up these characteristics, what a view we have of the Christian as he is, as he should be, and as he may be by the grace of God! He has the Spirit of Christ; he is led by the Spirit of God; he feeds upon Christ; he walks in the light; he does the will of God; he does good; he loves God, and he is looking for Christ. This is a Christian viewed morally, characteristically. This is what Christianity in its moral power produces in this world for the glory of God. What room for exercise of heart these characters present! Are we such as are thus described? Let us be duly exercised, but at the same time, lest a legal thought should mingle with our exercise, let us remember that all must be of grace, and (to use the words of another) "Christianity works by what it brings and not by what it finds." Praise God for that!

It may, perhaps, be mentioned in passing that our subject throws a most helpful light on such verses as Hebrews 9. 28.* For as we have seen, the descriptions of Christians contained in the verses quoted, of which this is one, are not selective—that is describing some Christians only, or a special class—but characteristic. The endeavour which has been strenuously made in some quarters to make a case for a special class of "watching" believers who will be caught up at the Lord's return, is seen to be entirely false; for if this passage be thus interpreted, then the other similar passages must be treated similarly, and that surely no one would be prepared for. Comparing Scripture with Scripture is a safe and blessed method of study and interpretation and no small help in perceiving the moral force and connection of the whole.

The moral character of Christianity is also strikingly brought out in 1 Timothy 1. 5. "Now the end of the commandment is love out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience and of faith unfeigned." This is a Spirit-given summary of what is enjoined upon us as Christians as regards practical character and conduct.

* Editor's Note.—See Answers to Correspondents—"The Doctrine of Partial Rapture."
The further consideration arises that if Christianity was in its essence a moral system in the days of its inauguration—the days of the New Testament—when by apostolic power the outward order and visible structure of the church was maintained practically intact, how much more must the Christian path be a moral one to-day when the outward order and visible structure of the church has become irretrievably ruined and corrupted? The directions given to us in the second epistle to Timothy, chapter 2, especially, amply support this statement. “Let everyone that nameth the name of Christ (the Lord) depart from iniquity... follow righteousness, faith, love, peace with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart” (vide verses 19-22). In accordance with the whole spirit of Christianity righteousness, however, is placed first. No amount of failure in ourselves or in others can for a moment justify any form or measure of abandonment of what is right—of God’s claims—of the Lord’s authority—of the Word of God—of “the truth as it was from the beginning.” The moral power of Christianity recognizes always individual responsibility but not independence or the assertion of the will of man. Those seeking to be morally right in these last days will manifest it not only by their moral disposition—“pure heart”—but by obedience, by “a walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless,” and doing so not haughtily or censoriously but in love and in peace.

Let us seek grace from the Lord, then, to appreciate and manifest better the moral power of Christianity. Let us beware of claiming any position individually or collectively; of resting in anything in the past, however venerable, or anything in the present that is merely outward and visible, even in leaders, “meetings” or “fellowship of saints,” precious as these are in themselves, but perilous if we rest in them. Let us watch also against tendencies to press the living and glorious truth of Christianity into our little moulds of dogma and definition, and on the other hand, of evaporating it into mysticism or religious sentiment. Both of these extremes have always been found to be destructive of its moral power, and therefore of its true character. Truth unpractised easily becomes one or the other.

And what is that power in one word? Could it be better expressed than in Adolphe Monod’s dying words? “All in Christ, by the Holy Spirit, for the glory of God.” Amen.

“YE ARE NOT YOUR OWN.”

Of course not, if “ye are bought with a price” and that is just the truth of Scripture. Christ who bought you has a right to you and all that is yours. This principle of righteousness lies at the basis of all true service, and if you know the love of Christ it becomes a joy to be guided in all things by it. “The love of Christ constraineth us.”

It would be a good answer to give to everyone that asked you, “Why do you do so and so?”. “I am doing it because I am Christ’s bondman for His pleasure.” The bondman of Jesus Christ is the freest man on earth. You ought to be glad that you are His slave, because He is such a wonderful Master.
ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

The Doctrine of a "Partial Rapture."

"I am very interested in the truth of the Lord's coming again. In talking to some of my friends, I find a difference of view as to it. I believe that all believers will be caught up when the Lord comes, while my friends seem (not definitely) in favour of the 'partial rapture' theory. I know very little of the Bible, and have studied hardly anything of it yet, so I am writing to see if you can help me on this question. My aim supremely is to know the truth, and to believe what the Bible teaches."—CARDIFF.

WITH the greatest respect to those Christians who hold what is called the "partial rapture" theory, we have to say that they have but a partial knowledge of the truth, and they do not rightly divide it. The error arises in the first place from the failure to see the unique character and place of the church—the ecclesia—the out-called assembly—it is one, indivisible, and not of the world, for it has been called out of it by the gospel, and will be taken completely out of it, before "the wrath to come," of which the great tribulation forms a part, falls upon the world. "We shall be saved from wrath through Him" (Romans 5. 9). "Jesus, our deliverer from coming wrath" (1 Thess. 1. 10 N.T.). "I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world" (Rev. 3. 10). These Scriptures embrace the whole Christian company. They are all "in Christ," and are His church, and consequently beyond the reach of condemnation, they cannot come under the coming wrath for Christ endured all for them.

The church is the object of the love of Christ, He gave Himself for it, and He will "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" (Ephes. 5. 25-27). Not a divided, mutilated or partial church will it be on the day of presentation, but all glorious and complete. The presentation will take place between the rapture and the appearing, for it is before Christ comes forth as King of kings and Lord of lords, that the marriage of the Lamb is celebrated in heaven (Rev. 19.). It should be clear to all that the church must be with Christ in its completeness when the marriage takes place.

Further, these dear people do not discern rightly between the two parts of the Lord's coming. They do not rightly divide the word of truth. The great bulk of the Scriptures that deal with the subject have His APPEARING in view, that is, His coming in glory to judge and to reign. The catching away of those that are Christ's might almost be called a family secret. The truth as to this was not given so much for public testimony, but for the comfort of those to whom it refers, and to stir their affections for Christ, and not more than half a dozen Scriptures refer to it. Our testimony to the world is that He is coming to judge the world in righteousness. The Lord's word to us, His redeemed Church, is that He Himself is coming for us before He comes to judge the world.

The Scriptures that have the catching away of the saints in view—what might be termed the first stage of the coming—are John 14. 3. And these words were spoken not for a selected few of the disciples but to them all, with the exception of Judas who was no longer one of them, and they are surely for all the true saints until the Lord fulfils His promise. They were spoken specially to comfort them in view of the
Lord's absence. It is not their love to Him that is prominent here, but His love to them. He will come for them Himself—so precious are they to Him—and nothing will satisfy His love for them, but having them where He is—in the Father's house, the place surely for all the Father's children. The next great passage, and the only one that describes the manner of His coming is 1 Thess. 4. 13-18. "The dead in Christ" surely includes all who have died in Christ, and "we which are alive and remain" excludes not one of the Christian "we." Philippians 3. 20, 21 has plainly the rapture in view, and gives no hint that any who are the Lord's shall be left out when the glorious change there spoken of takes place. 1 Corinthians 15. 23 speaks only of the dead and their resurrection from the dead, but "all that are Christ's" shall be raised at His coming—and of course share in the rapture, not one will be left behind. 2 Thess. 2. 1 speaks of "our gathering together unto Him," which will take place at the rapture.

There are other Scriptures in which this first stage of the Lord's coming is involved, but which do not refer to it exclusively, such as 1 Cor. 11. 26; Titus 2. 3; Rev. 22. 17, 20; and in the Synoptic Gospels, Matt. 25. 1-13 would cover the rapture but we believe also goes on to the appearing. The latter Scripture is often used to prove a partial rapture; but it is an unwarrantable use of it. It is not here the church as such that is contemplated but the individual responsibility of those who take up the profession of going forth to meet the Lord during His absence from the earth. The real going in and those who are not real, whom He does not know, are shut out. Hebrews 9. 28 is also used to prove that only the watching saints will share in the rapture, but this Scripture does not speak of the rapture but the appearing, and has in view in the first place the Lord's appearing to the remnant of His earthly people, the Jews, who will be looking for Him to appear for their deliverance, according to the Scriptures, and will be the fulfilment of the type of the high priest coming out of the holiest to bless the people on the great day of Atonement. We dealt with this in our May No., page 103. We do not object to a present application of it, but if so, then "those who watch for Him" must be used as characteristic of all true saints and not of a class only, for to use it in the latter way is to make it contradict other passages in the New Testament.

"Why 'the elect lady'?"

"Why is the 2nd Epistle of John addressed to the 'elect lady'? There does not seem to be any reason for it as far as the election of grace goes, for all Christian women could be so called. Can it be that because of her works she was elect in the estimation of the saints of her day? Is there an election of works?"—SCOTLAND.

All sorts of reasons have been put forward to account for this lady being called "elect." Some have thought that John was addressing the whole church under this designation; others that it was the actual name of the lady to whom he wrote; we have heard it suggested that she was the Virgin Mary and that her elect sister was Elizabeth, which we should think from the point of age was impossible. To us, the reason appears to lie in the Epistle itself. It is the only Epistle in the New Testament that is addressed to a woman and her children, and that should arrest our attention. The
reason for the writing of it was a most solemn one. It was to warn her against those who would subvert the faith by bringing other doctrines than the doctrines of Christ. She was to refuse such utterly: neither to receive them into her house, nor greet them in the street. This was the solemn responsibility that was laid upon her if she was to continue in the commandment—to walk in the truth. The anti-Christs who were going about denying Jesus Christ come in the flesh would have led her into another path if she had listened to them and harboured them, hence the necessity of the absolute refusal of them.

Now in pressing this responsibility upon her, the apostle does not call himself the apostle as though he would bring apostolic authority to bear upon her, but "the elder to the elect lady." He speaks of the Father's commandment rather than of his authority, and he addresses her as one who had been set in the truth by the sovereign grace of God. No higher reason or more powerful incentive to faithfulness could have been urged than this. The greatness and absoluteness of the grace that had chosen her to walk in the truth laid the obligation upon her that she should have neither truce nor alliance with the enemies of Christ, which these false teachers were. It may have been said that she was only a woman, and that it was a question only of her house and not the church, so that it did not matter very much, but it did. Satan had succeeded of old in introducing sin into the world by first seducing the woman from her obedience to the commandment of God, and here he was endeavouring to introduce evil into the very family of God, by sending forth his ministers to oppose the Father's commandment. Such servants of Satan creep into houses (2 Tim. 3. 6). The Christian household is part of God's kingdom; it is where the Lord's authority is acknowledged, and out of it must be kept what is contrary to the truth; it is a citadel standing for the truth and must not harbour the foe or render him sympathy or support.

The lady, we should judge, was well-known, for she was loved by all who knew the truth, hence her example would affect others, and this seems to be joined to the fact of her election by grace in John's salutation to her, and so there was a two-fold reason for steadfastness in this matter. She is reminded of her election according to grace, she had an obligation Godward in regard to that; and she is reminded of the bond that bound her to all who love the truth, she had an obligation to them also. To admit the evil to her house was to offend against God and against all the saints. And a third reason for faithfulness is urged in verse 8. She had an obligation towards those who had laboured to bring them into the truth.

The title, then, by which John addresses her belongs to every sister in Christ; it is not an election of works but of grace, but it carries with it solemn obligations to which we need more than ever to give heed. The grace that has saved us has called us to contend earnestly for the faith and the more so as it is attacked as never before by many who profess to teach it.

"Now THE GOD OF PEACE, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, THAT GREAT SHEPHERD of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting Covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do His will working in you that which is well pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen."—Hebrews 13.
Tampering with the Revelation.

"Will you please give some help as to Revelation 22. 18, 19?" "For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book."

THE Book of the Revelation begins with a promise of blessing to those that read, hear and keep the things that are written therein, and it closes with the solemn warning against adding anything to it and taking anything from it. This beginning and ending declare the importance of it. But why is the Book of the Revelation so important that it should be guarded by such a warning as to tampering with it? It shows us how God will deal eventually with the great problems of this world, and so it becomes in a special way a guide and light to us, enabling us to condemn and turn away now from those principles and things and forces that shall come under His judgment soon, and to identify ourselves with that that pleases Him and shall at last be glorified by Him. If it is altered according to men's thoughts, who know nothing of the future, the light is dimmed, and we shall be either bewildered or deceived.

IT IS THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST, WHICH GOD GAVE TO HIM, TO SHOW TO HIS SERVANTS THINGS WHICH MUST SHORTLY COME TO PASS. It is not in any sense the product of the mind of man: if it had been, then some greater mind might have arisen in course of time and improved upon it, adding a plague here or a glory there according to the bias of the man who attempted the improvement. But being the word that God gave to Jesus Christ it must surely be beyond man's impious attempts to improve it. It is there to be received and kept by the servants of Christ, and it will be by all who are faithful to Him.

The Revelation unveils the future, and only God can do that for us. The very wisest of men does not know what shall be on the morrow, so that if a man attempts to foretell it he does but draw upon his own imagination; it is mere guess work with him, and God will not have His infallible word adulterated by man's foolish guesses: hence the solemn warning at the end of the Book.

No doubt efforts have been made in the past to tamper with the text of this Book, for God's judgments are not a pleasant contemplation for self-willed men, and the devil would hide the final issue of things from our eyes if he can; but, thank God, these efforts have not prevailed and God has preserved the Book to us, and we have it for our guidance at the end of the church's history on earth just as they had it when it was first written. No true servant of Christ would dare or wish to tamper with it; if any have done so, they have been only servants in name substituting their own thoughts for God's, and these judgments will surely be theirs, for how great is the crime they have attempted! It would be as though a man changed the red light of the railway signals at night because he preferred green and white, and by his folly sent the express train with its living burden to destruction.

Now there are many who have the ears of men to-day who come very near doing this; they deny, for instance, the certainty of coming judgment, and what does that mean?
Simply that their estimate of things is the standard they set up, and that they would only have those things judged that they dislike and condemn. What folly this is, as they themselves ought to see; for suppose their intentions are of the best and do not spring from their hatred of God's holiness, and of the thought that He will yet intervene in the affairs of men: yet they can only see things partially and from their own standpoint. They cannot see the end from the beginning, or view the whole field in which the forces of darkness and evil contend with the forces of light and good. God alone sees all things as they are and the end of them, and He has shown us how evil will develop and come under His judgment at last, and what it is that He approves, and who they are that shall enter into His glory with the Lamb that was slain. And as we read and understand we can turn away from the evil and condemn it now and throw in our lot with the good, so that instead of wasting our time upon the evil and running the risk of being involved in the judgment of it, we may redeem the time and live our lives in consonance with the will of God. While we question whether any can take from or add to the words of this Book to-day, for we have it in its completeness, yet these of whom we speak are surely doing the work of the enemy by denying its truths, and these verses ought to be a solemn warning to them.

GOSPEL WORK.

The evangelist, equally with the pastor-teacher, has been given by Christ to men with the building up of THE BODY OF CHRIST in view. (Eph. 4.). And every gospel preacher ought to be intelligent as to this. What is the object of his labour? To make men better citizens of this world? No. The gospel calls them out of the world, so that they are no longer of it. To make them live cleaner lives and be more helpful and kind to their fellows. It will do that for them, but that is not the end or object of it. It is to gather them to Christ that they may know their place in relation to Him as members of His body. And none who labour in the gospel, whether with young or old, will lose sight of this if they are instructed in the truth.

The bee labours for the hive, the recruiting sergeant enlists men for his corps, the evangelist seeks the perfecting of the saints and the edification of the body of Christ (Eph. 4.). And the knowledge of this lifts him above all parties and sectarian work. But only the wisdom and grace of the Head of the body can enable any servant to keep this object in view and to labour rightly for it. The devil is set against it and lies in wait with his cunning craftiness to deceive, and it is so easy to fall on one side or the other. We may give up all thought of the great end of all ministry and labour merely for the good of men, or for the building up of a sect; the former is far better than the latter, but it is not the object set before us in Scripture; it will be most certainly secured in the greater benefit, but we who serve the Lord are wise when we seek communion with His mind as to our service, and are satisfied with nothing less than His purpose as it is revealed in the Word. Ephesians 4. should be studied in this connection.
HE THAT HATH MY WORD.

"He that hath My word, let him speak My word faithfully . . . saith the Lord."—Jeremiah 23. 28.

The work is too serious, and souls too precious, to experiment upon with any notions of our own, no matter how high-flown they may be. The Word of God only can give life, it only can so search the conscience that men will give up their sins in the fear of God, it only is the balm that can heal those who are sick of sin. Then let it be faithfully preached. How great is the presumption of the man who thinks that he can improve upon the Word of God.

The one who faithfully preaches the Word of God will be mocked by some, but what of that if he is approved of God, and those who mock will in their hearts fear him if he lives consistently with the Word he preaches. It was those preachers who flattered the people and who compromised the Word from fear of men, who were contemptible and base in the eyes of those they flattered (Mal. 2. 9).

The Word of God is two-edged. Have you not felt it cut at your own conscience, preacher, the while you have preached it to others? You wish it to be effective in your hearers, then give heed to it yourself. Unholiness in your life will hinder you from reproving the sins that you see in others. Paul's manner of life was not divorced from his doctrine and he is the pattern saint and servant.

If you are a steward of God's Word, it is required that you be faithful (1 Cor. 4. 2), not brilliant, nor popular, but faithful, and faithfulness stands in relation first to Him you serve. Do we now please men? Then as likely as not we are not faithful stewards. God knows what is in man and needs not that any should tell Him, and His holy Word is framed to meet the needs of men whom He knows. It is the one physic that can cure the sick; they may chide because of its bitterness sometimes, but they will give thanks when it has done its work in their souls. We only know men partially, and man's remedies for man's ruin are worse than useless; to change the figure, they are but untempered mortar daubed on a crumbling wall. The one who speaks God's Word faithfully to men is the best friend of the men to whom he speaks after all.

Be gentle with the souls of men, for gentleness is not incompatible with faithfulness. The servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all, apt to teach, patient, in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves (2 Tim. 2. 24, 25). The Word faithfully preached will soften the hearts of those whose consciences it truly reaches. The Master was meek and lowly in heart and His words were gentleness itself when the burdened and guilty came near to Him. Every word He spoke was truth, but grace as well, and we need to learn of Him, who preach the Word of God. Be rough if you will on men's sins, but be gentle with their souls.

ERROR.—Please note an error in page 260, col. 2, line 4, should read Aaron for "harm."