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*“THY WORD IS TRUTH”*

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## THE THREEFOLD CRY OF THE SPIRIT.

(J. T. MAWSON.)

*"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.

HERE we have the last mention of the Holy Spirit in the Bible, and it is a wonderful revelation to us of His unwearied activities. It shows us, too, what "the unity of the Spirit" is in practical expression, manifested in a threefold cry through the hearts and mouths of those whom He indwells, and whom He brings into unison with Himself.

The first cry is directed to Jesus our Lord. He shines in the heavens as the bright and morning Star. And to Him, when His glory breaks upon the soul, "*The Spirit and the bride say, Come.*" The second is to those whom Jesus loves, His own, for whose love He yearns, but whose hearts are sleeping; to them the cry is, "*Let him that heareth say, Come.*" The third is to the great outer circle of a needy world. To it the heart of God is full of compassion, and this is expressed in this last evangelical appeal in the Bible: "*Let him that is athirst come: and whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.*"

### TO JESUS OUR LORD.

The Spirit of Truth, the Comforter, is come to show the things of Christ to us, and to glorify Him, and He is successful in His work and Christ is glorified when the hearts of His redeemed people are so enraptured with Him that other things lose their attraction and they want only Him-

self, and are bound together in one great desire for His coming. When the hearts of the saints of God say, Come, there is no discord and no clash between the Spirit's desire and the desire of those whom He indwells. This is the Spirit's unity.

The Spirit has always desired that Christ should come, and He has laboured for this unceasingly since Pentecost, yet the centuries have rolled by and Christ has not yet come, and men deride the blessed hope; but the Spirit is not discouraged because the time is long, but continues to labour, and will until His labours are crowned with final and eternal success. And this last mention of His activities in the Word brings this day of glory clearly into view.

The reason why Christ has not yet come is because the first and chief reason of His coming will be to claim His bride. He will in due course have the kingdoms and the glory and universal adoration, but He must first have His bride, a complete and glorious church. Hitherto this has not been possible for the church is not yet completed, but the Spirit will not falter in His labours until it is complete and ready to be presented to Christ, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing. Then there will be no more delay, the Lord will answer the cry of the Spirit and the bride with a shout of joy and

triumph that will raise the dead saints and change the living and assemble them, the whole undivided church, to meet Him in the air. That that day must be drawing near is evinced, we believe, by the fact that the desire for the coming of the Lord is growing, and more hearts than ever are saying, "Come, Lord Jesus." The Spirit is gathering up the affections of the church and making them flow together in this one blessed unity of which He is the Originator and Sustainer. And He will continue His work until,

"By the Spirit all pervading  
Hosts unnumbered round the Lamb—  
Crowned with joy and light unfading—  
Hail Him as the great I AM."

#### TO THOSE WHOM HE LOVES.

It is impossible that the Spirit should rest from His labours while so many of those for whom Christ died, and whom He loves with a love that can never die, are indifferent to Him and His coming; He must work to stir up the hearts of the indifferent to join in this cry to the Lord. And those who are in tune with the Spirit will say, The Spirit worketh hitherto and we must work also; we cannot rest until all that have ears to hear have been brought into this same unity of heart and voice and are saying, "Come, Lord Jesus."

How strange is that state of mind which we sometimes meet with, that is indifferent as to how one's fellow Christians are affected towards Christ, and how completely outside the practical unity of the Spirit must those be who would discourage the servants of the Lord from going forth, north, south, east and west, everywhere, in fact, with the cry, "Behold the Bridegroom, go ye out to meet Him." Such indifference to that which must be of supreme importance indicates a heart out of tune with the Spirit, and with a

very small conception of the desire of the Lord for all saints. May the writer and reader alike be preserved from it in the great mercy of God.

Let us hear and rejoice in the truth, "There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in ONE HOPE OF YOUR CALLING." The church of God is one church, one Spirit dwells in it, and the Lamb who died to redeem it is its one glorious Hope. May these great facts seize upon our hearts, and have their true place in our lives; then shall we labour for the revival of the Spirit's cry in the hearts of all the saints.

#### TO A NEEDY WORLD.

The heart that is in unison with the Spirit will not only be true to Christ and desire His coming, and be solicitous for one's brethren, that they may not sleep as do others, but it will be evangelistic also, it will have an earnest invitation to give to a needy world. It has been said that, "the greatest churchman was the greatest evangelist," and this is true. Nobody ever entered into the unity of the Spirit more than Paul the apostle, nobody ever lived who laboured with greater zeal to have the saints of the Lord in trim for His coming than he. From what a warm, full and yet anxious heart this appeal must have come: "I am jealous over you with godly jealousy; for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ. But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ."

And yet this was the man who pressed from city to city and from country to country, enduring almost incredible hardships, that he might proclaim the glad tidings to every

creature under heaven. His Saviour and Lord had yearned for souls when He was here, and Paul yearned for them also, for the life of Jesus was manifested in his mortal flesh, and the compassions of God filled his soul. He was a wholly-surrendered vessel to his Lord, through whom the Spirit could speak and work; he was a Holy Ghost-filled man.

Nearly two thousand years have passed since the Spirit poured the message of grace into the ears of a needy world through that one vessel, and He is still looking for vessels in

tune with Himself through whom He can cry, "Let him that is athirst come, and let whosoever will take of the water of life freely." The heart of God is not satisfied with blessing, the fountain of the water of life springs up as fresh and free as ever it did. Until the Lord answers the cry of Spirit and bride, this great sphere of labour lies open to all those who are endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit. Indeed, there are these two spheres, the church and the world, and blessed will that servant be whom his Lord when He cometh shall find caring for His interests in these spheres.

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## FEEDING THE HOUSEHOLD.

*"AND THE LORD SAID, WHO THEN IS THAT FAITHFUL AND WISE STEWARD, WHOM HIS LORD SHALL MAKE RULER OVER HIS HOUSEHOLD, TO GIVE THEM THEIR PORTION OF MEAT IN DUE SEASON? BLESSED IS THAT SERVANT, WHOM HIS LORD WHEN HE COMETH SHALL FIND SO DOING. OF A TRUTH I SAY UNTO YOU, THAT HE WILL MAKE HIM RULER OVER ALL THAT HE HATH."*—Luke 12. 42-44.

**G**OD feeds the sparrows, shall His household be allowed to starve? Is He careless about the children's bread? And if He cares, shall we be indifferent? The bread has been provided in abundance and some have been specially entrusted with the distribution of it: could any sin against the Lord be greater than that of withholding it from the household for which it has been provided? **AWAKE, YE STEWARDS OF THE LORD; THE TIME IS SHORT, THE COMING OF THE LORD DRAWS NEAR,** and in view of His coming the household must be fed. How shall we best serve and please our Lord while we wait for Him? By feeding His household. He Himself has said that he who is doing this will be blessed at His coming, and so delighted will He be with him that He will deem no honour too great with which to reward him. He will make him ruler over all that He hath.

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**"BLESSED ARE THOSE SERVANTS, WHOM THE LORD WHEN HE COMETH SHALL FIND WATCHING: VERILY I SAY UNTO YOU, THAT HE SHALL GIRD HIMSELF, AND MAKE THEM TO SIT DOWN TO MEAT AND WILL COME FORTH AND SERVE THEM."**

**"THEREFORE BE YE ALSO READY; FOR IN SUCH AN HOUR AS YE THINK NOT THE SON OF MAN COMETH."**

# THE LORD'S RETURN.

(H. J. VINE)

“**BEHOLD**, He cometh!” These words still await their fulfilment. When on earth, Jesus said, “I will come again!” And from heaven He has said, “Surely I come quickly!” and these are His last words to us in the inspired Book. “By the word of the Lord,” Paul said, “the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout!” and in Philippians 3. 20, “*We look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, from heaven!*”

Some of us have waited for His return for many years; and He has meanwhile taught us lessons of grace, which are valuable beyond estimation. We have proved the true joy which the divinely granted assurance of the Lord's return gives, and the purifying effect, also, of the bright and blessed hope which we have in the Son of God. This hope has lifted faith's gaze to Himself, and given to our hearts stability and holy gladness in what lies beyond this present, passing world. We rejoice in the word, “*He that shall come will come, and will not tarry!*”

It may therefore be asked, “Will He come soon then?” Most certainly He will! This has often been rightly said in the past, and it may be said with increased emphasis now, for obviously the Lord's return must be nearer than ever it was.

Speaking in the ordinary language of men, it might be said, to come soon means in a few days, or a few weeks at the longest; but the language of the Spirit of God speaks thus, “Be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some men count slackness.” Nay, for since His first coming the Lord has been away only two days according to the divine

reckoning! A complete period of days is *seven!* and it has been said by some, The *seventh* day will probably be the day of the earth's rest and blessing—the millennium—the thousand years of Christ's public reign, the time so often spoken of in the Scriptures. It is a fact that we are at the close of the first six days—the first six thousand years of man's history on earth—and the seventh therefore must be nigh. We may not speak with absolute certainty as to this, but is it not more than possible that the glorious reign of Christ will fill up the seventh millennium of man's history?

This, however is quite certain. A great deal must quickly happen before that reign begins! When speaking of the preparatory judgments, and of His dealings with Israel in view of that time, Jesus said, “Watch ye therefore; for ye know not when the Master of the house cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at the cock-crowing, or in the morning: lest coming suddenly He finds you sleeping. . . . And what I say unto you, **I SAY UNTO ALL, WATCH.**”

At that time He also said, “Learn a parable of the fig tree; when her branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is near.” That distinctly refers to national life reviving in Israel; for Israel is the fig tree in Scripture. A national home in the land of promise through the foretold means of a maritime nation has become a fact and is being taken advantage of by numbers of Jews; and though serious interruptions will take place, as is clearly indicated in Scripture, nevertheless the present movement will doubtless go on, indicating that the Lord's return must be near; that is, His return to establish Israel again in national eminence in

their own land. That being so, how much nearer must be the moment of His coming to take out of the earth those who are saved by grace! His church, the out-called from the nations for His name now, will be the up-called from the earth to be with Himself then! We are told that our Lord Jesus Christ died for us; that whether we be watching or sleeping in the grave, when He returns, we may live in the glory together with Him!

Many of Israel's scholars and teachers, after long centuries of contumely, are now speaking in terms of high esteem concerning Jesus, whom they designate, "One of Israel's sons"; and some anxiety is observable among them as to their treatment of Him. What a blessed day it will be when, as Zechariah 12. 10 says, "They shall mourn for Him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for Him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn." All Israel shall then be saved; and the other nations, as well as the peoples of the earth, shall be blessed through and in association with them, for the Lord Himself said, "*Salvation is of the Jews.*" But those who are already saved by grace must be glorified on high with Christ before Israel can be nationally blessed on earth. Christ Jesus is *our* Hope—the Son of the Father's love! Christ Jesus is Israel's Hope as the Son of David! Christ Jesus is the Hope of the whole world, for He is also the Son of Man! Glory, glory, glory to His holy name!

In 1 John 4. 14 we read, "The Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world"; and He will surely bring that world-wide salvation to pass. Long ago the prophet said, "All flesh shall see the salvation of God." By His atoning death, our Lord Jesus Christ has laid the righteous

foundation for this to be brought about. He died for us truly, but He also "tasted death for every thing," and, being now glorified upon the throne of God, He will presently shine forth and *FILL THE EARTH WITH HIS GLORY*. The sweet singer of Israel sang:

*"His name shall endure for ever : His name shall be continued as long as the sun : and men shall be blessed in Him : all nations shall call Him blessed."*

And David's desires reached their climax when he concluded :

*"Blessed be His glorious name for ever : and let the whole earth be filled with His glory ; Amen, and Amen."*

*"The prayers of David the son of Jesse are ended"* (Ps. 72. 20).

David's thoughts rose to the height of earthly blessing. Great David's greater Son, exalted on high, has opened for us the heavenly heights of glory above. Therefore, the Holy Spirit sent down from heaven has awakened in our hearts desires accordingly; and all over the world now, among true believers on the Son of God, there are deep longings for His coming again, to translate them from earth to heaven, to be for ever with Himself. The mighty reality of this hope has a practical effect; and at any moment they expect that word to be fulfilled, "*The Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout,*" and we shall be caught up together "*TO MEET THE LORD!*"

Yes, it is for our all-powerful, all-loving Saviour from the heavens we look! the One to whom we owe all! the One who saved us! the One who brought us into divine favour and acceptance! the One who suffered first for our sins and is coming to claim

His redeemed! the One whose death we show until He comes! the One to whom we righteously belong for time and eternity, both by creation and redemption! the One in whom all things in heaven as well as upon earth are to be centred! Therefore we deeply desire His coming again, that the riches of grace and glory may fill all things with redemption splendour, to the praise of the glory of God.

The feeblest member of the assembly, the body of Christ, is necessary for that day of heavenly rejoicing. Whether perplexed or prospered now, weak or well, persecuted or praised, distressed or happy, dishonoured or favoured, whatever our present earthly lot may be, we belong to Christ; He gave Himself for the assembly; and He will present all to Himself in glory and love, without spot, or wrinkle, or

any such thing, for His own joy and satisfaction.

Yes, "Behold He cometh!" He *will* come! He *cannot* deny Himself! He *must* come! Jesus is David's Son, and the throne awaits His return! He is the Son of Man, and universal glory awaits His outshining! He is the Son of God, our divine Saviour and Lover, the bright morning Star, and we know His own promise to come again cannot fail! Moreover, His feet are yet to stand again "upon the Mount of Olives"; and "the Lord shall be King over all the earth" (Zech. 14. 4, 9); but before that swiftly approaching day dawns, as we have said, we shall be caught up to meet Him! Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly! Meanwhile, may divine grace keep our lamps burning brightly for Thy praise!

"Watching and ready may we be,  
As those that wait their Lord to see."

## "BEHOLD THE BRIDEGROOM!"

(W. BRAMWELL DICK.)

"*'Behold the Bridegroom!'* is a wonderful cry! Is it anything to us?  
Does it thrill you?"

SUCH was the challenging question contained in a letter received recently from a brother in the Lord. Doubtless he had been asking himself: "Does it thrill *me*?" Then, with his heart set aglow by the prospect, he passed the question on to us. May we venture to associate with ourselves all our beloved fellow-believers who read *Scripture Truth*? Shall we inquire: "Does it thrill *us*?" Then, coming from the general to the individual, shall we examine ourselves and ask: "Does it thrill *me*?"

1. Why *should* it thrill us? Before we answer that question, shall we ask ourselves another? When are we most desirous that the Lord should come? Is it when our health is good? Our family doing well? Our business

prosperous? Our prospects bright? Or is it when everything is just the reverse of that which we have indicated, that we heave a sigh, and say: "How I wish the Lord would come"? The Lord is very gracious and tender! and so kind! and He does illumine for us the darkness of the night; He does seek to ease the burden, and to cheer our drooping spirits by reminding us that it is only "a little while" and trial shall be followed by triumph; sorrow shall give place to song; and the past shall be forgotten in the joy of being with Him; or if remembered it will be that

"We'll bless the Hand that guided,  
We'll bless the Heart that planned,  
When throned where glory dwelleth  
In Immanuel's land."

Precious as all this is, we do not think it exactly thrills us, because we are thinking more of the great relief than of the great joy. To repeat the query: Why *should* it thrill us? May we say it with the greatest possible reverence? *Because it thrills Him!* Observe! It is the *BRIDEGROOM* who is coming, and He is coming to claim His Bride.

In the mirror of eternity the Bridegroom saw His Bride, He loved her and He determined to have her for Himself. We come down to the region of time, the first man was created and to him God presented a bride.

It is not without significance that the first type in the Holy Scriptures is that of the church as the Bride of Christ. (Cf Gen 2. 18-24, Ephes. 5. 25-32.) But sin came in with all its direful results. Those who were to form the Bride were haters of God and rejecters of Christ. Therefore into this world the Son of God came; to the Cross at Calvary He wended His way, there He laid down His spotless life and shed His precious blood that He might secure for Himself that Bride, divinely suited to Himself, whom He had loved from before the foundation of the world. "Christ also loved the church, and *gave Himself* for it" Having taken His place at the right hand of God, the Holy Spirit has been sent down, and just as Abraham's nameless servant was sent to conduct the bride to Isaac (Gen 24.), so this divine Person has been sent to conduct the Bride to Christ. Meanwhile all the interest of Christ is centred in His Bride, His love rests upon her; His present service is devoted to her; and He in patience awaits the moment when He shall come and claim her for Himself. Can we imagine the supreme joy that will be His when He has by His side the Bride whom He loves with a knowledge-surpassing love; for

whom He travelled so far, stooped so low, suffered so much; and has waited so long?

2. Why *should* it thrill us? Let us ask what is more calculated to thrill us than the cry: "Behold the Bridegroom, go forth to meet Him!" (Matt. 25. 6 New Trans.). It is not simply the fact of the coming, but it is the One who is coming. As He is presented to us—even if, in company with the foolish, oil-less professors, we have been asleep—does it not arouse us, stir our hearts, thrill our being? He is the Bridegroom, we are His Bride and He loves us with an eternal, changeless, undying love. Bridal affections are revived, we picture to ourselves the inconceivable delight of being with Him for His joy, to be sharers of His throne; to be forever the object of His love; to be His complement in the day of His power (Ephes. 1. 22-23), to be the treasure of His heart throughout the eternal ages; to be displayed by Him to a wondering universe; to be in the secret of His own peculiar affection in the Father's house.

3. Why *should* we be thrilled by it?

a. Because His last message to "His own," before His death, was: "I will come again, and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also" (John 14. 3).

b. Because His last petition to His Father, before He suffered, was: "Father, I will that they also, whom Thou hast given Me, *be with Me where I am*, that they may behold My glory, which Thou hast given Me for Thou lovedst Me before the foundation of the world" (John 17. 24).

c. Because through the darkness of the night He sends the heartening message: "Behold, I come quickly.

hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown" (Rev. 3. 11).

*d.* Because His very last message to His Bride is: "**SURELY I COME QUICKLY!**" (Rev. 22. 20).

4. *Are we thrilled by it?* It is generally conceded that the cry, "Behold the Bridegroom!" was made early last century. We have heard with our ears, and our fathers have told us, how those who loved the Lord were thrilled by it. Aroused from their death-like sleep, they "arose and trimmed their lamps." They cut their connection with the world, they no longer conformed to its fashions, adopted its practices, or engaged in its amusements; they "*went forth to meet the Bridegroom.*" Yes. They were thrilled. Does some person say: "But they lived and died, and He did not come; a hundred years have elapsed and He has not come yet; how do we know that another hundred years may not elapse before He does come?" Please note, the cry was: "**BEHOLD THE BRIDEGROOM; go forth to meet HIM!**" To go forth to meet Him is to be morally ready when He comes; is to have that of which we have already spoken as bridal affections maintained in the heart; and is to be just so that we shall meet Him with unclouded joy when He comes. Those to whom we have referred lived in the hope of it; died in the faith of it; and rejoiced that they were going on just a short time before to be at home with the Lord. We return to the question: *Are we thrilled by it?* We would suggest one or two things that might prevent our being thrilled by it.

*a.* Failing to divide rightly the Word of truth (2 Tim. 2. 15); e.g., it is taught by some that the Lord will not come until everybody has heard the gospel. We have yet to learn, however, that

such a theory has any support in the Word of God.

*b.* We have heard it said that we should be more occupied with "the world to come" than with the rapture of the saints. The thought of "the world to come" and all that that will mean for Christ should fill our hearts with great joy, and we should speak of it much more than we do. We are persuaded, however, that greater far than the triumph of having His rightful place where He was, and is, disowned and rejected, will be the joy of having with Himself, and for Himself, His beloved Bride resplendent in all His own incomparable beauty.

*c.* Smiting our fellow servants (Matt. 24. 49); making and perpetuating differences with our brethren in Christ; becoming estranged from those who form part of His Bride; and thus wounding the heart of the Bridegroom who loves His Bride so dearly.

*d.* Entanglement with the world; striving for our own advancement; seeking the prosperity of our children, and forming associations that may help us to attain our desire, but which alienate our affections from Christ. Is it not the case that we have dropped into a sort of somnolent state? That the latest news on the wireless interests us more than the latest news from heaven? That the state of the money market excites us more than the call: "Behold the Bridegroom"? That the tennis racket is more frequently in our hand than the Bible? That whilst we grudge no bodily exertion in worldly pursuits we are frequently much too tired to be found gathered with our fellow-believers? We are not preaching at anybody, nor talking down to anybody. We want to ask ourselves these plain, pointed, practical questions; and then inquire, *Are we thrilled by the cry, "Behold the Bridegroom"?*

If not, shall we pray that we may be aroused, and that *we* may go forth to meet *HIM*?

5. *Are we thrilled by it?* If we are it will make us not unpractical but more practical. We will do our business; we will educate our family; we will discharge our daily duty; we will pay our way; we will see that our body gets necessary rest and recreation, realizing that it belongs to the Lord (1 Cor. 6. 19, 20), but we will have the happy sense: at any moment He may come. We have been much impressed during the last few months by some dear brethren in Christ having been called home with tragic suddenness. One moment apparently all right, the next moment—gone. We have said to ourselves: "When the Lord comes we shall be translated from earth to heaven 'in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye'" (1 Cor. 15. 52). How, where, in what way occupied, should we like Him to find us? Doing our business for Him? Pursuing our studies for Him? Engaged in service for Him? Enjoying communion with Him? Every heart answers "Yes." Then may it be so for His dear Name's sake.

6. *How will it thrill us?* Not necessarily by reading books about it, though we should avail ourselves of everything that is in keeping with the inspired Word that will help us; nor by singing about it, though if we are thrilled we shall be glad to relieve our hearts in song. We *will* be thrilled as He commands the affection of our hearts—His love filling our heart; His beauty filling the vision of our souls, His glory attracting us more and more to Himself. We will go forth to meet Him, with a deep, unconquerable longing to see Him, to be like Him, to be with Him where He is. The mention of His name, the thought of His love, the

prospect of His return will stir us to the depth of our being.

7. *What will happen if we are thrilled?*

a. Our hearts will go out in affection to all those that are His. So successfully has the enemy wrought, and so sadly have we played into his hands, that we cannot all walk together here; but we will love all, we will pray for all, and our hearts will be thrilled by the prospect that we shall be all together there—His Bride.

b. We will seek to respond to the Word: "For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death *till He come*" (1 Cor. 11. 26).

c. We will not forsake the assembling of ourselves together (either in the holiday season or at any other time), but will seek to encourage one another and so much the more as we see the day approaching (Heb. 10 25).

d. We will be tireless in gospel activity. One hour out of one hundred and sixty-eight hours will not suffice us, but daily will we seek opportunity to carry the glad tidings to some needy soul, and we will be careful that our life corresponds with our testimony. Thus will we answer to the Word, "Occupy till I come" (Luke 19 13).

Beloved fellow Christian, the Lord is coming! The marriage day is near when all heaven shall be thrilled and shall join in the great Hallelujah Chorus (Rev. 19. 6-9.)

"How will our eyes to see His face delight,  
Whose love has cheered us through the  
darksome night!

How will our ears drunk in His well-known  
voice,

Whose faintest whisper makes our souls  
rejoice!

HALLELUJAH!

# "BEHOLD, I COME QUICKLY!"

(SAMUEL LEVERMORE.)

"Behold, I come quickly : hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown."—Revelation 3. 11.

AS I stand, with fear and trembling, upon the threshold of 1930, I hear one voice which drowns all others, and one word arrests and preoccupies me. The voice is that of the Great I AM of the text, and the arresting word is "Behold." Its sound is in my heart louder than the thunders : its importance beggars and nullifies my every preoccupation. According to Nuttall it means "to fix the attention upon." "To think over in one's mind," adds the godly Cruden.

The voice of the enthroned Christ seems to cry, "Hold on, Philadelphia," to this paradoxical assembly (*vide* 2 Cor. 6.). "Keep a grip-hold upon that priceless crown of yours." Satan hated this little church, which kept Christ's word and denied not the Holy Name. Deadly enemies hemmed them in like an army. Men and demons tried to rob them of their unflinching loyalty to Christ's Deity and Word. Hence the urge from the great Melchisedek, "Hold fast, Philadelphia." Philadelphia was, as we actually are, in the midst of a stormy sea of trial. The contrary blasts of modernism assail us, like the disciples in Mark 6. Rowing was heavy toil, their poor hands were skinned and bleeding, their muscles and sinews strained to the snapping point, for it was now the fourth watch of the night and they had been at it since evening. It appeared to be all over with them. Then Jesus came, with His Cheer up ! I'm here ! Just hold on a little longer !

It was so with the church of our text ; it is so with us. Acts 20. 29 is fulfilled : men have arisen among ourselves, speaking perverse things, and have drawn away disciples after them.

To us, therefore, comes His sweet message. Hold fast with tenacity that crown of thine !

## BEWARE OF THE CROWN-STEALERS.

Flee the "evil servant" of Matthew 24. 28, who preaches the deadly delusion of *delay*. And there are no crown-stealers so subtle or successful as these very men. The "evil servant" has bad heart-trouble, for he saith in his heart, "My Lord delayeth His coming."

Therefore our Lord seems to say, Believe it not. "I am coming, *without delay*" (Lit. Gk.). Hold fast to that : for that truth is your crown. The "evil servant" joins the scoffers and sceptics in 2 Peter 3. 4, who contemptuously say, "Where is the promise of His coming ?" They give the lie to that sweet word of the Spirit in Hebrews 10. 37, "He that shall come, will come, and *will not tarry*." They oppose their anti-gospel between the saint and his Saviour, between the Bridegroom and His bride-elect.

Alas ! these evil servants abound to-day. They cut in with their historicism or post-millennialism, or even pre-tribulationism, and do Satan's work in diverting the heart and hope of the saint from *THE IMMINENCE OF HIS COMING*.

Do not, O my reader, confound our Lord's coming *for* His saints and His coming *with* them. His coming *for* us is a "mystery" shewn, or revealed (1 Cor. 15. 51). "Behold, I shew—or unveil—you a mystery. We shall not all sleep (or die), but we shall all be changed, in a moment," etc.

Now *Christ's coming WITH His saints NEVER WAS A MYSTERY.*

It is found again and again in the Old Testament, from Enoch's great prophecy unto Malachi. But His coming for the rapture and translation of the church, never! And this great unveiled mystery of 1 Corinthians 15. 51 sweeps away every impending or predicted event which might seem to interpose itself, so that the preoccupation of our hearts is "Behold! He cometh." Himself and our hearts, and nothing between. O blissful prospect!

Satan has tried in vain to oppose it by argument, by misquotation of Scripture, and has even gone the length of casting ridicule upon it by referring to it as "*THE ANY MOMENT THEORY.*" Yea, and has used, and is using, earnest and zealous men to do it. I mention this to accentuate and emphasize our precious Lord's "Hold fast!" As to this "crown," I would that all readers might procure "In the Last Days," by Mr. Hamilton Smith, and "The Beloved," in *Scripture Truth* of Nov., 1929, by the Editor. These are invaluable: their words are golden. Distinguish also carefully, I beseech you, between our Lord's coming "for" us, and His coming "to" us (John 14. 3 and 18). He comes for us for future glory, but He comes to us for present comfort.

Thus to Ephesus (Rev. 2. 2) He urges remembrance, repentance and reaction, or else, "I will come unto thee quickly, and remove thy candlestick—lampstand—out of its place, except thou repent." In fact, He has already come to many and many an assembly and removed its lampstand. Where once all was gloriously happy and prosperous, with life, light and love abounding, illuminating and pulsating; saints being edified and sinners converted, all now is grave-like silence, with a darkness that may be felt: a loveless intercourse and nauseating lukewarm-

ness. Tell me, O dear co-heir, which experience of Ephesus do you covet: that of A.D. 64 in Ephesians 3. 17-19, or that of A.D. 96 in Revelation 2. 4, 5?

Smyrna, like Philadelphia, has all praise and no blame, but to *PERGAMOS OF THE GILDED CROSS*, the great world-church, He says (2. 16), "Repent, or else I will come unto thee quickly, and fight against thee with the sword of My mouth." "Thee" and "them." He knows how to distinguish between them and their enemies.

TO SARDIS, *THE CHURCH OF THE GOOD NAME*, He says, "I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead." A flower-strewn grave and a magnificent tomb with death and corruption within. All formalism and outside show. This exactly describes the mass of so-called Christian profession to-day. The big majority of churches and chapels are spiritually dead, with a few individuals that are alive unto God. Therefore He bids the mass repent, whilst to the "few names" He gives sweet assurance (Rev. 3. 1-5).

To the spiritually dead—the mass—the unregenerate professor,

*CHRIST IS COMING AS A THIEF*  
(Rev. 3. 3—16. 15).

Both of these Scriptures are intended as a warning to sleepers. Every professor is either a watcher or a sleeper. To Sardis our Lord writes, "If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief." Again in Revelation 16. 15, "Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame." This is a reference to the night guards in the temple at Jerusalem. They wore a special garment or robe. The Captain made surprise visits, and when he found one asleep he removed his robe, leaving him

naked and ashamed. Thus our Lord at His coming will remove the robe of mere profession, but the "few names" who wear the robe of God's righteousness will never be naked or ashamed.

"Jesus the Lord, my righteousness,  
My beauty Thou—my glorious dress.  
'Mid flaming worlds in this arrayed  
With joy shall I lift up my head."

Beware of spiritual necrosis, mortification in the bone. The foolish virgins had it. Sardis suffered from it. The super-heavenly saints in Ephesus were warned against it. Even the very Thessalonians were bidden not to "sleep as do others" but to "watch and be sober" (1 Thess. 5. 6). Lethargy, languor and laziness are Satan's soporifics. He cannot send the church to hell, so he sends her to sleep. He could not prevent the Lord Christ building His church in the world, therefore he puts his world in the church.

It is an old trouble. Amos pronounced (chapter 6.) "Woe" against those "at ease in Zion." Not Babylon, or Egypt, but Zion. Woes came to Israel sure enough—these luxurious, lustful and lazy sinners in the earthly Zion; but we, the church of the First-born, are come to the heavenly Zion (Heb. 12. 18). How do we stand?

The positive charge of Amos—that of luxurious living: wines, perfumes, music, upholstery, and the rest—were only criminal as contrasted with their complacency as to Joseph. They could feast, sing, dance and revel, without a single fear of grief for the affliction of Joseph. He might still be in the pit or a slave to the Ishmaelites, for all they cared. The Spirit declares that "Every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving: for it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer"; but anything which prevents thanksgiving,

or which clashes with the word of God and prayer, is not good.

### THE GREAT AMOS EXPOSURE

dealt with a *negative* crime. "They were not grieved for the affliction of Joseph." Our Joseph. To us it speaks of the daily anguish of our Lord's practical rejection and exclusion from our heart-life—our home and social life, and even, to an alarming extent, from our very assembly life. Suffering *with* our rejected Lord—what is it to thee, to me? What do we know about it? How does Philippians 3. 10 affect us? What place has "fellowship with His sufferings" in our daily life?

Our case is desperate. Let us give earnest heed to—

### THE SPIRIT'S TRUMPET BLAST TO THE SLEEPERS IN EPHESUS (Eph. 5. 14).

"Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from among the dead." This is not the gospel call to sinners, but the *réveillé* or trumpet blast to awaken sleeping saints. One must have *life* before sleep. Sleep is for the living, life is for the dead. The sleeping saint is a man among the tombs. This world is as a great cemetery of the dead in trespasses and sins, and, alas! many a saint is sleeping among them. A dead man and a sleeping one are, sometimes, very hard to distinguish.

Oh, ye wise virgins, behold the Bridegroom! Awake and trim your lamps. Hear the Bridegroom's voice, "Behold, I come without delay." There is no lack of oil. "Be filled with the Spirit."

Our Lord closes the parable of the Ten Virgins with the words, "Watch, therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of Man cometh" (Matt. 25. 13). They are to expect Him in *some* hour, and because they know not *which* hour, and it might

be *any* hour, they are to expect Him *every* hour.

A great "If" faces us on the threshold of 1930. Here it is. "If we suffer we shall also reign with Him" (2 Tim. 2. 12). There may be very little or no dilettantism or fleshly lust come our way. Sodom and Lotism may leave us cold; luxury, lust, and lethargy find us irresponsive; but is our heart in true sympathy with a suffering, afflicted and rejected Lord Jesus?

The very last chapter in the Bible gives us His sweet love message no less than three times.

Firstly, in verse 7, to the *Keepers*. Here, in the last chapter they get the blessing promised in the first (verse 3). Secondly, in verse 12 come the *Workers*. Then, in verse 20, those who are *ready*, as the Wise Virgins (Matt. 25. 10), and *waiting*, as Simeon, and *longing*, as Paul. To all who give an immediate response to His touching farewell as He presents Himself as "I, Jesus"—the farewell presentation of

the Saviour to His church. The Bible begins with the mighty acts of God's creatorial power, and closes with the sweet whispers of eternal love. The Spirit Himself cries "Come." The Bride seconds Him. Then John, as representing the hearers, says, "Come."

"I, Jesus." Himself!—no cold abstraction. As J. N. D. so sweetly says in referring to Philadelphia, "It is not so much that He is coming quickly, but that it is *Himself*." *I* come quickly. And the heart that is on the *qui vive*, the tip-toe of expectation, melting in love, in the true inwardness of Psalm 130. 5, 6, as it hears the whispered "surely" of the Lord Jesus, cries, "Let it be even so, come, Lord Jesus."

And so, God's wonderful revelation closes with a precious Christ, who is coming without delay for the comfort, satisfaction and joy of the heart; and His abounding grace for all present need.

"The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen."

## SURELY.

THERE are not many things connected with our lives on earth about which we can use the word "surely." We cannot say, "We shall *surely* wake to-morrow morning," nor even "We shall *surely* reach the end of this day."

But, thank God, there are some things with reference to which we may use the word without any reservation. We *may* say that of all the days that make up our lives, 365 every year, there is not one but what goodness and mercy shall SURELY follow us. For

does not the Word of truth itself say so (Ps. 23. 6) when it says "surely" we may with boldness do the same?

And the house of the Lord is our goal, for we are to dwell there for ever; for our Lord has said, "That where I am there ye may be also." How soon His word may be fulfilled! And again our word "surely" is used. "Surely," He says, "I come quickly." Put these two "surelys" together, they fill the future with their blessedness and should fill our hearts with confidence and hope.

"LET YOUR LOINS BE GIRDED ABOUT, AND YOUR LIGHTS BURNING; AND YE YOURSELVES LIKE UNTO MEN THAT WAIT FOR THEIR LORD."

# HOW DO YOU LOOK AT LIFE?

(F B HOLE)

THIS is a question which I should like to ask my fellow-Christians everywhere. I am stirred to do so by reading a brief article in a secular magazine.

The paper in question—*Elder's Review*, a quarterly issued as to West African matters by the large Steamship Company operating in those regions—was sent to me by a friend, before whom it came in the course of his business. He requested me to read a brief article, of but three short columns, which the editor had inserted right in the very centre. The *Review* I opened as indicated. The article, "How I look at Life," by Lord Beaverbrook, I have read.

The editor introduces the article with a few words pointing out that but few men in our day, in climbing to affluence and influence, have had such a romantic career as the author, and he expresses his opinion that the article is one which gives ample cause for reflection to those who are on the threshold of their careers and also to those who are older. With the editor we certainly agree.

Lord Beaverbrook points out that, "So much depends on the youthful direction of the mind that we can never completely recall our earliest important decisions." He goes on to cite his own case as an example of this, telling us how he was born in Canada, where prices are higher than in England. His father was a Presbyterian minister with an income of but £200 to £300 a year, whereon he struggled to bring up a family of a good round dozen. "As a consequence," he says, "we were miserably poor, and so life struck me as the necessity for an escape from poverty."

Naturally, then, he strove for education as the equipment which would enable him to live some better life, for

as he says, "I was so shocked with the atmosphere of penury which reigned at home that, when I went into the world, I sought above all and first of all—money." To the making of money, therefore, he turned all his youthful energies, with the result that in a very short space of time he accumulated a fortune, and with it came honour and influence and power.

His lordship is now well on in middle life and he looks back upon the years that are past, that he may speak of what he calls, "*Life's real satisfaction.*" He says, "Yet I regret this turn which circumstances gave to my mentality. I would gladly have lived a different life. . . . There is nothing I admire quite so much as the life of the evangelist—the man who embraces poverty willingly, who preaches a new doctrine to mankind, and revivifies an ancient faith for humanity. Luther, Knox, or Wesley—it is all the same. These are the men who have had the most satisfying of lives, because real satisfaction in life consists in the knowledge that one has done good. That is an ambition which can never be exhausted."

As for money, he tells us that he puts it lowest in the scale of what gives life satisfaction. Power he ranks just one degree higher. The power to do good is, he considers, better than all, the supreme source of satisfaction. Therefore it is that the career of an evangelist so greatly appeals to him.

He closes his article with these remarkable words —

"If I were in a position to influence the life of a sincere young man to-day I would say to him, 'Rather choose to be an evangelist than a Cabinet Minister or a millionaire.' When I was a young man I pitied my father for being a poor man and humble preacher of the

Word. Now that I am older I envy him his life and his career."

It may be observed that in these quotations which we have given there is nothing to show that God's call and God's work is recognized; nothing to show that no one can really devote his life to the work of an evangelist except first converted and then called of God; that conversion and the endowment of the Holy Spirit are needful before any individual can do a solitary thing in the service of the Lord. That is so, and the omission, alas! characterizes the whole article. That point of all-importance his lordship does not appear to see, and every reader of these lines might well at this point lift up his heart to God with the request that his eyes may be effectually opened to see it.

Still, this fact by no means takes the edge off his words. Here is a very successful man of affairs who is at least beginning to see life in its true perspective, and he tells us in very plain and open fashion what he sees. We, by the great mercy of our God, have been converted. Our sins are forgiven, we stand justified from all things, and we have received the Holy Spirit. We therefore have the Anointing which enables us to know all things in their true perspective, and we have the Power which capacitates us to take up the service of God under the direction of the Lord. How do we look at life? Let us ask ourselves this question in all seriousness.

We especially beseech our younger brethren and sisters to face this question. Many of you doubtless live in quite poor homes. Some of you have, or have had, fathers not earning as much as the salary of the Presbyterian minister, even in these days of high prices compared with fifty years ago. Does life strike you as being in the main an avenue of escape from the grind of

poverty? God forbid that it should! Others of you come from homes of comparative comfort, and some few of you from homes of affluence and wealth, from circumstances which can provide you with anything within reason on which you may set your heart. Does life strike you as mainly an avenue bordered on either side by gardens of pleasure, whence you may pluck as often as you please every flower that takes your fancy; a pathway which is to provide you with every earthly delight which does not violently clash with your Christian profession? Again we say, God forbid that it should!

One of our poets has said,

"Life is real, life is earnest,  
And the grave is not our goal."

This witness is indeed true. There surrounds us on every hand the world that is: there lies before us the world that is to come. The one thrusts itself upon our notice at every turn; our eyes rest upon its gilded glories, our ears are filled with its ceaseless din. The other is at present known only to faith. Yet the one is the creature of one short fevered hour in the history of eternity; the other abides for ever. No wonder the Apostle John has said to us, "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world." Though we all of us handle and use the things that are in the world we are to take great care that they do not obtain a strangle-hold on our affections. He added, "The world passeth away, and the lust thereof, but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever" (1 John 2. 17). God's world abides, and in that world he who does God's will abides for ever.

Dear young Christian, we appeal to you! For which world are you living? In which direction are you bending your energies? What seems to you to be the highest good in life?

You will tell us, perhaps, that you

quite admit the truth of what we have been saying : that you could not very well be a Christian and not admit it. Yet there are, you urge, many difficulties—one must make one's way in life and earn one's living : it is not pleasant to have but little of the good things of this life in the presence of others who have much : downright earnestness in God's things often brings contempt and even ridicule. Our reply to this has to be, that these difficult facts are just as you state them.

We cannot shut our eyes to them. Even Lord Beaverbrook in his article did not attempt to do so. He says, "I know only too well from bitter experience how youth is turned away from such high missions of service by the intimate prospect of penury." Again he adds the following striking words, "To this is often added the fear of ridicule and contempt which unworldly enthusiasm arouses. 'Let us,' said a bishop of the late eighteenth century, 'let us, above all things, put down enthusiasm.' And so the church lost Wesley. That man will be happiest in middle years who resists most successfully the temptation of a purely material success."

The difficulties are apparent, and we do not shut our eyes to them. But shall we flinch from them? Shall we allow them to obscure before our eyes the lasting glories of that world which is to come? Shall we let them dim in our souls the brightness, the sweetness, of the love of Christ, or damp down the holy enthusiasm which such a Master and such a message are otherwise bound to create? By the grace of God it shall not be so with us.

Let all the difficulties and disadvantages be duly weighed up and appraised. Then let the coming day be considered, when humble saints, who have been true and faithful to the Name of Christ,

shall be vindicated, according to that word, "Behold, I will make them [the opponents] to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee" (Rev. 3. 9); when there shall be fulfilled to humble servants that word of their Master, "Where I am, there shall also My servant be : if any man serve Me, him will My Father honour" (John 12. 26). What shall we say to these things?

Without a doubt we shall say that to be publicly honoured of the Father, and declared to be the objects of the love of Christ, is a coming blessedness and joy with which all possible disadvantages are not worthy of being compared. To be disliked by men and dishonoured by them is not pleasant, but what will it be to be loved by Christ and to be honoured of the Father?

Can you conceive of anything more blessed than that? No, indeed! Then see to it that for a little success and paltry honour in this world you do not forgo that honour which comes from God alone. See to it that you do not miss the opportunity of giving yourself whole-heartedly to Christ and His service.

Your abilities may be large or small. You may have gift of a pronounced kind or you may have no special gift at all. Whichever way it is, our exhortation to you is the same. You know the grace of God. You have a Master of infinite blessedness and glory to serve. Your years upon earth are at most very short. Your opportunity for devotedness to Him and His service will soon be gone. Oh, embrace it, dear young Christian, and labour not for the world that is but for that which is to come!

May God enable you to be whole-hearted for Christ.

# THE FIRST AND THE LAST.

(A. J. ATKINS.)

"I am Alpha and Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End."—  
Revelation 22. 13.

"All the promises of God in Him are Yea, and in Him Amen. . . ."—2 Corinthians  
2. 20.

"Jesus, the Author and Finisher of faith. . . ."—Hebrews 12. 2.

IN these passages we have brought before us five double titles of our Lord Jesus Christ. It will readily be perceived that one leading thought runs through them all, namely, that of commencement and conclusion. Each separate title shines like a star with its own peculiar lustre; and all together they form a bright constellation in those spiritual heavens which are ever ablaze with His glory.

He is (1) Alpha and Omega, (2) the First and the Last, (3) the Beginning and the End, (4) the Yea and the Amen, and (5) the Author and Finisher. So far as the writer can trace, these are the only titles exactly of this significance in the New Testament; and if this is the case, is there not something to be learned even from their very number? There are five series, each a pair; that is, ten titles in all. As students of Scripture are aware, ten in Scripture seems to be frequently connected with human responsibility, and five with human weakness. May we not have them here in numerical guise, the suggestion that in these titles is set forth the complete answer to our failure in *responsibility*, and the divine resource to which our *weakness* may cling? Solemn but precious thought! Let us proceed briefly to consider them in order and detail.

First, He is *the Alpha and the Omega*. As is well known, these are the first and the last letters of the Greek alphabet, the alphabet of the New Testament Scriptures. An alphabet is fundamental to language; and by it words

are built up, and through words thoughts are expressed. All the great and noble thoughts that have ever been uttered or written have been expressed within the compass of the alphabet employed! All English literature, for example, is comprised within the scope of twenty-six letters! What a wonderful thought it is that Christ is the  $\alpha$  and the  $\omega$ , the A and the Z, as it were; the initial and final digits in the *alphabet of God*! That is to say, He is the *whole alphabet* of God. This thought is similar to that which is brought before us in the opening of John's Gospel where we read of Him as the eternal Word, the embodiment and expression of the mind and thoughts of God. Christ is the sum and substance of all that God has to say. He is its commencement and conclusion. All that is expressed may be regarded as varied aspects and combinations of His glory. He not only is the divine Spokesman, He is also the divine speech. He is the Revealer, but He is also the revelation. Everything is embraced in His blessed Person. He was God's first Word; and He is God's last! Here is a study, inexhaustible! Whether it be the youngest in God's family learning the A, B, C, and spelling out some of God's simpler lessons, or the ripe saint studying His profound thoughts, Christ is the subject of both. When by the Spirit's power we are occupied with Christ, we are thinking God's thoughts after Him.\* We may look at this glory of Christ in

\* It is presumed, of course, that it is the Christ of the Scriptures. We can only truly know Him as revealed there.

another way. The alphabet, as already remarked, is the basis of human language. Human language at present is largely used to circulate the devil's lies, as in the infidel science and philosophy of the day; or the devil's filth, as in much of the press and literature current. May we not in the light of the statement that Christ is the Alpha and Omega anticipate the day, now, we believe, soon to dawn, when the earth, cleansed through its fiery baptism of judgment, shall be pure and free, and when literature, as all else, shall own His claims and proclaim His glory, and when He who was once the butt of ribald jest, shall be the theme of universal praise, and speech, and writing?

Then, secondly, He is the *First and the Last*—this is a characteristically *divine* title; and He who assumes it must be One “who without usurpation could lay claim to God's eternal throne.” The title occurs three times in the Old Testament and three in the New Testament. We read: “Who hath wrought and done it, calling the generations from the beginning? I JEHOVAH the first, and with the last; I AM He” (Isa. 41. 4). Here we seem to have brought before us God's *immutability* as the Source and Sustainer of all. Then again, “Thus saith JEHOVAH, the King of Israel, and His Redeemer, JEHOVAH of Hosts: I am the First, and I am the Last; and beside Me there is no God” (Isa. 44. 6). Here the thought seems to be that of God's *supremacy*—He only is God. Again we read: “I AM He; I am the First; I also am the Last. Mine hand also hath laid the foundation of the earth, and My right hand hath spanned the heavens; when I call unto them, they stand up together” (Isa. 48. 12). Here is the thought of God's *almighty power*. These

thoughts, God's immutability, His supremacy and His almighty power, are gathered up in the brief and majestic statement in the opening of the book of Revelation: “I AM the First and the Last” (1. 17 and 2. 8). How impressive thus to find the Lord Jesus Christ appropriating this title to Himself in His risen manhood, thus declaring Himself one with God! We must not fail, moreover, to observe that in asserting His title He uses the most glorious of all the divine names, the “I AM” peculiar to deity!

He is the *First* because He is the Son. Then, too, having entered into His own creation He is the “Firstborn of all creation” (Col. 1. 15). “He is before all,” because of whom He is, and He must, therefore, in all things have the pre-eminence, it is His by right. He is also Firstborn in virtue of His redemptive work, and resurrection from the dead.

Not only is He the First, He is also the Last, not as meaning the least and lowest, though in wondrous grace He took *that* place for the glory of God and for our redemption, but the Last as the great Finality. *The Last* from the point of view of the occasion when the Word was uttered, points forward; but in significance it points backward from the great consummation when everything created shall have been shaken and shall be folded up as a vesture: He will remain, therefore He is the Last. Further, one has said, “The First because all things are from Me; the Last because to Me are all things” Yes, He is the Last. None succeeds Him. He is the divine *ne plus ultra*. The stamp of finality is upon all His words and all His acts; they have an eternal bearing. He is the divine link between the past and the future, and in the mind of God He fills up all between. “It is

the infinite One who sums up, comprehends all existence whether past, present or future in His own being." And His name is *Jesus* !

Then, thirdly, He is the *Beginning and the End*. The Beginning is one of His peculiar divine titles (Col. 1. 18). In the beginning He *was* (John 1. 2). He is the "beginning of the creation of God" (Rev. 3. 14). He is the beginning, the Originator of life (Acts. 3. 15, New Trans.). He is the beginning of the grace of God—it "came by" Him (John 1. 17). He is the "beginning" of Christianity ; and although this might appear obvious, yet it is emphasized in John's epistle : "Him that is from the beginning" (2. 13). Whatever fresh departure God makes in His "methods with man," He has Christ before Him in whom all His purposes are centred.

And Christ is also the End. This word in the New Testament signifies much more than conclusion ; it means "the fulfilment or completion of anything, i.e., its end or issue, not its cessation. It denotes strictly not the ending of a departed state but the arrival of a complete or perfect one." In this sense Christ is the End. He is the End of creation—it was made for, *with a view to* Him (Col. 1. 16). He is the end of the providential order ; all things are working after the counsel of God's will to gather together all things in Christ (Eph. 1.). His mills grind slowly, but they grind exceeding small. No adventitious circumstances frustrate His plans. Nothing has been unforeseen or unprovided for. All is either fore-ordained or foreseen according to the divine foreknowledge. Even the devil is chained to the chariot wheels of God's triumph, and evil is made to serve His will. There are no broken threads on God's loom. The great and glorious pattern

is being wrought out ; and Christ is its beginning and end ; the design and the executed masterpiece !

These wonderful thoughts are carried yet a stage further, when we come to consider this same One as the *Yea and the Amen* of God's promises. God's promises are the outcome of His purpose. As has been said : "There is some difference between God's purposes and His promises. Both of them so to speak are gold ; but the one is gold in the *mine*, the other is gold in the *mint*, impressed and prepared for currency and use." His promises are those blessed engagements to which from time to time He has committed Himself, and which recorded in His Word claim and call forth the faith of His people. Every jot and tittle of them shall be fulfilled, for they are in Christ. They were made, when given, to men, but, *in the divine perspective*, not in Adam the fallen, federal head, nor in Noah the governor who could not govern himself, nor in Abraham the pilgrim and sojourner, nor in Isaac the deceived ; not in David the man of blood, nor in Solomon the backslider, nor in Israel which "destroyed" itself, nor in the church—in none of these were the promises deposited ; but *in Christ*. Only in Christ, therefore, could they be true or their fulfilment guaranteed, and only in Him will they be actually accomplished. For He is the *Yea*, the One who affirms and undertakes them ; He is the *Amen*, the One who will fulfil them completely.

Another aspect of this same truth is shown us in Christ as *the Author and Finisher* of faith. Here we have touchingly suggested that He whose *divine* glory we have been considering is also perfect Man. As a man He was the Man of faith. He lived by every word of God. He ever confided in the Father. Every word was uttered and every work

was performed in dependence upon the Father. How strikingly is all this brought out, for example, in Psalm 16, and in the Gospels! In the saints of olden time, in Abraham, Moses, David, Jeremiah and Daniel certain aspects of faith might be prominent; but in Him they are all seen in harmony and unity, and in fulness and perfection. He has trodden the *whole* path of faith. He has met with every form of difficulty and trial. He has experienced every order of suffering. He *learned* obedience. He is stranger to no form of trial which can be found in doing the will of God. And now His path has ended; His work is done; His mission is accomplished; He has reached the goal and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. And there in the glory, He is set before us as the *Author and Finisher of faith*.

This, then, is something of the meaning of these series of His glories. How good, how necessary it is for us to "consider Him"! To do so must affect us deeply. They have a practical message for us, as we stand at the threshold of another year.

Firstly, they are surely a *call to profound worship*. Do we not need this call in these busy days of stress and strain? Is there not the danger of our being too much in and with the world? Do we know sufficient of the secret place, and the great silences that produce worship? Let us accept the call. Let writer and reader join now to fall at His feet and *adore Him*, as John did in the Island long ago.

Secondly, they are a *storehouse of precious encouragement*. The darkness may deepen still. Evil may abound yet more. Difficulties may increase. Friends may fail us. Human leaders may break down or forsake the ranks. Much that is dear may break up. We may ourselves be unfaithful. Sorrow

may beset us. But in and through all, God's Christ is ours, and we know that all is in His hands, who is the First and the Last. How sweet is His word: "Fear not; I am the First and the Last, and *the living One*, and I became dead, and behold I am living to the ages of ages, and have the keys of death and of hades" (Rev. i. 17, 18, New Trans.).

Thirdly, they contain a mighty *stimulus to faith*. He remains. Everything else fails—always has failed in man's hands—but He abideth. Nothing *in Him* shall fail. Nothing given to Him shall perish. Nothing He has undertaken shall lapse. He will bring us safely through. God's glory and our souls are supremely safe in His keeping. The word "our" may not be in the text of Hebrews 12. 2, but the fact is certainly true: He is the Author and Finisher of *our* faith. He will perfect that which concerns us. He will confirm us to the end. He will fulfil in us the good pleasure of His goodness and the work of faith with power. Therefore let us hold fast and press on.

Then, lastly, they contain a strong *incentive to faithfulness*. Soon He is coming. Soon all we have believed and hoped for will be realized. Soon our opportunities to serve and follow Him will be gone. Let us labour—be ambitious—to be acceptable to Him! Let us seek to be more filled with the knowledge of His will unto all pleasing! May He be truly and practically *our* A and Z! May He be *to us* the First and the Last! May all our works be begun, continued and ended in Him! May we run with more diligence the race set before us, looking unto Him, Jesus, the Author and Finisher of faith! All, all is well if we are His and He is ours, and we are following Him.

## “THE ARM OF THE LORD.”

(J. C. TRENCH.)

FOUR times over does this remarkable expression occur in the Book of Isaiah, giving us a vivid idea of the power and grace of the Lord. Isaiah 51. 9 :

“Awake, awake, put on strength, O ARM OF THE LORD; awake, as in the ancient days, in the generations of old. Art thou not it that hath cut Rahab [Egypt], and wounded the dragon?”

Here it is the cry of God’s ancient people for deliverance *by judgment* on their foes, as was executed on Egypt under the Pharaoh of the oppression. The Arm of the Lord was sought to be put forth in power to this end, and Jehovah graciously answered and delivered His people. But what He did in the past is here claimed as an illustration of what He can do in the future, though over seven centuries had rolled by since the triumph of the Exodus. Jehovah is ever the same. His power is the same. His love is the same. And the cry for deliverance in Isaiah 51. 9 awaits still its answer. *The answer will ASSUREDLY come.* So we read, “Therefore the redeemed of the LORD shall return, and come with singing unto Zion; and everlasting joy shall be upon their head; they shall obtain gladness and joy; and sorrow and mourning shall flee away” (verse 11). This leads us to Isaiah 52. 10 :

“The LORD hath made bare HIS HOLY ARM in the eyes of all the nations; and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God.”

Isaiah in the joy of his prophetic vision speaks of happenings that will take place in the future, when Israel shall be blessed according to God’s promise made to Abraham, as if they were already fulfilled. For instance, take Isaiah 53., clearly pointing to

Christ and His atoning death, presented to us as if that death were already accomplished. “Surely He hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows” (verse 4). So sure is the vision of faith that it can use the past tense concerning things that were yet to come to pass centuries later.

So we may ask, In what way was Jehovah about to make bare His holy Arm? Against whom was that Arm to be outstretched? The following verses will answer our question :

“Behold, My Servant shall deal prudently, He shall be exalted and extolled, and be very high.

“As many were astonished at Thee; His visage was so marred more than any man, and His form more than the sons of men :

“So shall He sprinkle many nations; the kings shall shut their mouths at Him; for that which had not been told them shall they see; and that which they had not heard shall they consider.

“Who hath believed our report? and to whom is THE ARM OF THE LORD revealed?” (Isa. 52. 13-15; 53. 1).

“REVEALED!” Yes, indeed, it needed a revelation to make this known. Astounding fact, that God was about to stretch forth that ARM of His against His Fellow (Zech. 13. 7), the Son of His bosom (John 1. 18), the Son of His love (John 3. 35)—instead of upon His enemies! This is the secret of the glowing outburst of Isaiah 52. 7-10. “All the ends of the earth” were now to “see the salvation of our God,” brought to them by Him whose feet are beautiful upon the mountains, as He brings good tidings of good, publishing salvation, proclaiming the magnificent news, “Thy God reigneth,” surely referring to the Lord Himself,

though evangelists to-day are privileged to carry on the same message.

For if the ARM of Jehovah was not to be laid in judgment on the sinner, it must be laid on a spotless Victim, who could in righteousness bear that judgment, and at the same time exhaust it. Thus that wonderful fifty-third chapter of this prophecy is introduced, telling us of what that ARM had to inflict on the spotless Person of God the Son—become Man. He was “smitten of God, and afflicted.” He was “wounded for our transgression.” He was “bruised for our iniquities.” “With His stripes we are healed.” “Jehovah hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all.” “It pleased Jehovah to bruise Him; He hath put Him to grief.” “Thou shalt make His soul an offering for sin.” “He shall see of the travail of His soul and shall be satisfied.” “He bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.” Note the magnificent assurance of faith, describing an event that still lay in the womb of the future, as if it were accomplished and all its glorious results flowing forth in one great stream of redeeming grace.

But what if Israel, or the Gentile nations, do not prostrate themselves before their merciful God, who has laid bare His ARM against His well-beloved Son, and accept God's so great salvation?

The answer to our question we shall find in Isaiah 59. We read:

“Behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither His ear heavy that it cannot hear:

“But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid His face from you, that He will not hear” (verses 1 and 2).

The blessing of man is not lacking on God's side. There is mercy for all. It

is the refusal to repent, the going on with sin, that brings in judgment, which is God's strange work. He delights in mercy. But if this mercy is refused, what then? Read on to verse 15, where the awful picture of apostate Israel is sketched in appalling terms. Then the prophet wonders that there is no man to step into the breach, no intercessor to come forward, but turns to the Lord and says triumphantly:

“Therefore HIS ARM brought salvation unto Him; and His righteousness, it sustained Him.”

We see how the ARM of the Lord is strong in salvation, but for those who will not yield it is strong in judgment. “At the name of Jesus every knee shall bow, of things in heaven, and things on earth, and things under the earth” (Phil. 2. 10).

Then follows that beautiful verse, delightful in its poetical imagery:

“So shall they fear the name of the Lord from the west, and His glory from the rising of the sun. When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against Him” (verse 19).

This all fittingly closes with the beautiful sixtieth chapter, giving such a glowing account of the conversion of the Gentile nations, who will be the instruments to bring Israel's sons “from far” (verse 9), and establish them in their own land. We know how the great tribulation, “the time of Jacob's trouble” (Jer. 30. 7), will be necessary before Israel is brought to repentance, and the readiness to receive their Messiah. Blessing cannot come save as HE gets His true place. But events are hastening on to the day when the ARM of the Lord will be seen in the salvation of His people and the destruction of His foes.

# BEHOLD THE BRIDEGROOM!

(JAMES GREEN)

AND shall we see His face? Soon? Perhaps to-day? Does the thought, dear fellow Christian, stir you with expectant longing? Would you gladly, readily, leave all life's business and its schemes, home and its pleasures, matters of urgency, and the trivial round and common task, for that enraptured sight? To see His face: not as once it was upon the blood-stained tree, when for you, for us, He gave Himself to that shameful death of untold agony, and there bore our judgment; but to see Him as He is, the same One indeed, yet radiant with the glory of the Beloved of the Father's heart, the glory that was His before the world was. What a sight that shall cause to burst forth the heavenly anthem, "Unto Him that loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood." Dear Christian reader, before you lay down this copy of *Scripture Truth* His promise may be fulfilled: "I will come again and receive you unto Myself, that where I am ye may be also"

Coming, suddenly, soon. Perhaps you are one who for long years has been instructed in the truth of the Lord's coming, and you could turn without hesitation to the Scriptures in which this blessed hope is set forth. You do not doubt it in your mind, for the last thing you would do is to question His word, but can you be said to believe it as a present expectancy in your heart? Somehow you are conscious that the fact has but little power over your thoughts and life. Slowly, subtly, the world has intruded itself upon your attention; your crowded days leave little time for thought and so the things that are seen appear of more instant importance than the imminence of the return of your unseen Lord. If so it be with you, dear reader, then the

exhortation has not been written without point in your case "Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light"

There is only one cure for this coldness of orthodox acceptance of truth without the living power, and it is this, you need to know the abiding of His presence. None is really, truly expecting Him, but those into whose hearts He has come and manifested Himself. Into this blessedness He Himself has shown the way. "He that hath My commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loved Me, and he that loveth Me shall be loved of My Father, and I will love him and will manifest Myself to him" Obedience to His Word, the control of your life, is what He desires, and is this too much for Him to ask who has bought you with a price? Indeed to withhold this is to defraud Him of that which is His absolute right. But even so He will not compel, for that which is yielded without love, without the affections constrained, attracted, by His own excellent perfection and deep, deep love, is of no value in His eyes. It is His bride for whom He comes, the very name expressive of undivided affection. The Spirit's sojourn in this world is nearly ended, the last desert march is begun, soon the last steps will be taken, the sudden shout shall be heard, and that Holy Servant of the Father and the Son shall say, "It is My Master." Beloved reader, shake off your sloth, release your hold upon this world's glittering toys, loose the grave clothes of dead religious formalism, take up the pilgrim's staff, and stand with your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace. At any moment you may hear the words which on the betrayal night led your Lord forth to the agony and the

cross, once again repeated from the glory-cloud, ushering His redeemed into the bliss of His radiant presence: "Arise, let us go hence."

Again, awake; awake; nothing is of such importance to your soul, yea to His heart, as this, and already at the door, He bends His ear to catch the response that rises from His blood-bought church, "The Spirit and the Bride say, Come." If your hands have been slack for your coming Lord; if

your knees have been feeble; remember each hour is lessening the ever shortening time in which you may be His witness, and tell the gospel message, "Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." A present Christ within for communion; a proclaimed Christ upon the lips for testimony; the constant expectancy of those that love Him; blessed anticipation this for the Bridegroom's heart. Behold He cometh, go ye forth to meet Him.

## "AS HE IS."

(J. T. MAWSON.)

"We shall see Him as He is."—1 John 3. 2.

[ WAS doing my best to comfort a little girl whose mother had gone to be with the Lord Jesus. "You will see her again," I said, "brighter and more beautiful than ever she was on earth." Up from the lacerated little heart came the answer, "But I want to see her just as she was. I shall see her just as she was, shan't I?" That was love's cry, as she had known her mother so she wished to see her. What else could satisfy love but that? And this is the desire of our hearts in regard to our Lord. When we see Him we do not want to see a stranger, nor shall we; we want to see One whom we know well, who has won our heart's affection, and so we shall. We shall see Him as He is, as we have learnt Him, so full of tenderness, patience and love. We shall see Him as the One who has come near to us in our days of darkness and sorrow, and held us up when we feared that we would be overwhelmed; we shall see Him as the One who has restored our souls when our fickle hearts turned us into ways of misery and sin. We shall see Him as the One

who never forsook us day or night in our earthly pilgrimage, and who has become more to us than father, mother, husband, wife, child or friend. We shall see Him as He is now, our Lover, our Lord, our all.

We shall see Him as He is in the Father's favour, loved by Him, and all glorious in that love, and our hearts will thrill at the sight. This is one of the chiefest joys that His brethren shall ever have. We are to be with Him for this very purpose. For this He prayed, "Father, I will that they also, whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am; that they may behold My glory, WHICH THOU HAST GIVEN ME: for Thou lovedst Me before the foundation of the world" (John 17. 24). The world will not see Him thus; they will see Him in the dread majesty of the Judge of quick and dead, as King of kings and Lord of lords, and will wail in their fear of Him; but His own, whom He loves and will love to the end, are to be enraptured by the sight of Him as He is, in all the beauty of His grace and love.

## INVULNERABLE.

(J T MAWSON

“THOU ART THE CHRIST, THE SON OF THE LIVING GOD. . . . UPON THIS ROCK I WILL BUILD MY CHURCH; AND THE GATES OF HELL SHALL NOT PREVAIL AGAINST IT.”—Matthew 16. 16.

I WANT to speak to you of the absolute stability of that which God does, and to show you that nothing can fail or be shaken which is established in and by Christ. Everything else in which we may be tempted to trust will most certainly give way, fail and bitterly disappoint us, but if our confidence rests in what is of God there will not be, there cannot be, any disappointment for us either in time or eternity.

Here for the first time in Scripture the Lord speaks of His church—of the body that is being “called out” of the world by the gospel for His own special pleasure and glory. It is not the first time that there had been a church on earth. Stephen in Acts 7. speaks of “the church in the wilderness”—of Israel separated from the nations and called out of Egypt—but this of which the Lord speaks with such affection was something new, something that was to be for Himself, His own peculiar treasure, that should compensate Him for all the contumely and sorrow that He suffered when in this world He was cut off and had nothing. Consider the way He speaks of it, “MY CHURCH,” He says. Let the emphasis rest upon the possessive pronoun and you will begin to realize what it means to Him; then rejoice, dear Christian, and give thanks unto God that you are part of that of which your Saviour speaks in this touching way. Yes, you, a young, inexperienced, and perhaps untaught Christian, are part of that which is infinitely precious to your Lord and Saviour; but so also is every other Christian, and how precious this will make them all to you. It will increase

your love to all the saints if you look upon yourself and them in this holy and blessed association.

Notice that the gates of hell shall not prevail against His church. The gates of hell represent all the power and subtlety and scheming of the devil and the powers of darkness. Do not think lightly of these—there are forces of evil under the direction of Satan that are greater than anything else in the universe but God and what is of Him, and they are in perpetual counsel to thwart and overthrow the work of God. Their efforts are all in vain, they may seem to gain a temporary advantage, they may congratulate themselves that they are breaking up and destroying the church of God; they have yet to learn in bitter experience that it is invulnerable; it will come out of all the storms and buffetings of its nearly twenty centuries’ history on earth unscathed, a glorious church, holy and without blame. Throughout these centuries the triumphant Christ has been building, building, and the work is nearing its completion. He will finish it as once He finished the work of redemption; then shall Satan be bruised beneath our feet. Glorious prospect! Christian, rejoice exceedingly and with exultation. You belong to that which is infinitely precious to Christ, your great Saviour, and which in and through Him will triumph over Satan, your great foe.

The Lord asked His disciples, “Whom do men say that I the Son of Man am?” And this is the great question. Everything for God depends upon it: there could be no triumph, no impregnable

building for God, apart from the truth of the person of Christ, and this had to come out definitely and clearly before He could speak of His church. They answered, "Elias. . . Jeremias, or one the prophets." Men did not know Him, but these disciples of His, did they know Him? He would ask them, "But whom say ye that I am?" And Simon Peter answered and said, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God."

Did Simon Peter exult as he made that confession? I feel that he must have done, even though he may not have grasped the full meaning of it; but whether or not, we may exult to-day, for in this confession there is told the story of His triumph. He is God's Anointed, "declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead" (Rom. 1.). The confession was anticipatory—the title belongs to the One who has triumphed over death. It is Christ triumphant who has said, "I WILL BUILD MY CHURCH." He had to dig deep to lay the foundation, He had to go down into the depths until beneath Him there was nothing. Let us with hearts profoundly moved recall His words. "I sink in deep mire, where there is no standing: I am come into deep waters, where the floods overflow me" (Ps. 69). "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" (Ps. 22.). Every power that could challenge His right to build had to be annulled by Him, every question had to be answered; there must be nothing left beneath the foundation that He would lay that could shake His building, it must stand in everlasting righteousness. He must take up and settle to God's glory the question of sin, and this He did when He was made sin for us. And by dying He annulled the power of the

devil who had the power of death, that out of the quarry of sin and death He might raise up stones that should be living stones—stones having His own life, a life that death can never touch again.

He has won the right to build and to build with whatsoever material He may chose, and what He builds is invulnerable. He is building now unceasingly and victoriously, for in Him all the building fitly framed together groweth unto a holy temple in the Lord. No power of evil can stop that blessed work, and who shall challenge His right to complete it? And you may rejoice, Christians, with exceeding joy, that you are, each one of you, a stone in that building, and that even now in Him "ye also are builded together for a habitation of God through the Spirit" (Eph. 2.).

I beseech of you to look upon this side of the truth, and cast off the depression that comes from occupation with the failure of the churches in their responsibility, which Scripture has so plainly foretold. We rightly grieve about this failure, for our Lord's Name has been greatly dishonoured by it; but let us rejoice in that which is above all failure: the gates of hell cannot prevail against the church, of which you are part, and God is to have glory through it by Christ Jesus to the ages of the ages.

There are two sides to this great subject and we must use diligence to understand them: the first is what Christ is in the glory of His own person and the great victory that He has gained in and over death and the devil who had the power of death; and the second is the revelation of what Christ is to the soul, that transforms it from dead and unstable dust into living

stone Man after the flesh—that is, man of Adam's fallen race—was utterly unreliable and useless. There was no good in him that could be developed and fitted for an imperishable building; if there had been, Elias, Jeremias, or one of the prophets would have discovered it and there would then have been no need for the New Testament and its revelation; but these faithful men of God were broken-hearted men, for all their labours were in vain. In spite of them man got worse and worse, until from the crown of the head to the soles of the feet all was wounds and bruises and putrefying sores. The material upon which they laboured was rotten to its centre. Theirs was the day of testing of men, and the testing proved that God and faith must look elsewhere for material if the church which was in the mind and counsels of God before time began was ever to be built. The material has been found, not through the advance of civilization or by scientific research, but by the revelation of Christ to the souls of men. This is God's way of producing the material that is needed for His building. It is the Father's work—a work of sovereign grace. How blessed are those who are the subjects of it! Every one who has tasted that the Lord is gracious and has come to Him stands with Simon Bar-jona in this blessedness. Blessed be God!

Here we come to that which surely must move our souls profoundly, for here the Lord joins together "My Father" and "My church." He could not have had a church at all if He had not given Himself for it, neither could He have had it apart from the Father's work. I wish we knew the Father better, for then would our joy and confidence in Him be greater. It is He who has revealed Christ to our souls. When you felt the intolerable burden

of your sins, and cried out as a conscience-stricken sinner for relief, and were drawn to the feet of the Saviour and found Him to be gracious, most accessible; when He received you and did not cast you out, but blest you and gave you rest and peace, it was the Father's work. He drew you to Jesus, for no man comes except the Father draws him. The Father wished you to know the blessedness and all-sufficiency of His beloved Son, and so the light shone in your darkness and you were drawn to the Saviour, but you owe it to the Father's grace. And He had a great purpose behind this work of grace, and that purpose was that you should be part of this impregnable church. This was not an after-thought of His, and the grace with which He blest you was the means to this end.

You have come to Jesus, who is raised from the dead, the Christ, the Son of the living God, and having come He has imparted to you His own life. Listen to these wonderful words: "*Father, the hour is come; glorify Thy Son, that Thy Son also may glorify Thee: As Thou hast given Him power over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as Thou hast given Him. And this is life eternal, that they might know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent.*" Eternal life which has been given to us is His own life, it is invincible, triumphant life. Could the gates of hell prevail against Him? The prince of this world came but found nothing in Him. Jesus was the object of the personal attacks of Satan, and He yielded not an inch to the great foe. Satan was baffled, foiled, defeated, and the life in Jesus that was always victorious is the life of every living stone Christian, you are in Christ Jesus, and if any man be in Christ Jesus there is a new

creation, a new life and nature, and these are indestructible, they are superior to all the power of sin and Satan. Again, let us say, Blessed be God!

My desire in speaking of the church invulnerable is that in faith we may take our stand in definite identification with it, that we may no longer be depressed and pessimistic but triumphant and full of hope. We cannot ignore the condition of things in Christendom—we must own that we are in Laodicean days, and the perilous times of which Paul wrote and prophesied, and we do well to feel and mourn all this, and to be watchful lest we are led away from our steadfastness by the spirit of the day, but we shall not be preserved by dwelling on failure, nor do we gain the strength to meet it by talking about it. It is the truth that sets us free, only what is positive will help us. And the Lord's first words

about His church will be the last, for who can speak after Him, or alter a word that He has uttered; heaven and earth shall pass away, but His word cannot fail, and this is His word: "Upon this rock I will build My church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."

Rejoice, dear Christian, with exceeding joy, you are part through grace of that which is invulnerable. How keen men are in their allegiance and labours for this political party or that! What sacrifices they will make for the furtherance of their special movements and schemes for the building up of the world that they love! All their labour is in vain. The world system has no foundation, and will collapse at last under the judgment of God. We may labour under the Lord's direction for the building up of His church—His one church—and know that our labour is not in vain in the Lord.

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## A WORD TO ELDERS.

"*TAKE heed therefore unto yourselves.*" The personal life is of the first importance in those who would serve the Lord among His own. To neglect this means disaster. "*And to ALL THE FLOCK, over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers.*" If the heart is kept with diligence and enlarged towards the Lord, it will care for "all the flock"; the exhortation is needed, for the danger always has been and is still, to confine the thought and labour to a few, and to think of *folds* instead of all the flock. "*To feed the church of God*"—and the church of God embraces all His loved ones—"which He hath purchased with His own blood" (or "*with the blood of His own*") What a price! How precious the church must be to Him! He is looking for those who will be in communion with His own heart, and who will understand that the first thought of love is that the loved ones should be nourished.

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## Daily Labour.

AS to our daily toil, if we begin with God and are acting in faith, we shall be diligent, earnest, and ready to learn. The very dependence we have on God will provoke us to patient, laborious attention to that which we believe He has ordained for us as our labour for our daily bread. The more the faith, the more the endurance in the face of the most irksome and trying difficulties.

## ARE WE READY ?

(A. J. ATKINS)

THE Lord is coming! And He is coming, we believe, very soon. This seems to be the deepening conviction of spiritual Christians everywhere. Already nearly a century has elapsed since the cry went forth throughout Christendom, "Behold the Bridegroom cometh!" Since then signs have been increasing in number and portent. They now abound. Even the world feels that something must happen before long. The church does not need signs, but there they are shining like beacons, and warning all who have eyes to see that the hour of Christ's appearing is right at hand. And if, as we believe, the translation of the saints to glory will precede by some space of time the appearing of Christ in glory, signs of the approach of the latter must be also signs of the still nearer hour of the translation of 1 Thessalonians 4.

His coming, then, being so near, the question is raised with grave urgency, *Are we ready?*

In one sense, surely, every true believer is ready. Do we not read, "The Father, who hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light" ? (Col. 1 12). Yes, washed, justified, and sanctified, in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God, every saint of God is ready for translation to glory, and will in this sense never be more so, for it is entirely a matter of divine grace, in which works that we have done have no place whatever. "Our title to glory we read in His Blood," and we would read it nowhere else.

But is this all? If we read Scripture aright, there is also a *moral* readiness, a preparation of heart and ways which is insisted on in a number of passages. We read for one example of

many, "The marriage of the Lamb is come, and His wife hath *made herself ready*" (Rev. 19. 7). This readiness, as all else, is the fruit of grace, based upon the great work of Calvary, but being a moral readiness, conveying moral fitness for our place and destiny, it supposes a work in which our co-operation is required, for note, the words are, "hath *made herself ready*" This, we submit, is a solemn and urgent matter of deep moment to all the Lord's people.

Let us now consider a little further in what this readiness consists, and how it is to be attained.

First of all, it is a readiness of *heart*, of affection. Knowledge of the prophetic Word is good, indeed necessary; and a discernment of dispensational truth is essential to a right understanding of the faith. But surely before all else, what the Lord looks for is a love and longing for Himself. Nothing else compensates for lack in this respect. If love be present, it will surely show itself in ardent desire for His return, endeavour to be ready for Him, and sensibility as to what is suitable to Him.

It is well, then, heartily and sincerely to address to ourselves the questions, Is there anything between our hearts and Himself? Are there any secret reserves in our souls? Have we any plans which tend to make us in heart defer the thought of His coming? Are we involved in entanglements from which we would wish to be free if we knew He was returning to-morrow? Are we engaged in any pursuits, friendships or associations, inconsistent with the call and claim of His coming? May we have grace to be exercised before Him about all these things, where necessary have them cleared up

in His presence, so that with hearts and consciences that do not condemn us, we may be aglow with His love, ambitious of pleasing Him, and our aspirations set towards His kingdom and glory. May we *want* Him! For that, in a word, is to be ready in *affection*.

But this is not all. We read concerning the Lamb's wife, that "To her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousnesses of the saints" (Rev. 19. 8, N.T.). "Fine linen" reminds us at once of the tabernacle of old where it had a conspicuous place, and stood for Christ Himself, representing His perfect and unsullied purity as "the Righteous One" How "He loved righteousness and hated iniquity"! But here in Revelation we see that, that which was true absolutely of Him, has become characteristically true of His eternal companion. *The robe she will wear then is being woven now* Every act of righteousness now on the part of saints adds to its texture and beauty! We read, "His wife hath made herself ready." "She shall be brought to the King in raiment of needlework" (Ps. 45. 14). Raiment is that in which we appear before others and typically speaks of walk and ways. The Lord would have us actively getting ready as regards our *conduct*.

But conduct, walk and ways are outward and spring from what is within. There is, therefore, a readiness required within, as well as without; of holiness as well as righteousness. So we read, "He that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as He is pure" (1 John 3. 3) "Without holiness no man shall see the Lord," indicates an inexorable necessity; and yet in the glory of God's grace, "when we see Him *we shall be like Him*; for we shall see Him

as He is" (1 John 3. 2). The prospect of this—and so great is it that "it doth not yet appear what we shall be"—is a *hope* fraught with wonderful transforming power and purifying energy. It is a "blessed hope," truly; but it is also a cleansing hope. We need to be ready in *character*, and as the hope is meditated upon and allowed to affect us it produces that personal purity which alone shall see God.

Then we may gather a further thought as to the readiness required in view of the coming, from the parable of the virgins in Matthew 25 It is true that this is a parable of the kingdom and not of the church, and that the virgins do not represent the church as such; but surely they do represent a relationship in which those are set who do compose the church, and therefore the parable surely has a message for us. We read, "Then those virgins arose and trimmed their lamps." The wise had lamps; they had oil; there was light, but the light had become dim because the wick had not been trimmed. Little use to trim the wick where there is no oil; but where there is oil, such trimming is nevertheless necessary if there is to be light. The light speaks of *testimony*. We are set as lights in this world of darkness to shine, to hold forth the Word of Life. Are we doing it? If not, is not all our knowledge about the coming largely vain? For there is nothing like this truth for making God's people evangelical if it is held in power. As we read in Revelation 22. 17 the Bride in unison with the Spirit looks *up* and cries "Come," but then she also looks *around* at a world of need, and cries, "Let him that is athirst come." This is the last gospel appeal in Scripture, and its setting is most impressive. May we have grace, individually and collectively, to remove everything that

hinders the light, and be instant in testimony to the Christ who is coming, who has met all our need and is great and gracious enough to meet the need of the world! Let us see that those around hear from us about His coming. God knows how many may yet be awakened at the last hour by testimony to this truth. Thus shall we be ready as regards *testimony*, and when we see Him our hearts shall not condemn us.

In the last place, we have a beautiful suggestion from the story of Rebekah of old. If not strictly typical, her story is surely truly suggestive of the church being conducted over the wilderness by the faithful Servant to meet the beloved Son of the Father. There came the moment when the long journey was ended and she saw in the distance the one whose bride she was soon to be; and we read that she lighted off her camel and took a veil and covered herself. Looking above the setting of Oriental custom, may we not discern a suggestion of the modesty of true love? In these days when we see all around the false Laodicean church—the “harlot” yet to be—vaunting in wretched pride the “I am rich” of her self-deception, and shamelessly exposing her sacred things to the world, it is sweetly consoling to know that everywhere the true church, shortly to be translated, is becoming ever more conscious of the near return

of her Bridegroom; her heart is beating high; she is desirous of being a meet companion for Him; she is getting ready; and is *covering herself*. In accord with this, may we each have grace to cover in His death everything of self, all that might give credit to us as men in the flesh, that when our Lord comes He may see only the work of the Spirit in those for whom He gave Himself and for whom He has waited so long! May we be ready in the *sensibilities* of love and worship!

The Lord grant that the hearts of His own everywhere may be deeply stirred as to His coming, and to suited and immediate preparation in view of it, so as to be ready in affection, in conduct, in purity, in testimony, and in sensibility for Himself. All, let us say again, is entirely of grace, as we sometimes sing:

“All of grace, yes grace surpassing,  
Such a portion to bestow.”

But the grace that gives a perfect title and makes perfect provision, works in us so that, through the Holy Spirit, there should be a moral preparation and suitability for the purposed and prepared place which is ours as belonging to that which He speaks of as “My church.”

May we be a people made ready for the Lord!

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## “SURELY, I COME QUICKLY.”

LET us frame the second word of this final promise. Underline, if you will, the word “Surely.” Take to heart all the comfort that lies therein, but let the word that follows be line-circled, not only on the printed page but in your heart:

“SURELY I come quickly.”

Comfort one another, not only with these words in general, but with *this word* in particular.

## “WE HAVE NOT FOLLOWED CUNNINGLY DEvised FABLES.”

(A. J. POLLOCK)

JUST as a stream starts in the bosom of the hills, gathering strength and volume as it receives tributary after tributary on its way to the mighty ocean, so Bible prophecies concerning the coming Christ add item to item by prophet after prophet foretelling future events, as one witty divine put it, “without collusion or collision,” that is, they did not arrange among themselves how to frame the picture in prophecy of the coming Messiah, and though unknown to each other no one pen contradicted another.

And, if the range of prophecies is miraculous and God-given, what shall be said of the fulfilment of many of them, indeed all that have had time to be fulfilled? Their fulfilment needed the combination of events spreading over the centuries and the activity of thousands of individuals. For instance —“And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Cæsar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed” (Luke 2. 1). Why? In order that an obscure couple living in Nazareth should be compelled, at a time when a woman would naturally seek the seclusion and shelter of her own home, to travel to Bethlehem, where, according to Micah, writing seven centuries before, might be fulfilled the prophecy that the Saviour of the world should be born. Thousands of persons moved to bring about this one prophecy.

An apt illustration this, as showing the utter impossibility of a number of prophecies being fulfilled as the outcome of a series of extraordinary coincidences. No other book in the world has attempted a series of prophecies on the scale that the Bible has. Wherever this has been attempted, it has

ever recoiled on the head of the would-be prophet, blasting his reputation, and leaving him either pitied or execrated. But not so the Bible. Here is the Book that can stand the supreme test.

If only young Christians would consider the wonderful place of prophecies and their fulfilment, they would know that the Book must be inspired of God. Of course there are other proofs of inspiration, but in the very essence of our belief in these matters, FAITH is a necessity. One might have thought that in the matter of creation SIGHT would have been a sufficient proof. Yet we read, “Through FAITH we understand that the worlds were framed by the Word of God” (Heb. 11. 3). We must get behind the material, and it is *faith* that believes it was the bare word of the mighty Creator that brought out of nothing the wonderful universe we see.

So with the Word of God. God may graciously come down to our level, and give us proofs of inspiration in the fulfilment of prophecy, proofs as to the Christ in the arresting stream of miracles that marked His earthly ministry, but in the very last resort of things our only resource is FAITH—the only source of knowledge being by DIVINE REVELATION.

We can say with the Apostle Peter, “We have not followed cunningly devised fables,” though we have to take the proof of which he was an eyewitness on his testimony and that of others. Now Peter tells us that there are two great lines of Old Testament prophecy concerning the coming Christ —“The sufferings of Christ, and the

glory that should follow" (1 Peter 1 11). The former have all been fulfilled; the latter await fulfilment. Just as surely as the one has been fulfilled, so surely will the other be fulfilled.

Now Peter was a personal witness of the sufferings of Christ. His was indeed a painful experience in denying His Lord at the moment when the stream of opposition ran high. But he was a witness of His suffering, His resurrection, and His ascension.

He could not be a witness of His glory, for the glory of the kingdom lay through a suffering Messiah, but he had a rehearsal of it some time before he was a witness of His sufferings. How helpful must this vision have been! We read that the Lord took Peter, James, and John up into an high mountain, and there He was transfigured before them, His face shining as the sun, and His raiment white as the light. With Him were Moses and Elias. Their conversation was about His decease which He should accomplish at Jerusalem.

What an arresting scene! How did Moses get there? He failed to get into the promised land on earth. The law-giver himself broke down, and came under the lash of the commandments that he promulgated at the bidding of Jehovah. He failed to get entrance into the land flowing with milk and honey. We repeat, how did Moses get there? He was at home in that scene, unearthly in its splendour.

Elias was there. He was a man "subject to like passions as we are" (James 5. 17). He quailed before the threat of a woman, the notorious Jezebel, and handed in his resignation to the Lord as he lay under the juniper tree in the wilderness. He prayed for death, saying, "It is enough; now, O

Lord, take away my life; for I am not better than my fathers" (1 Kings 19. 4). We ask, how did Elias arrive at that wonderful scene of transfiguration, where the glory of the kingdom blazed out for a moment?

Moses and Elias were there, and at home with the Lord. His face might shine as the sun, but they were not affrighted. The theme of their conversation gives us the answer to our question. They "spake of His DECEASE which He should accomplish at Jerusalem" (Luke 9 31). They had learned on earth that the way to the glory was through the suffering.

What meant all the sacrifices on Jewish altars, which Moses instructed the children of Israel to observe? Did he himself not learn the lesson he sought to teach others at the bidding of the Lord? Again, was it for nothing that Elijah challenged the priests of Baal, "The God that answereth by fire, let Him be God" (1 Kings 18 24)? What meant his building the altar of twelve stones in sight of the wicked Ahab, and the prophets of Baal, the spiritists of that day, if he did not realize that the only way to the glory lay through the suffering?

It was the grand mistake of Israel in fastening upon the glory as their expectation, to fail to realize that the only way to that glory lay through the suffering. The glory appealed to the natural man, a glory which they materialized, not understanding its nature, the glory of God, a glory founded on the death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. For it cannot be over-emphasized that the suffering is an ATONING suffering, a SUBSTITUTIONARY suffering.

But what a wonderful help to the faith of Peter, James, and John to see the outburst of glory for the moment

before they witnessed the sufferings of the Lord, when outwardly everything looked like defeat and shame.

“ By weakness and defeat  
He won the meed and crown ”

Peter blundered in his forwardness. How much we have gained in the way of Peter's mistakes! He wanted to make three tabernacles, one for the Lord, one for Moses, one for Elias. In a moment Moses and Elias disappeared in the bright Shekinah cloud, and Jesus was left alone.

Peter made two mistakes. First, he wanted to perpetuate the scene. Three tabernacles spoke of permanence. How could the glory be established publicly before it was reached through the suffering? The Saviour Himself said, “ Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit ” (John 12 24). These were memorable words! There could have been no Moses and Elias on the Mount of Transfiguration, no Peter, James, and John, save in view of the decease to be accomplished at Jerusalem, unless as the blessed corn of wheat He fell into the ground and died, and in rising should bear much fruit.

The second mistake was in putting the Lord on a level with Moses and Elias. He must ever be not only

supreme, but alone the Saviour and the Object of adoring worship. But a beautiful thing happened. These two disappeared in the Shekinah glory cloud, lost in the brightness of the divine Presence, and a voice was heard, “ This is My beloved Son hear HIM ” “ And when the voice was past, Jesus was found alone ” How touching that just on the ground of the sufferings of the Lord these two men were to be found in the glory, and it is just this that touches our hearts, that it will be solely on the ground of the atoning sufferings of our Lord that we, unworthy sinners, will be found in the glory, unafraid and at home.

But we repeat how confirmatory to these chosen witnesses of the outburst of glory to have seen it with their eyes before they witnessed the suffering. No wonder Peter could write, “ We have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were EYE-WITNESSES of His glory ” (2 Peter 1. 16).

How uplifting to us to have this testimony as we remember the Lord in His sufferings week by week, and wait for the glory that is surely to come! How soon we may be ushered into it! And it will be all of pure sovereign grace.

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## The Glories and Humilities of Christ.

WE see glories and humilities in our Redeemer, and we need to see both. The One who sat on the well of Sychar, weary and thirsty, is the One who sits on high in heaven. He that ascended is He that descended. Dignities and condescensions are with Him. He sits in His own right at the right hand of God, yet He knelt at His disciples' feet to wash them. What a combination! Though glorious, stainless, with all power, yet He became the servant of His followers and is still. He serves us, so great is His love. We worship Him, for He is our Lord.

# “THE SON IS THE SON OF MAN.”

(H. J. VINR)

(John 5. 26-27.)

THE testimony of 1 John 4. 14 says, “The Father has sent the Son as Saviour of the world” (N.T.), and Jesus said, “I came not to judge the world, but to save the world” (John 12. 47). Nor will the designs of sovereign grace fail. Eventually the salvation of God shall bless the whole earth, when Christ returns and reigns over all. Meanwhile, how good it is to be taught by the Holy Spirit the good pleasure of the Father and the Son as to this.

Before the public and world-wide establishment of the Lord's glory on the earth, during the present testing time, when the testimony and saving grace is proclaimed to man, the truth manifests where souls really are, as it says, “*He that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father which hath sent Him*” (John 5. 23).

It was the Son who came and, being found here as a Man amongst men, He humbled Himself. To give effect to the will of God He became obedient even to a death of shame and scorn. Taking advantage of His heavenly grace and lowly demeanour, men despised the Saviour and heaped innumerable indignities upon Him. They hated Him, they smote Him, they spat upon Him, they rejected His divine mission. Judging Him to be worthy of death, they crucified the

Holy One with the sinful and lawless. Contempt, dishonour, sorrow, grief and cruelty were His from the hands of men. Their judgment thus expressed itself.

Is it then surprising to read that *the Father “hath committed all judgment to the Son”* (John 5. 22)? How divinely suitable is this, and what divine care for the glory of the One who was so vilely treated is thus justly shown, as it says, “*That all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father.*”

It was the Son who was here as Man. As the Son of Man He came for the blessing of man, but He was thus found within the reach of man's cruel hatred and ill treatment, so they slew Him. The redeemed may well rejoice therefore that God has righteously exalted Him, and decreed that all shall own Him as LORD “TO THE GLORY OF GOD THE FATHER” (Phil. 2. 11).

Yea, our hearts rejoice exceedingly, because of the fitting word of John 5. 26, 27, that the Father hath given “authority to execute judgment” to “THE SON . . . BECAUSE HE IS THE SON OF MAN.” Divine grace and divine justice are righteously maintained in Him to the eternal glory and praise of God.

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YOU must have Christ before you have Christian fellowship. The true secret and power of fellowship is abiding in Christ.

If you abide in Christ, you surrender your own will, because you are guided by Christ, like a mariner who adjusts his compass by the sun. Walking in darkness a man stumbles, but in the light of the sun he sees the path. If you keep the commandments of Christ, you are swayed and controlled by Him.

# THAT GLORIOUS EPIPHANY.

(SAMUEL LEVERMORE.)

2 Timothy 4. 1. Revelation 19. 11-21.

"YE also shall appear with Him in glory" (Col. 3. 4).

"And then was given Him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations and languages should serve Him: His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and His Kingdom that which shall not be destroyed" (Dan. 7. 13, 14, 27).

Before our Lord emerges from the opened heaven, He is invested by the "Ancient of days" (Dan. 7. 13, 22) with His kingly rights.

This is the time foretold by Daniel, when "The saints of the Most High shall take the kingdom, and possess the kingdom for ever, even for ever and ever."

"Having made known unto us the mystery of His will . . . to gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth: even in Him. In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated," etc. (Eph. 1. 9-11).

When His glory is in question, one thing is always certain, that where He is there His saints will surely be, whether as "saints of the Most High" in Daniel, or as the church in Ephesians, or as the Bride in Revelation 19.

**"WITH HIM IN GLORY" IS FINAL ALLELUIA!**

The antichrist, i.e., the ten-horned beast, has done his worst. He has "spoken great words against the Most High;" he has "worn out the saints of the Most High," for "they were given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of times" (i.e., the

last three and a half years). (Dan. 7. 25.)

These are the awful days of the ten-kingdomed confederacy, for, "in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces, and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever. . . . Forasmuch as thou sawest that the stone was cut out without hands, and that it brake in pieces the iron, the brass, the clay, the silver and the gold; the Great God hath made known unto the King that which shall be hereafter" (Dan. 2. 44-45). This is the "Stone which the builders refused." This is the Stone, upon which they who fall shall be broken, and it shall grind to powder all them upon whom it shall fall.

These are the mighty days of the fulfilment of the great Messianic Psalms—2, 72, 89, 110, and many others.

This glorious Epiphany, and its correlatives, occupy in the foretelling quite a fourth part of the whole Bible. Yet many years may pass by in these evil days without one hearing a single sermon or address upon it.

Inspired prophets have foretold it. Spiritual Bards have sung of it. ADAM (Ps. 8., Heb. 2.) as federal head prefigured that day when the last Adam should have all things under His feet. Out of the mists of the long past come the piercing tones of ENOCH (Jude 14.), "Behold the Lord cometh with ten thousands of His saints." ABRAHAM (John 8. 56) rejoiced, and his soul was glad, as with the piercing vision of an inwrought faith he saw the Great "I AM," in His day of

glory. The wayfaring JACOB (Gen. 28. 10-15) is raptured with a vision of His reign, and the setting up of direct communication between heaven and earth. The LEVITICAL RITUAL portrays Him through Aaron, in His Melchisedek character, as the Great King-Priest, clad in robes of glory and beauty, coming forth to bless the people. (Num. 6. 22-27.)

The reign of KINGS and the CHRONICLES of their times, only accentuate, by the comparative failure of each, the perfection of the King of kings. The SWEET SINGER OF ISRAEL, Psalm 72, sees the end of oppression in the coming of the One who "shall deliver the needy when he crieth." He foretells

#### THE GOLDEN AGE OF PEACE AND PLENTY

of prayer and praise, when earthly monarchies and empires, when imperialism and republicanism alike, shall give place to the only perfect Ruler, when every mouth shall praise Him, and every heart adore Him; when there shall be peace for cruel war, gold of Sheba for grinding poverty, shouts of praise for oaths and blasphemies; and liberty instead of bondage.

ISAIAH, chapter 35, tunes his lyre, and sings the glory of our Lord's Epiphany, and behold, the arid desert becomes a fruitful garden, the howling wilderness, an Eden; the seductive and alluring mirage, a pool of water (35. 7); the solitary haunt of stork and dragon, an Elysium; and the scorching sands, an oasis; the roll of drums and the crash of battle cease, and peace is proclaimed by Zion's heralds on every mountain.

JEREMIAH, chapter 23. 5, 6, foretells His coming as Jehovah Tsidkenu, EZEKIEL lightens up the sky

and makes it all ablaze from east to west with myriads of shining ones.

DANIEL shows Him standing upon clouds of glory, amid the crash and the thunder of ruined dynasties, and falling kingdoms. HOSEA, 6. 1-3, sings in dulcet strains of His coming to a parched earth as the gentle dew and the early rain.

AMOS, 9. 13-15, gazes upon the mountains as they drop sweet wine, and upon the hills as they melt with fruitfulness. He sees the ploughman overtake the reaper, and the treader of grapes him that soweth the seed; whilst OBADIAH declares that the kingdom shall be the Lord's

MICAH, 5. 2, foresees the actual rule of Him whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting; but NAHUM trembles at the sight of melting hills, a burning world, and crashing rocks; whilst (Nahum 1. 7) in pianissimo tones of angelic sweetness he tells that "The Lord is good, and a stronghold in the day of trouble"

HABAKKUK, 2. 20, sees Him enthroned in His holy temple at Jerusalem, with a listening world hanging breathlessly upon His lips, as His words drop like honey from the comb. ZEPHANIAH, 3. 17, tells that He is mighty, and will save; that He will rest in His love, and joy over His people with singing.

HAGGAI, 2. 6-8, sees the cataclysm of heaven, earth, and sea, and the shaking of nations preceding the coming of the Desire of all nations. ZEPHANIAH, 12. 9-14, throws the light of prophecy upon the upturned and tear-stained faces of the heart-broken and penitent Jews, as they look upon Him whom once they pierced; also His kingship, 14. 9; and MALACHI, 3. 1; 4. 1, 2, sees

the breaking of a day of untold splendour, when the Sun of Righteousness shall arise, to usher in a day of universal blessing, and a millennium of unimagined glory.

But this glorious era will open with judgment, stern and unrelenting. The deep shades of crimson blood alone can fade into the golden glory of the millennial sky. For

**HE COMES TO JUDGE, NOT TO  
SAVE (Rev. 19. 11).**

To judge, not to be judged. To rule, not to be ruled. Yea, and to "rule with a rod of iron" (Ps. 2.). As one has well said, "the iron Empire is to be ruled with a rod of iron," and again, "He will write His name in the blood of His foes." This is "the day of vengeance of our God" (Isa. 61. 2).

**HE COMES AS "KING OF KINGS  
AND LORD OF LORDS."**

The handwriting put up in derision over His cross is now seen to have been the exact truth, only that He is now seen to be not only "the King of the Jews," but also the "King of kings." Let us further notice what will be

**THE STATE OF THE WORLD  
WHEN HE COMES.**

"And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against Him that sat on the horse, and against His army." What a commentary upon men's foolish hopes of a man-perfected world! This is the human heart in its climax of hatred against God. Hatred, always incarnate in the individual, but now seen *en masse*, in kings and armies. This is the final assault of mad hate against God, and against His Christ. This is the full fruitage of the germ of enmity to be found in

the heart of every unregenerate man. The blasphemy which began under the cloak of Christian profession, by subtle attacks upon Christian verities, has found its inevitable expression and incarnation in the antichrist, and, being thus impersonated, is now become general, organized, and militant, culminating in actual and open war against the King of kings and Lord of lords. Thus, what men in these treacherous days call by the high-sounding titles of "Higher-criticism," "New-thought," "New-humanism," etc., contains its doom in itself. It only needs a more favourable environment, in order to bud, blossom, and bear fruit with amazing rapidity. That favourable environment will be the post-rapture period: the days of the *strong delusion*. (2 Thess. 2.)

Those who began with a sneer, will now in their mad fury actually try to annihilate the object of their hatred. Those who began by deleting a psalm, will now tear the whole Bible in pieces; and actually, in their mad delirium, try to kill the Word of God Himself. They did, indeed, take Him, and by wicked hands slew Him, in the days of His humiliation, but, blessed be God, He lives to die no more; and, in this day of His glorious revelation, as well might the worm try and remove the mountain, or the little child paddling on the sea-shore endeavour to stop the ceaseless beating of the waves upon it, as for this world-confederacy to oppose Him who travelleth in the greatness of His strength. Once despised, and rejected, the "Stone which the builders refused" is now become the **Head** of the corner, and falling upon them, shall grind them to powder.

And now behold the angel standing in the sun, crying to all the fowls which fly in the midst of heaven, "Come

and gather yourselves together unto

“THE SUPPER OF THE GREAT  
GOD” (Rev. 19. 17).

Here extremes meet: extremes of love and hate; of day and night; of bliss and woe, of joy and anguish; for the “Marriage Supper of the Lamb” has just been celebrated, the blissful recompense of the Saviour’s passion. The *slaughter* of the Lamb has become the *Sacrament* of bliss. Saints, prophets and martyrs, after their long night of suffering, enter upon their eternal joys. They are united in bonds of eternal love to the One who loved them, and gave Himself for them. And now, after the marriage, they come forth with Him to witness the destruction of His foes. They behold the Supper of the Great God.

Here again the scene is representative: all sorts of men are there (verse 18); and all led on by the beast and the false prophet. Every atom of force, both *Imperial* and *Ecclesiastical*, religious and irreligious, is directed against the Christ, and all alike meet their doom. Before the millennium of peace, THE BEAST, AND FALSE PROPHET MEET THEIR FINAL DOOM.

They are cast alive into “a lake of fire, burning with brimstone” (verse 20). But Satan’s career is not yet ended. He is chained up in the bottomless pit, and a seal set on him “that he should deceive the nations no more until the thousand years are fulfilled” (20 1). Then, after the millennium, he is loosed again, and goes out among the nations, to deceive them once more: and alas! to give us the final proof of the utter corruption of unregenerate nature. For, not only have all men’s schemes of reformation and religion utterly failed to purge the human heart of its

enmity against God, but even the display of millennial glory—and that the very glory of God—will also leave it, as even it ever was, hopelessly and perpetually at enmity. And so the last devil- and hate-inspired revolt takes place. The nations gather together like bees against “the camp of the saints, and the beloved city”: for they hate the saints, because they are the saints of the Most High, and they hate the beloved city, because it is beloved of God, and because He placed His name there (Rev. 20. 8, 9).

This is the climax of the continual war through the ages between the seed of the devil and the seed of the woman. It is the working out of their destiny. Each goes to its own place. It is the only possible ending of all the long pent-up hatred of Satan and his seed, against the Seed of the woman, i.e., Christ, and all they that be Christ’s (Gal 3. 7, 9, 29). But God Himself deals directly and summarily with them, and sends the flames of His wrath from heaven and consumes them.

Then comes

THE FINAL DOOM OF SATAN

“And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.”

These are words of terrific import! This is the terrible end to a career of crime, such as would make the brain reel even to contemplate. This judgment is the act of One who is the perfection of justice, and, as we turn away with horror from the appalling sight, we say, amen, whilst our hearts are bursting with gratitude for the grace which has saved us for ever from the terrible toils of sin and Satan. All glory be to God alone.

# THE HOME OF THE HEART.

(J. B. S.)

WHAT rest and satisfaction the heart finds when simply enjoying Christ ! It is the sense of ease and rest that one feels when in the same room with a known and valued friend. It is not so much what passes, as the feeling of resource, and the absence of all fear or care as to anything around or within ; like the lamb, unmoved by the approaching dog which alarms the other sheep, because it is beside its mother. It is the consciousness of being under the shelter of His wing ; not merely as saving one from what is outside, but still more as assuring one of what His love is. The strong quills preserve you from what is outside, but the nearer you are to Him the more you enjoy the *down*, and not merely the quills of the wing. This is the home—the place of rest, and of true cultivation of everything good and great. It is the home that really forms everyone. The homeless one must be more or less the heartless one. There are homeless rich as well as homeless poor ; for abundance of other things does not make up for the want of a home.

Home with Christ is a wondrous home ; and when this is known, outdoor work of every kind really only contributes to the comfort of the home. The one who makes the home everything is before the heart in every labour, as the result of all the wise woman's work (Prov. 31.) is that "her husband is known in the gates."

Toiling without a home may have large results, but there is never heart enjoyment in connection with them. The results are satisfaction, like gold to the miser ; but there is not the increase of friendship with Christ, which they, if simply referred to Him, would produce. It makes a great difference whether I am toiling for the gain—

the mere results of toil—or in order that the fruits of it may contribute to His pleasure in whom is the home and rest of my heart. In the latter case the results are not my object, but are like fragrant and rare flowers, adding to the charm of the home, and sweeter there than they could be anywhere else.

But more than this, the character is formed by the home ; the miser thinks and talks of his gold ; the homeless toiler or gleaner thinks only of the result of the day's work. But the one with a home finds how his heart is increasingly bound up in the sphere where it has rest, as he contributes in any way to please Him who makes it a home. And thus the heart is drawn out, because it finds its own proper food in the very love it clings to. Love feeds on love and as it toils for it, it finds its reward in that for which it toils. All the exercises of the heart are at home, as all the exercises of the hand are abroad ; and the heart imparts character to the hand which can only be returned by the hand, in the improved nature of its work. The heart must have a hand, though there may be a hand without a heart. The heart can only be taught by a heart, and the hand derives its exquisite touches from the heart. The heart learns in the home, and the hand goes out from it to act for the heart ; hence, the more you are in your proper home the larger will be your heart, and the better will your hand do whatever it findeth to do. But go from the home as the bee from its hive and all you gather, gather it with purpose to carry it back from every flower to the hive—the home of your heart. And thus you will grow in deeper rest and at-homeness with Him who makes every place where He is a blessed home to your heart.

## SAMUEL, THE PROPHET. No. 5.

(HAMILTON SMITH)

## The Maintenance of God's Glory (chapters 5. and 6.).

THE section of the Book of Samuel covered by chapters 5 and 6. deals with the solemn period of Israel's history during which all outward links with God are broken. We are permitted to see that in this sad time God Himself maintains the majesty of His great name.

The people of God had entirely failed to maintain the honour of God, nay, worse, they had attempted to identify the symbol of God's presence with their own sinful condition, and hence God, acting in judgment, had withdrawn His presence from their midst. In these circumstances, while the godly may well be humbled because of the unfaithfulness of God's people, they need not fear for the honour of God. Quite apart from His people, God is able to vindicate His holiness and maintain His majesty.

The Philistines had trembled when they heard that the ark had come into the camp of Israel. Now that the ark has been delivered into their hands, with bold daring they place it in the house of their idol, as if to celebrate its capture as a victory for their god Dagon over the God of Israel. Their former trembling was as needless as their present daring is misplaced.

God has shown, by the withdrawal of His presence, that He will not sanction the guilt of His people. Now He will make manifest that He will not suffer the eclipse of His glory by His enemies. The enemies of God's people have to learn that if, in His governmental ways, He may permit a triumph over His people, yet He Himself will suffer no defeat.

The ark of God having been placed in the house of Dagon, it becomes no

longer a question between the Philistines and Israel, but an issue between Dagon and the God of Israel. There can be but one end to this contest. Dagon is flung to the earth before the ark. To prove this is no mere coincidence, Dagon is set in his place again only to make more manifest the majesty of God and the futility of an idol. Dagon not only falls to the ground but is broken to pieces, so that henceforth the house of Dagon becomes a place of reproach amongst men.

Nor is this the only means whereby God maintains His majesty. He has poured contempt on the idol; He will now deal in judgment with the idolaters. "The hand of the Lord was heavy upon them of Ashdod." Many are destroyed and others are smitten with disease. In their distress the Philistines of Ashdod seek the counsel of their lords, who advise them to send the ark to Gath.

The city of Gath was famous as the dwelling place of the last of the Anakims—a race of giants (Joshua 11. 21, 22; 1 Sam. 17. 4). However, the might of man proves to be of no avail against the power of God, for we read, "The hand of the Lord was against the city with a very great destruction: and He smote the men of the city, both small and great" (1 Sam. 5. 9).

Finally the ark is sent to Ekron, the seat of their idol Baalzebub—a god that was credited with the power to heal diseases—in the hope, it may be, that their god can bring relief from the scourge. Vain hope, for here again God's judgment falls with increased severity, for we read, "There was a deadly destruction throughout all the city the hand of God was very heavy

there." Thus God maintains His glory and manifests the impotency of demons to relieve men of chastisements.

How solemn the divine commentary of Psalm 78. on the events of this chapter. Having said of Israel, "Their priests fell by the sword; and their widows made no lamentation," the Psalmist states, "Then the Lord awakened as one out of sleep, and like a mighty man that shouteth by reason of wine. And he smote His enemies in the hinder parts: He put them to perpetual reproach." If man, in his folly, seeks to identify the glory of God with idols, God will maintain His glory by judgment. Nevertheless, in judgment God remembers mercy, God is the Creator, and though His creatures may be sunk in darkness and idolatry, yet when they cry to Him in their distress, their cry will reach "up to heaven." Yet how often man takes occasion, by the providential character of God's dealings in judgment, to harden his heart against God. It was thus with the Philistines. Seven months are allowed to pass until, compelled by their desperate straits, they seek for some deliverance. Not only are the people smitten with disease but their land is marred with a plague of mice.

They turn for advice to their diviners, for which the Philistines were famed (Isa. 2. 6). The diviners, apparently, discern that in these judgments Jehovah is maintaining His own glory, and they counsel the Philistines to give glory to the God of Israel; to return the ark to Israel accompanied by a trespass offering. Moreover, they suggest that the ark should be returned in a way that would clearly demonstrate that what had happened was from the hand of God, and no mere coincidence.

Accordingly the ark is placed upon a new cart drawn by two milch kine,

their calves being taken from them. Contrary to nature the kine leave their calves and, without any promptings from man, take the ark to Beth-shemesh, lowing as they go, thus giving proof that they acted by some power above the instincts of nature. Thus God stoops to meet these heathen in their distress, and at the same time vindicates His glory in the sight of His enemies. God makes manifest that the victory of the Philistines over transgressing Israel was no victory over Him. Their trespass offering, however ignorantly made, is a recognition that the capture of the ark has only brought judgment from a God whom they now seek to propitiate.

The scene now changes, and the ark is once again found amongst the people of God at Beth-shemesh. They receive it with joy and offer sacrifices unto the Lord. It appears, however, to be the carnal joy of hearts unbroken by a sense of sin. They were glad to have the ark back, in anticipation of the blessing that they rightly associated with it, but, apparently, there is no sense of their sin which had involved the loss of the ark. They had yet to learn the glory due to God and the humbleness that becomes those whose condition was so low.

The levity of their hearts is made manifest by some of their number looking into the ark of the Lord. In a moment the Lord resents this wickedness, and maintains His glory by a judgment that smites seventy of their number. The men of Beth-shemesh immediately say, "Who is able to stand before this holy Lord God?" With great certainty we can answer, No one of all Adam's sinful race can stand before the holy Lord God, apart from the blood of Christ. To look into the ark these men, of necessity, had to remove the mercy seat, on which was

the sprinkled blood. At once they stood as naked sinners before a holy God. Judgment must be the result. From Genesis to Revelation—from the moment the Lord God clothed our fallen parents with coats of skin ere they were driven out of Paradise, to that last great passage in Revelation that declares that only those who have washed their robes have right to the tree of life, and can enter in through the gates of the city—the Book teaches one great lesson, that without the

shedding of blood there is no remission.

Alas! the modernists of our day are once again, like the men of Bethshemesh, with daring effrontery, trampling under foot the blood of Christ, and attempting to stand before the holy Lord God on the ground of their own works and apart from the work of Christ. Corrupt Christendom has gone in the way of Cain, and to such God says, "Woe unto them."

## No. 6.

### The Restoration of the People (chapter 7.).

The seventh chapter presents the Lord in sovereign grace re-establishing relations with His people through Samuel the prophet; and the people drawing near to the Lord through Samuel as priest.

Before, however, the Lord renews His relations with His people they have to learn by bitter experience their need of the Lord. In the past they valued His presence so lightly that they turned aside to idols. His presence being withdrawn they begin to realize that without the Lord there can be no deliverance from their enemies. For twenty years they have been in bondage to an enemy within their borders. At length the time comes when "All the house of Israel lamented after the Lord."

A sense of need having been awakened, the Lord, who had not been indifferent to the cry of the heathen (1 Sam. 7. 2), at once answers to the lamentation of His people. Samuel, of whom there has been no mention for a period of twenty years, again comes upon the scene. The Lord was thus drawing nigh to the people through the prophet. Samuel's last utterance had warned

the people of coming disaster, and "what Samuel had said happened to all Israel" (1 Sam. 4. 1). Then for twenty years no word comes from the Lord through the prophet. Faith can wait the Lord's time. At length that time has come: there is a movement of God among the people awakening a sense of need, and again Samuel speaks "unto all the house of Israel." It is significant that it is not the people who appeal to Samuel, it is Samuel—the man that the Lord is with—who draws nigh to the people. This emphasizes the fact that all true restoration is dependent upon the sovereign grace of the Lord. Restoration, whether for the individual or the people of God as a whole, commences with the Lord. Only the Lord can restore His wandering people.

In this fresh message to the people Samuel clearly shows that, in turning to the Lord, all depends upon the way in which they take this great step. He says, as it were, "If you are to be restored to blessing, 'return unto the Lord with all your hearts.'" A half-hearted return will not avail. It is useless for the people of God to turn

to the Lord with a partial condemnation of themselves accompanied by excuses. If we turn to the Lord there can be no compromise as to our sin and failure. If, however, the people return unto the Lord with all their hearts, three things will mark them:—

First, *Separation*. There must be separation from the evil that led to their departure from the Lord. Idolatry must be judged and “*put away*.” This is more than a protest against evil; it involves dealing with the evil. We are often willing to protest against evil, while shrinking from dealing with it. We may plead the difficulty of dealing with it; we may fear the result of dealing with it; we shrink from any odium that may attach to dealing with it; and thus, under one plea and another, shirk our plain responsibility. Nevertheless, the Word plainly declares it must be “*put away*.”

Second, *Preparation*. It is not enough to separate from evil. Separation from evil must be accompanied with preparation of heart. The Word through Samuel is, “*Prepare your hearts unto the Lord*.” The preparation of the heart implies a moral condition brought about by self-judgment, producing a lowly and contrite spirit—the true accompaniment of separation from evil. Without such preparation of the heart, separation would only minister to the pride of the flesh. On the other hand, to aim at preparation of the heart without separation from evil will lead finally to indifference to the evil.

Third, *Devotedness*. The true end of separation from evil, and preparation of heart, is devoted service to the Lord. It is that we may “*serve Him only*” (verse 3). Thus it is in our own day; for the separation from vessels to dishonour, enjoined upon us in 2 Timothy 2. 21, is, as the same passage tells us, in order that we may be “*meet for the*

Master’s use, and prepared unto every good work.” Particular circumstances may change with the changing years, but the great principles of God remain the same through all time. Thus it is still true in our day that “*separation*” and “*preparation*” are in view of the Master’s service.

If, then, there is this true-hearted return, it will be marked by separation, preparation, and devotedness. And where there is a movement among God’s people having these marks we may look for the Lord’s deliverance of His people out of the hands of their enemies. If, says Samuel, “*Ye do return unto the Lord*,” and “*put away the strange gods*,” “*and prepare your hearts*,” and “*serve Him only*,” “*He will deliver you out of the hand of the Philistines*.”

The result of this appeal shows that God was evidently working with His people, for they not only listen to Samuel but they obey his words. They first clear themselves from their evil associations (verse 4). They do not content themselves with protesting against evil, but they deal with the evil. They “*put away*” Baalim and Ash-taroath. Without this first step all else would have been in vain. God’s order is, “*Cease to do evil*” before learning to do well.

Having taken this first step, Samuel again speaks in order to lead them on to the second step—the preparation of heart. He urges them to gather all Israel to Mizpeh and, says he, “*I will pray for you unto the Lord*.” The place at which they are to gather is significant for the meaning of Mizpeh is “*watch-tower*.” It suggests that through lack of watchfulness the enemy had gained a footing amongst the people of God and brought them into bondage. Nor has it been otherwise in the church of God. The apostle warned the early church that “*grievous wolves*” would

enter in, not sparing the flock, and that men would arise within the Christian circle speaking perverse things. In view of this two-fold danger, he says, "Therefore *watch*" (Acts 20. 19-31). The leaders in the church, like the leaders in Israel of old, should have kept upon the watch-tower. Alas! both failed to watch. Instead of watching men slept, and the enemy took occasion to do his work.

In any revival it is of the first necessity to get back to the place of departure. We must get back to the watch-tower. Thus we find with Israel, "they gathered together to Mizpeh." Being gathered in the right place, they own their utter weakness and helplessness, and they confess their sin. They "drew water, and poured it out before the Lord." There could be no greater expression of weakness than water poured out. Not all the wisdom and power of man combined could gather up water spilt upon the ground (2 Sam. 14. 14). This action was a true confession of their condition before the Lord. By their own folly they were utterly weak and helpless to deliver themselves from their enemies. Further, they own that their weakness was the result of their own sin. They said, "We have sinned against the Lord."

Having separated themselves from evil and prepared their hearts, the Lord intervenes for their deliverance. They have cleared themselves from evil, they have mounted the watch-tower, they have owned their utter helplessness, they have confessed their sin. Having thus taken their true place "before the Lord," they are in a position and condition in which the Lord delights to act for His people.

Having heard that the children of Israel are "gathered together at Mizpeh," the opposition of the Philistines is at once aroused. Nothing will

so stir the enmity of the devil as the sight of the people of God on their watch against the enemy, and in prayer and confession before the Lord.

Having learnt something of their own weakness, the children of Israel are rightly "afraid of the Philistines" (verse 7). In their last encounter with the Philistines, twenty years before, Israel, away from God in the confidence of the flesh, took the offensive and "went out against the Philistines to battle" (4. 1). Now that Israel is restored to the Lord, we read, "The Philistines went up against Israel." On the former occasion Israel, with confidence in themselves, "shouted with a great shout" and "the Philistines were afraid" (4. 5, 7). Now Israel, distrustful of themselves, are "afraid," and the fleshly confidence is with the lords of the Philistines. In the day of their self-confidence they had neglected Samuel, the man that God was with. In the day of their felt weakness they gladly turn to Samuel and say, "Cease not to cry unto the Lord our God for us, that He will save us out of the hand of the Philistines" (verse 8). They recognize that the man through whom the Lord had approached His people is the one through whom the people can approach the Lord. They own that Jehovah is their God, and that He alone can save them from their enemies. No longer do they trust in the ark of God, but rather in the God of the ark of the covenant.

At once Samuel responds to their cry. The one through whom God had re-established relations with His people as prophet, now turns to God on behalf of the people as priest. Having the mind of God he takes a "lamb, and offered it for a burnt offering wholly unto the Lord." He approaches God on the ground of sacrifice. Separation

from evil, preparation of heart, repentance, however deep, confession of sin, however real, though necessary and right, do not form the righteous ground upon which God can bless His people. The solid and unchanging ground of all God's actings in grace must ever be Christ and His sacrifice on the cross. Samuel's "sucking lamb" speaks of an innocent victim; the "burnt offering wholly unto the Lord" speaks of the sacrifice which meets the glory of God. On the ground of the burnt offering "Samuel cried unto the Lord for Israel," and on the ground of sacrifice "the Lord heard him."

Here, then, we have a people humbled, broken-hearted, trembling before their enemies, pleading the sacrifice, and crying to God. With such God has no controversy, and for such God can act. It is no longer a question between Israel and the Philistines, the issue is between Jehovah and the Philistines. Thus we read, "As Samuel was offering up the burnt offering, the Philistines drew near to battle against Israel: but the Lord thundered with a great thunder on that day upon the Philistines, and discomfited them; and they were smitten before Israel." Samuel's sacrifice was followed by Samuel's cry to the Lord, but God's intervention was on the ground of sacrifice, and commenced during the sacrifice, and before the cry. The cry was right, and we are told the cry was heard, nevertheless the ground of intervention was the sacrifice. God delights to honour Christ. What will not God do in blessing His people for Christ's sake? "He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things."

The Lord has intervened for His people in delivering them from their enemies, and Samuel, who had prayed

to the Lord in their distress, does not forget to praise the Lord in their deliverance. He raises a stone and calls it Ebenezer, saying, "Hitherto has the Lord helped us" This was in reality an act of praise—an acknowledgment of the goodness of the Lord

The Philistines were subdued, and the ground that had been lost to them was recovered. All the days of Samuel the hand of the Lord was against the Philistines. The Lord had re-established relations with Israel, and now through one man the enemy is kept at bay during that man's life. How often, since the days of Samuel, has God used one man to stand in the breach and hold back the enemies of God's people (verses 13, 14).

The chapter closes with an account of the circuit that Samuel took from year to year. If we seize its spiritual significance we must admit that it will be good for us all to take this circuit.

First, Samuel went to Bethel, meaning the house of God. Here it was that God revealed Himself in sovereign grace to Jacob, the wanderer. There God revealed His settled purpose to bless Jacob; and there God promises that, in all Jacob's wanderings, he will be kept and brought back to the place of blessing. God will be true to His own word, as He says to Jacob, "I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of." Well for us to visit Bethel, and remind ourselves of the sovereign grace that has secured our ultimate blessing, according to God's faithfulness to His own Word. (Gen. 28. 16-22)

Second, Samuel went from Bethel to Gilgal. This we know was the place of circumcision. It means "rolling away," for at Gilgal, when circumcised, the reproach of Egypt was rolled away from Israel. If at Bethel we have learnt what God is for us in sovereign

grace, and according to His own faithfulness, at Gilgal we recognize that God cannot sanction the flesh in His people. Accepting God's judgment upon the flesh, the reproach of Egypt would be rolled away (Joshua 5 2, 9).

Third, from Gilgal Samuel journeyed to Mizpeh. If Gilgal speaks of the judgment of the flesh within, Mizpeh indicates the need for watchfulness against the enemy without for the meaning of the word is watch-tower.

Lastly, Samuel's return was to Ramah. The meaning of this name is "height." The man of God lives above this world on the heights. For the Christian, his blessings are spiritual, in heavenly places. The home of his affections is above. Bethel, Gilgal, and

Mizpeh, are but stages on the road to the heights at Ramah. The sure purpose of God, the judgment of the flesh, and watchfulness against the enemy, will prepare us for heavenly ground.

Samuel may visit Bethel, Gilgal, and Mizpeh, but of Ramah we read, "*There* was his house; and *there* he judged Israel; and *there* he built an altar unto the Lord." Good, too, if we, having made this circuit, return to the height of our calling. If we accept our portion as a heavenly people, outside this present evil world, and in spirit and affection in another world, then, indeed, we shall find our dwelling *there*; and *there* from the top of the rocks we shall form a true estimate of God's people, and *there* we shall have our hearts drawn out in worship.

## ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

### The Purchased Possession.

"Would you be kind enough to answer through 'Scripture Truth' what the 'purchased possession' is (Eph. 1. 14)?"—C. L.

THE "purchased possession" is all that Christ has acquired the right to by His death. He is the One who bought the field for the treasure that was in it (Matt. 13. 44). He tasted death for everything (see Heb. 2. 10, N.T.). He has a threefold right to everything in heaven and earth; they are His because He made all things; they are His because He is Heir of all things, and they are also His because He purchased all things by His blood. He has not yet taken possession of the inheritance, He will not do this until all the co-heirs are gathered out of the world and His church is completed; then He will redeem with power that which He has bought with blood. Every adversary that could challenge His right to the inheritance will be overthrown, and all things will be manifestly under His feet (Ps. 8. 5-9,

1 Cor. 15. 2; Heb. 2. 7, 8; Eph. 1. 22)

We who have been sealed by the Holy Ghost are the co-heirs who are to share this vast inheritance of glory with Him, and until the time comes for Him to take it up we have been sealed by the Spirit which dwells within us.

The Spirit is also to us the "earnest" of the inheritance—that is, He is the pledge to us that we are to enter into it all. Our bodies, which are now subject to suffering and death, are part of the purchased possession; they already belong to the Lord and He has taken possession of them by His Spirit, but they await redemption by power, as being part of this groaning creation. This is clearly stated in Romans 8. 23, where we are told that we are waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption, of our bodies.

## “LET US NOT SLEEP.”

“BRING out your dead! Bring out your dead! Bring out your dead!” Then comes the ringing of a bell. What is this? Here is a door marked with a great white cross. Lord, have mercy upon us! All the houses down that street seem to be marked with that white death cross. What is this? Here is the grass growing in the streets; here are Cornhill and Cheapside deserted; no one is found treading the solitary pavement; there is not a sound to be heard but those horse-hoofs like the hoofs of death’s pale horse upon the stones, and the ringing of that bell that sounds the death-knell to many, and the rumbling of wheels of that cart, and the dreadful cry, “Bring out your dead! Bring out your dead!”

Do you see that house? A physician lives there. He is a man who has great skill, and God has lent him wisdom. But a little while ago, while in his study, God was pleased to guide his mind, and he discovered the secret of the plague. He was plague-smitten himself, and ready to die; but he lifted the blessed

phial to his lips, and he drank a draught and cured himself. Do you believe what I am about to tell you? Can you imagine it? That man has the prescription that will heal all these people; he has it in his pocket. He has the medicine which, if once distributed in those streets, would make the sick rejoice, and put that dead-man’s bell away. And he is asleep! He is asleep! He is asleep! He has the medicine; he is too lazy to go and tell forth the remedy. He has the cure, and is too idle to go out and administer it to the sick and dying! No, my friends; such an inhuman wretch could not exist! But I can see him here to-day. There you are! You know the world is sick with the plague of sin, and you yourself have been cured by the remedy which has been provided. You are sleeping, inactive, loitering. You do not go forth to

“Tell to others all round,  
What a dear Saviour you have found.”

You must decide for yourself whether the doctor of my parable or you are the more blameworthy. S.

## THE OLD AND THE NEW.

THERE is not a greater figure than Moses in Old Testament history, he was Jehovah’s SERVANT, faithful in all his house, but he was only a servant, hence when he drew near to the bush that burned with fire, he heard the voice of God saying: “Take thy shoes from off thy feet for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground.” The servant must stand unshod in the presence of his Master. But come to the New Testament, and see there that wretch of a prodigal returning to his father. What a story! “Put shoes on his feet,” cries his father, “for this MY SON was dead and is alive again, was lost and is found.” This is New Testament grace. Not now as

servants, with no liberty before the Father and with feet unshod do we stand, but with access and title to His very presence, for the Son has made us free and we are free indeed. The Father’s heart and home are ours, and all the freedom of them. Oh! learn the surpassing glory of New Testament grace, beloved children of God. In the Old the greatest and truest man had to remove his shoes in the presence of God for he was only a servant; in the New, the worst of men, the vilest sinner, is shod with the shoes of sonship. This is the glory that excelleth, in which God has shown out the exceeding riches of His grace.

J. T. M.

# THE LORD'S RETURN.

## In the Acts of the Apostles.

(J. J. MAWSON.)

THE Lord's last words to His disciples as to His kingdom ought to have been enough to preserve men from the folly, and we might say the presumption, of fixing dates as to when it will come. "And He said unto them, *It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in His own power*" (Acts 1 7) Yet we should be looking for that kingdom to come, and be hastening it by our prayers and labours for it. It will come when the King comes, and not till then. Knowing this, how interesting it is to see that the first message from the glory after the Lord entered it was that He was coming back again. On swift pinion, as our Lord entered the glory, came His messengers, saying, "*This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven*" (verse 11). Clearly His coming back again should have the first place in the thoughts of His own. It was from the Mount of Olives that He went, and His feet will return to that same spot. If we connect this angelic declaration with the Lord's words in Matthew 24. 16, and the prophet's words in Zechariah 14 1-5, a flood of light is cast upon these Scriptures, and what otherwise might be obscure is made very clear to us.

Acts 3 19-21 has direct reference to the coming of the Lord for the blessing of His people Israel, of which the prophets spoke "The restitution of all things" is limited by the words "which God hath spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began." And this meets the error of the universalists who use this passage to support their doctrine of universal salvation. Yet how near to God's

heart must the coming of the Lord in glory and the blessing of His people be, since *all His prophets* have spoken of it! Let the fact that all God's holy prophets have spoken of the coming of the Lord in glory prove to us the great importance of it.

In the first sermon preached to the Gentiles (Acts 10.) it is remarkable that judgment is given the prominent place. "*He commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify that it is He which was ordained of God to be the Judge of quick and dead*" (verse 42). The judgment of the quick will be when He appears in glory for the establishment of His kingdom on earth (Matt. 25 31-46), the judgment of the dead will be when that kingdom is finished and the great white throne is set up (see Rev 20. 11-15). There is remission of sins now, through His name, but if this is rejected there remains nothing but judgment at His coming. Paul also pressed the coming judgment upon the Gentiles in Acts 17. "*God . . . now commandeth all men everywhere to repent: because He hath appointed a day, in the which He will judge the world in righteousness by that Man whom He hath ordained; whereof He hath given assurance unto all men, in that He hath raised Him from the dead.*" This judgment will be continued throughout the reign of Christ. It will be introduced and maintained in righteousness

These are the only two sermons recorded for us as being preached to Gentiles in the Acts by the Holy-Ghost-inspired apostles, and the fact of judgment to come being made so prominent ought to arrest the gospel preacher of this day and make him inquire as to how far his preaching squares with

it. We have the Lord's command to preach and to testify that He is coming to judge, and when the Lord gives a command His servants have no option but to obey. Again in speaking to Felix, the Gentile governor, Paul reasoned of "righteousness, temperance and judgment to come" (chapter 24. 25).

## How His Servants will be affected.

These statements as to the coming of the Lord in the Acts are all about His appearing in glory to the world, to judge what is evil and to establish what is right: and this is the testimony that the servants of the Lord have to bear to the world, as it was Enoch's in his day—the man who was translated to heaven before the judgment came, as we are to be. Our heavenly portion with Christ and His coming to introduce us into it comes out later in the epistles, and is ministered for the comfort and joy of the servants of the Lord, rather than to be the subject of their testimony to the world. There is joy in serving the Lord, yet there is something greater: "Rejoice," said the Lord to His servants, "that your names are written in heaven." Our citizenship is there, "from whence we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: who shall change our bodies of humiliation, that they may be fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself" (Phil. 3. 20, 21).

This great event draws nigh, for the Lord's work on earth must be nearing its completion and when it is completed He will instantly come. The first stage of His coming will be His descent to the air to summon His servants from their labours to meet Him there, and to introduce them into His Father's house, to enjoy with Him their heavenly

portion, and to review with Him their lives and labours at His judgment seat. What an unspeakable joy will His servants know when He calls them home from their service! Some are toiling in lonely and difficult fields, with very little human encouragement and no applause. What a rapture it will be for these to be caught up in the twinkling of an eye to the joy of the Master's presence, there to receive His approval, His "Well done!"

They are searching the highways and hedges for souls that His house may be full, and are going forth to every kindred and tongue and people and nation, that the sum of those who are to be redeemed unto God by the blood of the Lamb may be made up. The work is surely almost done, and the moment is fast coming when the voice of the Lord shall pronounce the work finished and they shall be instantly with Him, bringing their hard-won trophies with them, that shall be their joy and crown of rejoicing in that day! If our words reach any of these we would say to them, "The Lord has chosen you for most honourable service—He has fitted you and sent you forth to gather these souls out of the world for Him, and your labour is not in vain in Him. Hold fast! Cleave to the Lord! Let His coming be a bright and blessed hope to you, while you carry the gospel message to thirsty men saying, "Let him that is athirst come."

Others, faithful and wise servants are they, are giving to the Lord's household their meat in due season. They are feeding and nourishing the affections of His saints by ministering Christ to them, and in this way they are preparing them for His coming. Blessed, said the Lord, shall all such be when He comes.

No truth that we know of is more likely to stir up a holy energy within

the servants of the Lord, than that of His speedy return, and they could have no greater joy than the fulfilment of this blessed hope.

May we expect a Revival before the Lord comes ?

“DO you think we may look for a revival before the coming of the Lord Jesus ?” Often I have heard this question lately, and my answer has been, “We ought not to allow any expectation to stand between our souls and His coming, for His coming is our *immediate hope*.” Yet while we wait for Him we may rightly and earnestly desire a true revival of spiritual energy in the service of the Lord and most of all an increase of joy in Him. How can this be secured ? What could more surely revive us than manifestations of Himself to our souls ? Nothing, surely. And these He has promised to those that love Him. But the love that secures these manifestations must not be in word only ; to approach Him with the lips is not enough—it must show itself in obedience to His commandments, and the first of these is “that ye love one another.”

I believe that if we loved our brethren more, if we were kinder to the children of God, fellow-members with us of His family, if we were more ready to discern and appreciate the work of God's Holy Spirit, which is one work in all the saints, we should be greatly revived. For what could revive our souls more than an increased experi-

mental knowledge of the Father's love to us, and manifestations of the Lord Himself in His all-varied grace to our souls ? And the way to secure these unspeakable favours is to keep His commandments, and this is His commandment, that ye love one another.

I have no doubt that we have all realized the joy that follows a practical expression of love to one of God's children ; we have been greatly blest when we have visited an isolated or suffering saint ; a few words to a Christian whom perhaps we have never met before has brought great cheer into our souls. These experiences all meant that the Lord saw and appreciated these manifestations of love and He drew near to us, and we walked with Him. Suppose we gave ourselves more definitely and with greater purpose of heart to these things, should we not be greatly revived, and revive others also ?

We know also, from sad experience, how that hard feelings toward our brethren have brought deadness and dearth into our souls, for the Spirit of God has been grieved thereat and the Lord has withdrawn Himself. Questions, debates, sects, party feelings and zeal, all put the Lord at a distance from us and stop the flow of His grace to us and through us. We know it—let us own it, and put these things far from us, and instead of them love His commandments and do them. Then we shall have no need to ask, May we expect another revival. It will be with us a great reality, binding hearts as one and joining voices together in the cry, “Come, Lord Jesus.”

If you think of the vicissitudes you have to pass through, you know you are not sufficient for yourself. You need light from God ; if you abide in Christ you will have this continually in your soul.

The appreciation of Christ lies at the root of keeping His commandments, and His commandments are the law of liberty. To keep His commandments is the only way to overcome the world.

# DEVOTEDNESS TO CHRIST.

L. OLIVER)

(Substance of an Address at Edinburgh on Jan 1st, 1930)

Scriptures read · 2 Cor 5. 14, 15, Rom 8 34, 35, 37-39, Heb. 7 23-25 ;  
John 14 2, 3, 17 23, 26

**PERSONAL** devotedness to Christ is a laudable ambition. Current evangelical literature presents various solutions to the problem, but unless the solutions are based on the foundation of the Word of God they cannot be helpful. Hence at the outset we refer to Scriptural passages which present the matter in a perfectly clear light.

From 2 Corinthians 5. 14 we see that the essential spring of devotedness is the constraining power of the love of Christ, because the apostle and his associates had come to a certain judgment as to the bearing of the death of Christ. The love of Christ first came to us in a state of death. His death proved that "all were dead" and that no solution of the problem was admissible other than that He should die. The heart of every Christian should be affected by the fact that we were all in death, which is the judgment of sin, and that Christ actually came into the place where we were. When we realize that love was behind the action, then that love constrains us, and now that his death and resurrection have formed a new envelope of life into which we have been introduced in the superlative grace of God, we have no longer any right to an opinion as to how that life should be directed. Christ came into death that he might establish over us an absolute irrevocable claim, the claim of love.

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\*Some expositors say that the dead state was in consequence of the death of Christ, but the grammatical structure as well as the context show unmistakably that the dead condition was an antecedent and not a consequent of His death. The latter dictum is substantiated by other passages of Scripture.

A claim to the contrary effect would not be argued by any advocate in a court of law. Such a contrary claim would find a parallel in the following supposition. If a commercial man failed in business and was not able to pay the proverbial "penny in the pound," but was absolutely without assets against overwhelming liabilities, then, in the event of that firm being re-constituted with external capital and under new management, it would be *readily conceded to be gross impertinence* for the debtor to offer advice as to how the business should be conducted subsequently. But the conditions in the case of a Christian are even more acutely accentuated than the illustration shows.

In effect Christ says to us, "There is no love like mine. You were all in death, the universal condition, and I came into that condition and rose clear out of it, that I might subsequently have over you a claim which could not be gainsaid by any adverse advocate." Hence when that thought is apprehended by the Christian there must be a response to the death of Christ in devotedness to his interests.

But the fact of the death of Christ does not exhaust the argument. The love of Christ was not exhausted in death. It is now manifested in the power of an endless life. We turn to the end of the eighth chapter of Romans and to a parallel passage in the seventh chapter of Hebrews, where we see that Christ's intercession springs from His love. He first expressed His love in death but now that He lives the next great consequence of His love is His

intercession. He saves to the uttermost with the end in view that we should be more than conquerors over every circumstance

The expression, "Save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him," is often paraphrased as His being an "all-the-way-home Saviour." One would not seek to disparage a cherished thought which is fully supported by other Scriptures, but the context of this particular Scripture lays stress on the microscopic rather than the telescopic view of salvation. It is blessedly true that the end is as secure as the beginning but often it is not realized that our course is under perfect administration. The minutest details of our lives are delicately adjusted and harmonize with the trend of the ways of God. When we apprehend this harmony we can exclaim with the apostle, "We know that all things work together for good to those who love God."

Moreover, the new Priest at the right hand of God has a continuing priesthood, in contrast to the conditions of office in the old dispensation. Historians tell us that there were eighty-four performers of the high priestly function, and simple arithmetic gives a period of eighteen years as their average tenure of the office. "They were not suffered to continue by reason of death." But because the new Priest continues ever He has an unchanging priesthood. Moreover, there is no possibility of lapse of His function during its duration, as seemed inevitable in the beautiful type of Exodus 17, when the hands of Moses held up in intercession became heavy, and required to be reinforced by the support of Aaron and Hur. The priesthood of Christ knows no discontinuity nor variation in intensity. He intercedes for us because He loves us, and we

are more than conquerors over every difficulty through Him who loves us.

The apostle raises the question, "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?" Tribulation and the other enemies of the wilderness journey are powerless, and we join the apostle in his unfaltering persuasion that no conceivable agency, be it in the psychical sphere as angel, principality or power, or in the physical sphere of time and space, can separate us from the love of God which has secured us in the new envelope of Christ Jesus our Lord.

Prominent features of the priesthood of Christ are typified in the high priest's bearing the names of the children of Israel on his shoulder, the place of strength, and on his breast, the place of affection. Intercession is the fruit of affection, and the practical result is that we are supported in this world by the intercession of Christ. Thus we shall be able to maintain the position of devoted Christians, as our hearts are under the influence of the love of Christ.

But the culmination of the love of Christ is not reached in His death nor in His intercession for us, but in leading us to His Father's house, as stated in the beginning of the fourteenth chapter of John's Gospel. Someone has well said that we are "the Father's love gift to the Son," but we are His gift with the object in view of bringing us home to the Father. The love of Christ will never be satisfied short of having us there. "I will come again, and receive you unto Myself" (John 14:3)

That moment has not yet arrived, but meanwhile He brings us to the Father's heart. He declares the Father's name, and causes us to know the love of the Father. He causes us to know that we are loved of the

Father with the same love as He Himself is loved (John 17 23) In declaring the Father's name he declares the Father's love. He declares that "the love wherewith Thou hast loved Me may be in them, and I in them" (John 17. 26).

When we apprehend that, we can appreciate the apostolic prayer in the third chapter of the Ephesian epistle. We become enlightened as to the mind of God, so that we comprehend with all saints the dimensions of the sphere of purpose, and a further step is to know the love of Christ which transcends knowledge. This seeming paradox vanishes, when we realize that our knowledge will always be qualitative. To make a quantitative analysis of the love of God is conclusively beyond our powers. But the experimental result is that in the currency of our explorations in the sphere of purpose, jointly with our testing the love of Christ, we are in the process of being filled to all the fulness of God. So that there need be no lack of power.

That the character of God should be displayed in His saints on earth was the apostle's great desire. When Christ was here there was a perfect expression of God in Him. If all His people apprehended the love of Christ, there would be a corresponding expression of God now. "No man has seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwells in us, and His love is perfected in us" (1 John 4. 12) That

is the same expression as is predicated of Christ in John 1 18.

Christ was once here in testimony. Nothing short of the display of Christ now will suit God, therefore the church is to be filled with the fulness of God, and the secret of this being effected is through the knowledge of the love of Christ. Nothing else can make a Christian devoted. The apprehension of formal doctrine will not bring the desired result to pass. The object of devotion is Christ Himself. Mary sat at the feet of Jesus and heard His Word because she responded to His love. John leaned on His bosom and His heart-throbs were communicated to him. Every little increment of appreciation brings a further increment of support in the continuance of devotedness to the interests of Christ.

In conclusion, may we recapitulate the elements in the chain of development of devotedness to Christ? (1) His absolute claim in death. (2) The consequence of His love in intercession in the power of an endless life at the right-hand of God. (3) The continuance of His love in leading us out of the world to His Father's house, and the loving care which He manifests towards us on the way there, must bring to bear upon our course of action an irresistible conclusion that we should be loyal to Christ and His interests. May this prove to every one of us more than a beautiful sentiment, but a living bright reality indeed!

One who has an ear to hear willingly hears what is taught, wisely understands what he heareth, and obediently practises what he understandeth. If God be not first in the ear, He is neither sanctified in the heart nor rightly confessed with the mouth.

Faith in God is the great charmer of life's cares, and he who possesses it dwells in an atmosphere of grace, surrounded by a bodyguard of mercies. Even if we cannot trace the workings of God's mercy yet it is as all-surrounding as His presence. It is always so whether we believe it or not, but what rest of heart is ours when we believe it!

## BEAUTY FOR ASHES.

(J. T. MAWSON.)

HAVE you noticed the true meaning of the word translated "beauty" in that beautiful passage in Isaiah 61, 3?—"To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness," with the end in view "that He might be glorified." The word is only translated beauty in this our passage, but it is not the only time that it occurs in the Old Testament. It is the word that stands for "the goodly bonnets" of fine linen that were made for Aaron and his sons (Exod 39 28), and for the "linen bonnets" that the priests of the Lord will wear in the millennial temple (Ezek 44 18). It occurs in this same sixty-first of Isaiah, verse 10, "as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments." It is really a priestly turban, a joyous and beautiful ornament for the head. As we see this the meaning of the passage dawns upon us. Such is the grace of our God, such the exceeding riches of His grace, that He lifts us from the ashes of our repentance for sin and places us in priestly nearness to Himself. He removes the burden of sins

that bowed us in the dust, and raises our heads with joy in His presence. We can sing a song of praise to "Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and His Father, to Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever Amen." Nothing could be more wonderful than this: our blessing lies in being brought nigh to God and set in priestly relationship with Himself. We have been given access to Him, we have boldness to enter into His very presence now, we, whose place was once in sackcloth and ashes, and it is, as our verse tells us, that He might be glorified. "Whoso offereth praise glorifieth God," and the priests' privilege is to offer praise.

The whole passage bears this out. Our heads are anointed with the oil of joy, and the garment of praise has taken the place of our sackcloth and rags. What a covering is this to have! And thus we stand before our God, accepted in the Beloved, to praise Him and bring forth fruit for His delight—the trees of righteousness planted by the Lord.

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## THE BLESSING OF THE LORD

[N the New Translation by J. N. Darby that beautiful verse (Prov. 10. 22), "The blessing of the Lord it maketh rich, and He addeth no sorrow to it," has a footnote which gives an alternative reading for the last sentence, it is, "And toil addeth nothing to it." We are sure that this is the meaning of the statement. It describes so blessedly the blessing of the Lord. It is so perfect, so complete, that no toil of ours can improve it—we are not asked to labour to enjoy it. It is all grace and it enriches us. Our part is to take it and enjoy it with deep gratitude of heart. It is a gift to us—we could neither merit it nor purchase it. Yet at what a cost it has been made ours. "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." We cannot think lightly of that which has cost so much, we will not spoil it in the effort to improve it; we will simply exult in it and enjoy it, giving Him thanks.

# THREE PREREQUISITES FOR SERVICE

## In the Epistle to the Romans.

(S LEVERMORE)

THE first is JUSTIFICATION, which chiefly occupies the first eight chapters. The second is SONSHIP, and is co-ordinate with the thirteen-fold ministry of the Spirit in the eighth chapter, whilst the third is WORSHIP, closing the dispensational section with the eleventh chapter. Then and not before the *practical* section begins with,

*Paul's earnestness*, "I beseech you therefore, brethren."

*Paul's new ground of appeal*, "By the mercies of God"

*Paul's appeal itself*, "Present your bodies," and

*God's requirements*, A "Living," "holy" and therefore "acceptable" sacrifice.

"Present yourselves"—Dedication

"Be not conformed"—Separation

"Be ye transformed"—Transformation.

### FIRST PREREQUISITE— JUSTIFICATION.

An everlasting covenant of life, having God Himself as Covenantor—Christ as Covenantee—and all who believe as the Beneficiaries. Given by grace—*upheld* by power—and *witnessed* by the Spirit.

Originally by grace (3 24), meritoriously by the blood of Christ (5 9), instrumentally by faith (5 1) potentially by the Spirit (Gal 3) and evidently by works (James 2). It is not only pardon but also acquittal, or clearance. It is not chiefly a question of our "accepting Christ" but our being accepted *in* Him, for guilty sinners are not heroes to be worshipped nor lovely objects to be charmed,

allured, attracted, or seduced by flowers of rhetoric, or propitiated by engaging manners, but they are criminals to be cleared or justified, for justification presupposes condemnation, and "he that believeth not is condemned already" (John 3 18). Justification therefore is immunity from *condemnation* (Rom 8 1), *accusation* (33), and *separation* (35). No condemnation, no accusation, no separation.

In our Lord's immortal parable in Luke 15 the prodigal gets the kiss of pardon *to go home with*, and the robe of justification *to go in with*. The title of son to ennoble him—the fatted calf to sustain him—and the Father's joy to rejoice him—and as they put the ring of eternal love upon his finger, they seem to say—"All is yours, and yours for ever," for "what God doeth it is for ever" (Eccles 3 14). And, mark well, this is all God's doing, not ours; whether it be justification, it is a work outside us, and whether it be faith, it is a work inside us, and each alike are God's.

Whilst preachers are getting busy with ethical codes, moral systems and human panaceas, telling the people *what to do*, God is seeking for Spirit-filled men to tell them *what Christ has done*.

### THE SECOND PREREQUISITE OF SONSHIP

When Dreyfus returned from Devil's Island the French Government sent him a "pardon." He tore it to pieces saying, "Go tell them I want justification." He wanted to be justly cleared, and that is what God does for every repenting sinner. He then "sends forth the Spirit of His Son into his heart, saying, Abba, Father."

The Spirit Himself witnesseth with our spirits that we are the children of God (Gk. Teknon, "one born"). For only the new-born children of God can worship Him.

Therefore, before there can be any question of *the devoted life*, or *dedication*; the *holy life*, or *separation*; the *changed life* or *transformation*—there must come, thirdly,

### THE THIRD GREAT PREREQUISITE OF "WORSHIP."

It is profitable to observe that this glorious outburst in verses 33–36 of chapter 11. comes at the conclusion of the blessed and uncompromising doctrine of God's sovereignty. In the very place where carnal men *argue*, Spirit-taught men *worship*. The latter burst forth in grateful praise for the very same reason that the former withhold it; even because God's judgments *are* unsearchable, and His ways *past* finding out.

And now comes the three-fold service of the justified and worshipping sons. Firstly

#### DEDICATION.

"*Present your bodies.*" The Romans, accustomed to presenting their offerings to pagan deities, and the Jews to the only true God, would rise to this thought of presentation at once. But here is a new ground of appeal, "*By the mercies of God.*" This establishes a big contrast with God's appeal for consecration under the law in Exod. 32. 26. "Who is on the Lord's side?" And in verse 29, "Consecrate yourselves this day unto the Lord." Not by "the mercies of God" but "lest I consume thee." Yet the four-fold dedication involved here, legal and imperfect as it was, is deserving of the closest study, both by comparison and contrast. I merely offer it as a suggestion.

The four points which might prove a profitable meditation in the light of the references appended to each, are,

*SLAYING.* Exod. 32. 27; 1 Peter 4. 1; Col. 3. 4.

*STRIPPING.* Exod. 33. 5; "Put off," Col. 3. 8; "Lay aside" Heb. 12. 1.

*SEPARATING.* Exod. 33. 7; Heb. 13. 13; 1 Cor. 6. 14, 15; and

*SEEKING.* Exod. 33. 7; Heb. 13. 13; 1 Cor. 6. 14, 15.

Your "bodies." Paul amplifies this in 1 Cor. 6. 19, 20, crying, "What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body." Your "body." The New Translation omits "and your spirit" for men cannot see our spirits, and it is a question here of that which is "before men" (Matt. 5. 16). Action—works.

As in the cleansing of the leper (Lev. 14. 14), blood was put upon his right *ear, hand, and toe*, showing that all the virtue of Christ's blood was to be set apart in the Holy Ghost to His service, Heb. 13. 15, 16 gives us the two-fold ministry of the *lip* and the *hand*: *Aaronic*, the sacrifice of praise *to God*, and the *Melchisedek*, the doing good and communicating *to men*. One hand stretched up to God, and the other stretched out to men.

A "*LIVING*" sacrifice. "Yielding ourselves unto God, as those alive from the dead" (6. 13). In chapter 6. 23, "The gift of God is eternal life." A "dead" sinner can only do "dead" works. Here is risen life in the soul in a living body—not dead beasts, but living saints.

Post-mortem love and graveyard tears avail naught.

“HOLY” therefore “acceptable” unto God, for only such can be. And this is negative and positive. The negative is translated into the second division of our three-fold service, i.e., nonconformity to the flesh leading to separation from the world. “Be not conformed.” Lot “conformed” to Sodom for the sake of “a good position” and got his daughters well married, as men speak, and ended by being burnt out, and his sons-in-law burnt up—his wife petrified, and he himself and his daughters involved in horrible shame and contempt.

Jehoshaphat “conformed” to the marriage of his son with the wicked Athaliah, so Jehoram got an arch-murderess for a wife and the devil for a father-in-law.

Jehoshaphat “conformed” to a partnership in a ship-building business with the wicked Ahaziah, and God “broke his works” and his ships included (2 Chron. 20. 35-37). He “conformed” to a *matrimonial, political, and commercial*, but also to a military alliance, and God had to work a miracle to save his life.

Samson “conformed” to Delilah, lost the locks of his Nazariteship, and with them first his supernatural strength, secondly his eyes, and finally his life.

“Be not conformed” I pray you, for there can be no “acceptable” service with conformity to the world. Oh, beware, my readers, for this is a far deeper matter than sports, amusements, and commercial associations, for the world has its religion, and its ethics, its aims and objects—for a man may hold the cup of the Lord in his hand and have the world in his heart: he may be separate bodily from all worldly associations, yet united in heart and purpose with them all.

Beware of the world’s modernism and its pet theory of evolution. But all this is negative only; therefore I pray you, ere closing this all-too-brief study, let us take a parting glance at the positive side of

### TRANSFORMATION.

“Be ye transformed.” This goes deeper. It is the spring of action. It forms and controls the will. A transformed life demands a renewed mind. And by this transformation alone can we prove, test, or experience, what God’s will is.

In Romans we have transformation by *subjection*. In Philippians, by *association*. In 2 Cor. 3. by *contemplation*. Subjection to Christ. Association with Him. Contemplation of Him, and these three in combination give us

### AN UNCONSCIOUS RENEWAL OR TRANSFORMATION.

“Moses wist not that his face shone” (Exod. 34. 29). Samson wist not that the Lord had departed from him (Judges 16. 20). Peter knew not what to say (Mark 9. 6). Laodicea knew not its wretchedness, misery, poverty, blindness and nakedness.

“We . . . beholding . . . are changed.” Consciously beholding the glory of the Lord—unconsciously changed into the same image from glory to glory, as by the Spirit of the Lord. (2 Cor. 4. 18.)

So that in this wondrously vital synthesis we are put firstly in a right relationship with God by these three prerequisites of justification, sonship and worship; then with the world by nonconformity, or separation; then with ourselves by transformation.

May the Spirit breathe upon that which He has breathed forth. Amen.

# “THE MAN CHRIST JESUS.”

(A. J. ATKIN)

“ I AM sure that I dread reasonings where affections should animate us, and the withdrawing from the place of living power into anything like a region of notions or theories. But the mysteries of God are all of the highest practical value. We are also to be stewards of ‘mysteries,’ keeping uncorrupt and inviolate the peculiarities of divine revelation. The guardianship and witness of the personal glory of the Son of God form a chief part of this high and holy stewardship.” These true and valuable words from J. G. Bellett’s *Son of God* may well form a fitting introduction to our study of the manhood of our Lord Jesus Christ.

There are at least five great passages in the New Testament which speak expressly of our Lord as Man. “The first man is of the earth, made of dust: the *second Man* out of heaven” (1 Cor. 15: 47, N T). Here we have His order and His origin. He is the second Man not historically, but as related to a race, in contrast to Adam, and morally He is Man of His own order “out of heaven.” He brought into His manhood all that He was in Deity. “All the fulness of the Godhead dwelleth in Him bodily.” He Himself said, “I am from above.” “The Son of Man came down from heaven” (John 3: 13). He is the *heavenly Man*.

We also read “Jesus of Nazareth, a *Man approved of God* among you by miracles and wonders and signs” (Acts 2: 22). This passage relates to His earthly life, and what a precious and wonderful summary of that life it contains “approved of God”! Twice were the heavens opened for the Father to declare that in that Man, His beloved Son, was His delight. He is the *approved Man*.

Again we read “There is one God, and one Mediator between God and

men, the Man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself a ransom for all” (1 Tim 2: 5, 6). This aspect of His manhood clearly relates to His death. To be the Mediator He must be Man, and He must die. And though it was by the incarnation that He came into human life and conditions, and “dwelt among us,” it was not by His birth but by His death that He came into *relation* with men. Christ being united with mankind in incarnation has been well termed “the root error of modern theology.” Christ is, then, the *mediatorial Man*, for He is the propitiation for the whole world (1 John 2: 2).

Further, in Romans 5: 15 (N T) we read “The free gift in grace which is by *the one Man* Jesus Christ.” Here we have our Lord Jesus Christ presented as risen from the dead (Rom 4: 25), the federal Head of a new humanity, the source of grace, life and righteousness to all related to Him, in contrast to Adam, who was the source of sin and death and condemnation to all his posterity. Christ is the *risen Man*, the last Adam, the federal Head of a new race. Lastly, Christ is “that Man whom God hath ordained” to “judge the world in righteousness” (Acts 17: 31). He is the *appointed Man*, to whom all judgment is committed. This looks on to His coming again.

It would be impossible even to read these passages without realizing something of the vital place that the truth of the manhood of Christ has in the faith once for all delivered to the saints. We see that upon it depends all that is connected with His Person, His life, His death, His headship in resurrection and His coming again. In a word, Christianity. This being the case, it is not difficult to understand why Satan has made this truth, together with the complementary truth of His Deity, a

ceaseless object of attack. It explains, too, why it is imperative that we should clearly apprehend what is revealed in the Word thereupon, so that having and holding the truth in the power of it, we may be preserved from all that is a denial or distortion of it, or even from what is defective.

The truth of the manhood of our Lord Jesus Christ is exceedingly precious to God the Father, for Christ is the Man of His counsel. We may therefore fitly, first of all, consider the manhood of Christ in the purpose of God. Adam was but the figure—"the type"—of Him that was to come (Rom 5 14); and Christ was therefore the antitype, but He was also the archetype. He was God's original thought, and all God's counsels have reference to the One who was first in purpose though last in manifestation. Christ's manhood, it scarcely need be remarked, commenced historically with the incarnation, but, strictly speaking, it was not His birth that constituted Him the Son of Man, any more than it made Him the Son of God (cp. Luke 1. 35, 'called'). Did He not say, "The Son of Man descended from heaven" (John 3. 13), and, "What and if ye shall see the Son of Man ascend up where *He was before?*" (John 6. 62). "His birth was the fulfilment of the promise which the name implied." The incarnation is not to be regarded as an afterthought on the part of God, consequent upon the advent of sin. Christ was ever the Man of His purpose.

"Thy counsels ere the world began,  
All centred in the Son of Man."

The incarnation, too, was preceded by a grand and glorious series of promises and prophetic announcements, in which the manhood of the Redeemer was clearly portrayed. The very first of such was: The *Seed of the woman* shall bruise the serpent's head. Isaiah tells us that not only was a Son to be

given, but a child was to be born (Isa. 9. 6). Indeed, the fact that Messiah was to be a real man is plainly declared everywhere in the pages of the Old Testament. With what touching detail do Scriptures like Psalm 22. and Isaiah 53. speak of His manhood and His human sufferings of body and soul! Here is to be found a vast and delightful field of study.

At last, forty long centuries after the primeval promise, He came—the Son who was given became the "child born." The synoptical Gospels tell us of the fact of His birth in touching and delicate detail, and with a combined revelation and reserve that manifest their inspiration. But if we wish to be further instructed as to the mode and meaning of His entry into this world, we must turn to the Gospel of John and to the epistles.

Let us commence with three great passages. "The Word became flesh" (John 1. 14). He "made Himself of no reputation (RV., '*emptied Himself*'), and *took upon Him* the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men" (Phil 2 7). "Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also *Himself* likewise *took part* of the same. . . ." (Heb. 2. 14).

There are many passages that speak of our Lord Jesus as sent into the world; but these present the complementary truth that His coming was *His own act*, as a Divine Person. Let us weigh the inspired phrases carefully—*I come, He became, He emptied Himself, He took upon Him, He took part*. There is a mingled majesty and meekness glory and grace, in these expressions, and in the unspeakable surrender they signify, which bow our hearts in worship. The incarnation was, then, His own voluntary act, He came because He wished to; He came because He would.

This fact, apart from any other consideration, proclaims who He was; for who but a divine Person could of His own will change His condition of being? And the fact that He was a divine Person carries with it this further conclusion, that His becoming man involved no change in *who* He was, in His "Person" in this sense. He was, He is, He ever will be *the Son* (John 17. 5; Matt. 11. 27; 1 Cor. 15. 28). Again, in the past eternity He was the Word (John 1. 1); as come into the world He was the Word (Luke 1. 1); and when He comes again in glory He still bears this title (Rev. 19. 13). Throughout the New Testament there is not a single suggestion that He ever for a moment ceased to be who He was by reason of what He became, or relinquished the *possession* of any of the prerogatives of His Deity.\* His personal glory as the Son is immutable and inscrutable (Heb. 1. 12; Matt 11 27).

In the light of what the incarnation did not involve, we can better study what it did involve, and the questions that meet us at once are these. Was His manhood real and perfect, or was it different in kind to ours? Also what was the relation of His manhood to His Deity? The latter question—one that theology has been acutely occupied with at all times—we do well to leave, for its pursuit leads us outside the bounds of Scripture. "It is beside the teaching of the Spirit to wish to define how the divinity and humanity are united in Jesus" (J. N. D.). But the former question is one that is vital for us to answer from the Word, if we are to be faithful stewards of the mystery of His Person and glory. What, then, does Scripture state?

\* Matt. 24. 36 and John 5. 19 are not exceptions. These passages take us to the very borderline of the great mystery—vide penultimate paragraph of this paper.

"He emptied Himself." As we have seen, this could not be of His Deity; it could be, and was, of the "form" of God in which He originally existed. The sense of the passage is not that He emptied Himself *and* took upon Him the form of a servant, but that "He emptied Himself, taking upon Him the form of a servant . . ." (N.T.) The assuming of the servant's form, and man's likeness *was* the emptying. "Form," it has been observed, is "that by which a person or thing strikes the vision, the external appearance"; or as another has said, it is "manifested essence." The point to seize is, that "form" *implies a reality behind*. The "form of God" implies that He was God; and the "form of a servant" (it does *not* say a "creature") similarly implies, not merely that He took a servant's place, but that He became a servant by becoming man. This is borne out, too, by the next sentence; "being found in fashion as a man." We may not be able exactly to distinguish "form," "likeness," "fashion," but we may be sure that they testify to us with one voice that *all He appeared to be He really was*. It is an old argument from early days, and an unanswerable one, that He appeared to be man, and therefore He was man.

This conclusion is fully supported by the other passages quoted. "The Word became flesh." What a stupendous statement is this! Its glory dazzles us, making us "blind by excess of light"! Another has remarked. "In 'the Word became *flesh*,' the expression is used which most completely declares the reality of the manhood into which He entered. . . it was not some docetic\* form of it, but the verity of that which we know as such, and which most implies the weakness of the

\* The docetics in the early church taught that Christ had not a real body.

creature. And that He *became* flesh imports this manhood not as something outside of or other than His true self, but assumed into it" (F. W. G.). An old writer has succinctly and beautifully said: "The Word was made flesh not by ceasing to be what He was, but by becoming what He was not, in taking our nature into His own, whereby He dwelt among us" (Owen).

Then we read further: He took part in flesh and blood. What are we to understand by "flesh and blood"? Much depends upon the meaning of the phrase in this connection. Does it mean physical flesh and blood only? To answer this question let us observe how the same phrase is used elsewhere in the New Testament. "Flesh and blood have not revealed it unto thee, but, etc." (Matt. 11. 17). "Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God" (1 Cor. 15. 50). With "flesh and blood" Paul did not confer (Gal. 1. 16). Is it not apparent we are dealing with a figure of speech in which the part is used for the whole, and that "flesh and blood" means simply *human nature* as such? And as we have seen from other passages, this it was that our adorable Lord assumed, only entirely apart from sin. His human nature was ever and absolutely *holy*.

In two of the passages which speak of Christ as sent into the world, the same truth is declared. "God sending His own Son *in the likeness of sinful flesh . . .*" (Rom. 8. 3). "God sent forth His Son *made of a woman . . .*" (Gal. 4. 4). The word "made" ("come," N.T.) is the same word as "became" in John 1. 14. Bloomfield remarks that the expression in the original "intimates that Christ was endowed with the *whole* of the human *nature*" (*italics his*). Through her He was truly related in a natural descent to the generations preceding: "of the

seed of David *according to the flesh*"; "of whom (Israel) *concerning the flesh*, Christ came."

Here, then, seems to lie the balance of truth on this great and soul-inspiring mystery. "In the truth of the incarnation the reality and unchangeableness of his divine nature must not be in the least degree surrendered; and just as little may anything of the truth and reality of His human nature be surrendered." He remained the same Person—the Son—as before; but on the other hand He did not simply assume humanity as something that could be laid aside like a vesture. His sacred body He *did* lay aside between His death and resurrection; but did He lay aside in that period His *humanity*? Who would dare say so?

Thus far, then, the light of the Word guides us safely; but as has been well said: "The incarnation brings us to a point where the light of revealed truth shades off into inaccessible mystery, and into its ultimate secrets we may not penetrate. We at least know that each nature of Christ is perfect, and that the Person who unites them is one and indissoluble." In the more recent words of another, He is "Man in the whole texture of His bodily and spiritual being, but God and Man in the complex and inscrutable unity of His adorable Person; as truly God as Man; nothing lacking as to Godhead, for its fulness was there; and nothing lacking as to Manhood, for perfection characterized Him in whatever way He may be viewed." And, conversely, we may also be sure that, if in *any* respect Christ be not truly Man, if any element proper to manhood is lacking in Him, "the chasm which parted heaven and earth has not been bridged over. God as before the incarnation is still awful, remote, inaccessible."

(To be continued.)

# THE EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS. (HAMILTON SMITH)

## INTRODUCTORY.

[N the Epistle to the Philippians the

Christian is viewed as a heavenly pilgrim, passing through this world on his way to Christ in glory. In the Apostle Paul we have an example of one who treads this heavenly path according to the mind of God. As he pursues his pilgrim way he is called to suffer bonds and imprisonment, and face the realities of life and death. He is opposed by adversaries, endures persecutions, and suffers the loss of all things. He walks through a dark world in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation. He meets with sickness and sorrow. He has to contend against dogs, evil workers, and the concision. He mourns over those who seek their own things, and weeps over the enemies of the cross of Christ. At times he is faced with want and privations.

Nevertheless, in spite of all difficulties, he forgets the things that are behind and reaches out to the things that are before. At every step of this path he is sustained by having in view the glorious end of the journey—the prize of the calling on high of God in Christ Jesus.

Moreover the epistle presents not only the pilgrim path, but the experiences that are enjoyed by one who takes this path. Such experience is true Christian experience, though not necessarily the experience of Christians. Alas! the experience of Christians is often far below proper Christian experience. The Christian may at times be depressed in mind, dull of spirit, and cold at heart. Obviously such experiences are not proper Christian experience. The epistle very blessedly presents *the experience enjoyed by one who, in his journey through this world, lives the Christian life in its normal*

*condition under the power of the Spirit of God.*

We know that the Spirit of God has come to take of the things of Christ and show them unto us. Thus Christ is formed in us by being presented to us as our Life, our Pattern, our Object, and our Power. As we become followers of Christ, according to the example of the apostle, so shall we become true representatives of Christ, and enjoy true Christian experience.

In Chapter 1. Christ is presented as our life, and consequently everything is viewed in connection with Christ. The key word is "For me to live is Christ" (1. 21).

In Chapter 2. Christ is presented in humiliation as our pattern, giving grace to the Christian life. The key word is "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus" (2. 5).

In Chapter 3. Christ is presented in glory as our object, giving energy to the Christian life. The key word being "I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus" (3. 14).

In Chapter 4. Christ is presented as our power, lifting us above the cares and anxieties of the pilgrim path. The key word is "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me" (4. 13).

For at least four years Paul had been a prisoner and, in the ways of God, allowed to suffer want. Hearing of his need the hearts of the Philippians were moved to send a gift. This gift drew forth from the apostle this touching letter of acknowledgment. He writes the epistle not as an apostle, but as a servant of Jesus Christ, associating Timothy with himself. Thus the experience of which he speaks is not simply apostolic, but that which is proper to all Christians.

## CHAPTER 1

## CHRIST OUR LIFE.

In the first chapter Christ is viewed as the source and motive of the Christian life lived on earth. Paul can write, "For me to live is Christ." Others might well shrink from publicly stating "For me to live is Christ," though it may indeed be the desire of the heart. Paul, as led by the Spirit, could say this in all truth. As the man of the world lives for money, or pleasure, or fame, and the loss of these things would deprive him of his object in life, so Paul lived solely for Christ, and had it been possible to rob him of Christ he would have had nothing left for which to live.

It is plain that a man's life is governed by, and viewed in connection with, that which is his object in life. If he lives for money, everything will be viewed in connection with money. If pleasure, everything will be viewed in connection with pleasure. Other things may at times demand his attention, but that which is his life will dominate his thoughts and actions. Nor is it otherwise with the Christian. If, as Paul can say, "For me to live is Christ," it will mean in practice that *everything in Paul's life will be viewed in connection with Christ and His interest.*

The natural man lives for self, and views everything in connection with self. It is the privilege of the believer to know that, in the cross of Christ, God has dealt with "self," so that we need not be occupied with "self" any more. Our old man has been crucified with Christ and thus we have a title to reckon ourselves to be dead to sin. This reckoning is the foundation of practical Christianity, involving as it does the entire setting aside of the old man in the judgment of the cross, and the introduction of a new man in a new world, Christ in the glory.

Alas! our experiences as Christians are often low because we view things in relation to ourselves. The true Christian experience as set before us in this chapter is the result of seeing everything in connection with Christ. This is strikingly set forth in the case of the Apostle Paul. Everything he touches upon in this opening chapter is viewed in relation to Christ.

## I.

*The Gift of the Philippians (Verse 5).*

After the introductory verses the apostle at once refers, in an indirect way, to the gift sent by the Philippians, in which he sees a fresh expression of their fellowship. Christ, however, being his life, he views this gift not in connection with himself, but in relation to the gospel of Christ. Hence he speaks of this gift as "fellowship in the gospel." Had he thought only of himself he would have said "fellowship with me." Forgetting himself and his immediate needs, he sees in it a proof of the Lord's grace working in the Philippians.

## II.

*The Philippian Assembly (Verse 6)*

The gift leads the apostle to think of those who had given the gift. Christ being his life, he views the Philippians, as before he had viewed their gift, in connection with Christ. Viewing them thus he can say, "He which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ." Viewing the saints in connection with the flesh that is in them, the world that is around them, the Devil who is against them, or the difficulties opposed to them, we may well be cast down in regard to them. When for a moment the apostle thought of the Galatian saints in connection with their ways, he has to say, "I stand in doubt of

you." Directly, however, he views them in connection with Christ, he can say, "I have confidence as to you through the Lord" (Gal 4 20; 5 10). So with the Philippians, viewing them in connection with Christ, he can speak of "being confident" that the work commenced in them will be finished in the day of Jesus Christ.

### III

#### *The Love of the Apostle (Verses 7, 8).*

Thinking of the Philippians naturally leads the apostle to speak of his love for them. He can say, "God is my record, how greatly I long after you all in the bowels of Jesus Christ" Moreover, Christ being his life, this love to the Philippians is viewed in connection with Christ. He does not long after them with mere human affection which waxes and wanes according to the way others may act, but with deep divine affection—the bowels of Jesus Christ; a love that, having loved, loves to the end.

### IV.

#### *The Prayer of the Apostle (Verses 9-11).*

Those we love, we pray for So with the apostle loving the Philippians he prays for their state of soul, that their love may abound yet more and more. If, however, he prays for their state, he does so in connection with Christ. He does not pray for a good state in connection with himself, that they may be a credit to him, or that they may accredit themselves before men, in man's small day. He prays for them in view of the day of Christ. Furthermore he desires that their lives might be filled with the fruit of practical righteousness. This, however, he at once connects with Christ, for such practical fruits can only be by Jesus Christ. Nor does the apostle desire these fruits that he may be praised,

or the Philippians praised, but for the glory and praise of God.

### V.

#### *The Circumstances by the Way (Verses 12-14).*

Counting upon their loving interest in himself, the apostle passes from the Philippians to speak of himself and his circumstances. Again we see that, Christ being his life, he views his circumstances in connection with Christ and His gospel He says, "I would have you to know, brethren, that the circumstances in which I am have turned out rather to the furtherance of the glad tidings" (NT) The circumstances were such as to make the stoutest heart quail. For four years he had been a prisoner in bonds under the rule of the tyrant Nero, he was no longer able to minister in the assemblies, or preach to the crowds Had he viewed his circumstances in connection with himself he might well have been cast down, and possibly have reproached himself for actions in the past which might have led to his imprisonment Rising above all considerations of self—whether lack of wisdom in the past, or ease and comfort in the present—he views his circumstances entirely in connection with Christ. He does not ask, "How do these untoward circumstances affect me?" but, "How do they further the interests of Christ?" Viewing them thus he sees that God is above all circumstances, even if brought about largely by our own mistakes, and makes the most unpropitious circumstances, as nature would think, turn to the furtherance of the gospel. Viewing circumstances in the light of Christ and His interests, they become the occasion of experiencing joy in the Lord—as he says, "I herein do rejoice, and will rejoice" (*To be continued.*)

# GRACE UPON GRACE.

I.R

“GRACE upon grace”; not a small measure of grace, not grace according to our thoughts of grace, but grace of the fulness of Him who was full of grace and truth, for “of His fulness have all we received, and GRACE UPON GRACE” (John 1. 16).

Those who have gone on before—teachers in divine things—have told us that grace is love in activity; perhaps we might say love working. Here in this wonderful first chapter of St. John’s Gospel grace is mentioned three times, and the word does not occur again in the whole Gospel. Is not the reason that in chapter 1. we have presented to us Him who brought this grace in His own Person? “Grace and truth came (subsists) by Jesus Christ” (John 1. 17), and then we are shown, as in a holy and beautiful picture, this divine love—ever the only-begotten Son in the bosom of the Father—stooping down to our necessity. It is a lovely theme to contemplate. May the Holy Spirit, who indited the Gospel, unfold it to our adoring hearts!

We will consider Him first as the Lamb of God, for unless He had come thus, all else could have availed us nothing. You will have noticed in Exod. 12 that instruction is given for what should be done if the household were too little for the lamb; but the household could never be too great for the lamb. This is just one of the precious intimations in the Old Testament of the greatness of Him who was yet to come. The limitation is always on our side. “Every man according to his eating shall make your count for the lamb” (Exod. 12. 4). Andrew and his friend made their count for the Lamb, when they asked, “Master, where dwellest Thou?” and they found what poor, feeble thoughts they had when He said, “Come and see, and

they came and saw where He dwelt, and abode with Him that day” Beloved, how do we make our count for the Lamb? According to our thoughts of our need as sinners, or according to God’s thoughts of the worthiness of the Lamb, once slain indeed, but now the centre and effulgence of the heavenly glory?

Let us pursue our way through the Gospel. We see the Lord at the wedding feast, turning the water of purification into the wine of joy, and we know that though we taste the wine of joy now, yet in all its fulness it is reserved for another day. We see His way with a seeking soul in chapter 3, His way with a secret sinner in chapter 4, and with a convicted sinner in chapter 8. In chapter 4, too, we see His way in speaking the life-giving Word. A man, whose son is sick unto death, comes to Jesus and receives from Him the assurance, “thy son liveth” and he “believed the word which Jesus had spoken and went his way.” Four things are here: the dying boy, the word of Jesus, the father’s faith, and the work following faith; but the emphasis of the story would seem to be on the words “thy son liveth,” repeated three times. Has it not been thus with ourselves? First there was our need, then the word the Lord spake to our hearts, and believing His word we lived, it was a life-giving word and we live unto Him. But do we always go our way as this nobleman did, strong in faith in the word of the Lord, and adding to our faith works that shall please Him?

Again, we watch His way with the impotent man in chapter 5—the man with such a long history of failure and weakness—and we see that His word speaks power as well as life. Therefore we, who have learned something of our

powerlessness, turn from our own efforts, and, undismayed by the lack of all other aid, we turn to Him, that He may speak the word of power to us also. For the word He speaks brings with it the power to do accordingly. One would fain pause here, because the lack of power is such a sore thing with us. May we hear more and more His power-speaking word!

Thus we go through this Gospel of St. John. We see love bringing living water, love made the living bread, love giving sight to the blind, love weeping at a graveside, and love raising the dead. We see love revealed as the Good Shepherd, love preparing a place for the loved ones, and love fitting them for the place. We gaze with moistening eye on love thinking of the sorrowing woman at the cross, on love made an offering for sin—the true burnt-offering. With what joy do we behold this love in resurrection, bringing the spoils of victory to the watcher at the tomb, love making the beloved ones sharers in the triumph, love dispelling doubt and fear, love providing refreshment for some who had toiled all night in vain, and love restoring the one who had so sadly failed. Last of all we hear love saying, "Follow Me."

And we who have read this Gospel more times than we can count, we who read it ever with deepening joy, can we not say, 'Of His fulness have all we received, and grace upon grace'? What intimacies of love each saint can tell! How many times has that infinite love stooped down to our need!

How often has love spoken in our ear words such as none other ever spake! How often has that love comforted, rebuked, strengthened, enlightened! Truly it has been "grace upon grace"; it will be "grace upon grace" until it is grace in glory. Well may we say in the words of Charles Wesley's hymn:

"Love, only love, Thy heart inclined,  
And brought Thee, Saviour of mankind,  
Down from the throne above,  
Love made Thee here a Man of grief  
Distressed Thee sore for our relief,  
O mystery of love!"

And now—you remember that Peter saw "the disciple whom Jesus loved following, which also leaned on His breast at supper." Here is one of the secrets of love, and we also, if we have found our rest in His love upon His bosom, will follow Him. Is it our great joy in the little while, until He come, to follow Him? To follow Him humbly here where love is little known, and to follow Him in spirit to the place where He is gone, as one now with Him has beautifully written

"Then afar and afar did I follow Him on,  
To the land where He was going,  
To the depths of glory beyond the sun,  
Where the golden fields were glowing."

Our hearts delight to think of Him there. He took the lowest place here, and now He is acclaimed worthy of the highest place there. As we meditate on His toil and sorrow here, we rejoice that He has entered in there—entered into the place where toil and sorrow and tears come not, but where love reigns supreme, and we know that He waits to welcome His own there, to be for ever with Him. Amen.

In the company of the Lord, who knows our every frailty, and rightly appreciates all our service, and loves His servants better than the service they render, our souls are toned, our vision, so apt to be blurred by the stress of conflict, is cleared, and we see things as He sees them. Thus, refreshed and strengthened, we are ready to go forth again at His bidding and serve Him as those who have been with Him.

## ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

## "Behold the Bridegroom!"

"With reference to the article in January issue of *Scripture Truth*, 'Behold the Bridegroom!' by Mr W Bramwell Dick Does not the parable of the Ten Virgins (Matt. 25.) refer to our Lord's coming in His Kingdom? The disciples' query to our Lord was 'What shall be the sign of Thy coming, and of the end of the world (or age)?' (Matt 24 3). And in answer to this our Lord spoke the parable of the Ten Virgins, among other things, and concludes it by saying, 'Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of Man cometh' (Matt 25 13) Is not the coming of the Son of Man distinct in point of time from the coming spoken of in 1 Thess 4 13-18?—which surely is the 'blessed hope' of the church?"—EBBW VALE.

THE parable covers the whole period of the Lord's absence from the earth, from His ascension to glory to His coming again in power. It does not contemplate the church as the Bride of the Lamb, nor is the coming confined to His descent from heaven for His church, though that, of course, is included in it, for there will not be two second comings; but the second coming will be in two stages. the first stage will be when He descends from heaven to summon His church to meet Him in the air; the second stage will be when He completes that coming and enters with His saints into the joys of His fully established Kingdom. There will be an interval between these stages. The first stage will be all sovereign grace; but in connection with the second, which is spoken of as the appearing, the responsibility of those who profess to be the followers of the Lord is prominent. The parable looks on to this:

It is the *kingdom of heaven* that is likened to the ten virgins, not the church; and the kingdom of heaven includes all who have made a profession of the name of the Lord, both real and unreal, only those who are real form the church—the kingdom of heaven is really baptized Christendom

The parable is of such great importance that we will give a brief exposition of it "They went forth to meet the Bridegroom"—the Jews who professed the name of the Lord Jesus left their

Judaism and the Gentiles left their heathenism, they turned their backs on the world, both Jewish and Gentile, to wait for God's Son from heaven; that was their profession. But they soon lost this special character and settled down in the world. The whole profession of the name of the Lord became indifferent to the truth of His coming again, and that they were not of the world, even as He was not of it. It might be said that this period of what is called church history commenced when the world began to smile upon the church and the two joined forces under the Emperor Constantine—the Pergamos period of Rev. 2. 12-17. They all slept.

The midnight cry, so we believe, went forth first at the darkest hour of the church's history on earth, when Rome and its awful corruptions seemed to have blotted out all light for the absent Bridegroom, for it is to the church in Thyatira which represents this period, that the fact of the Lord's return is first broached in these prophetic Epistles to the seven churches (Rev. 2. 25-29) A place of authority in the coming Kingdom and the Morning Star were to be the reward of the overcomer. The overcomers would be those who heard and responded to the midnight cry

Everything will be made fully manifest by the appearing of the Son of Man and a lifeless profession will avail nothing then. Only those who are

Christ's at His coming will go with Him into the joys of His Kingdom, and they are known by their possession of the oil in the vessels—the grace which the Holy Spirit brings. ‘If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His’ (Rom. 8 9)

The midnight cry, “Behold the Bridegroom!” must of course make a powerful appeal to all who know and love Him. It ought to thrill their hearts with joyful anticipation, and if any have become indifferent and have gone to sleep, it should awaken them and make them trim their lamps, that their lights for Him should not be

### “Healing the Sick.”

“Seeing that the Lord Jesus promised big things to His disciples I should like you to comment on the following Scriptures Matt 10 1, Luke 9 2, 10 9 and 19, James 5 13 15. He meant them to be superior to everything else in the world. Were these promises for a limited period only or were they to be continuous? If continuous, do you know any church up to that standard? NORTHANTS.

THESE commissions that the Lord gave to His disciples were undoubtedly limited to the time of His own life on earth. He communicated His power to them and sent them as His delegates to preach that “the kingdom of heaven was at hand,” and they were to show the powers of that Kingdom by healing the sick, etc. They were not then remarkable for their faith, and had not received the Holy Spirit, and Judas Iscariot was one of them, exercising the same power as the rest, and their missions as to any definite result were a failure, for the hearts of the people were not turned to the Lord, and they were not to rejoice in this power that had been bestowed upon them, but that their “names were written in heaven” (Luke 10 20). That was greater. Evidently their standard was not very high, nor were their works to be a matter for boasting or for exalting them, but the GRACE that had written their names in heaven was cause for joy. Their

dim; this is their responsibility, and in this way the parable was justly used in the paper referred to by our correspondent.

It sounds forth also as a solemn warning to all who are not truly Christ's. It should awaken them to their need of the oil, and thus they can only buy “without money and without price” from the Lord Himself. If they are to secure it they must have personal transactions with Himself, otherwise He will not know them, and their portion will be outside the joys of His Kingdom.

activities were to be confined to the lost sheep of the house of Israel; they had not to go to the Gentiles or into any city of the Samaritans (Matt. 10.). This limitation alone proves that the commission was not to be a continuous one. In Luke's Gospel also it is plain that it was for that time only, for in chapter 22 35-38 the Lord plainly declares that the conditions of service were to be completely changed.

The apostles and others in the Acts had these powers of the Kingdom committed to them, as sign gifts in view of the establishment of the kingdom on earth, but we know of no word that indicates that they were to continue indefinitely. Indeed, the Apostle Paul, who had these powers as truly as any of the apostles (see 2 Cor 12 11, 12), ceased to exercise them as he unfolded more and more the heavenly calling of the saints and the truth as to the church. He did not heal Epaphroditus who was sick nigh unto death, but he

rejoiced that God had mercy both on the sick man and upon himself and had raised him up, lest Paul should have sorrow upon sorrow (Phil. 2 25). He did not heal Timothy of his often infirmities, but directed him to natural curative means (1 Tim 5 23). And he left Trophimus at Miletum sick (2 Tim. 4 20) There is evidently something of greater importance than the healing of the sick

James 5 14, 15 is there in the Word for any who have the faith and guidance to take it up, but it is a very different thing from the much advertised "Healing Campaigns" of modern times It does not contemplate crowded meetings throbbing with excitement, nor men claiming to have divinely-given powers to heal the sick. The work was to be done in the quietude and privacy of the sick chamber, and the elders had to be called there by the sick man himself. There the *prayer of faith* had to be offered, which shut out the importance of man and brought in the Lord and His power.

Then on the confession of his sin, he was forgiven governmentally and his sickness healed.

These miraculous powers were not committed to the church as such, but to the apostles and others who exercised them in their individual responsibility as the stewards and servants of the Lord We are not told that there would be a revival of these powers in these last days, and so we do not expect to see it, and we view with grave suspicion any pretension thereto. Instead of seeking these spectacular gifts, we are told to keep the Lord's Word and not deny His name; to depart from iniquity and follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart, and to look for His coming again. If we are doing these things in obedience to the Lord we shall be vessels meet for the Master's use and He will carry on His own work through us and the souls of men will be healed even if their bodies remain sick.

## Worry and True Exercise of Heart.

"Do you ever find it difficult to define where worrying ceases and exercise begins? The one we know is displeasing to God, but the other I am sure is good, and the more we are exercised, the more we realize our dependence. What do you think?" —B. M

IT will be helpful to understand the difference between worry and true exercise of heart. When a Christian worries, his circumstances or trials fill his mind, and his own strength and resources are measured against the difficulties or the demands that are made upon him, with the consequent anxious care and distress of mind. Things are viewed as they affect himself, and God is lost sight of. The circumstances have hidden Him from the view, and faith has grown feeble. The only antidote to worry that we know of is a renewed sense of a Father's care, which is so blessedly taught in Luke 12.

by the Lord Himself. If as children of God we looked at our difficulties in the presence of His love and wisdom and power and realized that "even the very hairs of your head are all numbered," meaning surely, that those details of our lives which are too insignificant for us to notice are matters of interest to Him, we should be relieved of worry. Of course it must displease our God when we bear burdens which He would have us cast upon Him, for it shows that our confidence in Him is small, and yet He is full of pity and loving kindness, and comforts us and encourages us by His Word to a

more perfect trust in Him. "Casting all your care upon Him, for He careth for you."

True exercise of heart commences when God is really before the soul; the circumstances may be the same, but the point of view has shifted and the desire is awakened to see God's way and to realize what His purpose is for us in the trial. God's hand is recognized and the ear is eager to hear His voice, and the result is, "the peaceable fruits of righteousness" which are only gathered by those who are exercised by God's dealings with them (Heb. 12.).

The soul is depressed and weakened by worry, but is enlarged and strengthened by exercise, and it is only by exercise of soul that we reach a haven of rest about any matter (see Ps. 107.). Exercise of soul is the opposite to indifference, and we ought to desire it greatly. David understood the necessity of it when he cried, "O Lord, my rock; be not silent unto me, lest, if Thou be silent to me, I become like them that go down to the pit" (Ps. 28.). Without exercise of soul we are like the dead who hear not the voice of God. It is exercise that brings us into line with God's will for us.

## THE BLESSING AT ITS SOURCE.

(J. B. S.)

TO ensure enjoyment of any blessing conferred, it is necessary to connect it with Christ the source of it. Independence was the ruin of the first man, Adam; dependence is the normal characteristic of the new man. The more conscious I am of my gain, the more necessary is it that I should be assured of its continuance and perpetuity. The deepest misery of man is traceable to this, that in proportion to the value he sets on anything, so is his anxiety as to its continuance; and the less apprehension there is of its being lost, the more enjoyment there is in it. Man in nature cannot connect any favour or blessing with its Source; but as to all spiritual blessings, we have the guarantee of their perpetuity in the knowledge of Him from whom every favour comes. Gifts or acquisitions in themselves only make one unhappy in proportion as they are valued, unless we connect them with Christ, and realize Him as the Giver; not only as one able to give, but as one to whom we are brought in the closest relation-

ship, and who imparts His gifts to us, in order to qualify us for Himself. If I know His mind about me, I am not only assured of the continuance of the gift, but I also know that it is an expression of His love which passeth knowledge. I enjoy the gift for the acquisition which is unfolded to me in His Word, as acquainting me with His heart; and hence my heart, in order to have full rest, seeks His heart, and not the acquisition of the blessing merely, which is only the expression of it. The very eagerness to acquire, and the extent of the acquisition, is often followed by a winter of depression, simply because there has been too much occupation with the acquisition, and a losing sight of the Source. Gifts and feelings, even spiritual ones, are not sufficient in themselves apart from Christ, the Head, to maintain freshness of joy and vigour in the soul—any more than the action of the heart in the human subject is enough for healthful consciousness without the head, or seat of feeling.

## THREE SNARES.

**T**HERE are three great snares of which we must beware, if we are to grow in the divine life and walk in the liberty of it. These are plainly indicated in the Epistles, and just as plainly we are shown what will deliver us out of them or preserve us from them.

**THE CORINTHIAN SNARE WAS LEVITY, LICENCE** They thought a man could do as he liked, a widespread sentiment to-day. The one remedy and preservative from this snare is the cross of Christ—it fills the first Epistle to that church. The cross exposed what man is, it is the measure of God's judgment on what he is. It shows us the more excellent way, for Christ our passover was slain for us, and we conclude that if He suffered to deliver us from the judgment of our evil, self-willed flesh, we must turn from it and live unto Him.

**THE GALATIAN SNARE WAS LEGALITY** They put themselves under law, and thought to improve their ways and bridle their flesh by its enactments, and this is still a very popular notion in Christendom. The remedy, as the Epistle to the Galatian churches teaches, is Christ risen, and the Christian in Him. Not only Christ crucified *for* us, but we crucified *with*

Him, a truth that must be taken up by each individual and entered into experimentally, but also Christ risen, the true Isaac, and we associated with Him as the Seed of promise. Christians are the children of freedom, they are not under bondage. The Spirit of the Son has been sent into their hearts, and those who know this, cry "Abba, Father," instead of cowering with fear at Sinai, and they live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved them and gave Himself for them.

**THE COLOSSIAN SNARE WAS RELIGIOUSNESS**—Ritualism, sanctimoniousness with a strong admixture of philosophy—these are the two great forces in Christendom to-day that seem to have caught up all who are not rooted and grounded in the faith—ritualism and modernism. The remedy and preservative is Christ in glory, in whom all the fulness of the Godhead dwells, the Head of His body the church. Nothing that man can devise can add to Him and we are complete in Him. Whatever of man's device is added to His body is an obnoxious accretion that must spoil and fetter it, and those who fall into this snare and those who foster it, plainly declare that they do not know the fulness that is in Christ or His all-sufficiency for all the needs of His body.

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## GOD'S LOVE AND HIS GIFTS.

**A BABE** in its mother's arms clings instinctively to her, for it draws its nourishment from and finds its rest at her breast, but as the child grows in intelligence and in the knowledge of the relationship that exists between them he finds something greater than his dependence upon her—the love that fills her heart for him and it is this love that inspires his confidence in her. Let us not enjoy God's love only in the way it is expressed in His gifts—precious they are and indispensable to us—but He wants us to be so near Him that we know the love that is behind every gift and that is greater than all it gives. John 17 will teach us this, it is a chapter that calls for prayer and adoring study.

# THE LORD IN THE MIDST. No. I. (J T MAWSON)

WE hold that there could not be anything greater or more blessed for us to realize this side of heaven than the presence of the Lord in the midst of His own church, or assembly. And in case what we mean is not clear to our readers, we quote one text of Scripture. "*For both He that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one for which cause He is not ashamed to call them brethren, saying, I WILL DECLARE THY NAME UNTO MY BRETHREN, IN THE MIDST OF THE CHURCH WILL I SING PRAISE UNTO THEE*" (Heb 2. 11, 12). This triumphant declaration is a quotation from Psalm 22, than which there is no more solemn passage in the whole Bible. It describes for us in the early part of it the sufferings of our Lord and Saviour when He was forsaken of God for our sakes and sins. It shows us in His own words the intense agony of His soul when He hung upon the cross, beset by the whole force of evil, and when, more terrible than all, He was made sin for us. The Spirit of Christ in the psalmist portrayed all this a thousand years before it actually happened, showing what a place these sufferings had in the thoughts of God from the beginning. What an unspeakable blessing it would be to us if we mused upon those sufferings more! What enlargement of heart we should experience as we considered God's hatred of sin as expressed there, and His love for us who were the sinners; and the great price that was paid for our redemption and the love that filled the heart of the Redeemer that made Him willing to pay that price! O brethren, how cold and slow our hearts are! How little moved we are by the wonder of the ages—the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ! Why do we not

glory in it more, and say more often in wondering worship—the Son of God loved me and gave Himself for me?

But in verse 21 of this psalm the sorrow and unfathomed woe give place to triumph, and there breaks from the lips of the One who had suffered these words that are quoted in Hebrews 2. Briefly we desire to consider what is involved in them.

## THE RISEN LORD IN THE MIDST.

The fulfilment of this great thing began in John 20, where the Lord, raised up from the dead, sent that message to His disciples "*GO TO MY BRETHREN, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God.*" That message gathered them together, and when so gathered Jesus Himself stood in the midst of them, saying, "Peace be unto you," and that they might have no doubt as to who He was, He shewed them His hands and His side. The effect was deep and definite and instantaneous, "**THEN WERE THE DISCIPLES GLAD, WHEN THEY SAW THE LORD.**"

Many things crowd themselves into this revelation of Himself to them. They must have been assured of His power and victory by His presence with them. Death had been defeated or He could not have been there, hence peace could indeed be their portion instead of distress and fear and an overwhelming sense of loss.

Then He had come back again to them; they were His first thought on that never-to-be-forgotten day. What a sense of His grace they must have gained by that fact? He had always been tender, patient and gracious with them, but they had failed Him so

completely in the hour of His deep need; their faith had broken down and they had showed themselves to be so faithless, and yet He had come to them as full of grace as ever, unchanged by all their failure. His grace was as great as His power; this must have moved their hearts. Then those wounds manifested His love, a love that had suffered for them and gone before them, and met all their foes, that they might follow after Him in the way everlasting without fear or hurt.

There was only one thing they could do as they realized these things, and that one thing was to own Him unreservedly as their Lord, and this they did gladly. *His supremacy in their midst was unchallenged.* He had in them the nucleus of His church or assembly; a circle in which He could do as He pleased, where His will would be dominant and His rights maintained. And that company of disciples was most satisfied to have it so. They needed no other Lord, Head, Centre or Leader; Christ was enough. They were glad when they saw THE LORD. He had the right to be Lord in their midst because of who He was; He had gained the right to be supreme there because of what He had done. He had redeemed them—they were all His because of the great price that He had paid for them; they could not justly deny His claim. Thank God, they gladly owned it.

Now this manifestation of the Lord to His disciples was not for them only, the words we have quoted from Hebrews 2. show us very clearly that it was to be perpetuated and to continue until God's many sons are brought to glory. Let us notice the way in which those who are attached to Christ by faith are spoken of here for it is important. They are *sons of God*, and Christ is not ashamed to call them

His *brethren*. We wish that we understood better the dignity with which we are here invested. Could anything be more wonderful? We are no longer bankrupt suppliants at God's gateway, but brought to Him as His sons; we are no longer saved sinners merely, though we are that, and should not forget it, but the One who has saved us and sanctified us has done it so blessedly that we are one with Him, and He is not ashamed to call us brethren, and this not because He has in grace stooped to save us, but because having done this, blessed be His Name, He has raised us up and brought us into the same relationship in which He stands to God, according to the message that He sent to His disciples—*"My Father, and your Father; and to My God, and your God."* He is the first-born—the Chief and Leader among many brethren. And these brethren of His are His church in the midst of which He is to-day, as much as He ever was. How much have we realized this? Let us challenge ourselves as to it. We cannot read Psalm 22. without feeling that it means much to the Lord who suffered for our salvation. It is evidently a great joy to Him to surround Himself with His brethren and to tell them of the Father, but what does it mean to us? In the days of His great sorrow the people passed Him by. It was nothing to them. Are His brethren guilty of this same indifference to His joy. Is there any joy so great as His as He comes with the light and knowledge of the Father's love that had filled His own heart throughout eternity to declare it to His brethren? And is this nothing to His brethren?

To many of them it is nothing at all; they have been seduced from their loyalty to Christ, or corrupted by false teaching and false aims, and instead of having the glory before them as their

longed-for destiny, the world and worldly ways fill their hearts, and "if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him." And consequently they have neither heart nor ears for the voice of the Son of the Father. Many are ignorant of the glory of Christ, and are so involved in worldly organizations and evil associations that it is impossible for them to realize the sufficiency of the Lord as the Leader and Head of His church. It is unspeakably sad that it should be so, and it must be a grief to the heart of the Lord. But has this defection on the part of the church, this indifference to His claims, changed Him? No, that were impossible, having loved His own that are in the world He will love them to the end. And these words abide for us: "*I will declare Thy Name unto my brethren: in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto Thee*"

We repeat that nothing could be greater or more blessed than the realization of this. It were well worth while to count everything else loss for the knowledge of it; and to abandon every association that would hide the Lord from the soul when He appears in the midst in this character. We may see Him and hear Him just as truly today in a spiritual way as His disciples did on the resurrection day. And the one who has known this will be satisfied with nothing less. "Let everyone that nameth the Name of the Lord depart from iniquity . . . flee also youthful lusts, and follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart," and they shall know the power and blessedness of the presence of the Lord if this is their desire, for He will ever be faithful to His own word, He will ever be in the midst of His brethren, His church.

But here we must sound a note of warning, for it is easy to press with great vigour the need of separation from evil, and know very little of the blessedness of the presence of the Lord, and be very little formed and fashioned by it. We may lose sight of this positive side of the truth in urging the negative; we may endeavour to exclude disease and not know how to promote health, we may become censorious and pharisaical and do much harm and little good. We need to cultivate the eye that can see the Lord and the ear that can hear His Voice and the heart that can own His positive supremacy in the midst, more than the nostrils that are keen to discover evil. His presence must form those who know it after His own likeness, so that with all lowliness and meekness, and with long-suffering, they will forbear one another in love. And these things will characterize those who know His presence, and by them we can test ourselves whether that presence is a reality to us or a mere profession.

#### DECLARING THE FATHER'S NAME TO HIS BRETHREN.

What fills the heart of the Lord is the blessedness of the Father's Name, and this He must declare to His brethren, that they may share with Him the great joy of this for them new relationship. The Father's Name is not a name only, it is the revelation of Himself—it tells us not only who He is, but what He is. Of old He revealed Himself by a succession of names to those who were privileged to draw near to Him. But all those names by which He was known to Adam and Abraham, and Moses and David were names that had to do with some circumstance or need that had arisen in time—they were all relative to the conditions in which He found those whom He would bless. But the Name of Father belongs to

eternity—it is the name and relationship that the well-beloved Son knew before the foundation of the world. It lifts us out of and above all circumstances and needs and dispensations into what is eternal—for “this is life eternal, that they might know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent.” And this gives character to the assembly in the midst of which Christ is. It is not of the world, it is heavenly in its character, and before it reaches the Father’s house, it should know the Father and find fulness of joy in this blessed relationship.

One of the sweetest names by which God was known in Old Testament days was “the mighty God of Jacob.” It was by this Name that David knew Him when He set to work to prepare a habitation for Him (Ps. 132) It speaks of invincible, sovereign mercy. And David knew that nothing else would do for him and his people; he knew that if God in this character was amongst them they would be blest indeed; he knew that only the God who had borne with scheming, failing Jacob would do for his equally faulty children. But we do not go back to those old days to learn the relationship in which we stand to God. We are in New Testament days, and belong not to Israel but to the assembly, the church; Christ is not ashamed to call us brethren, and we know God as **THE GOD AND FATHER OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST**. Here it is not

mercy or even grace, but love, and not the love of compassion but the love of complacency, for there was everything in our Lord Jesus Christ to draw out the Father’s love—He is the eternally worthy object of it. We can understand that; we do not wonder at His words “Thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world.” But let us realize the exceeding riches of God’s grace

“We stand accepted in the place  
That none but Christ could claim !”

Our sins for ever put away, our needs all provided for until the time of need ceases for ever, and we brought into this place of nearness to God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, to listen to the voice of His Son, while He tells us of what He knows so well—the Father’s love. Is it still possible to enjoy this blessedness? It surely is, and what joy it must give the heart of the Lord to find some who earnestly desire it. We press it upon our readers. We pray while we do so that true exercise of heart may be given to us all in regard to it, that while we lay hold of and enjoy lesser blessings we may not miss this that is higher and brighter than all. It is not something that only those who have advanced far into the knowledge of the truth may enjoy. It is for all—even the babes know the Father. It is heart that is needed, heart for Christ and His things.

*(To be continued.)*

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“Be careful for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus” (Phil. 4. 6, 7).

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**“THE LORD DIRECT YOUR HEARTS INTO THE LOVE OF GOD, AND INTO THE PATIENT WAITING FOR CHRIST.”**

# "THE SON OF GOD IS COME."

(FRANK B. HOLE)

*An Address given in Glasgow, January 2nd, 1930.*

I John 5. 20-21.

WHEN we remember that these words are the last words of apostolic instruction that the Church of God has had, we at once feel that they are worthy of very great attention. The apostles have spoken to us by the Spirit of God, as He indicated in His farewell words in the upper chamber in Jerusalem. He indicated that He had many things to say to His disciples, which He could not say at that moment, but that when the Holy Spirit was come He would lead us in all truth. The Holy Ghost is viewed as acting on behalf of the risen Lord Jesus Christ. The One who has gone on high has received the anointing, and shed the anointing forth; so that in the energy of His Spirit and as the fruit of redemption there has been through the apostles this telling out of all that which the Lord Jesus, in the nature of things, could not say while He was still here upon earth.

We all know that the second and third Epistles of John are little supplementary ones of a more private nature, but the first is a general Epistle written to all the saints. Here we have the last apostolic instruction, for the very last words of the Spirit are those given to us through the Apostle John. When he laid down his pen the apostolic writings ceased.

I say again, we have got to pay very great attention to the last word, for right down through the ages there has been ringing in the ears of the church this word, "Children, keep yourselves from idols." Oh, how little have we obeyed that word! But you see the apostle gives us that which will help us to obey it, he gives us that which really received would so fill our hearts

that we should say like Ephraim, "What have I to do any more with idols?"

Now the Apostle John closes his Epistle with a very confident note. Again and again he says, "we know." Here are things which are proper Christian knowledge, but I only ask you to look at that which we know according to the twentieth verse.

First of all he says, "We know that the Son of God is come" There you have a most amazing fact—a fact indeed that we get in his Gospel. Nothing in this world can be the same again if that be true. Into this world, which had broken away from God in rebellion, the Son of God is come. Is that true? Why, it carries everything with it, does it not? If I believe that the Jesus, the rejected Jesus, the prophet of Nazareth, who was treated as of no account and refused—if I believe that He was indeed the mighty Son of God, then I say no event in this world's history is worthy of mention in the same breath with that! So we say, "We know that the Son of God is come!"

Supposing we could have got John aside, and said, "How do we know it? What can you give us to show that the Son of God is come?" Well, he tells us why he wrote his Gospel. He says, "These are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing ye might have life through His name." So we read his Gospel from this standpoint, and see how he points out for us the features of the Lord Jesus. All His miracles are signs of the Son of God. All His words and works indelibly stamp Him as the Son of God. His Gospel really falls into three sections

First we have the great "life" section, chapters 1. to 7.; then the great "light" section, chapters 8. to 12.; and then the great "love" section, chapters 13. to 17.

He sets before us the Lord Jesus Christ as the One in whom is life and who is the Life-giver. He gives the life, for if any man comes to Him and drinks the water which He gives, he is so satisfied that he shall never thirst again for ever; and further, out of his inner parts shall flow rivers of living water. Who then is this One who brings with Him the solution of the great "life" question, being Himself the Giver of life? Why, we bow down before Him and say, "Lord, Thou art the Son of God."

Again He was here as the Light of the world; and men felt it, too—proud, religious men though they were. They came into His presence gloating over a case of sin, but the Lord turned the light, the effectual search-light of His presence, upon them and that sent them scrambling out of it like creatures of darkness. They rendered testimony to His light: they could not stand it. Who is He? He is the Son of God; for who can bring light into the scene like Jesus? Then we bow down before Him and say, "Thou art the Light as well as the Life-giver. Thou art the Son of God."

Who can bring the love? We are in a world of hatred. Who is the embodiment of love? Jesus. Then we bow down before Him and say, "Lord Jesus, Thou art the Son of God." We have got the Father delineated in the Son.

There is a very striking story in European history which suddenly springs into my mind. In the days when Sweden was a great power in Europe and was using its strength in the Protestant cause, one of her kings

fell and, as far as the people knew, he died without any successor to the throne. It was announced when all the nobles assembled in council that there was an heir. The nobles said, "Can he be produced?" "Yes," said one who was in the secret, and he retired, drew aside a curtain, and in came the Queen leading a little boy. She stopped and lifted him on to a table, and said, "There he is." The story is that one of the old nobles, feeble though he was, got up at the head of them all, came up to the child and peered at him. He looked into his eyes, looked him up and down, and then he said, "Nobles, the likeness is unmistakable; that is the son of our king." They all raised their swords and shouted, and they put the crown royal on his head. They were right. The life of the king was there, for they saw it reproduced. They knew the son because they knew the father—there was no mistaking him.

I merely use that story as an illustration of this point: there was the delineation of the life, and they said, "We know him." We know that the Son of God is come, because God has been manifested in Him; His life has been delineated in the Son. Divine life, divine light, and divine love have been manifested in Him.

Well now, knowing *that*, we are in the simple truth of Christianity. But not only do "we know that the Son of God is come," but He has given us an understanding that we may know Him that is true. In Him we have the setting forth of truth itself; all truth is come to light in a world which is very much not what it appears to be. It is the most difficult thing, as you may know, to get at truth of any sort in this world. It is most difficult in most ordinary matters to get what you want. You try to buy something of a

special sort—no matter what. Well you *may* get it, but you *may not*. You are living in a world, you may depend upon it, where you do not usually get what you want to get, and the more you get the faked thing, the more you realize things are not what they appear to be in this world of unreality. We all see the vain show of this world; but, says John, do not love the world, and do not love the things that are in the world: they are all passing away. It is only he who does the will of God that abides for ever.

Now the Son of God is come and hath given us an understanding that we may know Him that is true. He has brought us a revelation, but—blessed be God!—He has given us an understanding so that the revelation may be received by us, otherwise it had been displayed before our eyes and we had received nothing. You may have the loveliest scenery imaginable, and you may have a very costly camera with a lens which costs a great many guineas, but you must have the plate or film chemically treated so that it has a sensitized surface; and only then can you capture the picture. You might throw the image through the most expensive lens on to a clear sheet of glass a thousand times and nothing would happen. Throw it once on to a sensitized surface for a tenth part of a second and you have caught it: it is sensitized so that it can capture the thing that it sees

Now apply that to our Scripture. Not only have we in the Lord Jesus Christ the full setting forth of God Himself—"the Son of God is come"—but we have *seen* the light, we have *seen* the life, and all that is characteristic of love. He has given us the understanding. We are born of God, we have received His Spirit. In John's Gospel we have an indication of this in

that being come forth in resurrection He breathed into His disciples and said, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost," that is life in the power of the Spirit of God. John tells us that, you remember, at the end of his Gospel; Luke tells us at the end of his Gospel that He opened their understanding that they might understand the Scriptures. We may connect together those two things: the inbreathing of the Spirit, and the opening of the understanding. At any rate, we are born of God and, possessing as the fruit of His work the Spirit of God, we have an understanding that we may know Him that is true.

Even that is not all, for it says, "We are in Him that is true." We are in Him, that is Himself the truth. We are of His life, nature, and order; we have not been created into the old but into the new; we stand in another order. Once we were in Adam—the man of sin and disorder, and failure and rebellion—but not to-day, for we are in Him that is true. That at once gives us a very personal connection with Him. We may see wonderful things like a man walking round a gallery and seeing the pictures, but yet have no vital connection with the wonderful things that we see. The marvellous thing is, however, that if the Son of God is come, we have got the understanding that we may know Him that is true, and we are *in Him that is true*, even in His Son Jesus Christ.

Here at the end of the Epistle we have God Himself and the Son of God so brought together as to be almost indistinguishable; we are in Him that is true, even in His Son Jesus Christ, and, says John, "This One is the true God and eternal life." I say again, here you have the last bit of apostolic instruction. Thus the apostle sums up the whole situation for us in few words, in a succession of brief sentences.

This One, who is the Son of God, who has given us an understanding, in whom we stand, *this One* is the true God and eternal life. Everything that goes to make up life is found in Him: He is the life, to be known and enjoyed by us for ever. You must remember, dear friends, that not only is there the life by which we live, but there is the life we live; and when you read of the eternal life, you have to take both these things into consideration. How many people to-day are saying, "I want to see life." Well, we want to see life, and the Christian through grace has the power to see and know it and enjoy it. If we had not life in our souls of course we could not see it. But then we are *to see life*, we are to know what the life is, and it is summed up for us in the Son of God Himself. He is the true God and eternal life.

No wonder the apostle says that last word "children"—not "little children," for it is the whole family of

God—"Children, keep yourselves from idols." Somebody may say, What is an idol? I do not want to attempt a definition, but I am sure I can say that an idol is that which creeps into the affections and usurps in the heart that unique place that belongs to God alone. God is only revealed to us in Jesus; if anything creeps into my heart and usurps that supreme place that has been kept for the Son of God and He whom the Son of God has revealed, then it is an idol.

Do not idolize your business, or your children; let nothing grip you and hold you and dominate you until your mind and thoughts are subject to it. There is only one Son of God; He is made known to us, we know Him, we are in Him. He has set before us the true God and eternal life. If you want life, go in for the things that centre in Jesus. "Children, keep yourselves from idols."

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## "THERE AM I."

(ARTHUR J. POLLOCK)

IF asked what statement of Scripture is most frequently quoted at almost every kind of Christian gathering, few would have any hesitation in naming the words of our Lord, "Where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them" (Matt. 18:20). Yet, with the frequent repetition of the words, may we not lose sight of their scope and import? And may we not with profit weigh over afresh their significance, lest we miss the wonderful and blessed experience that may be known and enjoyed by those who gather together in the Lord's name?

The words quoted above were spoken by our Lord in vindication of the wonderful assertion that He had just

made, "That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of My Father which is in heaven" (verse 19), so that *prayer* is particularly in view.

If then in faith we gather together in His name to pray, shall we not be filled with the expectation that that for which we ask shall be done? Yet do we not all too often come together quoting Matthew 18:20 without getting answers to our prayers, and perhaps, alas! little concerned that prayer remains unanswered. If this is the case shall we not do well to pause and ask ourselves with searchings of heart whether we really do gather together *in His name*? for if we do so in reality

and faith, there certain'y would not be barrenness. If, then, that for which we ask is not done, what proof is there that we gather in His name? Are we ready to let these considerations search us? And if our hearts condemn us, are we ready to seek the Lord's face about it? Surely it is only thus that things can be changed.

But what is it to gather together *in His name*? Is it not that the Lord anticipated the time of His absence, when those who loved Him would no longer have His bodily presence and so must gather in His name—He being the loved object of the heart and He the dominating Spirit? For if He is in the midst, He must take the place of supremacy and authority. Further, does He not invest with the power and authority of His name two or three who so gather?

Such a gathering, then, could never be under the direction of one of the Lord's servants, however godly he might be personally, for if so controlled how could the Lord's words in Matthew 18. 20 be rightly claimed? No, the attitude of those who gather in the Lord's name must be one of waiting upon Him, looking to Him to guide and control by His Spirit and a ready answering to His leading. There must be a gathering together in right conditions in order to have His presence in the midst and to experience the power of His name.

Then, how can we know that the conditions have been fulfilled and that we have the Lord truly in the midst according to His word? Will there not be "signs following"? Who has not been disappointed by the apparent weakness and barrenness of meetings which have claimed to come together according to Matthew 18. 20?

May we not get light and help by looking at the inspired record (John 20.)

of the first occasion that Jesus came into the midst of His own after His death and resurrection and by considering the import of His communications on that memorable first day of the week?

His first words were, "Peace be unto you!" Having so said, He showed unto them His hands and His side, and we read, "Then were the disciples glad when they saw the Lord." Surely they were filled with "all joy and peace in believing," as the blessed Lord thus appealed to them in showing the marks of where He had been for them, assuring their hearts that it was He Himself, in resurrection, who stood in the midst, giving full proof that the work of redemption had been gloriously completed and that He had made peace by the blood of His cross. May we not then conclude that the first thing true of those who gather in His name is that the soul is at peace with God?

What follows is very suggestive of that which will be impressed on the souls of His own by our blessed Lord as He makes His presence in the midst to be realized and of that which will flow from gathering in His name. Of His disciples we read that "He ordained twelve that they should be with Him and that He might send them forth." Their being with Him had in view their being sent forth, and surely in like manner it is the same to-day; for the Lord, who was about to leave the world, impressed upon those into whose midst He came, that in going away He gave them a great commission, saying, "As the Father has sent me, even so send I you." But before giving them this great commission He again says, "Peace be unto you!" Are we not reminded of His words, spoken to His disciples as He talked with them just before He suffered—"My peace I give unto you," for would they not need the

peace that He had, as He carried out the Father's will ?

Would there not, too, be peace among those who gather in His name ? And where there is discord ought we not again to ask ourselves the question as to whether we come together in sincerity and truth ? And when peace has been broken are we ready to turn unitedly to the Lord, confessing that we have lost the sense of His presence in the midst and seek His restoring mercy ? To go on with discord would only be an indication of how little we value or really seek to enter into the privilege of gathering in His name.

Again, when giving His commission the Lord breathed on His disciples, saying, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost," reminding us of the Scripture, which speaks of Christ as the last Adam—a quickening spirit. This act surely indicates that Christ's great commission can only be carried out as we have risen life with Him, and so we would conclude that those who gather in His name will be characterized by the manifestation of this new life in Christ lived in the power of an ungrieved Spirit, and they will be evangelical.

Christ by His presence in the midst will produce these things in those who gather in His name ; if, therefore, peace is not among His own, if prayer is not

answered, if there is not an evangelical spirit and if the power of the Holy Ghost is not manifest, then there is great occasion for heart-searching as to whether there is a gathering in His name in sincerity and truth, or whether the gathering has lapsed into what is little more than a matter of routine, dishonouring to the Lord and disappointing to those who meet together.

It is a day of declension and weakness in the church, yet often with this there is considerable pretension. Let us not excuse ourselves because of the weakness, but let us rather the more highly value the promise to "two or three" who gather in His name, and let us not rest content without a realization of the Lord's presence in the midst. How our souls would be thrilled thereby ! For this faith and diligence of soul are needed, but if we set ourselves to know His presence in the midst, He will not disappoint us. Then He will have His portion in His own, we shall be filled with joy and peace ; the love and compassion manifested by Christ in His devoted, holy and separate path here on earth will be manifested in us ; what we ask in prayer will be done and His great commission will not be neglected : thus His peerless name will be glorified and His heart gratified as blessing flows out to those around. May it be so, for His name's sake !

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## HUMBLE YOURSELVES.

*HUMBLE yourselves in the sight of the Lord and He shall lift you up.* It is what Christ did (Phil. 2.), and He has said, "He that humbleth himself shall be exalted." God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble. Humility becomes man ; it becomes his littleness before God, in the sense of the greatness of His grace, and of all that man is in himself. The great glory which the believer waits for is also the occasion of humility to him when he considers his unworthiness ; he knows that he can understand nothing and do nothing in divine things without God.

# THE LORD'S RETURN.

(J. T. MAWSON.)

“Glue together till I come back.”

A FAMILY came tumbling pell-mell into our compartment, returning from a seaside holiday. They were a healthy crowd of boys and girls with a merry looking father and a somewhat anxious looking mother; she probably had good cause for her anxiety for her young brood looked quite capable of daring deeds. We were *en route* for Edinburgh and a connection had to be made there by this family for the west; the time between the trains was little enough, and numerous trunks were packed in the luggage van. It was the father's business to attend to these, and as he dashed off to do so he said to his family, in a tone which was a command, “Glue together till I come back.” It was a sensible command, for anyone could see what trouble the father would have had and what time would have been lost if on returning he had found his family scattered; and it was a needed command, for those youngsters had wills of their own, and looked as though they liked to exercise them independently of each other, but the father's authority controlled them. I watched to see if they would obey, and they did; I was delighted, and hope they got their train.

The father's words to his family glued themselves to me. They sounded so much like other words, words that should be for ever sacred and precious to Christian hearts because they fell from the lips of the Lord whom we love. The burden of His parting words to His disciples was, “Love one another till I return.” “Glue together!” Several reasons are given for this. Said He:—

“A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I

*have loved you, that ye also love one another.”*

“These things I command you, that ye love one another. *If the world hate you, ye know that it hated Me before it hated you.*”

“That they all may be one . . . that the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me.”

Cogent reasons these why the followers of the Lord should “glue together” during His absence.

Consider them:—

1. He commands it.
2. Because He loves them.
3. That all may know that they are His disciples.
4. Because the world hates them because they belong to Him.
5. That the world may believe that the Father sent the Son.

Other reasons could be cited why those who are the objects of the Lord's love should “glue together,” and not the least is that He is waiting to hear the cry, “Come, Lord Jesus,” from hearts united by love to Him. Some ignore these great reasons for loving cohesion on the part of the saints of God and would substitute rules and regulations, would build again little folds for keeping the sheep together; but these things only militate against true cohesion; they divide the saints instead of binding them together. He is coming back, the time of His absence is drawing to its close. Do we not feel that it is an unspeakable shame that His disciples have forgotten His word and not kept it; that they have not “glued together” during His absence, but have quarrelled and divided, and scattered, to their loss and dishonour and to His grief?

So much so that if He were not the Lord who knoweth them that are His and where to find them, He would have much difficulty at His coming to gather them together again in one. This sort of thing began very early in the history of the church, as the first epistle to the Corinthians proves and if it was easy for the flesh and Satan to work their evil way then we need not marvel at it now; yet the blame is entirely ours. We certainly have no cause for self-congratulation on this line, but plenty of cause for deep heart-searching and self-condemnation as we dwell upon the fact that in spite of His love and His command we have not "glued together."

## The Practical effect of the Truth.

It has been urged that over much occupation with the truth of the Second Coming of the Lord tends to make Christians unpractical, and indifferent to the welfare of others. A great preacher of the last century, in speaking of this, said he felt inclined to say to certain people who made much of this truth, "Ye men of —, why stand ye gazing into heaven?" But the very opposite effect to this is the truth, where it is HIMSELF that is looked for, and not a mere doctrine held. This is clearly taught by the Lord's own words in Luke 12. There, in view of His coming, He urges His disciples to be waiting and watching for Him, but while they wait and watch they are to work. His interests are to occupy them and the reality of the hope of His return would be seen by their care for His interests during His absence.

A simple illustration will make this plain. It is necessary for a mother to leave her children for a while, and as she puts the good-bye kiss upon their

lips she says, "I will come back soon," and if she has the opportunity of sending a message to them during her absence, the burden of it is, "I will come back soon." She knows well that nothing will stir the hearts of her children and please them more than that word. Yes, but in the message her own desire breaks out! It is because she longs for them and yearns to see and embrace them again that she sends such a message to them. And what can cheer her more during her separation from them than to know that they are longing to see her, and echoing her own message, "Come back soon." Even so it is with the Lord and every true-hearted saint in Revelation 22.

But in that little household there is Mary, the eldest of those young children. Not only is there expectation in her heart, but a sense of responsibility too. It is love that has put both there. She loves her mother, and so she longs to see her again; she loves her mother, and so she will not be idle, for she wants everything in the home to be ready for her return. And the love for her mother and the time she has spent in her company has made her very sensible as to what will please her, so the home is kept clean and the children are dressed and ready. Mother may come any time now, she will find them WAITING.

But how often they go to the door and peer out of the window; they cannot sit still—mother will soon be here, and they are eager for a sight of her, and as the day wears on they become more eager and expectant. They are a WATCHING as well as a waiting family, and it is their love for their mother that makes them so.

But what is Mary doing? While she waits for her mother, she slips first into this room and then into that to make

sure that nothing is out of place, and most of all she keeps her eye on the younger children; not a speck must be on them when the mother returns. She must feed them, for this is of greater importance than a spotless house, and keep them out of mischief, and as their minds wander to other things—for an infant's pleasure is continually changing—she continually reminds them that mother is coming, and so she keeps alive their interest in this greatest of all events to her. She *waits* and she *watches* like the rest, but she **WORKS** also. She is faithful to her trust. Blessed is Mary when her mother comes. She has a two-fold happiness. Not only is her mother back again, but she has said, "Well done!" to her faithful daughter. She has the joy of her mother's presence and the satisfaction of her mother's approbation.

This surely is what we get in the

Lord's words in this closing chapter of the Bible: "Behold, I come quickly, and My reward is with Me to give to every man according as his work shall be." And again: "Behold, I come quickly; blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this Book." Has the Lord's love to me affected me as the mother's love affected her daughter? Let each reader ask himself that question. If so, I shall not be an unpractical and lazy Christian; I shall be watching, waiting and working, and my heart will go out to all whom He loves, and I shall not be satisfied with being ready to greet Him myself when He comes, but I shall be anxious that all His own may be ready too, because I know that thus He would have it. There is no truth in the whole of Scripture that could have a greater effect upon us or make us labour more diligently than this.

## "WE KNOW."

*"We KNOW that ALL things work together for good to them that love God."*

A DECLARATION that is especially comforting to the believer in times of perplexity and trial. There are seasons in our lives when all things seem to be against us. It is then that we need a divine assurance like this. Faith says not "we hope" but "we know." This is one of the things of which the child of God is privileged to speak with a calm and steady assurance. We know that all things *work together*. This conjunction of events is going on now. However dark and mysterious the outward aspect may be, let us not forget there is a divine

purpose that is being steadily fulfilled. God's will of love is being done, and every event of life is contributing to its fulfilment. Let faith grasp that fact. All things are working together for my good. Life is like an elaborate piece of tapestry that is being woven on the loom. In order to contribute to the beauty of the pattern the colours must not be all of one hue. While some must be bright and beautiful, others must be dark and sombre. As they are worked together they all contribute to the beauty of the pattern.

"UNTO WHOMSOEVER MUCH IS GIVEN, OF HIM SHALL BE MUCH REQUIRED; AND TO WHOM MEN HAVE COMMITTED MUCH, OF HIM THEY WILL ASK THE MORE."

# OUR SPIRITS.

(H J VINE).

AT any moment *the bodies* of the redeemed may be glorified! Our Lord Jesus Christ will fashion them like unto His body of glory in "the twinkling of an eye," when He returns to claim His own! Meanwhile *our spirits* are constantly cared for by God our Father, enabling us to respond to Himself in a measure of grateful praise, blessing and thanksgiving even now,

*"Although our efforts here to praise  
Are often weak and lowly."*

To believers, called by grace from among the Jews, passing through seasons of trial, we find the word given in Hebrews 12. 9, "Be in subjection unto *the Father of spirits*, and live." Holiness and peaceable fruit of righteousness result. Hezekiah, after sore sickness and weeping, softly tuned his song—"O Lord, by these things men live, and in all these things is the life of *my spirit*. . . . The living, the living, he shall praise Thee, as I do this day!" What precious effects follow God's gracious dealings with our spirits! At the present time He dealeth with us as sons (Heb 12 7), in honoured and filial relationship to Him.

In regard to the spirits of men in the world generally, we are told in Isaiah 42 5, "He that spread forth the earth . . . *giveth* breath unto the people upon it, and *spirit* to them that walk therein." The Creator who gives breath to men also gives spirit. Then Zechariah 12. 1 discloses that it is He who also "*formeth the spirit* of man within him"; and Ecclesiastes 12 7 makes known that it goes to the Giver and Maker when leaving the body—"Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and *the spirit* shall return unto God who *gave* it" Twice God is addressed in Numbers as "The God of the spirits of all flesh" (16 22, 27 16).

To that profane monarch, Belshazzar, Daniel said, "The God in whose hand thy breath is . . . hast thou not glorified." Like his breath, the foregoing Scriptures show that man's spirit is given from God. Some men are sunken into base and God-dishonouring practices; others are outwardly respectable and religious, having great advantages, like the chosen people of God; yet it is said in this regard, "He is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh but he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, *in the spirit*, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God" (Rom 2. 29) The Jew of old had the Bible, and so have Christians to-day, but sinful man's inward condition is such, that a divine operation in his spirit is necessary; he "*must be born again*" to be personally put right with a holy God, who or whatever he may be.

We are told to seek edification in all things, and we have spoken of the spirits of men generally; now in regard to those who are saved and sealed by the Holy Ghost, having redemption in Christ through His blood, they have already been born of God, and are the children of God, having *the witness of the Holy Spirit with their spirits* that they are God's children (Rom. 8 16) The necessary change has taken place with them, and they know God now as Father.

As to the new birth, it is said, "That which is born of the Spirit is *spirit* . . . The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but *canst not tell* whence it cometh, and whither it goeth so is every one that is born of the Spirit" (John 3 6, 8). Like life, and other things whose

operations are plainly visible, but what they are in themselves we cannot tell, so is it in *this* regard ; but, nevertheless, it is emphatically made known. "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ IS born of God" (1 John 5, 1).

Now although there is much that we do not know, there is, nevertheless, a great deal divinely revealed which we may know ; and as we enter by faith and the Holy Spirit's power into this, our spirits will be preserved, formed and strengthened to rejoice in God our Father. We read in Luke of one who "waxed strong in spirit" (l. 80), and of Mary who said, "My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour" (l. 46-47). On the other hand, bodily infirmity often hinders the freedom of a willing spirit. The Lord once said, "The spirit truly is ready, but the flesh is weak" (Mark 14. 38) ; and again, speaking in regard to kingdom circumstances, He said, "Blessed are the poor in spirit," and, "Blessed are the meek," which contrasts strongly with the proud and haughty spirit of many who selfishly aim at possessive authority to-day.

The One who shall shortly rule over all—the King of kings and Lord of lords—is "meek." True prosperity of spirit results from beholding appreciatively the lowly and lovely traits which beamed with gentleness and grace from Him when here on earth, and the enabling of the Holy Spirit guides in this. The Apostle Paul sought to help his brethren in "a spirit of meekness," and desired that this should also mark the spiritual brethren in Galatia (Gal. 6. 1). Lowliness, longsuffering, forbearance, forgiveness, humbleness, kindness and compassion, along with "meekness of wisdom," will adorn our spirits where there is

true progress in the knowledge of the Son of the Father. Even when He was crucified by men, Jesus said, "Father, forgive them ; for they know not what they do" ; also, "*Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit.*" Thus Spirit-filled Stephen also, when martyred exhibited the traits of his loved Lord and Saviour, as he prayed for his persecutors,—“Lord, lay not this sin to their charge” ; and, "*Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.*" What a victory of lowly grace shines here !—when haughty religious bigotry and hate exposed themselves—a greater victory than all men's violent feats of arms ! The present exaltation of the crucified One confirms this ! The future glory with Christ of those who suffer with Him now will also publicly demonstrate what true victory and true worth are ! The despised One below is the honoured One on high !

"By weakness and defeat He won the  
meed and crown,  
Trode all His foes beneath His feet by  
being trodden down."

The present enrichment of our spirits, brought about by our gracious God and Father's dealings with His sons, not only finds some measure of expression in the reproduction of the excellencies of the Son of His love, but likewise in His own presence,—made nigh to the Father through Christ's redeeming blood,—our spirits may offer freely their sweet savour offerings of praise for His pleasure ; yea, it is the precious privilege of each one now, by our Lord Jesus Christ, to "offer the sacrifice of praise to God CONTINUALLY, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to His Name" (Heb. 13. 15). Oh, that in freedom of spirit we may always abound in this ! He hath said, "Whoso offereth praise glorifieth Me."

Finally, in 1 Corinthians 14. 14-16, we are told of praying with the spirit,

and of singing with the spirit, and blessing with the spirit; but the apostle sought to regulate this in view of richer results; for, although the blessing and thanksgiving and song might be good, he desired that the understanding as well as the spirit might be in function; so he said, "I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also" Fruitful indeed are such offerings of blessing and praise.

Through His beloved Son the Father has sought and found true worshippers.

The law provided for the outward expressions of worship to Jehovah in Israel; but to-day He has the "*true worshippers*," of whom John 4. 23 speaks.

These worship "IN SPIRIT AND TRUTH"

In the SON the truth has been fully revealed, and by the SPIRIT we are enabled to worship the FATHER, whose grace and love have been made known.

"Our spirits rise to bless His name,  
And holy worship give."

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## DRAW NIGH TO GOD.

"*DRAW nigh to God, and He will draw nigh to you.*" In this is shown the active dependence of the heart Thanks be to God, we can draw near to Him! His throne is for us a throne of grace; we may come into His presence without fear, because of His love, and enter into the holiest by the precious blood of Christ. When near Him we learn holiness, we discern His will, the eye sees clearly in this pure atmosphere, the heart is subject, the secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him They walk with God, but as taught of God, and the whole body is full of light. Then He is with us, He draws near to us, He inspires us with confidence.

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## "IF GOD BE FOR US!"

"[I]f God be for us, who can be against us?" says the apostle. It is not only that the strength of God is for us to meet every difficulty and foe, but His presence produces liberty and confidence in our hearts, for we feel that we have the knowledge of His will, since He is with us. The sense of His presence gives joy, calmness, and courage in presence of the enemy, and in the difficulties of the way we rest in Him. "Thou wilt hide him in Thy presence from the provoking of all men; Thou wilt keep him secretly in a pavilion from the strife of tongues." The presence of God, a true and real thing for the heart, keeps the conscience awake, and the heart filled with quiet confidence.

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Remark, that the humbling oneself is in *the sight of the Lord*, not of men—a real inward work which destroys self-esteem; realizing the presence and the greatness of God, it gives Him His true place in the heart, and gives us ours also. Then all is real, and then alone we can act for God according to truth (James 4 10).

# THE EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS. (HAMILTON SMITH.)

## Chapter I.—*continued.*

### VI.

#### *Contentious Brethren (Verses 15-18).*

NOT only, however, has Paul to meet untoward circumstances, but he has to deal with contentious brethren. There were such in Paul's day, and there are such in our day—men who take up service with impure motives. How are they to be viewed? Had Paul viewed such in relation to himself, he might well have been indignant, for he knew full well that they were hoping to add affliction to his bonds. In the presence of Paul they would have been silent; now that he is absent they give expression to their envy by making themselves prominent, thinking thus to belittle Paul and magnify themselves. Paul, however, refuses to view them in connection with himself, and thus their efforts to annoy Paul entirely fail. For Paul to live was Christ, and hence he views the action of these men in connection with Christ, with the result he sees clearly that, whatever their motive, "Christ is preached." This again leads to Christian experience. "I therein do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice."

### VII.

#### *The Present Salvation of the Apostle (Verse 19).*

Here the apostle passes on to speak of the deliverance from all the ill effects of trying circumstances and contentious brethren. The latter thought to arouse tribulation for the apostle (verse 17, N.T.). "No," says the apostle, "through your prayers all will turn out to my salvation." He will be delivered from being cast down because of his bonds, and from self-confidence, as if the work entirely depended upon the apostle. But this salvation from perils that beset his soul he connects

with Jesus Christ. It will come through the gracious supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ.

### VIII.

#### *The Mortal Body (Verse 20).*

From the perils that beset his soul, he passes on to speak of his body. If he thinks of his body, his thoughts are not engrossed with feeding and clothing it, or devising means to minister to its comfort. This indeed would be to think of his body in connection with himself. For Paul to live is Christ, therefore he thinks of his body in connection with Christ, and hence his "earnest expectation" is "that Christ shall be magnified" in his body. For Paul his body was only a vessel in which to set forth Christ.

### IX.

#### *Life and Death (Verses 20-26).*

The apostle faces the great realities of life and death. He speaks of the life lived on earth. Had he viewed this life as a natural man, with all his great abilities, advantages of birth and education, it would have appeared to be full of possibilities and dazzling prospects. Christ, however, being his life, he entirely refuses to view the life here in connection with himself, and can say, "For me to live is Christ."

Then death passes before him. To the natural man death is the king of terrors and the terror of kings, being the loss of all things that men count dear. Viewing death in connection with Christ it no longer held any terror for the apostle, and entailed no loss. Indeed, he can say "to die is gain," for "to depart" is "to be with Christ." The man who makes money his object would

not find death a gain. He would not gain more of his object by death; he would lose all that for which he had lived, for shrouds have no pockets. If Christ is the object, then death is gain, for by death more of that blessed object would be gained, and by death all things that hinder the enjoyment of Christ would be removed.

If, however, Paul is to abide for a while in this life and continue with the saints, it would be for their "furtherance and joy of faith." He still thinks only of Christ. He has no thought of continuing in order that the saints may rejoice in Paul through Jesus Christ, but that they may rejoice "in Jesus Christ through Paul" (N.T.).

## X.

### *The Conduct of the Philippians* (Verses 27-30).

Whether Paul is absent or present with the saints, he desires that their conduct may be worthy of the gospel of Christ. He does not think of their conduct in relation to himself—that it might be worthy of Paul—but in relation to Christ. Hence he desires that they may stand fast in one spirit, with one soul, striving together for the faith of the gospel.

Finally there are adversaries to meet and sufferings to be borne. If we view such in connection with ourselves we may well be terrified, for we are weak and they are strong. Paul viewing such in connection with Christ can say, "Unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on Him, but also to suffer for His sake." Suffering is robbed of its terror and seen to be a Christian privilege that has been

"given" to us in grace, carrying with it a bright reward in glory.

Thus, from a rapid review of this chapter, it becomes plain that everything is viewed in connection with Christ. Whether it be a gift from the saints, the saints themselves, or the love between the servant and the saints; whether it be the condition of the saints or the fruits they bring forth, the circumstances which befall them, the contentious men they may have to meet, the body in which they tabernacle, the life they live down here, or the death that ends that life; whether it be the presence or absence of a gifted leader, the adversaries that oppose the saints or the sufferings they may have to endure—all are viewed in connection with Christ. This blessed view-point is the result of having Christ for the life.

Moreover, the result of having Christ for the life, and viewing all in connection with Christ, is the enjoyment of true Christian experience. Thus the apostle expresses *thankfulness* in remembering the saints (verse 3); *joy* in praying for them (verse 4); *confidence* as to their future (verse 6); *loving interest* in their present welfare (verses 7-11); *continuous joy* that Christ is preached. He has no trace of fear in the presence of life or death or adversaries, or sufferings; he is filled with joy at the thought of departing to be with Christ; he is filled with calm and peace in the presence of adversaries, if for a while he is left here to be for Christ. Such are the happy and true Christian experiences of a man who has Christ for his life. As set forth in the apostle we cannot but admire this life, though humbled as we have to confess how far we come short in living the life.

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The Turks say that we Christians cannot believe heaven to be so glorious a place, else we should not be so reluctant to go there.

# THE MAN CHRIST JESUS.\*—Contd.

(A J ATKINS)

WE now turn to the Gospels to look at what they present on the manhood of our Lord Jesus Christ in their records of His life here below. We do well to study that life, as Paul did, *in the light of the glory* of those revelations which were given to the church from the glory. Some of these revelations on this subject in the epistles we have previously considered, and now we proceed to gather up what the Evangelists declare.

Very early in the narratives we are introduced to Bethlehem and *the babe* (Luke 2. 16) which had been *conceived* by the Holy Spirit's power in the virgin's womb according to the divine announcement. In spite of the religious sentiment which has gathered around the narrative, there is nothing in it to suggest that anything extraordinary was to be *observed* either in the mother or the babe, though in fact that babe was the Son of God. The babe was "God's sign, the token of perfect weakness: a little infant who could only weep." Well may we sing with the author quoted:

"Blest babe who lowly liest,  
In yonder manger there,  
Descended from the highest,  
Our sins and griefs to bear!  
O, Love, all thought surpassing,  
That thou should'st with us be;  
Nor yet in triumph passing,  
But human infancy."—(J N D.)

On the eighth day He was *circumcised* as all Jewish male infants were. And then He *grew* as all children do. Soon we find Him described as *the young child* (Matt. 2. 13), and then as

*the child* (Luke 2. 40). The fact of His growth is, indeed, expressly noted: "And the child grew and waxed strong [in spirit], filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was upon Him" (idem). Here we notice the physical—"grew"; the mental—"filled with wisdom"; and the spiritual—"waxed strong . . . and the grace of God was upon Him." Surely here we have presented to us a natural, healthy, happy, holy child.

When He reached twelve years of age, the threshold of adolescence, we observe a change of expression concerning His growth. We read, "And Jesus *increased* (or 'advanced' N.T.) in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man" (Luke 2. 52). Here again we have the mental, the physical, and the spiritual; and the social also is added: "in favour with man." The complete man is again brought before us, and His growth represented as now becoming more conscious and directive.

That He was a wondrous child we may well believe, but never apparently was He abnormal or precocious, and as if to rebuke such a thought we read, "He went down . . . and was subject unto them (His parents)" (Luke 2. 51). In these words we have represented the *true child*, as in the words: "I must be about My Father's business" we have revealed the *true Son*. "When we see who it was, we see human nature filled with God, so to speak. . . . The blessedness of the child's intrinsic loveliness fills the heart" (J. N. D.). What precious glimpses are these of "the silent years"!

Everywhere as the story unfolds is the testimony consistent to the reality of His humanity. That His *human body* was real is not in dispute to-day, nevertheless it is good to gather up the evidence that abounds on this point.

\* The writer feels that to study one aspect of Christ's blessed Person is not without danger, while also profitable. The Son of God is One blessed Person. May he be permitted to refer to his paper in *Scripture Truth* October, 1927—"My Lord and my God," for the testimony of the Gospel to the complementary truth of Christ's Deity.

He had not where to lay His *head* (Matt. 8. 20). Devoted love anointed it (Matt. 26. 7). His *hands*—how often do we read of them ministering blessing with personal touch to all around! They were pierced with the Roman nails, and lastly lifted up in blessing on His own (Luke 24. 50). Oh, what *eyes* He must have had, the windows of His soul, fit media for His looks of compassion or of indignation, or of glory! His *feet* were washed by a sinner's tears (Luke 7. 38). They trod the roads and field paths of Palestine in those ceaseless journeys of mercy. At length they, too, were pierced and nailed to the tree; but one day yet they shall stand upon the Mount of Olives in glory (Zech. 14. 4). A human *heart* also was His. We know it was broken with reproach (Ps. 69. 20). Great drops of *sweat* in Gethsemane betokened His deep agony, moral and physical. On the cross out from His pierced *side* came the *blood* that redeems, and the *water* that cleanses (John 19. 34). In His blessed risen body the *marks of the wounds* were (John 20. 20) and are still visible (Rev. 1. 7).

In *bodily feelings*, too, His manhood was as real as ours, sin apart. He could be *hungry* (Mark 11. 12), and knew the exhaustion due to lack of food (Matt. 4. 2, cp. verse 11); and the terrible agony of great *thirst* (John 19. 28). Wearied with His journey one day He sat on Sychar's well for a rest (John 4. 6). When crossing the lake at the end of an arduous day, His disciples having taken Him into the boat "as He was," He *slept* so deeply that the storm did not awake Him (Mark 8. 24). Three times He *wept* human tears out of deep heart grief, once in sympathy for the bereaved sisters (John 11. 35), once over the sinful city (Luke 19. 41), and once in His prayer to be saved out of death (Heb. 5. 7).

How real were the *emotions* and *feelings* of His *soul*! He loved, surely as only *God* can love, but He loved, too, with true human affection, as we see in the case of the rich young ruler (Mark 10. 21). In the incident of the fig tree we learn that He cou'd search for information: "He came, if haply He might find anything thereon" (Mark 11. 13); and we are distinctly told that He *marvelled* on several occasions (Luke 7. 9; Mark 6. 6). He valued loyal friendship, as we see evidenced in His words, "Ye are they that have continued with me in all my temptations," while His words, "Could ye not watch with me one hour?" betoken His desire, so truly human, for the solace and strength that we all want in a time of great crisis. Alas! He also knew the pain of loneliness (John 16. 32). He appreciated loving attention, and felt what it was to be slighted (Luke 7. 44). He had a sense of justice—another truly human quality—as is shown in His words when struck on the cheek, "Why smitest thou Me?" (John 18. 23), and He felt, surely more than any other, the baseness of treachery (Luke 22. 48). How truly human as well as divine were His *compassions*! How often those words have moved our souls, "Jesus, moved with compassion"! He could also be moved by moral grief at the hardness of religious hypocrisy (Mark 3. 4) and obstinate unbelief. "Then began He to upbraid the cities wherein most of His mighty works were done, because they repented not" (Matt. 11. 20). "Here was true grief and thoroughly felt as grief" (J. N. D.).

His *temptations* were real, we may be sure—awfully real. "He was tempted in all points like as we are, sin apart" (Heb. 4. 15, N.T.). The forty days' contest with Satan was a representative conflict (Luke 4. 2-13) and reveals to us something of the nature and

subtlety of the attacks The Lord Jesus was tempted there on the physical plane—to satisfy His need; on the moral plane—to vindicate Himself by a daring exploit, and on the spiritual plane—to accept an easy way to the kingdom and avoid the cross. And He conquered then as always, not by His inherent Godhead power, but as dependent man, trusting in God, and wielding the sword of the Word—“It is written.” Still more severe was the pressure of the power of darkness in the garden. There He was greatly amazed and sore troubled (Mark 14. 33). Listen to His words so full of pathos: “*My soul* is exceeding sorrowful unto death” (Mark 14. 34). There we see, too—though here we touch the very fringe of the mystery of His Person—His human *will* distinct from but coalescing perfectly with the Father’s (Luke 22. 42). And in the end He poured out His soul unto death: it was made an offering for sin (Isa. 53. 10). Finally, we listen to His prayer, prophetically declared in the ancient Psalm: “Thou wilt not leave *My soul* in hades.” How fitting to find this recorded in Psalm 16—the psalm of His manhood perfection. Surely His was a true human soul, though He was God.

But man complete is *spirit*, as well as soul and body. “The spirit of a man,” a human spirit, that is what we may, surely, predicate of our adorable Lord. The Gospels, we find, speak distinctly of His spirit. We read that He grew strong in spirit (Luke 2. 40) \* He rejoiced in spirit (Luke 10. 40) On another occasion He groaned in spirit (John 11. 33) And on yet another He was troubled in spirit (John 13. 21). Finally, in manhood per-

fection He commended His spirit to the Father, and yielded it up to Him (Luke 23. 46; Matt. 27. 50).

How blessed it is in this connection to trace His *spiritual life as man*. How dominant was the sense of obligation to God. “Wist ye not, that I *must*.” He learned obedience experimentally (Heb. 5. 8). He was always the dependent Man, living “by (on account of) the Father.” He always did those things that pleased the Father. He lived by every word of God (Luke 4. 4). In the power of that word He received guidance, power to continue in the face of all opposition, and maintained unswerving confidence in God. “By it He faced His enemies, led His friends, performed His miracles, uttered His teachings, voiced His prayers, and carried into effect [God’s] mighty programme.” As Man, too, He needed and received strength from above (Luke 22. 43).

In nothing is man’s relation to God so truly and fittingly expressed as in prayer. How pre-eminently was He the *Man of prayer*! At His baptism, after busy days of love and labour, before He called His apostles, on the mount of transfiguration, in the garden and on the cross, He prayed. Another has well said, “His prayers as the holy expression of dependence, infinitely precious and attractive to God were all sweet odours as frankincense before Him.”

The Gospels, then, throughout show us in clear and living pictures what we have seen the Epistles positively declare, that Christ was truly man. In Him were found all the varieties and gradations of human susceptibilities and powers, of body, soul and spirit, with one notable exception: He was without sin: in nature, “In Him is no sin” (1 John 3. 5); in consciousness, “He knew no sin” (2 Cor. 5. 21); and in

\* It is only just and necessary to observe that there is a question of a reading here see JND, NT, and other authorities.)

act He "did no sin" (1 Peter 2. 22). His was perfect but *holy* humanity. As He faced the foes of His earthly life, so now in the searching light of twenty centuries He faces the generations and says, "Which of you convinceth Me of sin?"

Another has beautifully said: "He was the perfection of human nature. The sensibilities, firmness, decision, elevation, and calm meekness which belong to human nature all found their perfect place in Him" (J. N. D.) One perfect human life then has been lived here below and presented to God for His eternal pleasure. That life has been offered to God in sacrifice. It has been taken again in resurrection conditions. In that life He lives to

God. In Him our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, God has been perfectly revealed to man, and man in Him has been presented to God. And *He is Man for ever*. His humanity is not a vesture in which He is clothed, and which could conceivably be discarded; it is part of Himself, and will be for ever. In Him there will be the eternal witness of the mighty condescension of God; and in Him, who is *God and Man*, all redeemed intelligencies will find an inexhaustible subject of wonder and theme of praise.

To us, for a little longer, is committed the keeping of this holy mystery. May we have grace to hold it fast and keep it pure, with faith and love which are in Christ Jesus!

## ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

### Paradise.

"We were wondering yesterday how it was that the Lord said to the thief on the cross, '*This day* shalt thou be with Me in Paradise,' and yet He didn't rise again till the third day, and then said, 'I am not yet ascended to My Father.' Is it a case of the punctuation being wrong? 'Verily I say unto thee this day, thou shalt be with Me in Paradise'—the comma being so placed gives a different meaning to the words. Also, what is the Paradise spoken of?"—GLASGOW.

**T**H**ERE** is no mistake in the punctuation of these words of the Lord to the dying malefactor. He went that very day into Paradise with the Lord whom he had confessed. About this we can have no question if the promise is read simply in its connection. The malefactor spoke of the Lord's Kingdom, which had not yet come. The Lord's answer is, I will not keep you waiting until the Kingdom; you shall be blest this very day. "To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise."

Then what is Paradise? The word means a garden of delights; it is taken up in the New Testament to describe a state of blessedness in the unseen world, both here and in 2 Corinthians 12. 4. The disembodied condition does

not mean unconsciousness—soul sleeping, as it is called—but conscious happiness for those who die in the Lord, and this in contrast to those who have died without mercy, and who are in a state of torment (Luke 16.). The word is also used in Revelation 2. 7. "The tree of life which is in the midst of the paradise of God." There it is clearly connected with the heavenly Jerusalem during the Millennium (Rev. 22. 2). Paradise, then, in the New Testament stands in contrast to Eden in the Old, or we might say, Eden was the type and it is the anti-type. It is not the Father's house into which the Lord entered bodily at His ascension, yet a state of heavenly blessedness in the unseen world—the third heaven, as

it is described by Paul. The presence of the Lord is there and His unutterable glories are the theme and contemplation of those who are there. In the Millennium it will be no longer hidden, for it is opened up to the view of all in Revelation 22. And we find that while man was turned out of the earthly paradise and the tree of life refused him there because his tenure in it

depended upon his faithfulness to his trust, which trust he betrayed, he now has access to this heavenly paradise and the tree of life that is there, through the infinite grace of God; and the first man who is shown to us as entering into it is a thief on a cross, no longer fit to live on earth because of his crimes, but made fit for this heavenly paradise through the blood of the Lamb.

## The Eternal Sonship.

“Do the Scriptures teach the eternal sonship of Christ? This is being questioned by some who admit that ‘In the beginning was the Word,’ like Barnes and Adam Clarke. I asked one of these if he believed that God was the everlasting Father? He said he did, and I tried to show him that that admission was enough to prove the eternal Sonship of Christ, for a father must have a child to be a father, and that if we deprive our Lord of eternal Sonship, we deprive God of His eternal Fatherhood.”—TORONTO

THE Scriptures do undoubtedly teach the eternal Sonship of our Lord. The denial of this great truth is an old error but it is a very serious one, for it would rob us of the very heart of our faith. But the epithet “everlasting Father,” quoted from Isaiah 9. 6, does not teach this great truth, for there it is one of the titles of the “Child born,” the “Son given,” and simply means that He is the Creator—every thing that is good, or ever shall be, has sprung from Him.

The truth, however, is plain enough in the New Testament. Take Hebrews 1. “God hath in these last days spoken by His Son, by whom also He made the worlds.” Clearly the Son was there before the worlds were made, or He could not have made them. Verses 8–12 of the same chapter confirm this. Colossians 1., verse 13, speaks of Him as “His dear Son,” or “the Son of His love” (see margin), and then verse 16 precedes to tell us of His glory as the Creator of all things that are in heaven and in earth. It was the Son of God’s love who created every thing.

But John 17. is conclusive. The Lord as man upon earth addressed His

Father there, saying, “And now, O Father, glorify Thou Me with Thine own self with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was” (verse 5), and “Father . . . Thou lovedest Me before the foundation of the world” (verse 24). That glory before time began which He had with the Father was that of the only begotten Son, and that love wherewith He was loved was the love of the Father for the Son. It was “His only-begotten Son” that God gave, when He would show His love to the world (John 3. 16). It was the only-begotten Son that is in the bosom of the Father that has declared God to men (John 1. 18). And the question has been asked, “Had the Father no bosom in eternity?” He certainly had, for “God is love.” He did not begin to be love when sinners needed Him. Love is His nature, it is what He is eternally, and love must have an object or it is no love at all: a word without any meaning. The object of the Father’s love throughout His eternal being was, is, and ever shall be, His only-begotten Son.

Now the love of this most blessed relationship, which is heavenly, eternal,

and hence unchanging in its character, has been brought down to us. It rests upon us, for "the Father Himself loveth you, because ye have loved Me" (John 16 27). And "that the world may know that . . . Thou hast loved them, as Thou hast loved me" (John 17 23), and, "that the love wherewith Thou

hast loved Me may be in them" (verse 26). And to know this is to enjoy, to know experimentally what eternal life is. The Father has been revealed to us as only the Son knew Him, that we might enter into an unchanging relationship with Him, and know Him as our Father and our God.

## Our House from Heaven

"At a conversational Bible Class when the fifth chapter of 2 Corinthians had been reached, the force of the statement that if our earthly house were dissolved 'we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens' was considered. The suggestion was made that it may mean that the spirit has a temporary habitation while waiting its resurrection body, the perfect state, and the fact that it is in the present tense, 'we have' was emphasized"—BELFAST.

"A building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens," could not be a temporary habitation, for *eternal* is the exact opposite to *temporary*. This building of God is undoubtedly the resurrection body, with the life and power suited to it. This body the apostle ardently desired. He had had glimpses of the glory, and in consequence he was straightened in his earthly tabernacle. "Here in the body pent" would describe his feelings. The earthly body was unsuited to the glory that he had seen, it limited his enjoyment of it, and so he longed for the perfect, incorruptible resurrection condition—the body that God would give, heavenly in its character and entirely suited to the heavenly glory to which he was destined, along with all the saints.

His hope and wish was not the unclothed or disembodied condition, but that his mortal body might be swallowed up of life. This is the true Christian hope and has reference not to

death but to the coming of the Lord, who shall change the body of humiliation and fashion it like unto His own body of glory—yet though this was his great hope and would be the complete satisfaction of his desire, yet as he thought of the Lord, his Saviour, he was willing and would be pleased to die, to be absent from the body and present with the Lord (verse 8). We must distinguish between being "unclothed" and "naked." Those who have died without Christ will be raised again but they will be just as naked before the great white throne (Rev. 20) as were Adam and Eve before the searching eye of God in Eden—the entire man unfit for the presence of God; but the Christian, whether his portion is to be unclothed, to die, or to be clothed upon with His house that is from heaven, at the coming of the Lord, is always confident. This blessed confidence is his because He knows the Lord and the power that is in Him.

Do not form an idea of God's love towards you by the mercies He gives you or His acts towards you, but learn that His love gives character to every gift and every act.

# MORE THAN CONQUERORS.

(J. T. MAWSON)

## 2. Kings vi.

### Enlargement.

“ And the sons of the prophets said unto Elisha, Behold now, the place where we dwell with thee is too strait for us. Let us go, we pray thee, unto Jordan, and take thence every man a beam, and let us make us a place there, where we may dwell. And he answered, Go ye. And one said, Be content, I pray thee, and go with thy servants. And he answered, I will go. So he went with them. And when they came to Jordan, they cut down wood.

“ But as one was felling a beam, the axe head fell into the water : and he cried, and said, Alas, master ! for it was borrowed. And the man of God said, Where fell it ? And he shewed him the place. And he cut down a stick, and cast it in thither, and the iron did swim. Therefore said he, Take it up to thee. And he put out his hand, and took it.”

**WHAT** highly favoured men these sons of the prophets were in being the companions and disciples of Elisha, for he was the one prophet of grace in that age of law, and showed to a sinful and rebellious people what the goodness of God could do for them when they had all but destroyed themselves. In all this he was a type of the Son of God, who came full of grace and truth, and who is now the Administrator of God's grace — that all-sufficient grace — to guilty sinners and to needy saints. The words of Elisha must have been good to listen to, and it is no wonder that the sons of the prophets crowded to hear him until the place where they dwelt with him could not contain them, and they felt that they needed more room. It was a healthy sign, and their desire had the full approval of the prophet.

As those sons of the prophets dwelt with Elisha are we dwelling with our Lord ? “ I will never leave thee nor forsake thee,” He has said, and He will not deny His own word, but are we consciously dwelling with Him ? Are we cleaving to the Lord with purpose of heart ? We often quote His words, “ Where two or three are gathered together unto My Name, there am I in the midst of them ” ; but are they mere words to us, or a living reality ? The answer to my questions is not difficult to find. If we are dwelling with the Lord we are growing ; we are

being enlarged in our souls, and we shall want to move on in the more abundant life that is ours. Are we growing in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ ? This question of growth is a vital one. A father would be seriously concerned if his children ceased to develop in mind and body, and God is our Father—does He not care whether His children are growing in grace or not ? He certainly does. Let us not be indifferent to this matter, for growth and strength go together, and we cannot be strong in the face of the foe if we do not grow and move on in the knowledge of the Lord ; we shall not be more than conquerors if we stagnate and are stunted in our growth. Let us turn to a New Testament Scripture. To the church at Corinth Paul wrote : “ O ye Corinthians, our mouth is opened unto you, our heart is enlarged. Ye are not straitened in us, but ye are straitened in your own bowels. Now for a recompense in the same, (I speak as unto my children,) **BE YE ALSO ENLARGED** ” (2 Cor. 6. 11-13). What was it that had straitened and stunted these Christians ? The world and the evil things that are in it. They had forgotten that the gospel of their salvation had called them out of the world to brighter and better things, and that they had been united to Christ, who is not of the world, by the Holy Ghost from heaven, and they had formed associations which made it

impossible for them to expand in the greatness of the Christian life and portion—they were fettered and not free. And they needed the command, "Be ye not unequally yoked with unbelievers. . . . Come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing." We cannot love and cleave to the world and abide in Christ at the same time. To dwell as His disciples with Him means separation from the world, and there can be no spiritual growth apart from this.

It was to JORDAN that these young men went for the material with which to build their larger dwelling, and there is no place like Jordan for enlargement of soul, for Jordan is a figure of death. Death is a great and effectual teacher; it teaches us how great is the fall of man, for death is the measure of it, and it teaches us how great is the love of God, for He "commendeth His love toward us that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us." Death shows us the way that God has taken to recover His fallen creature for Himself and to bring him into larger blessing than was possible for him before he fell. The incident of the loss and recovery of the borrowed axe head shall illustrate these things for us. I do not think that I am giving it a fanciful interpretation in so using it; if my readers think so, let them forget the illustration and consider the truth that I am pressing.

The axe head fell from the handle of it and sank beneath the waters of Jordan. The wielder of it was a careless man, for the axe was borrowed; it was not his to lose, but it was lost, nevertheless. Thus carelessly did Adam become a lost soul in the Garden. Nay, in his case it was not carelessness but wilfulness, for he deliberately turned away from the God he did know and listened to the devil he did not know.

And by his one act of disobedience death entered into the world. So we read in Romans 5. 12, "By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; **AND SO DEATH PASSED UPON ALL MEN, FOR THAT ALL HAVE SINNED.**" Yes, the waters of Jordan roll over a whole race of sinners as a result of the first man's disobedience. Adam had no right to cast away his soul, for it belonged to God who had created it and given it to him, but then and there he fell and all his race has been involved in his fall. All Scripture, as well as all history, teaches this solemn truth, but nowhere is it stated more emphatically than in this fifth chapter of Romans. Verse 15 says, "through the offence of one many be dead"; verse 17, "by one man's offence death reigned by one"; verse 18, "by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation"; verse 19, "by one man's disobedience many were made sinners."

This is not a popular doctrine. The foolish theory of evolution suits the modern mind better than the solemn truth. Men want to get rid of the thought that they are responsible to God and must give account to Him. And this is why the fact of the fall is refused; and this is why the fiction of evolution is embraced. It is more pleasant to believe that man is rising up, becoming greater and grander as the ages pass by, to those who do not want God and His grace, than to own that he is sinful, fallen and lost. But the latter is the truth. Just as the nature of the axe head was to sink and not swim, to go down with no power in itself to rise up, so man's nature as a sinful, fallen creature is to go further and further from God; his course is ever downward, as is plainly shown to us in Romans 1. 19-32, which solemn Scripture my readers should seriously ponder.

Nothing but the truth will satisfy a fully awakened conscience, and the truth is clearly stated in these Scriptures that I have quoted. Blessed is the man who will own it before God !

This son of a prophet was conscious of his loss, and he felt it the more because the axe was borrowed ; but he was wise in that he did not waste his time in vain efforts to recover what he had lost, but cried to the man of God, "Alas, master !" And here is a fine example for sinful men. The first step to recovery and blessing is to realize the need and the loss, but some who have taken this step are seeking sincerely and earnestly to right what is wrong by their own efforts. They are endeavouring by their works to save themselves, when the Scripture states expressly, "Not of works, lest any man should boast."

The man of God was equal to the situation, and in this he did faintly foreshadow the all-sufficiency of Christ, who came into the world to destroy the power of death and set us free. "Where fell it ?" asked the man of God. Then, cutting down a branch of a tree, he cast it into the water, and lo, the iron did swim ! How wonderful is the gospel story ! It tells us of Jesus, who went into death for us that we might pass out of death into life. Yet the question might well arise, "If death has passed upon all men, if all are dead in trespasses and sins, so that none can deliver either himself or his brother, what was there in Jesus that made Him different to others ? Who was He ?" He was the only begotten Son of God, He was the Word, the Creator of all things, and He became flesh and dwelt among us. He became flesh—a man, as truly a man as Adam was, or as any man is to-day, but THE SINLESS MAN, and in this He differed from all others. In becoming man He did not cease to be

the only begotten, eternal Son for God. This great truth we must hold fast in the face of modern infidelity, but He who was in the form of God was found in the likeness of men. He had become a man that He might die for men. Yet as a man death had no claim upon Him, for He was holy. Yes, just as holy as He trod the dusty roads of Galilee as when He sat upon the throne of His glory and created the hosts of heaven. Because He was holy, the one sinless Man, death had no claim upon Him. He could have walked victoriously upon death's fiercest billows, just as He trod upon the waves of the sea of Galilee at midnight. But He came to die. This commandment He had received of His Father, and just as the branch of the tree—the nature of which was to swim—was cast into the waters by Elisha, that the iron—the nature of which was to sink—might swim, so Jesus, upon whom death had no claim, went down into death that we, whom death held in its power, might pass out of death into life, that we might live in Him who died for us and rose again.

This is God's way of salvation, the way that His great love has found, and as we consider it we are greatly enlarged ; we are delivered from bondage and set free by the truth, for the truth is that GOD IS LOVE, and "in this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent His only-begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him."

"Take it up to thee," said the prophet, and he put out his hand and took it, a grateful and wondering man. I desire that we might understand better those words of the Lord, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that heareth My word, and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation ; but is passed from death unto life"

(John 5. 24). If we have taken this life by faith, we live, but how shall we live, and to whom? There is only one right answer and it is a Scriptural one: "*The love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if One died for all, then were all dead: and that He died for all, that THEY WHICH LIVE SHOULD NOT HENCEFORTH LIVE UNTO THEMSELVES, BUT UNTO HIM WHICH DIED FOR THEM AND ROSE AGAIN*" (2 Cor. 5. 14, 15). We could have no better commentary on our Old Testament story than that Scripture, and that life that is lived unto Christ is the victorious life; in it we are more than conquerors, and in none other. And in it our souls will be enlarged in the knowledge of God and of Christ.

## Saving ourselves from the snares of the devil.

"Then the king of Syria warred against Israel, and took counsel with his servants, saying, In such and such a place shall be my camp. And the man of God sent unto the king of Israel, saying, Beware that thou pass not such a place; for thither the Syrians are come down. And the king of Israel sent to the place which the man of God told him and warned him of, and saved himself there, not once nor twice. Therefore the heart of the king of Syria was sore troubled for this thing; and he called his servants, and said unto them, Will ye not show me which of us is for the king of Israel? And one of his servants said, None, my lord, O king; but Elisha, the prophet that is in Israel, telleth the king of Israel the words that thou speakest in thy bedchamber."

Every one who has believed the gospel of God concerning His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, has been delivered from the darkness and bondage of death, and is no longer the property and prey of the devil; he has lost them and lost them for ever. They belong to Christ and He will not let any pluck them from Him; they shall never perish, but eternal life is theirs. There are three words at the end of 1 Cor. 3. that are full of comfort, they

are "**YE ARE CHRIST'S.**" Let them sing their wondrous melody to our souls. Let us make them our boast. They mean not only safety but liberty and triumph and eternal glory. But if we are Christ's the devil hates us, and the world hates us. "Because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you" (John 15. 19). And the devil, who is the god of the world, will show his hatred of us by ensnaring us if he can. He wants to rob us of our joy in the Lord, he wants to rob the Lord of His joy in us, he wants to retard our spiritual growth and keep us from being more than conquerors. His efforts in this regard are illustrated for us in the next story of our chapter. The King of Syria shall illustrate the devil's efforts, the King of Israel shall illustrate the way that we may escape his snare.

A master of strategy was this King of Syria, and carefully and well he prepared his plan of campaign. An ambush here, another there, and still a third, and surely the unsuspecting King of Israel would be caught! But he wasn't, he **SAVED HIMSELF, NOT ONCE NOR TWICE.** The Syrian King was baffled, he was a puzzled man. How was it that his schemes all went wrong? Ah, the answer was a very simple one—the **KING OF ISRAEL KEPT IN CONTACT WITH THE MAN OF GOD,** and in that lay his salvation from the snares of his great foe.

The devil has made a careful study of every one of us; he knows well our propensities and our weaknesses, and he is full of wiles and lays his snares with consummate skill. We are no match for him; if we meet him in our own wisdom and strength we are sure to be ensnared. How, then, may we save ourselves, not once nor twice, from

his traps? There is one infallible way: we must cleave to the Lord with purpose of heart; we must keep in daily, constant communication with the Lord. He watches us more closely than the devil does; He knows us better than our great enemy knows us; and He watches us and cares for us with a wonderful, untiring love. He knows every snare that the devil can lay for our feet, and He knows how to minister His own word to us, the right word at the right time, so that we may be able to say, "*By the words of Thy lips I have kept me from the paths of the destroyer. Hold up my goings in Thy paths, that my footsteps slip not*" (Ps. 17. 4, 5). We must be near Him if we are to receive the words of His lips. It will not do to receive things second-hand, we must be in close contact with Him, then we are safe and victorious: more than conquerors through Him.

If we are to work out our own salvation in these things it must be with fear and trembling; we must be conscious of the subtlety and power of the enemy; we must have no confidence in the flesh, no trust in ourselves, and yet we may have great boldness, and shall have, if we know the blessedness of the knowledge of Christ and communion with Him. We shall want to be near Him if we love Him, and we shall love Him if we know that He loves us. Nearness to Christ is the secret. Mary discovered it when she sat at His feet; John discovered it when he leaned upon His breast. We may all know it and triumph over our foe in the joy of it.

*(To be continued next month:*

*"Delivered from Fear"; "Overcoming the Flesh.")*

## PUT THE TUBS ROUND THEM.

THE subject under discussion was how very young and untaught Christians were to be treated. Ought they to be allowed the privilege of partaking in the Lord's Supper, or kept waiting for this until they understood its meaning. It was suggested that if they were introduced into the assemblies of God's people without being aware of the responsibilities connected therewith they would only be a source of weakness. The late Dr. G. W. Glenny listened in silence for a while and then spoke up. "Brethren," he said, "the authorities in Port Elizabeth, S.A., were anxious to beautify the city, and planted young trees along the streets and roads, but the strong winds from the Indian Ocean uprooted them almost as fast as they were planted. Until it was proposed that 1000 tubs should be purchased and that these should be put round the young saplings

until they grew strong enough to withstand the gales. This was done and Port Elizabeth has its tree-lined streets now. And my advice to you, dear brethren, is, shelter these young Christians from the world's winds. Receive them, care for them, protect them until they are strong enough to withstand the storms, in short, put the tubs round them."

It was a word of wisdom, and it brought the discussion to a happy termination, but more touching than all are the words of the Lord Jesus—"Feed My lambs." Those that are precious to Him must be cared for, and the wisdom of the heart is necessary for this. Shepherd them, shield them, care for them, feed them. Acknowledge them as His and open up to them every privilege that is theirs and thus please Him and strengthen them.

# THE EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS.

(HAMILTON SMITH.)

## Chapter 2.

THE first chapter of the epistle presents Christ as our life, and the Christian experience that is the happy result of viewing the different circumstances of our path in connection with Christ.

The second chapter presents Christ as our pattern, and the Christian experience that flows from having the lowly mind set forth in Christ.

In the first chapter Christ is the Object that governs the Christian life ; in the second chapter He is the Pattern that imparts grace to the Christian life. Thus the Christian life is not only a life devoted to Christ, but also a life marked by the lowliness and gentleness of Christ.

In verses 1 to 4 the apostle expresses his longing for the unity of believers, and exhorts to the lowly mind without which there can be no practical unity.

In verses 5 to 11 he presents Christ as the perfect Pattern of the lowly mind.

In verses 12 to 16 he gives a beautiful picture of the Christian life lived according to the Pattern.

Finally, in verses 17 to 30, we have three examples in actual life of believers whose lives were formed after the Pattern—Paul, Timothy, and Epaphroditus.

### I.

#### *Unity (Verses 1-4).*

It is good to notice that the apostle, in writing to the saints, while faithfully dealing with defects that may mark them, never overlooks the graces that adorn them. He gladly recognizes the fruit of the Spirit, though faithfully rebuking the works of the flesh. Thus in writing to the Philippians—a company of saints rich in the graces of

Christ—he lingers with delight upon the fruits of the Spirit that they exhibit—the “consolation in Christ,” the “comfort of love,” the “fellowship of the Spirit,” and the “bowels and compassions.” Nevertheless, with all these excellencies, he sees a serious defect, though, remembering their graces, he touches it with a very tender hand. He discerns in this assembly a lack of unity. Again and again, in a gentle, pleading spirit, he refers to this defect. In chapter 1. he alludes to it when he desires that they should “stand firm in one spirit, with one soul labouring together.” Were this all that was said as to practical unity we should hardly have known that it was lacking in the assembly at Philippi. However, in chapter 2. the apostle, with greater plainness, intimates that there were symptoms of division amongst them. Therefore again he exhorts them to “think the same thing, having the same love, joined in soul, thinking one thing.” Then a little later in the epistle he appears to have this lack of unity in his mind when he says “Let us walk in the same steps” (3. 17). Finally he sends a special message to two sisters, beseeching them to “be of the same mind in the Lord” (4. 2).

Though touching this lack of unity very tenderly he does not treat it lightly. He realizes that if a spirit of division creeps into an assembly, if only between two sisters, it will hinder the work of the gospel, mar their testimony to Christ, and check spiritual progress. If in the apostles’ day the lack of unity was so serious, is it less so to-day? Surely not! Though alas! in a day of ruin, we have become so accustomed to division, and so constantly faced with differences of judgment, that we are in

danger of regarding the lack of unity with dull apathy—a matter of regret but of no great consequence. If, however, any little company of God's people are to set forth in any measure the graces of Christ, to make spiritual progress and render any little gospel testimony, the first necessity will be unity amongst themselves.

Moreover, let us note that the unity of which the apostle speaks is not a mere outward unity of words and ways. It is a unity of heart and mind. "Think," says the apostle, "the same thing, having the same love, joined in soul, thinking one thing." Therefore to produce this unity he does not set before us a formal creed to which all must subscribe, or a set of rules to which all must adhere. He takes a better way: he sets before us Christ.

First, however, in verse 3, he points out the great hindrance to this unity of heart and mind. He says, "Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory." The hindrance in one word is *self-importance*. Strife is the endeavour to put down others: vainglory is the attempt to exalt self. Anything that is done simply in opposition to someone else, or with the object of exalting self will tend to destroy unity.

Then the apostle shows that the true way to promote unity is through *self-effacement*. He says, "In lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own qualities, but every man also on those of others" (2. 3, 4). The lowly mind does not think of self at all, but only of the good of others. Naturally we find it difficult to lose sight of ourselves and think only of others in love, for the tendency with us all is to attach a certain importance to ourselves. It is easy to assume a *lowly manner* and to use *lowly words*; the real difficulty is to have the *lowly mind*.

We may talk in a lowly way of ourselves, but self-depreciation is no evidence of the lowly mind, rather the reverse. In self-depreciation we are, after all, talking about ourselves, and this may be the worst form of pride—the pride of humility. The lowly mind does not think of self—good or bad—it thinks of others to serve in love. It is the ignoring of self, not the depreciation of self.

Let us also carefully note that the promotion of unity, in this passage, is set before us as an individual matter. The word is "*each* esteeming the other as more excellent than themselves; regarding not *each* his own [qualities] but *each* those of others" (N.T.). In a day of division and scattering we are not asked to undertake the impossible task of bringing about the unity of Christendom, but we are exhorted to promote unity by each one forgetting self and in lowliness of mind seeking the good of others in love.

It is instructive to see that the strife and vainglory, as well as the lowly mind of verses 3 and 4, are illustrated in the incident recorded in Mark 9. 33-37. This passage speaks of a strife that had arisen among the disciples. As with ourselves, too often, they had fallen out "by the way." Very similar was the cause of the dispute to that which has caused so many divisions amongst the people of God in our day—someone wanted to be great; for we read "they had disputed among themselves who should be greatest." Here, then, was strife and vainglory at work, and the Lord takes the occasion, in His own tender and gracious way, to give them, and us, a lesson in the lowly mind. A little before He had been speaking of humbling Himself to the cross; they, with apparent hardness and insensitiveness of heart, immediately strive

amongst themselves as to who shall be the greatest. Nevertheless, the Lord does not rise up with indignation and rebuke His disciples; He sits down in lowly grace and calls them to Himself. The lowly mind in Christ will serve them in love, where the natural mind would have rebuked them in scorn. Having gathered them around Himself, He gives them a lesson in the lowly mind. He says if you want to be first then become the servant of all. He seems to say, "Do not think of yourself at all, but serve others in love." And having shown them the way to greatness, the Lord gives them a practical lesson by taking a "little child into His arms." The Lord of glory comes down to earth and picks up a little child. He had indeed the lowly mind.

Turning back to the Epistle to the Philippians we shall see that the way of the Lord with His disciples anticipates the teaching of the Spirit to the church. The Lord, as we have seen, instructs His disciples that the end of all strife, and the path to true greatness, is found in having the lowly mind of one who serves in love, and then presents Himself as the perfect Pattern. So in Philippians 2. the apostle, having pressed upon the saints the lowly mind as the way to end all strife, presents before them Christ as the perfect Pattern of the lowly mind.

We are thus reminded that the lowly mind cannot be acquired by effort, or by trying to be humble. Effort only brings self all the more into sight, leading to self-occupation, rather than self-effacement. The lowly mind can only be produced by the apprehension of what is set forth in Christ. Seeing the lowly mind in absolute perfection in Christ, we cannot but admire its perfect grace and beauty, and we become transformed by what we admire. Beholding the glory of the

Lord we are changed from glory to glory.

## II.

### *Christ our Pattern (Verses 5-11).*

In order that the mind of Christ may be formed in us, the apostle presents Christ before us as our perfect Pattern. We have a touching presentation of the lowliness of mind that was expressed in Him in His marvellous journey from Godhead glory to the cross of shame. Let us note, the force of the passage is to present, not simply the downward path He took, but *the lowly mind* which marked Him in taking the path.

First, Christ is presented as "being in the form of God." No man could pretend to describe the form of One "whom no man hath seen or can see"; nevertheless we are told what was the mind of Christ while yet in the form of God. His mind was so set upon serving others in love that He thought not of Himself and His reputation, but "*made Himself of no reputation,*" and laid aside the outward form of God—though never ceasing to be God.

Second, He exhibits the lowly mind by taking *the form of a servant*. Not only does He serve, but He assumes the form that is proper to a servant.

Third, still further does He express the lowly mind by the particular "form of servant" He assumed. The angels are servants, but He passed the angels by. He was made a little lower than the angels and took His place in *the likeness of men*. He passed by the higher form of servant to take the lower. He was made in the likeness of men: a word that surely implies manhood in its full constitution—spirit, soul, and body, though, be it remembered, not manhood in its fallen condition.

Fourth, still further is the lowly mind expressed in Christ; for when found in

fashion as a man, He *humbled* Himself. He did not take occasion by "being found in fashion as a man" to exalt Himself amongst men according to the natural thought of His brethren, who said, "If Thou do these things, shew Thyself to the world" (John 7. 3, 4), but He humbled Himself. He did not claim His rights as man.

Fifth, yet further He expresses the lowly mind by becoming "*obedient.*" He might have become a man and commanded, but He takes the place of obedience. This implies the laying aside of individual will, to do the will of another.

Sixth, then again the lowly mind is seen by the measure of His obedience, for He was "*obedient even unto death.*" This was more than obedience. In obedience He gave up His will; in death He gave up His life.

Seventh, finally His lowly mind is expressed in the death that He died. There are many forms of death, but of all the deaths that man can die, He died the most ignominious of deaths—the *death of the cross*. This was more than an ordinary death, for while in going to death a man gives up his life, in going to the death of the cross a man gives up, not only his life, but his reputation before men. Thus it was with the Lord. In going to the death of the cross such was His lowly mind—so truly did He ignore self—that He gave up His reputation before men and was numbered with the transgressors.

Here, then, we have the lowly mind of Christ expressed in His down-stooping. The object of this great passage is not to prove that Christ is God, or that He became a true and perfect man, though both truths are involved. It has been truly said, "His humiliation is a proof that He is God. God only could leave His first estate in the sovereign rights of His

love; it is sin for any creature to do so." On the other hand, if it was not true manhood that He assumed there would be no expression of true lowliness of mind. Thus, while the passage guards the glory of His Godhead and maintains the reality of His manhood, yet the immediate object is to present, as one has said, "the mind of One who from a height of glory beyond possible apprehension could come down, moved by His love, into the lowest possible depths where again the eye cannot follow Him, every step the giving up afresh of something that might be held."

Here indeed is the perfect pattern of the lowly mind—the mind that forgets self in thinking of others, that leads to sacrifice in order to serve; that gives up that others may gain. Evidently the life governed by this mind—the mind that was in Christ Jesus—would be a life of lowly grace.

Moreover, it is the life that has its bright reward. This, also, has its perfect expression in the Lord Jesus. The lowly mind took Christ into the lowest place, therefore God has exalted Him to the highest. In the highest place He bears the greatest Name—"A Name which is above every name." And yet more, in the highest place, with the greatest Name, He will have universal sway. Every knee will bow before Him. Heavenly, earthly, and infernal beings—all must bow before the One who bears the Name of Jesus. All will confess that He is Lord to the glory of God the Father. Thus the lowly mind in Christ Jesus has led to the blessing of the saints and the glory of the Father. So, too, in our little measure as, with the perfect Pattern before us, the lowly mind is formed in us, it will lead to the blessing and unity of God's people; and, above all, to the glory of the Father.

## SUNSHINE AND SALT.

A. J. POLLOCK

THERE is a Roman proverb, attributed to the authorship of the writer Strabo:—

*"Nothing does more than sunshine and salt."*

It set me thinking We all like the sunshine of comfortable circumstances, but we do not like the salt of the discipline of life. We like to have the sunshine of good health and do not like the salt of ill-health. We like the sunshine of a comfortable income, but we do not like the salt of straitness of means. We like blue skies, warm sunshine and zephyr breezes, and we do not like grey skies and bitter winds.

But nature teaches us a lesson. We can get too much sunshine. In the tropics it is perpetual sunshine from January to December, with the exception of two intensive rainy seasons, and what is the result? The white people are pale and anæmic. They need the tonic of grey skies and bitter winds.

Just as you can get too much sunshine, so you can get too much salt. See how the scurvy breaks out on board the ship where the sailors have been forced to sustain life by food that has been salted to keep it from putrefaction. They get too much salt. Discipline is the tonic, the salt of life. There is the discipline of the home, the school, the army, the navy, the collar of business. The army is not all parade in glittering uniform before the King. Before there is the fine show there is the grinding discipline of the drill ground.

The clamour to-day is for all sunshine and no salt. It is the sinister menace of this generation. But there are unalterable economic laws that no man can turn aside that bring the salt into life.

Let all this be a parable to illustrate divine truth. Alongside the sunshine

of our circumstances as children of God there is the salt of discipline. There is the discipline of the Father's hand. With the sunshine there is the salt. We read, "Whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth" (Heb. 12. 6). Without this discipline we are bastards and not sons. We all need it. How many of us would have wandered far from the Lord, without the wise and loving hand of our God in restraining and chastening grace.

It is related of the late G. V. Wigram that he once went to the prayer meeting, and asked for earnest prayer, as he felt he was in danger because a fortune had been left to him. He recognized that the sunshine of easy circumstances needed the salt of discipline.

The history of Abraham illustrates our theme. Did the God of glory appear to him, and open to his enraptured vision "a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God"? (Heb. 11. 10). He must perforce turn his back upon Ur of the Chaldees, and become a stranger and a pilgrim in the land of promise. The sunshine and the salt went together.

The circumstances of Solomon's life would never have produced a David. Solomon had the sunshine of easy circumstances. He had wisdom, riches, honour, peace in his realm, long life, yet never did a man make a bigger fool of himself than did Solomon. He could write wise proverbs, but could not live wisely. Solomon could give his son excellent advice, which his son did not follow, for Solomon's example was not likely to help his son. What sort of example was his? "Then did Solomon build an high place for Chemosh, the abomination of Moab, in the hill that is before Jerusalem, and for

Molech, the abomination of the children of Ammon. And likewise did he for all his strange wives, which burnt incense and sacrificed unto their gods " (1 Kings 11. 7, 8).

Solomon could write wise proverbs; David wrote experiential psalms. Solomon could write, "Vanity of vanities, saith the Preacher, vanity of vanities; all is vanity" (Eccles. 1. 2); but David could write, "The Lord is my Shepherd; I shall not want" (Ps. 23. 1). David knew both sunshine and salt.

In reading the lives of eminent servants of Christ how noticeable is the salt of discipline in their lives. Choicest spiritual gifts are often seen in frailest bodies.

A Christian woman was once complaining to a visitor of the trials that beset her life, and how she would like them to be removed. She was wanting all sunshine and no salt.

The visitor walked up to the grandfather clock that was ticking in the corner, and proceeded to remove the heavy weights. The woman, in amazement, asked him what he was doing. He replied that he was removing the weights in order for the clock to work better. She replied, "These weights are necessary, and must not be removed or else the clock will run down in no time. The clock is useless without the weights."

In this way the visitor tried to teach this good woman how the things she was complaining about were all necessary for her in connection with the practical living of the everyday Christian life.

We can re-echo the words of the Roman proverb,

*"Nothing does more than sunshine and salt."*

## THE MISSION OF THE CHURCH IN THE WORLD.

### (1) Should it move with the times?

(W. BRAMWELL DICK.)

TO a large number of readers of *Scripture Truth* this may seem an unnecessary question, and they will without hesitation answer it with an emphatic "NO."

We offer no apology, however, for submitting the question to the consideration of our readers, because there are so many real Christians who are in associations where the precious truth of the church is not known, where the leaders have not got beyond the idea of "organized religion," which they seem to think should be the handmaid of national progress.

Some look upon the church as an ancient institution characterized by archaic language; wedded to worn-out practices; without any very definite

message; in fact, something to be tolerated but not to be reckoned of any value in the march for advancement, liberty, and all-round improvement.

To such we have nothing to say. We take our stand upon the Book which they ignore, and we accept in its entirety the truth of which they apparently know nothing. We wish to address ourselves particularly to those who are really Christians, but who, it may be, have not bestowed much thought upon this important subject.

Let us note at the outset that the church is not a religious organization directed by a clerical order and governed by a set of man-made rules. When the Lord Jesus said, "Upon this rock I will build My church" (Matt. 16.

18), He clearly indicated that He was going to produce something such as had never existed before. That key-epistle, Ephesians, shows us that the church is composed of persons who have been redeemed by the blood of Christ and who know that their sins have been forgiven (1. 7); taken out from among Jews and Gentiles (2. 14); brought into the enjoyment of the same blessing (3. 6); and formed into "one body" (4. 4); while Colossians 1. 18 tells us that of that body Christ is the Head. So we see that the church is composed of those who have been called out of the world; united by an indissoluble bond; linked with the living Head in heaven; and set up in this world to be descriptive of Christ. The plan of the church was conceived and designed in heaven before time began; the work of the cross laid the basis for that plan to be carried out; the Holy Ghost came down to call out from amongst men those who should form the church, and to conduct them to the place of their origin, the country of their (new) birth; and meanwhile to enable them to breathe their native air; to live in the sunshine of the place to which they belong, whither they are travelling, and where they may now in spirit dwell.

This is not fancy: it is fact. We are not drawing upon our own imagination, nor are we seeking to work upon that of those who read these lines. We are presenting that which is clearly taught in the Word of God. Now let us inquire what is the world's attitude to Christ? The answer is "He is despised and rejected of men" (Isa. 53. 3). Visit a whist drive, even if it be in a church hall; speak of Him whom you love and you will be considered a very awkward person. The cross still indicates what this world thinks of Christ. He is in heaven to-day because the

world would not have Him. When on the day of Pentecost three thousand souls responded to the testimony of the Holy Spirit through the lips of the Apostle Peter, they reversed the verdict of the world so far as they were concerned, immediately separated themselves from their former associations, and ranged themselves under His banner whom the world had rejected, but whom God had made "both Lord and Christ" (Acts 2. 36). The line of demarcation is no less clear to-day for those who have eyes to see. What, then, is the mission of the church? Why is it on earth at all? Of what use is it to mankind in general? In the first place the church is in course of formation. The Lord Jesus said, "I will build My church," and He is still building. It "groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord" (Eph. 2. 21). Not until it has been completed—and that might happen at any moment—will it be removed to heaven. Yet the Lord Jesus looks down and takes account of one church. He saw it in the mirror of eternity; it was before His eye as He suffered on the cross; He has pledged His word that "the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (Matt. 16. 18); and soon He will "present it to Himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing" (Eph. 5. 27). But we return to our question: What is the mission of the church in the world? Before dealing with that, or by way of doing so, shall we ask another question? What was the mission of Christ in this world? It was not to redress wrongs, nor to banish inequality, nor to make the world a better place. If it were, that mission was a gigantic failure. Then what was it? Let His own words supply the answer:—

"Wherefore when He cometh into the world, He saith, . . . Lo, I come

... to do Thy will, O God" (Heb. 10. 5, 7).

"And He said . . . Wist ye not that I must be about My Father's business?" (Luke 2. 49).

"Jesus saith . . . My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me, and to finish His work" (John 4. 34).

"For I came down from heaven, not to do Mine own will, but the will of Him that sent Me. . . . And this is the will of Him that sent Me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on Him, may have everlasting life" (John 6. 38, 40).

These words leave us in no doubt as to the object of His mission. He who is the eternal Son of God became man in order that in this world, where every man did his own will, He might do the will of God. Not only so, but that, as the result of finishing His work, in other words by His atoning death, He might, as raised up from the dead, give everlasting life to all who believe on Him. Through God's mercy, every believer to-day is one of that number, and forms part of the church, and is left here to continue Christ's mission—that is, to do the will of God. The apostle, inspired by the Holy Spirit, wrote to the church at Corinth:—

"Ye are our epistle written in our hearts, *known and read of all men*: forasmuch as ye are *manifestly declared* to be the epistle of Christ ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in the fleshy tables of the heart" (2 Cor. 3. 2, 3).

From this we see that the church is something pulsating with divine life, descriptive of Christ, and showing forth the excellencies of Christ in such a way that it is manifest to all, and thus they read Christ in the church. Let us rid our mind of the idea that the church

is an erection to hold a congregation, or that it consists merely of people who form a sect, or an aggregate of sects, or no sect. Let us dismiss the thought of organized religion, or of an organization of any kind, and let us grasp the fact that the church is a living organism permeated by love—love to God; love to Him who is the Head of the church; the love of the Spirit; love for every one who forms part of the church; and love for all men. Do not let us say that this is an unattainable ideal. It is the divine standard; the thought of God as set forth in His infallible Word; and it is our privilege—not only so, but our responsibility—to seek individually to answer to it. This aspect we desire to press. If we had been dealing with the precious truth of the church we might have developed further that which we have written. Our subject, however, is the mission of the church in the world; so that, having stated in the briefest way what the church is, we proceed to consider our individual responsibility in the carrying out of its mission. If the church is "the epistle of Christ," we should each seek to be epistles of Christ. If the church has been set here for the will of God, that means that all who form the church here have been left here to do the will of God. This is intensely practical and should come home powerfully to every one of us. Are we each in our individual life set for the will of God? or is His will only agreeable to us when it does not clash with our will? Our answer to this will decide whether or not we are fulfilling our share of the mission for which He has left the church in this world. Do we hear some one ask, Is that the whole mission of the church? It is, because that includes every other thing. God's will implies that we are here not for our own gratification, or for the applause

of men, but for the pleasure of God. It may be in the supposed menial affairs of housework, the sometimes humdrum work of the office or the bench, it may mean the sometimes trying service of the Sunday School, or carrying the gospel to the dark places of the earth; the obscure work of visiting the sick; the more prominent occupation of ministering to our fellow-believers: no matter what it be—if it is the will of God for us, that is our part in this great concern. We want to impress upon ourselves, and upon our fellow-believers, that doing the will of God does not consist merely in engaging in fuller service, valuable as that is, but that in our private life, every hour of the day, we are doing either God's will or our own will, and are thus either carrying on, or failing in, our part of the great mission entrusted to the church.

It may be said that we have passed from the general to the particular, and that we have dealt not with the mission of the church as a whole but with that of the individual. Our answer to that is that it is the individuals who form the church. It is as the individuals answer to their privilege that the church will carry out its responsibility. Again it may be asked, "Is that not putting a premium upon indolence?" No. Let us look again at the life of our blessed Lord and hear the testimony of the Holy Spirit, through the lips of Peter, with regard to it

"God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with Him" (Acts 10. 38).

For Christ, doing the will of God meant doing good wherever He went. So we are exhorted over and over again in the epistles "to do good," to be "zealous of good works," etc., etc. In

other words, the mission of the church is to be the continuation of the mission of Christ. Now observe! When Christ was here doing His work so perfectly He was hated by men. When He went to heaven and His mission was continued by His church, they too were hated. They were not written up in the Press, but they were denounced by the people. They were not fêted by the public, but they were treated as "the offscouring of all things." They were not welcomed in the houses of the great, but were "thrust into the inner prison." Nor did this surprise them. The Lord Jesus had said on the night of His betrayal:

"If the world hate you, ye know that it hated Me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because *ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you*" (John 15. 18, 19).

Hence it was that the apostles rejoiced that "they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name" (Acts 5. 41).

We have simply sought—we trust in the fear of God and in dependence upon His Holy Spirit—to show in broad outline, as set forth in the Word of God, the mission of the church in the world; and we fervently pray that we may respond to our privilege, answer to our responsibility, and seek that our one great object in life may be to be here ever, always and only for the will of God; realizing that we are each one day by day contributing either to the prosperity of the church and to the carrying out of the mission of the church, or we are verily guilty if that end be not attained. In view of the nearness of our Lord's return, may we give this matter our prayerful consideration.

# THE FATHER'S NAME IN MANIFESTATION.

(H. J. VINE.)

THE Father's Name has been manifested by His Son in the world—manifested in pure and sovereign grace. Of old He was revealed as the Creator, as the Almighty, or as the All-sufficient One, and as Jehovah; but by the Son the ineffable Name of Father has been manifested. Until the Son came to reveal Him as Father He could not so be known, for Jesus said, "Neither knoweth any man the Father save the Son."

Faith might apprehend Him as the Source of all things,—the "one God and Father of all"; and as "the Father of mercies" and "the Father of lights"; but by the Son alone is the Father made known, according to His own divine pleasure. The world is incapable of knowing the children of God in their relationship with Him as such; but God's children know the Father and His Name is made known to them, so that His wondrous love for His own Son might rest on them and be their hallowed portion.

The time is drawing near which was foretold by the Lord when Antichrist will appear, and coming in all the glamour of his own importance, the world will welcome him. He will appeal strongly to the admiration of men, but the exaltation of himself will vividly contrast with the meekness and lowliness of the Lord Jesus, who said, "*I am come in My Father's Name, and ye receive Me not: if another shall come in His own name, him ye will receive.*" The short and blasphemous success of this deceiver will be the everlasting ruin of many, but eternal life and glory, and endless blessing, will be shared by those who receive the Son of God. Let us be glad and rejoice that our hearts have been opened to receive the Son of God, for how terrible will be the doom of those who reject Him

and receive Antichrist instead. Being born of God, we are even now the children of God, and the Father's Name is precious to us.

It was to His Father the Son said, "I have manifested Thy Name unto the men which Thou gavest Me out of the world." That which is manifested is to be *seen*. That which is declared is to be *heard*. Jesus both manifested and declared the Father's Name. What He *did* showed what the Father is, manifesting to sight what His Name represents; so He said to the Jews, "The works that I do in My Father's Name, they bear witness of Me. But ye believe not, because ye are not of My sheep"; and, again, "Ye neither know Me, nor My Father; if ye had known Me, ye should have known My Father also." He said, "*He that seeth Me seeth Him that sent Me.*" What the Father is was found in perfect manifestation in the Son, and those in whom the Spirit has wrought are capable of appreciating the heavenly grace of God made visible in the Lord Jesus, who has manifested His Father's Name to those given to Him "*out of the world.*"

The supreme blessedness connected with this Name, and with those divinely favoured in knowing it, finds marked contrast to the world.

This comes out in the Lord's prayer to His Father. "They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world" (John 17. 14, 16); "O righteous Father, the world hath not known Thee"; and in 1 John 2. 15, the Spirit says, "If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him"; and then in chapter 3. 1, we are encouraged to "Behold, what love the Father has given to us, that we should be called the children of God. For this reason the world knows us not, because it knew Him not" (N.T.). The Father

was made visible in the Son on earth, "and the world knew Him not,"—not even the religious world! It is the same now in regard to God's children,—“the world knows us not!” i.e., in this heavenly and eternal relationship,—the divine relationship, where the life eternal is known in holy nearness to the true God and His Son Jesus Christ.

How important it is, therefore, that we should earnestly value the preciousness of the Father's Name, made known as we have said, by His Son. He came in His Name, His works were done in that Name; He said, "Many good works have I showed you from My Father"; and again, "The Father that dwelleth in Me, He doeth the works"; "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father." To behold Him was to behold the manifestation of the Father. Inspired by the Spirit, John could say, "We beheld His glory," for wondrous sign-miracles were done by Him in His Father's Name "in the presence of His disciples." To see God's mercy, grace and love, with power, in holy activity in Jesus was to see the Father's Name represented,—the Father's Name manifested.

We may see how the ways and worship of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob were affected by the Name of God made known to them; also of Moses and those in Israel who had the Name of Jehovah given to them; and, where the Father's Name has become precious to the faith of God's children, their walk, ways and worship are correspondingly affected. They are designated, "The true worshippers," who "worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship Him" (John 4. 23). Differing widely from the walk and ways of other men, Abraham was a pilgrim on earth, but a worshipper of God as He was known to him. Differing vastly from

other nations, the nation of Israel was called out of Egypt and separated; and abundant sweet savour offerings ascended to God from their midst, expressing their worship according to God's known Name of Jehovah. Differing still more greatly from other families, the children of God are in the world, but not of it, and unknown by it; and their worship is in spirit and in truth, rendering to God, in the unction of the Holy Ghost, their sweet savour offerings of praise, in response to the disclosure of the Father's Name by the Son. The '*true worshippers*' are thus found to-day.

Being born of God, redeemed in Christ, set in relationship to God as children, the manifestation of the Father's Name by His Son is ours to rejoice in! The works done in that Name made this manifestation. What cause there was to bless God when His Son gave sight to the blind man, who afterwards worshipped in His presence! The works of God were manifest in him! Yet the religious leaders cast out the one who had received the benefit (John 9. 35), and persecuted the Benefactor! He said to them, "Many good works have I showed you from My Father." "Though ye believe not Me, believe the works: that ye may know, and believe, that the Father is in Me, and I in Him." Sight for blindness!—Divine grace manifesting itself! Hearing for the deaf! Strength for the palsied! Health for the sick! Healing for multitudes suffering from all sorts of diseases! and speech given to the dumb! all showed grace acting in power, manifesting the Father's Name! No wonder they exclaimed, "He hath done all things well!" and spiritual sight sees the Father in the Son thus made visible.

Behold Him giving thanks, and feeding the multitude with five loaves and

two fishes! Behold His glory manifested forth at Cana of Galilee, when He turned the water of purification into the wine of gladness!

Behold Him when He says, "Father, I thank Thee that Thou hast heard Me!" and Lazarus came forth from death, and from corruption also! Again, when He said, "FATHER, GLORIFY THY NAME!" and the voice from heaven answered, "*I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again!*" It was glorified in the resurrection of Lazarus, and again in the resurrection of the Son of God! Oh! what a sight for Mary to behold!—

Jesus, her Saviour and Lord, alive to die no more!—actually "raised up from among the dead by the glory of the Father!" What could surpass the gracious words Mary heard from our risen Lord's holy lips?—words she was honoured to carry to those He was not ashamed to call brethren!—"Go to My brethren," He said, "and say unto them, I ascend unto MY FATHER, AND YOUR FATHER; AND TO MY GOD, AND YOUR GOD." Was ever such a divine disclosure of near relationship before made like this? Worship and blessing are the becoming response.

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## IN AFFLICTION.

BY drawing near to God in affliction, the will is subdued, and the heart consoled and encouraged. God Himself is revealed to the soul, and works by His grace; and in the sense of His presence we say, "It is good for me that I have been afflicted." And not only are we near to God, but we also open our hearts to Him. He would have us do so, for He is full of grace. He desires our confidence, not only that we may be subject to His will, but that we may present our cares to Him.

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## "DRAW NIGH UNTO GOD."

*"Cleanse your hands . . . purify your hearts. . . ."*

TO draw nigh to God the hands must be cleansed, and the heart purified, that in nothing we may be double-minded. God is light; He will have purity and integrity in the inner man. Full of goodness and condescension, He is swift to help the weak, but He closes His ears to all who are double in heart. He looks for a pure walk and a sincere heart in those who seek to draw near Him. It cannot be otherwise; He holds Himself aloof from those whose hearts are not opened in His presence; He sees everything, but for Him to hearken, the heart must be sincere.

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"Who maketh thee to differ from another? and what hast thou that thou didst not receive? now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?" (1 Cor. 4. 7).

"Judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts: and then shall every man have praise of God" (1 Cor. 4, 5).

"Ye are bought with a price; be not ye the servants of men" (1 Cor. 7. 23).

# YOUR OWN SALVATION.

(J. T. MAWSON.)

*"Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure"* (Phil. 2. 12, 13).

WE were sitting in a room where played a little baby boy; he had just begun to walk and talk, and was putting his new found powers to the test. As he tremblingly ran from one chair to another, we heard him say to himself, "Mind the fender, C——." A careful mother had warned him of the danger that lurked just there, and he was now repeating her warning to himself and so working out his own salvation in respect to it.

God has warned us, in His Word, as to where the dangers lie, and as we keep His Word in mind, and are obedient to it, we, too, work out our own salvation with fear and trembling. "Concerning the works of men, by the word of Thy lips I have kept me from the paths of the destroyer" (Ps. xvii. 4).

But not only are we preserved from falling into the devil's snares by the wholesome fear of them, but also by the attraction of something greater and better than the temptation presents. In ancient Greek mythology we read of the Sirens, beautiful in voice, but malignant in soul. They lived by the sea, and sang their sweetest songs as the ships sailed by in order to lure the mariners to destruction on their treacherous shore. When the Argonauts set sail for Pontus in search of the Golden Fleece, they knew that they must pass this point of danger, and that they might not be turned from their purpose by the seductive songs of the Sirens, they induced Orpheus, the greatest poet and singer of those times, to accompany them.

Every day of that voyage he poured forth his most enchanting strains in the ears of those sailors, so that when they came to the point of danger the Sirens

sang in vain; the Argonauts passed them with contempt for the inferior music had no charm for them because of the sweeter strains that filled their ears.

It is thus that God works in His grace. Christ is presented to us in all that wonderful charm that has won our hearts, and with the eye and heart filled with His surpassing beauty, our souls are proof against the false glamour which only attracts to destroy. The same holy Word of God, which warns us of danger around, also unveils for us the excellencies of Christ. Consider them as they are presented to us in this second chapter of Philipians. As we consider it we are compelled to sing—

"Brightness of the eternal glory  
Shall Thy praise unuttered lie;  
Who would hush the heavenly story  
Of the Lamb who came to die.

"Came from Godhead's fullest glory  
Down to Calvary's depth of woe;  
Now on high we bow before Thee,  
Streams of praises ceaseless flow!"

The world has nothing to show us or tell us like that wonderful story, and we do not wonder that Paul, who knew the Lord so well, wrote "what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord."

Now this passage is often supposed to be an exhortation to work *for* salvation, but those who so use it do not know the grace of God, nor the supreme excellence of the work of Christ. It is "By grace are ye saved . . . *not of works*, lest any man should boast" (Eph. 2. 8, 9). Thus saith the Scripture, and it cannot be broken, nor

contradict itself. The words were written to those who were already saved, who had within them the new life, nature and power—by the exercise of which they were to be preserved in the path of God's pleasure in obedience to His will. And who can obey the *Word of God* but those who are His children by grace? Is it not written, "they that in the flesh cannot please God"?

When in the Transvaal we went down into one of the gold mines there, and saw the quartz being worked out from the bowels of the earth; then presently we saw the bars of yellow metal all ready for shipment for the English mint. The gold was there in the mine first of all, but it had to be worked out to be of use in the world and of profit to the owners. So it is with us who believe—there must be exercise, and diligence, and work, so that that which God has placed within us may be worked out for His praise and glory and the blessing of men. But only a gold mine can produce gold, you would work in vain for it in any other mine. And so only the truly saved person can work out salvation.

But there is still a point of greatest importance in this passage, which must not be overlooked; "It is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure." We have no power in ourselves naturally, and many Christians are greatly disap-

pointed because this is overlooked. It is God who works in us both the will and the energy. As some mighty electric dynamo supplies the factory with the force needful for the production of that for which it was erected, so God, by the power of the Holy Spirit, works in us His will and way, so that we may follow the Lord wholly, and give pleasure to Him who has bought us at so great a cost. Our place is to obey Him, to yield ourselves to Him alone, having no confidence in the flesh; then shall we be sons of God, blameless and harmless, and only by our obedience to Him can we prove ourselves to be such. And such are sorely needed, for the world is crooked and perverse; darkness and death hold men in their terrible thrall and they need light that can only come from God, and the *Word of life*.

Good it would be for us if we could see things as Paul saw them when he wrote these words. He saw a stream of death and darkness carrying men further and further from God into a lost eternity, and he also saw the sons of God, rescued from that dread river, delivered from it and standing clear of it casting their light across its dark waters and stretching out to the poor victims in it the *Word of life*, their only hope. Ah, we need to work out our own salvation, not only that we may be witnesses for God, but witnesses to men, giving them no cause to blame us, but every reason to bless us.

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## The Power of the Gospel.—Romans 1. 16, 17.

WHAT made the gospel to be so divine a power?—the revelation of the righteousness of God in it. He (Paul) does not say the love or the mercy of God, but His righteousness; because without permission of righteousness, love and mercy cannot act; every act of God must be justified by all His attributes. No sinner was ever afraid of the love of God, or of His mercy: His righteousness is another thing. Consequently, it is just the righteousness of God which, if it can be revealed in the gospel—in good news to sinners—then we have what indeed has power to save.

# INSTRUCTION IN RIGHTEOUSNESS. (J. ALFRED TRENCH.)

## A Reply to Questions.

*When evil has not only "come into" the Assembly, but well nigh carried everything before it (as it was fast doing before Paul's ministry closed), what is the responsibility of those who fear the Lord and tremble at His Word?*

*Are there inspired instructions as to how the man of God should act, in diligently seeking to realize in the power of the Spirit the unity, in which God has formed all that are Christ's?*

NO incoming of evil can "cancel or dissolve" the collective responsibility of the saints of God, which is to "keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace," though it may greatly increase their difficulty in doing so. Paul in 2 Tim. 2. indicates in the clearest terms the path of faith and faithfulness to the Lord in carrying out the immutable principles of the Assembly in the general departure from them.

The question is asked, "If an assembly cannot exercise discipline, etc." This, of course, supposes that evil has come in which calls for the exercise of discipline. Why cannot the Assembly put it away from among themselves according to its solemn responsibility? It is just what is contemplated in 2 Tim; the Assembly so leavened with evil as to be unable to deal with it. Even an apostolic delegate has no power to purge it out. What must the faithful servant of the Lord do? Go on with the evil for unity and peace? this would be to sin against the cardinal principle of God's House that holiness becomes it for ever. He cannot leave the Assembly, for this would be to renounce the profession of the Lord's Name. Give up Assembly responsibility? Impossible to conceive it. Seek *Assembly restoration?* not a word of it in the plain instructions before us.

"Nevertheless the sure foundation of God standeth, having this seal," with its double impression by which it

may be discovered amid the rubbish man has heaped upon it, "the Lord knoweth them that are His." That is His side of it, His responsibility, if one may so speak in reverence. But here is ours: "And let everyone that nameth the name of the Lord depart from iniquity." Here is the priceless principle of Scripture, wherever evil prevails in that which is connected with the Lord's name; nor is it a new one, or a new thing that "he that departeth from evil maketh himself a prey."

The application of the principle follows. That which is in profession, and responsibility, and by the Spirit that remaineth among us, God's House, can be only likened to a great house with vessels of mixed material and use—some to honour and some to dishonour; if a man, therefore, purge himself by separating himself from these last—(the compound verb carrying this force as Bengel, Alford, and others have noticed)—he shall be a vessel unto honour, etc. That was the first step in carrying out the Lord's will. Next he has to watch lest the enemy get in through the active will of the flesh and mar and mock the path of outward separation, and lastly, he is to follow the things that are according to God's own nature with those that call in the Lord, similarly purged from evil association. Note carefully that there is no boundary or limitation or geographical sphere connected with this injunction. Thus he finds himself by grace, not in deed, on the

ground of the restored Assembly, but with two or three cleaving to the Lord according to the undying principles of the Assembly's calling.

It is just here that Matt. 18. 18-20 is found to be so blessedly applicable even in the last days. For it secures to the two or three gathered together to His Name, all that the Assembly had in its brightest days; His Name—the full revelation of the glory of His Person—divine satisfaction, and sufficiency for every trial and difficulty of the path. True to His Name they will have nothing less before their hearts than the Assembly as such, embracing all who confess that Name; hence there will be ever present to them its mournful history, and present state, and their own part in it.

The Epistles to the Corinthians will have their full place with the two or three thus gathered, though there will be no pretension to the power that belonged to brighter days, when the Assembly, true to its calling, was assembled as a whole. Yet recognizing that there is always power for obedience to the commandments of the Lord, the miserable plea that there is no power to put away from among ourselves a wicked person, will have no weight. It was not a question at Corinth, however, of power to deal with the outbreak of the flesh. The Assembly had not had the responsibility laid upon them to do so, till the occasion arose, and the epistle was written, but their moral state was such that there was no sense that it *had* to be dealt with: they were "puffed up," as if the liberty of grace were licence for the flesh.

The true sense of the sin, as that of the Assembly, would have led them

to mourn, that the Lord might have acted as He did at Jerusalem (Acts 5.) and removed the actual offender. It was only too plain that conscience as to what was due to the presence of God in His house had to be reached, and the apostle sets himself to do it; that they might carry out the last resort of discipline in such a way as to clear themselves from a state of evil in which the Assembly had been involved. In result we know from 2 Cor. that there was such a work of grace with the many, that what could be recognized as a valid action of the Spirit in the Assembly took place, though all (chap. 12. 20, 21) were not carried with it. For unanimity, however much to be desired, no more enters into such an action than a question of majorities or minorities being all alike but human principles.

Again, any such gathering of even two or three would find that they had the Lord's authority to decide how far such a recovery in individual souls had been wrought (even if in the general break-up and progress of evil no action of the Assembly as a whole could be looked for), so that they might be recognized as having departed from unrighteousness, in seeking the company of their brethren. And those who feared the Lord elsewhere would abide by their decision as recognizing His authority, still attaching to the saints so gathered according to Matt. 18. 18-20.

To suppose that any are gathered according to Matt. 18. 18-20 who cannot bind or loose in His Name, is to do violence to the first great principle of the Assembly's position, and to open the door to the denial of its true character of holiness.

It is a great comfort that Christ is unaltered. He is as available as ever; if we appreciate Him we turn away from man and the outward order that he loves and we seek to order things according to Christ.

## ONE BODY.

“*FOR by one Spirit are we all baptized with one body*” (1 Cor. 12. 13). Not by a set of privileges, or rules agreed to, but by the one Spirit, the Holy Ghost. We could not consider anything more important and solemn. The One who has incorporated us into the body is surely the One alone who can maintain its unity in practical power and blessing. Having begun in the Spirit the body cannot be perfected in the flesh. Hence the Spirit and what suits Him is of the greatest importance, as this chapter shows. My first consideration must not be the fellow members, though I must consider them, but the Spirit; for if the Spirit is grieved or quenched how can the body prosper? Ought we not then to inquire with greater diligence as to what will suit the Spirit and seek to be guided and developed in our thoughts and affections and ways by Him?

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## 2. Cor. vi. 14—18.

COMMUNION with God without separation from an evil world is here declared to us to be an impossible thing; and how clearly is manifested here the drift of things, even among Christians, in a day like this when large liberality is supposed to be what is pre-eminently Christian, and the love that thinketh no evil is confounded with the blindness which sees none where it manifestly exists. God's Word abides for us to-day, and the world abides also still in its essential character the same, the busy self-seeking world that knows not the cross, save, perhaps, as an ornament on the outside.

If we are to know the blessedness of having the Almighty God as our Father and of being enlarged in His things, separation from the world is essential.

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## The Power of Death is broken.

“*Jordan overfloweth all his banks all the time of harvest.*”—Joshua 3. 15.

BUT the waters fled before the ark of the Lord and left a way for His people to pass over. When Christ rolled back the waters of death for us it had all its terrors, but its flood was stopped by Him and its waters heaped up very far off so that they should not come near His people at their crossing. It was our death that He bore, and its power is broken—we pass over to our inheritance untouched and unhindered by it.

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## We shall see Him as He is.

I CAN understand a great angel filled with admiration at the majesty of his Lord, saying to such an one as Mary of Bethany, “Behold the splendour of His glory!” and I can understand her answering, “Yes, I see it and rejoice in it, for I know that He is worthy of every crown that He shall wear, but I know something more blessed than His glory—*He wept with me.* I have seen His tears and know the comfort of

His love that could enter into the secret of my sorrow. I have known His sympathy, and that I may not—cannot forget. What He was to me in that day He is now and ever shall be; I know His heart, and His heart is mine.” And many of us will say the same in that great day. To us He ever will be what we now know Him to be. We shall see Him as He is.

# ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

## Unleavened bread at the Lord's Supper.

"I am writing to you because I am an old reader of *Scripture Truth*, almost from its first issue, and a regular reader, too. Perhaps you can give a little help as to whether unleavened bread should be used at the Lord's Supper. The question has been raised and it is rather difficult to refute it.

"Perhaps you know of something written on the subject that we could obtain. In these days of departure and new ideas we are not going to give up what we have had handed down to us by men of God unless, of course, it can be proved to us that we have been wrong in using leavened bread. The argument advanced is that leaven being a type of sin, how can we use it in the loaf that represents the Lord's body?"—WEYMOUTH.

**WE** do not know of any pamphlet on this subject, but hope these few notes will be helpful to you.

Unleavened bread belonged to the age of types and shadows, but for us that age has passed, because the substance has come. We do not need the shadows now, but we do need the reality of which the shadows spoke.

Leaven is always in Scripture a type of evil, and so we find that in connection with the Passover all leaven had to be put out of the houses of the Israelites, and they had to eat unleavened bread only. This was to teach them, and us, for these things were written for our admonition, that if the Passover lamb had died to deliver the people from the just judgment of God against evil, they must put away evil from themselves. God could not tolerate that amongst His people from which He had redeemed them by the blood of the lamb.

The great anti-type of this we get in the first epistle to the Corinthians 5. 7-8: "Christ our Passover is crucified for us: therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth." Unleavened bread of sincerity and truth is not material, but a great spiritual reality.

But unleavened bread had to be eaten not only at the Passover Supper, but for the seven successive days. Those who would go back to the

shadows should do so whole-heartedly and consistently, and eat no leavened bread at all.

The character of the bread used at the Lord's Supper is without importance. Had it been necessary for the proper celebration of it to have had a special kind of bread, the Holy Ghost would have indicated this when correcting abuses in regard to the Lord's Supper in first Corinthians 11. We would not object to eating unleavened bread at the Lord's Supper any more than ordinary bread, unless it was insisted upon that it was necessary to the proper celebration of it; then we should refuse it, for that would mean occupation with the material and what is external, with forms and ceremonies, and not with the spiritual realities that the elements bring before the soul. It would be the confounding of the Christian memorial feast with a Jewish ordinance.

This is a ritualistic error and is exposed for us in Colossians 2.; there it is termed "the rudiments of the world," and we read, "Let no man . . . judge you in meat or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the Sabbath which are shadows of things to come; but the body is of Christ."

These things belong to carnal religion in which God had no pleasure and which puffed up the carnal man and gave a false sanctity to the flesh. Yet

we can understand sincere but legal-minded Christians being caught in the snare.

Leaven is a most striking type of the evil flesh; it corrupts and puffs up. In this twofold character it prevailed in the church at Corinth, and it is

prevalent in Christendom to-day. Those who would be faithful to the Lord will not occupy themselves with the figure, but will judge that of which the figure speaks in themselves and purge themselves from it in others, as 2 Timothy 2. plainly commands them.

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## The Hardening of Israel.

“I have been asked to explain Isaiah 6. 9, 10, and find it very difficult. Will you please give me the key to it?”—LONDON, N.

THE whole passage, verses 9-13, is a remarkable prophetic utterance, foretelling the doom of Israel as a result of their centuries of rebellion against God, and His Word; and yet in it for faith there was hope, for in the midst of the nation's apostasy there would still be a remnant, a “tenth,” called also “a holy seed,” and this remnant would be the root from which the nation would grow up again, when all hope for it seemed to be over. Verse 13 gives a striking figure of this.

The prophecy was first quoted against the nation in John 12. in which chapter we have the close of the Lord's witness to them by words and works. In spite of His many miracles they believed not in Him (verse 37). Their attitude towards the Son of God was not different to that of their fathers' to the prophets whom God had sent to them, and the solemn prophecy was fulfilled in them. Yet another opportunity was given to them, showing how loth

the mercy of God was to abandon them to their self-chosen fate, and no doubt this opportunity came in answer to the Lord's prayer on the cross for their forgiveness. So Paul pleaded with them in Acts 28., but they were still rebellious, and he had also to quote against them the solemn words of the prophet. It is interesting to see that both in John 12. and Acts 28. there were some who believed—the remnant, “the holy seed,” was there.

Not long after Paul's denunciation of them “the cities were wasted without inhabitant, and the houses without man, and the land was utterly desolate” (Isa. 6. 11),—A striking confirmation of the Divine origin of the prophecy. The last verse of the chapter will have its complete fulfilment when the Spirit of God works afresh in a remnant of the Jews, and they will own and worship their once rejected Messiah, as many Scriptures show. This will take place after the church has been caught up to heaven.

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The Lord make you to increase and abound in love one toward another, and toward all men, even as we do toward you: to the end He may stablish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father, AT THE COMING OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST WITH ALL HIS SAINTS.”

# MORE THAN CONQUERORS.

(J. T. MAWSON.)

## 2. Kings 6. continued. Delivered from fear.

“ And he said, Go and spy where he is, that I may send and fetch him. And it was told him, saying, Behold, he is in Dothan. Therefore sent he thither horses, and chariots, and a great host : and they came by night, and compassed the city about. And when the servant of the man of God was risen early, and gone forth, behold, an host compassed the city both with horses and chariots. And his servant said unto him, Alas, my master ! how shall we do ? And he answered, Fear not : for they that be with us are more than they that be with them. And Elisha prayed, and said, Lord, I pray thee, open his eyes, that he may see. And the Lord opened the eyes of the young man ; and he saw : and, behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha.”

**[F** the devil fails to ensnare us by his wiles, as the King of Syria failed to ensnare the King of Israel, he will change his tactics ; he will cease his beguilings and begin to buffet us ; he will show himself as an open and implacable enemy. This is his way. It was his plan of campaign against the Lord Jesus. First he endeavoured to allure Him in the desert by the offer of self-gratification, self-glory and self-vindication, and failing utterly in these efforts to turn Him from a life of complete dependence upon God, he retired for a season in order to gather all his forces in the hope of filling the heart of Jesus with dismay and terror. He marshalled all the powers of darkness against Him in Gethsemane and at Golgotha ; but he failed ; he could not shake the perfect confidence that Jesus had in God, nor drive Him from the path of obedience to the will of God ; and it is through Him that loved us and first gained so signal a victory over our foe that we may be more than conquerors also.

Nearness to the Lord will preserve us from the devil's snares, for we shall find a treasure in His love that will satisfy our hearts, and His word will keep us, but if we do this we must be prepared for this change of tactics on the devil's part. He will endeavour to make us feel that a life of faith is beset with dangers and insurmountable difficulties, and so shake our faith in

God. This is illustrated in this third incident in our chapter. The city where Elisha was was surrounded by a great force of Syrian warriors, and when the servant of the man of God awoke he was filled with fear. There did not appear any way of escape and he may have begun to feel that it would have been better to have been for the foe than against him, since his power was so great. He was wise in running to his master in his fear, but his cry, “ Alas, my master, how shall we do ? ” showed plainly how shaken he was by the circumstances. Have we ever felt like that ? It may be that some are even now finding that their adherence to our Lord has brought them into difficulties that they never anticipated and with which they feel utterly unable to cope ? What, then ? Is the way of escape to make terms with the enemy ? Can you find relief by compromising with him ? No, that will not do. Stand fast ! Have faith in God. A little faith can overcome great difficulties, for faith is the sight that sees God.

Elisha replied : “ Fear not : for they that be with us are more than they that be with them.” But his eyes had to be opened to see these protecting forces, and when they were opened he saw the mountain full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha. Would he fear when he saw these ? God never abandoned a man who

stood for Him. The Hebrew youths in the furnace of fire, Daniel in the den of lions, Elisha and his servant in Dothan, proclaim this fact for us. And to us the Lord has said, "I will not leave thee, neither will I forsake thee. So that, taking courage, we may say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not be afraid; what will men do unto me?" (Heb. 13. 5, 6). The devil is just as powerless as men in the presence of the Lord.

It is a great day in our spiritual history when we learn that God has bound us up with the interests and fortunes of His dear Son, and that He is not against us, but for us. If God were against us we could not but despair, but He is for us, and if God be for us, who can be against us? That is a great and triumphant challenge! "I am thy shield," He said to Abraham. He is ours also, to stand between us and every foe, to answer every charge and to drive away all fear of the foe from our breast. Having given His Son for us, will He withhold any good? And if He allows us to suffer, to be killed all the day long for Christ's sake, in these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us. The enemy may take a Christian's possession from him and even his life, if God permit it, but he cannot destroy his faith or separate him from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. It is in the knowledge that God is for us that we are delivered from all fear in the path of faith, and this knowledge will ever be real to us if we keep in the company of our Lord Jesus Christ.

## Overcoming the Flesh.

"And when they came down to him, Elisha prayed unto the Lord, and said, Smite this people, I pray thee, with blindness. And he smote them with blindness according to the word of Elisha. And Elisha said unto them, This is not the way, neither is this the

city: follow me, and I will bring you to the man whom ye seek. But he led them to Samaria. And it came to pass, when they were come into Samaria, that Elisha said, Lord, open the eyes of these men, that they may see. And the Lord opened their eyes, and they saw, and, behold, they were in the midst of Samaria. And the King of Israel said unto Elisha, when he saw them, My father, shall I smite them? shall I smite them? And he answered, Thou shalt not smite them: wouldest thou smite those whom thou hast taken captive with thy sword and with thy bow? set bread and water before them, that they may eat and drink, and go to their master. And he prepared great provision for them: and when they had eaten and drunk, he sent them away, and they went to their master. So the bands of Syria came no more into the land of Israel."

The would-be captors were taken captive; for all their show of might they were helpless prisoners when the Lord displayed Himself on behalf of His servants. But now comes the need of special watchfulness. If the wiles and might of the devil both fail to turn us from the Lord and the life of faith, he will endeavour to incite the flesh within us and make us act in times of testing on our natural impulses. The danger that lies here is illustrated for us in the King of Israel's feelings towards these captive Syrians. They were his enemies; much trouble they had given him; they had plotted his overthrow and would have accomplished their purpose if he had not kept in constant communication with the man of God, and now they were in his power, he could repay them for all the evil they had done him, he could avenge himself of them now, his turn had come. His hand flew to his sword hilt and he cried to the man of God, "My father, shall I smite them? shall I smite them?" It is not difficult to picture his eagerness, and we can understand it well; this king was very human, so very like ourselves; we feel that our impulse would have been just what his was if we had been in his place. Indeed, I have no doubt that a feeling of shame begins to rise within

our hearts as we see ourselves in this rash king. We have been wronged by someone who ought to have known better and we made up our minds that when the opportunity came we would smite; we would avenge ourselves. We knew the feeling was wrong and we lost our joy and peace by nursing it; but there it was, revenge is sweet to the flesh, and revenged we would be. How often the devil has triumphed over the children of God, by encouraging them to cultivate and display this spirit.

We have to learn that if God had retaliated upon us because of our sins we should have perished for ever, but He did not; He overcame our evil by His good, and He saved us by His grace. We are not now in the flesh but in the Spirit (Rom. 8.), and the fruits of the Spirit and not the works of the flesh are to be manifested in us; the life of Jesus has now to be seen in us; we are to be like Him. His enemies were merciless and implacable; they pursued Him with their bitter hatred throughout His life, and were not satisfied until they had nailed Him to a cross, and what did He do when they had done their worst? He prayed, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."

But it is not easy to forgive. He was so unkind to you and the things he said were so false, and you were so deeply wounded, and she has been so unreasonable and persistent in her enmity that you feel you cannot forgive; no you cannot! But you will if you are near enough to the Lord, just as the King of Israel did, through

being near to Elisha. Elisha was the prophet of grace and this was an opportunity for the display of grace; these Syrians must go back to their master, persuaded that there was a spirit in Israel that had no place in Syria, and so Elisha said, "Thou shalt not smite them . . . set bread and water before them, that they may eat and drink, and go to their master." It does not appear to have been hard for the King of Israel to do this, he seems to have entered into Elisha's spirit with a very good will, for **HE PREPARED GREAT PROVISION FOR THEM**: and when they had eaten and drunk, he sent them away, and they went to their master." And the king gained a greater victory by his kindness than he could have gained by his prowess upon the battle field, and the bands of Syrians troubled him no more.

This is the way of victory, to suffer and bear it patiently, to overcome evil with good, to meet enmity with the spirit of grace and forgiveness: this is the Lord's way for His saints and He has left us an example that we should thus follow in His steps: "Who did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth: who when He was reviled, reviled not again; when He suffered He threatened not; but committed Himself to Him that judgeth righteously: who His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness, by whose stripes we are healed." And we only live unto righteousness as His own life and grace show themselves in us.

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"I WOULD HAVE YOU WISE UNTO THAT WHICH IS GOOD, AND SIMPLE CONCERNING EVIL. AND THE GOD OF PEACE SHALL BRUISE SATAN UNDER YOUR FEET SHORTLY. AMEN." Romans 16. 19, 20.

# JEHOVAH'S SERVANT.

Isa. 42. 1-8 ; 49. 1-7 ; 52. 13-53 ; 12.

(A. J. ATKINS.)

THE second division of Isaiah's prophecy commences with chapter 40. It deals with the mighty deliverance which Jehovah will effect for His people Israel, and with the new moral and social order of universal righteousness and blessing which will result from this deliverance.

Early in this division there is introduced to our notice a mysterious figure described as *Jehovah's Servant*, with whom Jehovah's purpose and programme is identified, and by whose instrumentality the glorious fulfilment would be brought about.\* The prophet seems to delight to linger on every feature of this Servant: "His call and commission, His gentleness, His patience, His courage, His purity, His meekness, His daily wakefulness to God's voice, the swiftness and brilliance of His speech for others, His silence under His own torments, His resorts—among the bruised, the prisoners, the lost sheep of the house of Israel, the weary and them that sit in darkness, the far-off heathen ; His warfare with the world, His face set like a flint ; His unworldly beauty, His unnoticed presence in His own generation, yet the effect of His face upon kings : His habit of woe, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief ; His sore stripes and bruises ; His judicial murder, His being numbered with transgressors ; His grave with the rich ; His exaltation and eternal glory. What a marvellous and mysterious blending !

Certain it is, that no mere personification is here (as some allege) ; undoubtedly a Person is in view. Plainly, too,

\* Cyrus and also the nation of Israel are regarded in other passages as Jehovah's servant ; but the passages now under consideration seem clearly to refer to Christ.

this Person is a man ; and yet as plainly He is more than man for we read in chapter 48. 16, "Come ye near unto me, hear ye this ; I have not spoken in secret from the beginning ; from the time that it was, there *am I* ; and now the Lord God, and His Spirit, hath sent Me." Here, then, we notice that He is "*I am*" ; and also that "the Lord God," "His Spirit," and "Me" (this Servant) are joined in a a threefold combination suggesting, as other similar triple statements in the Old Testament, that Israel's one God was Three Persons. Who, then, could this Servant be ? Surely none other than Jesus, God's Son. Nor is this only a surmise, for apart from the direct quotation in Matt. 12. 17-21, in the *Acts* Christ is expressly designated *the Servant of God* (*Acts*. 3. 13, 15, 26 ; 4. 27-30 N.T.). The Greek word used in these passages is, we understand, that by which the Septuagint translates the Hebrew word in this section of Isaiah : the identification is thus exact.

It is interesting to note that, according to an authority on Hebrew, the Hebrew word here for "servant" means a person at the disposal of another, to carry out his will, do his work, represent his interests. In the singular, the word was reserved for persons of extraordinary character or usefulness. The Lord Jesus Christ pre-eminently fulfils these characteristics.

It will, perhaps, be well to mention at this point, that the passages quoted at the head seem to divide into three : (1) 42. 1-8, where we have God's (Jehovah's) testimony to His Servant ; (2) 49. 1-7, where we have mainly the

Servant's testimony concerning Himself, and (3) 52. 13; 53 12, where we appear to have the Spirit's testimony concerning Him.

We now proceed to consider (1). Attention is called to Him in a striking and abrupt way. "Behold *they* are all vanity. . . Behold *my Servant!*" Yes, surely, "they," i.e., man at his best estate is altogether vanity. At every stage of divine dealing he had proved himself to be hopelessly unreliable. What precious blessing of God has he not abused and corrupted? His utter bankruptcy and condemnation, that is, *our own*, are seen at the cross; and it is only as we come into moral accord with the judgment there expressed, that we shall have any capacity or desire to take delight in the Man of God's pleasure, His beloved Son. The words, "Behold my Servant," are, surely, a most gracious invitation to consider Him. It is, perhaps, the highest aspect of our fellowship with God that we are called to share His delight in His Son. Nothing so frees us for worship, forms us in character, or fits us for conflict as this.

"In Thy grace Thou now hast called us  
 Sharers of Thy joy to be,  
 And to know the blessed secret  
 Of His preciousness to Thee."

We seem to discern in the passage (42 1-7) a *seven-fold* view of this Servant in relation to Jehovah.

1. He is the Object of Jehovah's choice: "mine elect." While God's choice is sovereign, it is never arbitrary; in other words it always arises from and is consistent with His moral character and glory. This is borne out in this instance by the statement that follows: "in whom my soul delighteth." The reasons for this delight we shall trace.

2. We next learn of His *calling*. God's call ever proceeds from His choice. "I have called thee in righteousness." This is a profound statement. It includes the purpose of God, involves the intrinsic character required in His servant, and also suggests the nature and object of His mission. We may note that "righteousness" is a word of large meaning and frequent mention in this book. How significant it is, that the words of the Lord Jesus just before He entered upon His service were: "Thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness"!

3 In the next place we have a threefold delineation of the Servant's character. First, His *humility*. "He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause His voice to be heard in the streets." He would not be loud, nor would He ever be found advertising Himself. Not with pomp or pageantry, not as those who sound a trumpet before them, not with fiery denunciation and loud declamation, should He be known. The "might of meekness" would be His. No motives of self-interest would spoil His work; and at the last it would be by weakness and defeat that He would win the meed and crown. In Himself He would be perfectly humble, "meek and lowly in heart." Then, secondly, in regard to others, He would be marked by *gentleness*. The reed that had become bruised and useless He would not break, the smoking flax, the wick that was fading and even giving forth an offensive odour, He would not quench. How infinitely tender would be His tone and touch with those bruised and broken with sin, and failing for lack of good! (see Matt. 12 17-21) Then, in relation to God and His work, we see His *patience*. "He shall not fail nor be discouraged, till. . . ." These words

“fail” and “be discouraged” are the same as “break” and “quench” in the previous verse (see R.V.). Though so tender with others, there would be no failure with Him; and all He undertook He would fulfil. His character would be one of humility, gentleness and patience; and by these He would prevail.

4. But character alone, however true and gracious, is not sufficient; a servant needs a *commission*. “I Jehovah will give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles; to open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison house.” We have here, then, what He would *be*: a covenant and a light; on the one hand, to confirm all the promises to Israel, and on the other, to enlighten and bring to light the Gentiles. How we see these two aspects of His mission blended in the Gospels, and still more in the Acts! Then, depending upon what He would *be*, there is what He would *do*. It is all embraced in one glorious word, the emancipation of captives from bondage and darkness. The passage looks beyond the Gospels, and the present era of grace, to the kingdom in power.

5. Then we note His *capacity*. “I will put my Spirit upon Him.” Neither divine choice, call, commission, nor the perfection of character, are sufficient for God’s work; there must be the anointing. God does nothing apart from His Spirit; and only work

energized by that Spirit will be effective or abiding. The Lord Jesus could say in fulfilment of this promise: “The Spirit of Jehovah is upon me, because He hath anointed me . . .” (Luke 4. 18). There is the further promise: “Whom *I uphold*,” and “I will hold Thy hand and will keep thee.” In addition to the anointing, this Servant would have the assurance of the divine support and preservation on which to stay His faith.

6. The *consummation* of the Servant’s mission is assured, but is not dwelt upon in this passage as it is in those yet to be considered. It is suggested in the pregnant phrases: “bring forth judgment in truth,” or, as rendered in the New Testament quotation, “judgment unto victory,” “set judgment in the earth,” “the isles shall wait for His law.” This Servant’s “*call in righteousness*” would result at length in the *establishment* of righteousness in that day when the shadows would flee away and the glory of the Lord be revealed.

7. And what is the guarantee of all this, a guarantee which, with all that has gone before, constitutes the ground of this Servant’s *claims*. It is nothing less than Jehovah’s word, and Name and glory! “Thus saith Jehovah!” (verse 5), “I am Jehovah; that is My name, and My glory will I not give to another” (verse 8). Jehovah, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, is saying to us to-day, “Behold My Servant!” “This is My beloved Son, *hear Him!*”

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THE Christian who is not looking for the coming of the Lord—who says in his heart my Lord delayeth His coming—is sure to be worldly or selfish. To be expecting the Lord detaches the heart from the world.

If you leave out the truth of the coming of the Lord Jesus you miss one of the chief powers for holiness that God hath given us. Everyone that hath this hope in Him purifieth himself even as He is pure (1 John 3. 3).

## OUR DAILY LIVES.

IT is a magnificent book, this Epistle to the Hebrews, and great and wonderful are the things it unfolds for us and in language suited to their greatness. And the climax is surely reached when the writer exults in the assembled glories to which we are now brought in contrast to all that had gone before. Says he :—

“But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the Mediator of the new Covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel,” ch. 12, 22–24.

Surely after this something heroic and altogether out of the common would be expected of us. Could those whose associations and dignity are so exalted settle down to ordinary affairs of life? Well, let us see. “*Let brotherly love continue.*” That is simple enough, describing as it does the everyday intercourse of the family of God. “*Be not forgetful to entertain strangers.*” There is nothing spectacular about that. It means, be kind and hospitable, and not wrapt up in yourselves. “*Remember them that are in bonds . . . and them which suffer adversity.*” That requires not extraordinary

powers, but tender, compassionate hearts and sympathies that can flow freely to others. “*Marriage is honourable in all*” That simply means, enter into and carry out the God-ordained relationships of life in the fear of God. “*Let your conversations be without covetousness, and be content with such things as ye have.*” In this home life be content; don’t allow the restless grasping spirit of the world to have a place there; and that will be easily possible if a day-by-day confidence in God upholds us.

It is a very simple life, but it is the life that God loves, for He hath said, “**I WILL NEVER LEAVE THEE, NOR FORSAKE THEE.**” He delights to dwell with the lowly, and with those who are simply obedient to His word; and if He is with us we may boldly say, “The Lord is my helper, I will not fear what man shall do unto me.” So that the spiritual wealth with which God has blest us must not make us fanatical dreamers; nor must the hatred of men, for they will hate those who are faithful to Christ, make us fearful. Our business is to be undisturbed, but with steadiness and steadfastness fulfil these duties in life honourably and for God’s honour.

(J. T. M.)

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## SALVATION AND WORKS.

THE subject in our conversational Bible reading was the Judgment Seat of Christ, a solemn subject! A brother, commenting on 1 Corinthians 3. 13–15, remarked that it was possible for a man to be saved, and to get into heaven through the work of Christ, but to have absolutely nothing to shew, no works at all that could stand the test of the fire. Another brother, who had been saved from the depths and whose life had been completely changed by the gospel, quietly asked,

“*And what sort of a salvation would you call that?*”

Well, it would be a very poor sort of salvation that produced no works and wrought no change in the life. And that saved sinner to whom God’s salvation was a reality and not a theory knew this. He knew that the grace of God that brings salvation, both teaches and empowers those who receive it to maintain good works for God’s glory.

# THE HOUR WHICH STANDS ALONE.

(INGLIS FLEMING.)

"Father, the hour is come" (John 17. 1).

THE hour which stands alone in history was at hand. To that hour all the centuries preceding had looked forward. To that hour all the centuries succeeding look back. That hour is the centre of all time and the centre of all eternity. The enemies of our Lord had sought again and again to take Him, but they had failed. The time had not come for Him to deliver Himself up. And no man could take His life from Him. He had "power to lay it down" and He had "power to take it again."

But now His earthly pathway is ending. His farewell ministry to and for His own is being given. Judas the betrayer has gone out, the Lord having said to him, "That thou doest, do quickly."

The judgment of the world has been pronounced (John 12. 31). The Lord has pictured for His disciples His present ministry in the typical action of washing their feet (13. 1-8), for loving "His own which were in the world, He loved them unto the end"—all the way through—and would have them know even now the blessedness of "part with Him" in communion and service.

He has unfolded before them the blessedness of the Father's house—to which He was going in order to open it up for them, so that He might have the joy of their being with Himself—and that theirs might be the joy of being with Him in that home of light and love.

But meanwhile they were to be left in the world which had rejected Him and He prepares them by His communications for a path of suffering and rejection, saying, "Now I have told you before it come to pass, that when

it is come to pass ye might believe"—adding, "Hereafter I will not talk much with you," as in His grace He had done previously, "for the Prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in Me."

Defeated in the wilderness, Satan, the prince of this world, was about to return to the attack with all the power of death and all the forces of evil available through the hatred and malice and envy of men. But he had nothing in Christ. There was no vulnerable point in the holy Son of God, as there is in us. All the waves of Satanic power would hurl themselves against Him in vain, for

"Spotless, undefiled and pure,  
The Great Redeemer stood."

And all the crushing which He endured would only bring out the sweetness of the odour of those moral perfections which were ever in Him.

As another has shown, it is the anti-type of the meat offering baken in a pan (Lev. 2.) "It shall be of fine flour unleavened, mingled with oil. Thou shalt part it in pieces, and pour oil thereon." It was not only of fine flour, unleavened, mingled with oil in the making of it—our holy Lord in His holy nature, untainted by sin in any form—conceived by the Holy Ghost and anointed by the Holy Ghost, but when "*parted in pieces*" it was to be "anointed with oil." All would be seen to be in the power of the Holy Spirit. In the awfulness of the break-up at the end of His perfect pathway this should be manifested in fulness.

Satan tested Him anew. Disciples fled (one having betrayed Him and another having denied Him). Jew and Gentile took counsel together

against Him. In the hours of His mock judgment and scourging and crucifixion they sneered and spurned, disdained and derided Him. *Then* it was that His moral perfections were displayed as never before. He would pray for His murderers. He would comfort and care for His mother, He would open paradise to the repentant thief. He would ascribe holiness to God, saying, "Thou art holy" even when forsaken on our behalf. He was glorifying God in the fires of His wrath.

The true "Breadcorn" was "bruised," the Stone was "tried," the fat (the hidden perfection of the sacrifice) was brought to light (Gen. 4.4; Lev. 3. 16), the Cake was "broken in pieces." Through the Eternal Spirit He "offered Himself without spot to God."

When tested or troubled we are in danger of manifesting irritation and selfishness. Our imperfections become exhibited. In our Lord every foot fall was for the glory of God, and told the story of grace to man. Above and beyond all there was witnessed what His life had declared, "I love the Father."

The "Wist ye not that I must be about My Father's business?" of Luke 2. 49. The "I do always those things that please Him," of John 8. 29. The

"Even so, Father," of Matthew 11. 26. The "Father, glorify Thy Name," of John 12. 28. The "Abba Father . . . not what I will, but what Thou wilt," of Mark 14. 36. These and all else had borne witness, and their witness agreed together that in love to the Father He had come down from heaven to do His will and glorify His Name. The cross gave its testimony. It was the solemn "Yea and Amen" to all that had been uttered before. In view of it He could say, "I have glorified Thee on the earth, I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do." Then, "Arise, let us go hence," is His word to His own. Leaving the supper table with its precious ministry in act and word to His own, He would go to Gethsemane, to Gabbatha, to Golgotha and by way of these to the glory of God.

He would go thus to prepare a place for His loved ones, according to the will of His Father, accomplishing His pleasure. Thus He opened the way in righteousness for the fulfilment of the Father's counsels of grace to have us in His house in the company and likeness of Christ Himself.

Now that we are at rest through His accomplished atonement, we delight to trace His hallowed pathway while we await His glad coming again. "Lord, haste the day!"

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## GOD'S LEADERS. I. Sam. 17.

THE Lord trains in private those whom He brings forth at last for public use; "not a novice," is His rule for leaders; and David, young as he might be, was none. There was with him the shepherd's heart which had made him venture his life, not before the eyes of many, nor for a great result, but for a single lamb only. How could he now shrink when the issue was so vast, and the people of God were looking vainly for a deliverer? His measure is the measure of faith. Faith has but to make one inquiry: Where is God in this matter? and having found this, nothing whatever on the opposite side can weigh against this.

# THE EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS. (HAMILTON SMITH.)

## Chapter 2.—*continued.*

### III.

#### *The Christian Life (Verses 12-16).*

THE apostle passes on to present a beautiful picture of the Christian life formed after the pattern. He says as it were, "I have exhorted you to have the lowly mind, and I have set before you the perfect pattern of the lowly mind in Christ, now I look for an answer to the pattern I want you to obey." Obedience to the truth the apostle has been setting before us will have a two-fold result: first, it will lead to salvation from all the enemies and snares by which the believer is surrounded in his journey through the wilderness: second, it will lead to the expression of the Christian life formed after the pattern.

As regards the salvation of which the apostle speaks. When he was present with them he exposed and resisted the different attacks of the enemy. Now he was absent they would have to work out their own salvation. This would call for fear and trembling; "fear" because of the power of the enemy, "trembling" because of their own weakness. In this warfare self-confidence and fleshly energy would only lead to defeat. However, if the devil was against them, God was for them and working in them. Paul was absent from them, the devil was against them, but God was with them, to work in them both the willing and the doing of His good pleasure.

What, then, is the good pleasure of God? The following verses, 14 to 16, will tell us. It is the pleasure of God that all that is of the flesh should practically be set aside in His people in order to make room for the display of Christ. Thus at once the apostle passes from "willing" and "doing"

to "being." All this, he says, is in order that we may "be" something. And what are we to be? In character just what Christ was—blameless, harmless, irreproachable, children of God, shining as lights, and holding forth the word of life. The flesh refused with its murmurings and reasonings; the character of Christ reproduced, resulting in a witness for God in the world—shining as lights in a dark world, and holding forth the word of life in a dead world. Shining is not what a man says, but what he is—he shines. "Holding forth" is not exactly preaching, for it is "holding forth the word of life." The "word of God" is what God says, not what we say. We hold forth what God says.

### IV.

#### *Practical Examples of the Christian Life (Verses 17-30).*

In the remaining portion of the chapter we read of three devoted men in whose lives we see the setting forth of the lowly mind that, forgetting self, thinks only of serving others in love, thus expressing the Christian life lived after the pattern of Christ.

First, the apostle himself (17, 18). Naturally he does not say he is an example of the lowly mind; but obviously the Spirit of God intends that we should view him as such, for he is a striking example of a man who, having the mind of Christ, was willing to pour out his life in the service of others. In the gift of the Philippians he sees the faith that led them to make a sacrifice to God—a service of love to himself. As for himself, he has already told them that his conviction is that he will live and continue with them for their "furtherance and joy of faith" (1. 25); but if God willed

otherwise, and he was called to make the greatest sacrifice of love in his service for the saints, he would rejoice to do so, and they, too, are called to rejoice, counting the giving up of his life as a "libation" poured out to the glory of God.

Second, the apostle passes on to speak of Timothy (19-24). He is another example of a man possessed with the lowly mind that, forgetful of self, serves others in love—a man having the mind of Christ, and thus like-minded with the apostle. One of whom he can say he "will care with genuine feeling how ye get on" (N.T.). Alas, the mass of the Christian profession, even in that day, had a very different mind, for the apostle has to say, "All seek their own things, not the things of Jesus Christ." In contrast to these Timothy had given proof of the lowly mind by his loving fellowship with the apostle in the service of the gospel.

Third, in Epaphroditus we have another striking example of the lowly mind. He was not only a companion but a companion in labour; a fellow-soldier in the conflict, and a messenger who ministered to the apostle's wants. Not thinking of self, or sparing self, he was ready to labour, to fight, to serve. And in the midst of this full life of service he did not forget the Philippians; for even in sickness, that brought him nigh to death, he was not thinking of himself but of the saints, who, he feared, would be plunged into anxiety and sorrow on his behalf, having heard of his sickness.

In each of these shining examples we see the lowly mind of Christ expressing itself in a life of gracious consideration of others, that forgets self, and is ready to surrender self, and life, and all things that men count dear, in order to serve in love.

## Chapter 3

In the second chapter of the epistle, we have the presentation of the lowly mind perfectly expressed in Christ, in His pathway from the glory to the cross, producing in the believer the grace of the Christian life.

In chapter three we have the presentation of Christ in the glory—the goal to which the Christian presses on—to impart to the believer the energy of the Christian life. In this Scripture the believer is viewed as leaving behind the world from which Christ is absent, and journeying on to that better world to which Christ has gone. He is seen travelling this heavenly path with his heart so engrossed by Christ in the glory, that he counts all things, in which the flesh glories, as dung and dross. His mind is so set on things above, that he forgets the things that are behind.

Such is the beautiful picture set before us, and exemplified in the apostle's life. It is for believers to walk as having his path as "an ensample" (17). Feebly we may answer to the pattern, but at least we can appreciate its beauty, and seek to know its blessedness.

### I.

#### *The Secret of the Heavenly Path* (Verse 1).

"Rejoice in the Lord" is the opening exhortation of the chapter. This discovers to us the secret of the path that is set before us. This is more than rejoicing in the blessings we have received, it is an exhortation to rejoice in the One through whom we have received them. Through the blessings we reach the *Blesser*, and discover that He is greater than all the blessings He bestows. It is the discovery of the attractiveness of the *Blesser* that sets

the feet in the path that leads to the place where He has gone. The One in whom we rejoice is the One to whom we press on.

This exhortation, and the experience to which it leads, is very happily anticipated in the case of Peter, and the other disciples, in the incident of the great draught of fishes described in Luke 5. There the disciples' feet were set in a path in which they left all to follow Christ, for, at the close, we read, "They forsook all and followed Him." What was it, however, that set their feet in this path? It was the discovery that Christ is greater than all the gifts that He gives. The Lord had just given the disciples the biggest catch of fishes that had ever fallen to their lot. Such an unexpected display of miraculous power discovers to Peter the glory of the Person of Christ, and makes him realize, in the presence of God, his own exceeding sinfulness. It does more, however, for it brings home to Peter the blessed truth that all this divine power is *for him in grace*, in spite of the fact that he is a man full of sin. Realizing his sinfulness, he says, "Depart from me"; realizing the grace of Christ, he gets as near to Christ as ever he can. The result is that Christ becomes greater to Peter than the gifts that He gives, and he

leaves behind the gifts—the draught of fishes—to follow the Giver He "forsook all, and followed Him."

We, too, if rejoicing in the Lord, would know a little more of following hard after the Lord. An unsatisfied heart will lead to restless feet. The joyless man is the listless man. The man of divine energy is the one who is rejoicing in the Lord. We oft-times hinder our joy in the Lord by seeking joy in ourselves, our brethren, our circumstances or our surroundings. Had Paul done so he might well have been cast down, for, as to his circumstances, he was in prison; as to the saints, all were seeking their own; and over some, who professed the Name of Christ, he has to weep. He rejoiced in One of whom it is written "Thou art the Same," and "Thou remainest"—One who never changes and will never pass away.

To set this blessed Person before the saints was nothing new with the apostle: he had often ministered Christ. However, he says the same things are safe things, and to minister Christ is not irksome to the servant of Christ. In another epistle the same apostle warns us against "itching ears" that seek for some new thing, and lead many to turn "from the truth . . . unto fables" (2 Tim. 4. 3, 4).

(To be continued.)

**WHAT** a gospel our God has given us to believe and to preach! First, all our offences are removed for ever by the death and resurrection of Christ, for He was delivered for them and raised again for our justification—our complete clearance (Rom. 4. 25); then His love is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us (chapter 5. 5); our enmity to Him has been swept away and His love to us has taken its place. The good tidings of God's grace is that He can be just and the Justifier of Him that believeth in Jesus; that He can receive the returning prodigal in the fulness of His love; and consequently, the first sense of the Spirit in our hearts is the love of God. The great end of the grace of God is that God can make known His great love to us, so that we joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

## THE SPIRIT WHICH IS OF GOD.

**WHAT** moved me most in a meeting that I attended recently was a remarkable utterance by a servant of the Lord. He said: "I would not give you my spirit even if I could. Why? Because if I did you would know too much about me. But God has given to us His Spirit. Why? Because He wants us to know Him fully. He will hide nothing from us, for the knowledge of Himself is our blessing, and He is bent upon blessing us." So we read:—

*"But as it is written, 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. For*

*what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God."*

Is it not a surprising and wonderful thing that God should have given to us His Spirit to bring us into Communion with Himself and to open up to us His deep things, making them ours for our present enjoyment? He could not have given us a greater gift. How much do we appreciate it?

*"What moved Thee to impart  
Thy Spirit from above,  
Therewith to fill our heart  
With heavenly peace and love?  
'Twas love, unbounded love to us  
Moved Thee to give Thy Spirit thus."*

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## TO THEM THAT OBEY HIM.

**TWO** things were emphasized in a recent gathering for the study of the Word, in which the subject was the coming of the Holy Spirit. The first was that the gift of the Holy Spirit to us was a great manifestation of the love of God, love of a special sort, that desired that we should be reverently intimate with Him and His things. It was said: "God loves us so well that He will not be satisfied until He has us at home with Himself in heaven, but He loves us so well that He will not keep us waiting until we get to heaven to enjoy it; He has given to us His Spirit that we might begin to enjoy it now."

The second important thing was, that the Spirit only sealed those who

were obedient, He never yet sealed a disobedient man. "If ye love Me, keep My commandments," said the Lord, in promising the Spirit. "And I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you for ever; even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive." At Pentecost He came upon a company of obedient men, and He is only given to them that obey God by bowing to the truth of the gospel and owning Jesus as Lord (Acts. 5. 32). And if He is given only to the obedient, He is only free to work in and through those who are obedient. This is the first necessity, apart from it the Spirit is grieved and quenched and there can be neither spiritual growth nor effective testimony.

## DOES GOD CARE FOR ME ?

(A. J. POLLOCK.)

[T is related of an astronomer that he was so overwhelmed by the vastness of creation that he felt that God could not take any interest in him, tiny atom as he felt himself to be. As his telescope revealed to his wondering eyes worlds upon worlds, bigger by far than our sun in many cases, he was staggered and he began to lose his faith.

After a time the astronomer was looking through a microscope. When he saw a tiny creature, invisible to the naked eye, disporting itself in a single drop of water in the joy of living, his faith began to revive again ; he thought that if God could care for a tiny creature like that He could care for him.

Ah ! if only he had read his Bible attentively he might have been saved the collapse of his faith, and the revival of his faith would have been on surer grounds than observing the very minute beauties that a microscope reveals.

Possibly there are many tried saints of God, who under the pressure of circumstances, begin to question if God cares for them.

The glory of God is that He is sufficient for the very minute as well as the very vast. As a rule great men attend to great things and leave little things to the care of little men. There are men who can only attend to little things, and are not capable of attending to great things. How blessed it is to turn to our God and know that while He sustains the mighty universe, of whose vast extent man knows but little, He notes the falling tear of His saint. The psalmist could say, "Thou tellest my wanderings : put Thou my tears into Thy bottle : are they not in Thy book ?" (Ps. 56. 8).

When the Lord gave His commission to His disciples, and showed to them

that the day would come when their persecutors would seek to put them to death, and succeed as we know all too well, He said to them, "Are not two sparrows sold for five farthings, and not one of them is forgotten before God ?" The sparrow so worthless that if a customer bought two-farthings worth an extra bird would be thrown in ! Then the disciples were reminded that they were of more value than many sparrows and that the very hairs of their head were all numbered. How wonderful that God can care for such details, yet this is the glory of God that it is so !

Again we read, "Behold the fowls of the air : for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns ; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they ?" (Matt. 6, 26). Again, we are told to "consider the lilies of the field, how they grow ; they toil not, neither do they spin : and yet I say unto you, that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven, shall He not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith ?" (Matt. 6. 28-30).

How encouraging it is to dwell on these passages of Scripture. How it comforts the heart and encourages the saint of God to trust in His care that covers the upholding of the universe and the needs of the worthless sparrow or the grass of the field, which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven. How much more will He care for His blood-bought people. It is interesting to observe that when God records the original creation He does so in one verse of ten words (Gen. 1. 1). When He describes the origin of the stars that stud the vast expanse of space in

their millions He does so in five words :  
 " He made the stars also " (Gen. 1. 16).

And then we find no less than over thirteen chapters devoted to the history of one man—Abraham, besides copious allusions to him in no less than ten New Testament books, notably Romans, Galatians, Hebrews and James.

And yet in the eyes of the astronomer this earth is but a mere speck of dust in the universe, and Abraham a tiny atom in that speck. How could the great God in heaven take notice of such utter insignificance? Yet we read, " The God of glory appeared to our father Abraham " (Acts 7. 2). He was but a poor idolator in Ur of the Chaldees, but when he knew God as the God of glory everything for him was changed. He stands as the example for us all. He is the fountain head of promise for faith.

We need not go into the details of Abraham's life. To refer to it is sufficient for our purpose.

Moral things are greater than material things. Man is after all greater than the whole of the material universe. Inanimate creation cannot commune with God. Man can. Herein stands his greatness, as given by God, and his responsibility. It brings into perspective the terrible ruin of the fall. It is infinitely sad to see unregenerate men living like the beasts below them in the fact that they have no sense of the claims of God, nay, often are violently opposed to God from whom they derive all they possess in the way of life—health, food, shelter. Moral things are more than material things. The following eloquent passage proves this.

" But where shall wisdom be found? and where is the place of understanding?

" Man knoweth not the price thereof; neither is it found in the land of the living.

" The depth saith, It is not in me: and the sea saith, It is not with me.

" It cannot be gotten for gold, neither shall silver be weighed for the price thereof.

" It cannot be valued with the gold of Ophir, with the precious onyx, or the sapphire.

" The gold and the crystal cannot equal it: and the exchange of it shall not be for jewels of fine gold.

" No mention shall be made of coral, or of pearls: for the price of wisdom is above rubies.

" The topaz of Ethiopia shall not equal it, neither shall it be valued with pure gold " (Job 28. 12-19).

Wisdom in the humblest saint—God-given—is more than the tiara of glittering diamonds in the head of a proud empress.

Do we not learn a lesson here? God does not explain astronomy, or chemistry, or a thousand and one things of great interest, but He does tell us at great length of His dealings with one man—Job—in the book that is called by his name, consisting of forty-two chapters; He does let us know for our profit the exercises of His saints in their distresses and troubles, as seen in the one hundred and fifty Psalms, that constitute a special portion of Scripture.

Above all, have we not the amazing fact that " the mighty God, the everlasting Father " (Isa. 9. 6) should stoop to man's estate in order to bless man and bring him into heights of blessing that will shine through the eternal ages when the vast universe that we see shall have fulfilled its purpose and been burned up.

So we end our meditation with the magnificent verse, " He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things? " (Rom. 8. 32). His love is as much expressed when He gives us sorrow as when He gives joy, when He gives clouds as when He gives sunshine. So we answer the question of our title, " Does God care for me? " with an emphatic, adoring, worshipping YES!

## AMEN. ALLELUIA.

(L. R.)

"And all the people said, Amen, and praised the Lord."—1 Chronicles 16. 36.

THERE is a wonderful significance in all the early chapters of 1 Chronicles read in the light of the New Testament. They furnish us with a graphic picture, not found elsewhere, of the end of this age. The long lists of names, which seem so unimportant, become vested with great importance, when it is seen that the names are written in the book of the kings (1 Chron. ix. 1). Unless the names were in the book there could be no claim to an inheritance in the kingdom.

It will be remarked that there are many of whom nothing is said; the only fact of any moment concerning them is that their names are in the book. There are a few who are highly commended—mighty men of valour, very able men for service—women are there, Achsah, who craved springs of water for her south land, Sherah, who built cities, and many others. There are some sorrowful ones: Jabez whom his mother bare with sorrow, and the boy whose father called him "Beriah, because it went evil with his house"—and some, alas! are mentioned with disapproval, because they served other gods; their names are in the book, but their hearts were not perfect towards God.

What a word for us, beloved, whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life! None of our sorrows is forgotten, nor the smallest service done for His Name's sake; but we may well ask ourselves what shall be the record added to our names? Grace has put them in the Book of Life, and none may erase them, but what is being written in the Book of Remembrance? Is it the Lord's censure or is it His approval that is being written there?

In 1 Chronicles xvi. 36 something

further comes into view. David has brought the ark to Jerusalem; the day of its sojourn in the fields of the wood is over. The temple is not yet built, but the ark has its place as the divine centre. David's reign, which has prefigured the reign of the rejected Son of Man, is drawing to a close, and the King of glory (typically) is about to come. In our chapter David has seen the vision of the kingdom in its glory and of the temple in its beauty, and he gives this Psalm (verses 8-36) to praise the Lord, concluding with "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel for ever and ever." And the people, for one brief moment in communion with the thoughts of God, say Amen and praise the Lord.

Now the priests are set in their places, the Levites in theirs; doorkeepers, porters, singers, players on harps, psalteries and cymbals, and trumpeters, sounding with trumpets are given their work; those set over the treasures, those over the sacrifices, and those over the business of the Lord's house are all appointed by King David and left, each in his place, to praise and serve the Lord. Does it not bring home to us the thought of the day, so soon coming, when everything that hath breath shall praise the Lord, when every purpose of God for Jerusalem and for the whole world shall be accomplished, when everything shall be subdued to the Lord Jesus Christ, and He shall reign gloriously and triumphantly. Israel shall have their blessing, a blessing on earth, but the saints of the heavenly places shall have their heavenly portion and service in association with the heavenly One. Those who have suffered with Him in His rejection, shall reign with Him in His glory. How blessed to behold Him as shadowed

forth in these historic scenes, crowned with many crowns, appointing to each of His servants the allotted task in His kingdom; how precious the privilege of being used by Him to effect liberty and healing in the world to come [2 Tim. 2. 12 (believed to be a quotation from the earliest known Christian hymn) and 1 Cor. 6. 2, 3].

When we turn to Rev. 19. 4, we find almost the same words as in 1 Chron. 16. 36. Here the judgment of the great apostate system has been consummated; the King of kings and Lord of lords is about to come forth, conquering and to conquer. "And the four and twenty elders" (foreshadowed by the four and twenty priestly courses) "and the four beasts fell down and worshipped God that sat on the throne, saying, Amen; Alleluia."

We look back and, seeing the vision David saw, we say Amen, and praise the Lord. We look forward and know that grace sets us among the worshipping company of Rev. 19. 4, saying

Amen, Alleluia. Much people say Alleluia, and again they said Alleluia; a voice out of the throne says Alleluia, and a voice of a great multitude, a voice of many waters and of mighty thunderings, says ALLELUIA. All is praise, for "the Lord God omnipotent reigneth."

And while we await that long-loved, long-expected day, shall *we* not say, even now, Amen, Alleluia? We may be oft in difficult places, but what sustainment, what comfort are ours! We may be cast down and perplexed, but the Lord Himself is our Guide and Helper. Let us remember it is only for a little while. Nothing can befall us, unless divinely allowed by perfect love, so we may take courage, and looking up to Him who loved us and gave Himself for us, the response of loving hearts to all that He does or permits, shall be, Amen. Alleluia.

"Praise shall employ these tongues of ours,  
Till we with all the saints above,  
Extol His name with nobler powers,  
And see the ocean of His love:  
Then while we look, and wondering gaze,  
We'll fill the heavens with endless praise."

## THE EIGHT SIGNS OF JOHN'S GOSPEL. (J. GREEN.

[IN the first three Gospels, Christ is seen presented to man in his natural responsible condition, the object being to test whether the manifestation of God in infinite grace would affect his attitude Godward. The demand of law had only brought out the insubjection and rebellion of man's heart: will the presence of God in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, produce any change? Will His grace in not imputing their trespasses unto them lead to repentance? The answer of the Jew was, "We will not have this man to reign over us." The answer of the Gentile was one of indifference. Careless greatness washed its hands of the matter, caring nothing

as to whether righteousness suffered or not, and so long as it might be left undisturbed, said "I am innocent of the blood of this just person, see ye to it." The cross is thus the full demonstration that the world is enmity against God, incapable of amendment by any process, for it has refused the call of infinite love in God who had so loved it as to give His only begotten Son.

The fourth Gospel starts from this point. "He came unto His own (things) and His own (people) received Him not." The light shone in the darkness but the darkness was unchanged. It is at this point of man's

hopeless condition that the magnificence of the revelation of the purpose of God shines forth, and the glory of the Person of Christ, the Eternal Word, Son of the Father, Creator of all things, tabernacling in flesh, is seen in John's Gospel for the contemplation of God-given faith.

Three things are connected with this manifestation: 1, The Father, the Source of eternal life; 2, The Son, the Giver of it; 3, The Spirit of God, its power. The discourses which mainly fill the Gospel of John are all based upon the finished work of atonement for sin, as being already accomplished of (John 17. 4). It may be observed also that in John's account of the cross, Christ is presented not as the sin offering, so distinctly seen in Matthew and Mark, nor again as the peace offering, with which Luke is occupied, but as offering Himself by the Eternal Spirit without spot to God, the supreme burnt offering, the object of the love of God." "Therefore doth My Father love Me because I lay down My life that I might take it again."

Chapter 1. opens with the eternal, and creatorial glory of the divine Word, for, of necessity, in order to understand the greatness and character of the life that is the light of men, we must bow in the presence of the One in whom life is essentially. Here the soul finds rest amidst the conflict of words and vain attempts of human wisdom to discover the origin and definition of life. Here is the solution, it is in Him who eternally was. Life in all its forms and manifestations proceeds from Him, but far higher than that which gives life and breath to material things is that which concerns the spiritual in man; for man is much more than material and was never intended to find his life in that over which the shadow of death hangs. Life in the Word, who is God, is life

eternal, and in Him who in the beginning was with God all the moral relationships connected with it are unchanging. Whether viewed in the mystery of the Godhead before all worlds, or as the Word become flesh dwelling amongst men, it is ever that eternal life which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us. Further in those who receive Him it is the Truth which abideth with us, and shall be with us to eternity.

The writings of the beloved apostle are of the utmost importance, forming one of the two lines of inspired communications which bring to light the purpose, pleasure and will of God, when the present dispensation has failed of the grace of God through the introduction of Judaizing elements. The first is seen in the revelation of "The Mystery" in the prison epistles of Paul, the second in the power of eternal life in the Son, which is characteristic of John. Both are for the sustainment of faith and practical Christian life, when all around is confusion, moral breakdown, and apostacy from the truth. Both enable the man of faith to overcome the world and to continue in his witness to an exalted Christ, knowing that in His hand nothing can fail, although John, the witness of "Eternal Life," is not received by a Diotrephes, and all in Asia turn away from the chosen vessel of "The Mystery."

The structure of John's Gospel consists of various discourses of our Lord, all bearing on the great theme of eternal life. These are grouped around eight miracles, or rather signs, for John uses the latter word "semion" rather than the word "dunamis" (powers), common in the other evangelists. And because the miracles of our Lord are not mere prodigies intended simply to strike the imagination, the word "thauma" (an

astonishing thing), occurring only in Rev. 17. 6, is never used of His works. In fact, it is significant as guarding this thought, that "teras" (wonder) is never found alone, but always in connection with "powers" or "signs" (Acts 14. 3; Rom. 15. 19; Heb. 2. 4). It has been well said, "That the miracles forcibly startle men from the dull dream of a sense-bound existence, and act as a summons to him, to open his eyes to the spiritual appeal which is conveyed in the sign."

Signs were intended to convey three things :—

1. They were a witness and attestation of the presence of God in Christ; as Nicodemus said, "No man can do these signs that thou doest, except God be with him."

2. They were seals of the doctrine taught, having a moral application, and illustrating by material means, the spiritual realities.

3. They were types of the ways of God, showing that the Old Testament prophecies, to which they give added testimony, are no cunningly devised fables.

Because they are all this, men reject the thought of miracle, for if the truth of the Scripture record is admitted, there is but one conclusion—the Son of God has come. Happy the heart that believing the record can therefore say "We know" (1 John 5. 20).

There is a close relation between these marvellous facts and the Person of Him who did them. They were visible emblems of who He was, and what He came to do, springing as rays from the supreme miracle of the manifestation of God in the Son of Man. It is the deep meaning which lay beneath the act which showed the divine presence, which it is important to understand.

The Lord's works of power recorded by John are all peculiar to his Gospel, with the exception of the feeding of the multitude, and the first seven have been selected by the Holy Spirit with a distinct purpose. "Many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of His disciples which are not written in this book: but these are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through His name" (John 20. 30, 31). The emphasis is upon faith, "believing." In John's epistle the result is seen in "knowing." "These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God, that ye may know that ye have eternal life" (1 John 5. 13).

With this in view, beloved reader, may we contemplate these signs in dependence on the Holy Spirit of God, that we may perceive, and believe, and know the spiritual realities they are intended to convey.

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THE means we use in the work of the Lord will largely tell the spirit we are of.

In themselves of small importance, our making much of them will make them much, though in a different sense from that which we imagine. Paul came not among the Corinthians "with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring the testimony of God." And in this there was not mere human weakness, but the distinct purpose that their "faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God." All supplements of spiritual power necessarily carnalize the effect produced; and even when God is working, the result will show itself, perhaps, not till after many days. Meanwhile, as with stung fruit, the ripening may seem quicker, while in fact the proper ripeness never is attained.

# THE FATHER'S NAME MADE KNOWN. (H. J. VINE.)

*"O righteous Father, the world hath not known Thee: but I have known Thee, and these have known that Thou hast sent Me"* (John 17. 25).

EVERY ONE that the Father has given to His Son will come to Him; and He has said, "No man can come to Me, except the Father which hath sent Me draw Him"; also, "They shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto Me." It is to them the Father's Name is made known by the Son. The Father draws to the Son, and the Son makes known the Father's Name.

In His prayer to the Father He said, "Righteous Father, the world has not known Thee, but I have known Thee, and these have known that Thou hast sent Me. And I have made known to them Thy Name, and will make it known: that the love with which Thou hast loved Me may be in them and I in them" (John 17. 25, 26, N.T.). This shows why the Father's Name is made known to us; that the love of which the Son was the worthy Object might be ours also, and that He who is so loved might be in us. Wonderful is this love of relationship, the Father's love for His Son. Who could have thought of such infinite blessedness for us, save our thrice holy God? Once sinners, undone, deserving just judgment! but now forgiven and saved through Jesus, who bore that judgment! and given to Him He gives us to know the Father's love, wherewith He was loved before the world's foundation!

"He the prodigal has pardoned,  
Kissed us with a father's love."

Those who are born of God are granted this surpassing favour. They have received Christ in faith. Even the babes in this family know the Father, and have a nature capable of development in this. None are thus

blessed because of some distinction of heredity or consanguinity, or the descendants of such as Aaron and David might get the advantage! None are thus honoured because of fleshly energy socially and religiously, or some prosperous and bigoted peoples might have the advantage! None are brought into such a divine relation with the Father because of national and priestly pre-eminence, or the chosen nation of Israel would have this right! but the Spirit of God has left us without one doubt in regard to it, saying, "To them gave He the right to be the children of God, *to those that believe on His Name*; who have been born, not of blood, nor of flesh's will, nor of man's will, but of God" (John 1. 12, 13, N.T.). Wonderful indeed is the Father's love which has put us in the children's place! Of His own will He begat us! Divinely, Sovereignly, and righteously He has given us this right of relationship! His wisdom and love designed it, and it is for His own pleasure, and for our joy also.

What the Father is has been declared and manifested: His Name has been made known and made discernible in the Son. This is the way God is specially made known to-day. The heavens declare His glory as Creator, and the firmament shows His handiwork. Creation pronounces and manifests somewhat of His glory and greatness. The separated nation of Israel declared and bore witness to Him as Jehovah, God; and He said concerning them, "Ye are My witnesses, saith Jehovah . . . before Me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after Me. I, even I, am Jehovah; and beside Me there is no Saviour. I have declared, I have showed, when

there was no strange god among you : therefore ye are My witnesses, saith Jehovah, that I am God. Yea, before the day was I am He. . . . I am Jehovah, your Holy One, the Creator of Israel, your King " (Isa. 43, 10-15). We are told what God is as Jehovah in the proclamation of His Name—" Merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth," etc. We see how this gave character to men of faith in the Old Testament, but it was not till the Son came that the Name of divine love—the Father's Name—was made known.

The inspired writings pointed on to Him. The law and the prophets testified of the One that was to come—the One who should speak God's words.

Moses and Elias had both been at Horeb, the mount of God, where Jehovah's Name was once proclaimed ; but when they appeared with Jesus on " the holy mount," they spake with Him of what He was to accomplish at Jerusalem, and then disappeared from view ; while from the bright cloud, the excellent glory, Jesus was honoured by God the Father—such a voice from heaven being uttered to Him, "*This is My beloved Son, hear Him.*" Peter, James, and John were witnesses of this. It actually took place ! Pointing on to Him, the Old Testament said, "*Him shall ye hear !*" Singling Him out, the voice from the excellent glory said, "*HEAR HIM !*"

The disciples viewed His glory, when in His company on earth ; and John writes, " We contemplated His glory, a glory as of an only-begotten with a Father." It was said of Isaac to Abraham, " Thy son, *thine only one*, Isaac, whom thou lovest." He had other sons, but Isaac was His only one in an unique sense. The Son with the

Father is without compeer ; yet His glory was seen to be, not like a mighty Samson or a warrior-king David, but like an only son with a father ! This is the One who makes known the Father's Name, and we are divinely instructed to "*hear Him !*" Who else could manifest and make known what He is, save the Son of the Father's love ? It is said, " No one has seen God at any time, the only-begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him." He could make Him known perfectly and only He ; for none other had " seen the Father, except He who is of God, He has seen the Father " ; and He said, " He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father." The Invisible was Visible in His Son. Jesus manifested Him, but none other could.

" Son of His bosom, come from heaven above,  
We see in Thee incarnate ' God is Love.' "

We rejoice in being limited to Him for the gracious making known of His Father's Name. He manifested it to those who were given to Him out of the world. He preserved them in that Name when here on earth, and prayed, " Holy Father, keep through Thine own Name those whom Thou hast given Me." If, as Proverbs 18. 10 tells us, "*The Name of Jehovah is a strong tower,*" into which the righteous runs and is safe ; *the Name of the righteous Father*, unknown by the world, is a dwelling of divine love, where there is safety truly, but also infinite riches of holy joy ; for it is as risen in triumph from among the dead and ascended, the Lord Jesus brings His own into this to-day, and they rightly sing with heavenly gladness :

" Now the Father's name Thou tellest,  
joy is in Thine heart !  
In His love in which Thou dwellest we  
have part."

Eternal life, as well as eternal love, in its highest privilege, is immediately connected with the knowledge of the Father. Like a new creation, like the precious anointing, like the dew, Jehovah may command the blessing of it presently on the earthly side upon the restored priestly nation of Israel when they arise from the dust, as Daniel says. It will be like life from the dead! On the heavenly side the children of God are granted this now, in peculiar and family nearness with the Son of the Father. To Him authority is given over all flesh, so that He should give eternal life to all that the Father gives to Him; and this eternal life, wonderful to say, is that we should know *the Father, the only true God, and Jesus Christ His sent One*. The eternal life is given to-day to this end. The capability is also given to us—"an understanding, that we should know Him that is true; and we are in *Him that is true, even in His Son Jesus Christ*. He is the true God, and eternal life" (read 1 John 5. 20 with John 17. 2, 3). What unmeasured favour is here! Both the eternal life and the understanding are divinely given, that the incomparable knowledge of the Father and Jesus Christ might be our exalted portion! When all this blessedness is being slighted by so many, well may we earnestly heed the word addressed to the babes of the family in 1 John 2. 24, 25—"Continue in the Son, and in the Father. And this is the promise that He hath promised us, even eternal life." The Son is named first here, for it is as we abide in Him, who makes the Father's Name known, we abide also in the Father.

So the Spirit teaches us to "*abide in Him!*" (verse 27) and then in verse 28 the exhortation is given to all the children of God—not to the young only—"ABIDE IN HIM!"

It is said, "He who confesses the Son has the Father also," but not vice versa.

The Father loves the Son, yea, He dearly loves Him, giving all things into His hand, and showing Him all that He does. The Father works and the Son does likewise. The Father quickens, and the Son does also. He does nothing independently. Perfect in love, power and co-operation, yet the Father does not "judge anyone, but has given all judgment to the Son; that all may honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. He who honours not the Son, honours not the Father who has sent Him." The works which He did were done in the Father's Name, and He spake the Father's words, that His Name might be known. Even deeper than making the *declaration*, to His own He makes *known* His Father's Name. A declaration might be made without its becoming intelligible. Jesus gives us to *know* the Name of eternal love. Being the Son He can do this. Eternal praise to His holy Name.

In this day of grace upon grace rich favours are bestowed upon the children of God! It is granted to them to *know* that their sins are forgiven for His Son's Name sake! to *know* that when He shall appear, we shall be like Him! to *know* the things that are freely given to us of God! to *know* that we have eternal life in the Son! who said, "Ye shall *know* that I am in My Father, and ye in Me, and I in you"; for it is as we are in Him we are in the Father, whose wondrous Name He makes known, as we have said, that the eternal love of His Father might be in us, and He in us. "ENDLESS PRAISE AND ADORATION TO THE FATHER AND THE SON."

## ECCLESIASTES XII.

(A. W. T.)

THE Book of Ecclesiastes closes with the transitory character of youth, succeeded by old age and death. Ecclesiastes 12. should really begin at verse 7 of chapter 11.—“Truly the light is sweet,” etc. The connection—“Remember now thy Creator” is interrupted by our division of chapters. Chapter 12. really begins, “*And remember*” (Cook’s Commentary). Almost all expositors treat these verses as an allegorical description of old age, with its natural infirmities and solitariness, and ending with death.

And remember thy Creator, in the days of thy youth, before the evil days come, and the years draw nigh, of which thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them; before the sun, and the light, and the moon, and the stars, be darkened, and the clouds return after the rain.

In the day when the *keepers* of the house shall tremble, and the *strong men* shall bow themselves, and the *grinders* cease because they are few, and those that look out of the windows be darkened.

And the *doors* shall be shut in the streets, when the *sound* of the grinding is low, and he shall rise up at the voice of the bird, and all the daughters of *musick* shall be brought low.

Also when they shall be *afraid* of that which is high, and *fears* shall be in the way, and the *almond tree* shall flourish, and the *grasshopper* shall be a burden, and *desire* shall fail.

‘The *House*’—The human body is often compared to a house. This verse refers to the change which old age brings to four parts of the body—  
The *keepers*—hands.  
The *strong men*—knees.  
The *grinders*—teeth.  
The *windows*—eyes.  
‘*Cease*’=fail, or become unfit for use.  
‘*Darkened*’=dimmed.

*Doors*—double doors (Ellicott).

Figures of the mouth, ears and speech. All communication with the outside world broken off.

The *ears* are dulled of all sounds; even the grinding of the mill reaches him as a low murmur, though it be really as loud as the shrill piping of a bird. (J. A. Trench.)

*Musick*—song.

*Brought low*—sound faintly.

(Sweet song no longer enjoyed.)

*Afraid. Fears*—Timidity of old age.

Alarm felt at the slightest need of exertion. Apprehensions of danger in journeying. (J. A. Trench.)

*Almond tree*—referring to white hair. (J. N. Darby.)

“It is the type of old age whose hair is white . . . the white blossoms completely cover the whole tree; the green leaves do not appear till some time after.”

(From Cook’s Commentary.)

*Grasshopper*—the smallest thing proves a burden or weight. (J. A. Trench.)

“*Desire shall fail.*” This A.V. rendering is best.

[Avoid the Lit. trans.—“the caper berry is without effect.” This berry, which was eaten before meals as a provocative to the appetite, shall fail to take effect on a man whose powers are exhausted.]

The failing appetite cannot be again awakened.

Because man goeth to his *long home*, and the mourners go about the streets.

'*Age-long home*'—death not the end of him. (J. A. Trench.)  
Lit. 'eternal house.' (Cook's.)

Or ever the *silver cord* be loosed, or the *golden bowl* be broken, or the *pitcher* be broken at the fountain, or the wheel broken at the *cistern*.

Four seats of life invaded, viz.—  
'the silver cord,' i.e., the spinal cord.  
'the golden bowl,' i.e., the grain, or head.  
'the pitcher,' i.e., the heart.  
'the cistern,' i.e., the blood.

The *wheel*—on which the bracket is brought up by a rope from the wall.  
"In the East to-day are wells where a *wheel* pumps up the water through one pipe, to discharge it through another. This is what the heart does, pumping up through pipes of blue to propel it through pipes of red—the 'fountain' and the 'cistern' hinting the ventricles and auricles. Solomon inspired to use language poetically to keep within the facts as modern discovery have made them known." (J. A. Trench.)

Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it.

V. 11:—

"The words of the wise are as *goads*,"

(because they rouse the hearer, and impel him to right action; sharp, pointed, effective.)

"and as *nails* well fastened in" (R.V.),

(because they remain fixed in the memory), (right words—on which may hang, as on a "nail," much quiet meditation.)

"by the *masters of assemblies*"

(or, collectors of sentences (R.V.), or collections of sayings, or, teachers, or preachers)

"which are given from one shepherd."

(one Shepherd, i.e. God—who is the supreme Giver of wisdom—the great Shepherd.)

[From: Cook's Commentary; Ellicott's Commentary; "The Companion Bible" (R.V.); J. N. Darby's translation; J. A. Trench's (marked) Bible; F. C. Jennings's "Old Groans and New Songs."]

How blessed it is, after having considered the dissolution of man at death, a sad and melancholy consideration, to turn to the New Testament and read that triumphant utterance. "We know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens" (2 Cor. 5. 1).

"The kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost" (Rom. 14. 17).

"For the kingdom of God is not in word, but in power" (1 Cor. 4. 20).

# THE TWO LAST EPISTLES.

(J. T. MAWSON)

## Holding the Fort and Helping the Truth.

“ *If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed* ” (2 John 10).

“ *We therefore ought to receive such, that we might be fellowhelpers to the truth* ” (3 John 8).

### HOLDING THE FORT (2 John).

AN inspired epistle to A LADY AND HER CHILDREN! Here is something that ought to arrest our attention and make us ask the reason why—for this short letter (2 John) stands alone in this respect in the New Testament.

One of the last of the inspired writings, it emphasizes at the closing of the canon of Holy Scripture that which is so constantly taught therein, that in weakness God manifests His power, and out of the mouths of babes and sucklings He ordains strength (Ps. 8.). When men in times past abandoned the truth and, because of their cowardice or selfishness, failed the Lord, women stood firm and maintained the ground for God. This we see at the time of the first coming of our Lord, when pious women kept constant watch and faithful, for the advent of Israel's Redeemer; and when Mary of Bethany, anticipating His rejection and death, poured her precious ointment upon Him, in holy self-abandonment, whilst His men-disciples quarrelled as to who should be the greatest in His kingdom; and also, when the Magdalene stood weeping and alone without His empty tomb, whilst the rest sought the shelter and comfort of their own homes. These are examples of devotion that shall never be forgotten, and with them shall be remembered the faithfulness of this nameless lady who held herself and her household for the Lord.

She probably lived in a great pagan city in which there may have been a

Christian assembly such as that described in John's letter to Gaius, out of which godly men were being cast, and into which neither the apostle nor his inspired writings were received.

Very early in the church's history the citadel had been surrendered to the enemy, and the flag of truth had been hauled down and laid in the dust. Had it? As far as the majority were concerned, who had yielded to other authority than the Lord's, and who had compromised the truth, perhaps; but this lady and her children had not yielded to the adversary. They were keeping the flag flying. When the church failed, the *Christian household* stepped into the breach; its answer to the enemy was “No surrender!” and it held the fort for the Lord and the truth.

A day of small things, and weak; say you. Yes, and yet, though small, certainly not weak. Suppose news reached us that a great and numerous foe had invaded some British territory, and had swept all before it until checked by a handful of men—say, a dozen—who withstood the mighty army and kept the flag flying. Should we call that weak? No, that would be something to be talked about and admired, something at which all the world would wonder, an exhibition of courage and power that would win lasting fame and fill pages of British history. Neither is it an exhibition of weakness which is given us in this epistle, but of “power and love and a sound mind.”

It is no small or weak thing for an individual believer surrounded by declension from the truth to hold himself for Christ; it is a most blessed thing when a company of Christians hold on their way in the same path, the Lord their centre and His word their law. But in this particular case it was a household that walked in the truth, and this greatly gladdened the heart of the inspired apostle.

The instruction given must not be unheeded by any assembly of saints, whether great or small, that desires to abide faithful to the Lord, for, apart from the rigid exclusion of evil doctrine here spoken of, the ground cannot be held at all. Indeed, that assembly that opens its doors to a denier of the faith has already gone over to the foe, bag and baggage: it has become a partaker of his evil deeds. There is no ambiguity about that statement; and this is a matter that will admit of no parley or accommodation or compromise. In whatever else we are neutral we cannot be neutral here. But the letter was not written to an assembly of saints in which were Christian men, strong and learned, but to a lady—probably a widow—and her children. As we have said, when the assembly failed, the Christian household stepped into the breach and kept the flag of truth aloft. This should be a great encouragement to us, for it shows what the grace and power of God can do for those who are dependent upon Him.

The attempts of the devil to break down this lady's faithfulness to Christ had failed; he had not been able to capture her house—it had stood like an impregnable citadel in the presence of all his assaults, so he changed his tactics and determined to accomplish by subtlety that which he had failed to do by force. It was because the apostle knew of this that he wrote to

her to warn her that if any came to her house in the guise of a Christian minister, and yet not bringing the doctrine of Christ, her doors were to be bolted and barred against him.

But there was another danger that threatened from within, and they needed to be reminded of the commandment of the Lord. John had often pressed it upon them when with them, but now, being absent, he writes the self-same thing to them: "THAT YE LOVE ONE ANOTHER." Love is the divine nature; it is also the atmosphere in which the true children of God live and thrive; it is the power that inspires all true activity, and it cannot be indolent; where it is, it will always show itself in self-forgetful service. Apart from this a man is NOTHING, even though he stands most rigidly for purity of doctrine. What pleasure could the Lord find in a man who, while he refused all complicity with a heretic, did not love his brethren? None at all, we trow, for the man who does not love his brother does not keep the command of the Lord, and he who does not keep the Lord's command does not love Him (John 14. 21-24). Such a man would be a mere Pharisee in spite of all his zeal for orthodoxy.

Where the Lord's command is kept, whether in the assembly or the household, there He is supreme; but here it is not only the Lord's commandment, but the FATHER'S. How wonderful that grace should have set the saints in the path of obedience to the Father's will: a path trodden perfectly by the Lord when here, and in which we are to be His followers! In His lowly obedience to His Father's command He was maintained by the Father's hand and abode in His Father's love. And we also, as our hearts are set for this path, shall find succour from that same most blessed source of all blessing, for

mark how the salutation runs: "*Grace be with you; mercy and peace, from GOD THE FATHER, and from the Lord Jesus Christ, THE SON OF THE FATHER, in truth and love.*" The succour comes from the top—it is from heaven, it comes out of eternity, and it is according to the full revelation of the truth—God the Father and His Son our Lord Jesus Christ. It is entirely adequate to keep us walking in THE TRUTH and filled with the power and joy of it, in spite of the hostility of the devil. This salutation is one of the most wonderful in the Scriptures, and volumes would fail to explain the blessedness of it. It speaks of great realities which the weakest of us may prove; it speaks of all the mighty resources of the Father revealed in Jesus—grace, mercy, and peace—and tells us that these are at the disposal of those whose hearts are set upon walking in the truth. Let us contemplate it in the presence of God our Father, and fear no more either the power or subtlety of the devil, for from it we learn that the assembly, household, or individual that is set upon walking in the truth is the object of the Father's special care.

"Walking in the truth" does not mean that we hold the doctrines of Christianity intact—it involves this, surely, but it is more—it is obedience to the Father and love to one another; and further, as the letter reveals, the resistance of all attempts to introduce subversive teaching contrary to that which we have learned from the beginning.

Obedience to the Father's command will result in love to one another and make us valiant for the truth. True love does not wink at evil. It is not that weak and falsely-called charity that preaches a universal brotherhood and runs with any man who is plausible and popular, no matter what his creed

and doctrine may be. Such charity as that is the devil's spawn, produced in the shameful bed of modern latitudinarianism. What an amazing thing it is that in Christendom every God-dishonouring and Christ-denying doctrine that was ever propagated beneath the sun should find a home! And yet it is the fulfilment of the parable of the great mustard tree in which the foul birds of the air find a lodging (Matt. 13. 31, 32). So that we are not taken by surprise when we find it so.

True love is jealous for the truth; it will not bid the heretic "God speed"; it will withdraw from him and avoid those associations where he is tolerated; for he who denies the truth of Christ is a deceiver and an antichrist, and to hold intercourse with him is to play the traitor to the Lord. True love will close the door against the evil teacher, for it knows that if Christ is to be kept in, the deceiver and antichrist must be kept out; it also knows that if evil teaching is admitted, the very springs of life will be poisoned, and that all true godliness will wither and die, "for he who abideth not in the doctrine of Christ hath not GOD," and if God be taken from us what life have we? Do we want to give up the Father and the Son? As a mother would refuse to allow polluted or poisoned food to come into the house and upon the table where her children feed, true love will keep far distant all that is not the truth. And if this cannot be done in the church at large, then it must be done in the Christian home; it is the privilege and responsibility of the head, as well as of each member of it, to be valiant and diligent in this regard. May the grace and mercy of God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father, maintain many in the truth until we see the Saviour face to face, when our joy will be full.

## HELPING THE TRUTH (3 John).

Important as it is to hold the fort and maintain the truth free from all contamination, so that we may have it to walk in for our own joy and the glory of God, it is not everything. It is the first thing, undoubtedly, and without it everything else, no matter how popular with men, must come, more or less, under the Lord's disapprobation. But there is something further, and in its place of equal importance, and this is the subject of John's Third Letter. The gospel must be aggressive, the truth must be active. *It is active*, thank God, and as long as the Holy Ghost—the untiring Servant of the glory of Christ—abides here, the gospel will continue to run and be glorified; and every saint of God who loves the truth, and is intelligent as to it, will desire to be heartily and actively in sympathy with it.

The way that God has chosen in His infinite wisdom for the sending out of the truth to win its victories in the world, is by the preaching. "God has been pleased by the foolishness of the preaching to save them that believe" (1 Cor. 1. 21, N.T.). "How shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach except they be sent? As it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!" (Rom. 10. 14, 15).

John addressed his third epistle to Gaius to commend him for associating himself with the truth in its aggressive character, and with those who went forth with it. Now Gaius walked in the truth and his soul prospered in it. This was evinced by his loving and hearty identification with the outgoings

of it. He could not rest satisfied in knowing it for himself. It had brought him into fellowship with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ, and in that wonderful fellowship he had become intelligent in the thoughts of God. So he welcomed to his home the brethren and strangers who for Christ's Name's sake had gone forth with the truth. He interested himself in their work and welfare, and he sent them on their way in a manner worthy of God, and in so doing he was A FELLOW-HELPER TO THE TRUTH.

In the church in which he was, Diotrophes ruled. It was a fallen church and neither instructed nor encouraged Gaius in what he was doing. There was no sympathy in it with the truth in its activities, the preachers of it were not received, nor the apostles, nor their inspired letters. Tradition and prejudice and the will of man held sway in it, and those who acted according to the truth and in the vigour of divine life were cast out of it. A sad condition of things, and the more so as this is the only mention of the church in John's writings outside the Revelation. But again we find that if the church failed it was in the Christian home that God's thought was carried out, and the consequence was that in the home there was soul-prosperity, while in the church the will of man held sway, and, consequently, evil abounded, and spiritual stagnation.

Not all Christians are in the circumstances of Gaius, and his opportunities, perhaps, come within the reach of the few only. Yet all may show an active interest in the testimony of the Lord, all may whole-heartedly identify themselves with the truth in its activities, and so be "fellow-helpers to the truth": a priceless privilege!

We must not allow anything to hinder us from acting in the fervour and power of divine life and love, and

these short epistles are given to us to encourage us to walk in the truth and to warn us against the things that might hinder us. They are the shortest books of the New Testament and so are apt to be passed by as of minor importance, but the instruction they contain is of the greatest possible moment to us, and is needed to-day more than ever before, and if we ignore it we shall cease to walk in the truth.

We are called to reject the evil and receive the good; to rigidly exclude from our communion all who do not bring the doctrine of Christ, and to faithfully include the brethren and strangers who go forth in His name bearing His testimony, dependent upon God and independent of the world; to have no intercourse, even of the most formal kind, with any who would undermine our holy faith, but to show the heartiest sympathy and in a way

“worthy of God” with those who are labouring to carry forth the word and to build up the saints in it. In short, since the truth has been given to us we have now, in the vigour and the joy of it, to make its protection and propagation our one great business in life. Not in the wisdom of men shall we be able to do this, but we have “received an unction from the Holy One.” The Spirit of God dwells in us to lead us in the truth, and to develop divine affections in our souls, and to direct us as to the right channels in which these affections should run, and He does this latter by giving us understanding in the things that are written. **BELOVED, FOLLOW NOT THAT WHICH IS EVIL, BUT THAT WHICH IS GOOD. HE THAT DOETH GOOD IS OF GOD: BUT HE THAT DOETH EVIL HATH NOT SEEN GOD.**

## “ALAS, MY BROTHER!”

1. Kings 13. 30.

**A**N *arresting and solemn story is that of the man of God, told in 1 Kings 13., who is only known as the disobedient prophet. It were well for all who speak the word of God to read it often and ponder it well. He who carries the word of God to others must himself pay heed to it, for that word is sharper than any two-edged sword. He who faithfully tells out God’s warning word to others must keep himself pure, having no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness against which he speaks, or others may have to mourn his death to spiritual life and true service.*

“Alas ! my brother, round thy tomb  
In sorrow kneeling, and in fear,  
We read the servant’s doom  
Who speaks and will not hear.”

**DO** not be troubled by attacks on **THE SCRIPTURES**. To those who have found the mind of God in them and heard His voice through them, those who attack them appear to be vainly blowing with their feeble breath at a mountain to upset it; they exhaust themselves and it remains as and where it was. Their presumption would look like madness if it were not malice. Their total ignorance of what they are and what the mountain is are clearly proved. The eternal power of the word proves itself more and more to those who hear it and obey it.

## BLEEDING AND BLESSING.

*"As soon as we cease to bleed we cease to bless"*—(Jowett).

WE came across this striking sentence lately, and it set us thinking. The thought contained in it is indeed arresting. What does our service for the Lord COST us? The most of us, alas! only yield a very languid interest in the Lord's interests. We sit in our comfortable easy chairs by glowing fires, we give what we can spare and never miss, we congratulate ourselves that we are doing our duty; but is this really so? Does our service cost us anything? Do we bleed? Are we really a blessing?

Chemists have discovered the exact properties of milk. They have collected these properties in right proportion and brought them together scientifically. They have produced synthetic milk. It looks like milk. It tastes like milk. But if babies were fed on it, they would die. It lacks the mysterious vitamins that only living nature can produce. Thus it was with the apostolic church at Ephesus in the year A. D. 96. The Lord could address them, "I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience" (Rev. II. 2). But note the spring of this service was wanting. Spiritual vitamins were conspicuous by their absence. The Lord had to say, "I have . . . against thee, because thou hast left thy first love" (verse 4).

See how the spring was present in the young Thessalonica church in A. D. 54. The Apostle Paul could write, "Remembering without ceasing your work of FAITH, and labour of LOVE, and patience of HOPE in our Lord Jesus Christ, in the sight of God and our Father" (I Thess. II. 3).

With the Ephesians there were the works, but it is not said they were works of FAITH; there was labour,

but it is not said to be labour of LOVE; there was patience, but it is not said to be patience of HOPE. The Ephesian assembly came behind in no gift. It was not want of correct teaching. It was want of that something that cannot be gained by our mere intelligence, that something that can best be described as spiritual vitamins.

It is only as we are really in touch with the Lord that we shall know what the sentence at the head of this paper implies. The young, little gifted Thessalonica assembly had it. The gifted Ephesian church lacked it. May we not just here ask ourselves honest questions as to where we are in such matters?

There is a world of meaning in the sentence that heads this article. But, as in all else, we have the Lord Jesus Christ as the supreme Example for us. "Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow His steps" (I Peter 2. 21). It is true that the death of the Lord Jesus has an element, nay the chief element in it, that renders it perfectly unique. His was an ATONING death. In this His death stands alone. Nevertheless, He died, not only as a Saviour, but as an example of devotedness to the will of God, even to the giving up of His precious life, and as an example of devotedness He has left us an example to follow, even in His steps.

So when we read the sentence that heads this article, our thoughts went to that scene of long ago, outside the gate of Jerusalem. We read,

*"One of the soldiers with a spear pierced His side, and forthwith came there out blood and water"* (John 19. 34). That this is of the greatest

interest is seen in the solemn asseveration of the inspired writer as eyewitness, "And he that saw it bare record, and his record is true: and he knoweth that he saith true, that ye might believe" (Verse 35).

Was there ever such bleeding? Was there ever such bleeding?

Was there ever such blessing? To arrive at that point, there was the veiling of the Godhead glory. Jesus was never less than the mighty God, but He took upon Himself the form of a bondsman, and veiled His glory: wondrous, marvellous, gracious stoop!

The Word become flesh was the Son of Man with rights to the whole creation. Yet He had not where to lay His head. He said of Himself, "The foxes have holes, and the birds have nests; but the Son of Man hath not where to lay His head" (Matt. 8. 20). Creatures of His hand, members of the lower creation, they had their lairs and their nests, but He, the Lord of them all, was homeless.

All this, His going about doing good, the virtue flowing out of Him at the touch of need and of faith, led directly to the cross. There abandoned to Divine wrath, so that God's love could express itself through a righteous channel, the Lord of glory endured the cross. His precious life was given, He gave Himself, and the bleeding from His side was the proof of it. Was there ever such bleeding? Was there ever such blessing?

Lift up your eyes and behold the answer! The seer, John, could write,

*"I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white garments, and palms in their hands; and cried with a loud voice, saying,*

*Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb" (Rev. 7. 9, 10).*

There stretched in vision in interminable ranks is seen a number baffling the powers of human census, a multitude that no man can number. There is a multitude that no man can number, who have been blessed of the Lord. Was there ever such bleeding? Was there ever such blessing? In this lies the mighty power of the gospel, the power to melt the stubborn heart, and to bend the stubborn knee at the feet of Him, who thus expressed divine love to the uttermost.

Let His example fill our minds and hearts, ever remembering the atoning character of that death, which we cannot share, but remembering that in suffering He left us an example to follow in His steps.

There is such a thing as bleeding to be a blessing. Call to mind the greatest servants of Christ, and you will invariably find that they bled to bless; in other words they sacrificed themselves to serve. It is sacrifice that serves—the sacrifice it may be of time, money, position, comforts, health, even of life itself in order that blessing may come to others.

Examples by the thousand rise up before the mind. There are Christian men and women who have given up brilliant prospects in this world, who have given up home ties, social amenities, spiritual advantages, in many cases life itself in order to carry the gospel to men. They bleed in order to bless, they sacrifice themselves in order to serve.

Take a Bible example. Look at the Apostle Paul. He turned his back upon brilliant prospects. As a young man he was found in a leading place in the Jewish circle. Yet the things he once counted as gain he counted as

loss, even as dung, that he might win Christ.

See how he suffered and endured that he might carry the gospel to the perishing. Necessity was laid upon him, the gospel must be preached whatever the trials or dangers in so doing. Read down the list of the things he endured. It is easily done, but sit down, and try to imagine a tithe of what it meant, and then ask yourself the question, Do I bleed to bless?

"In labours more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft, of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once I was stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day have I been in the deep, in journeyings often

in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils of mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; in weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness" (2 Cor. 11. 23-27).

What a list! The magnitude of it, the dangers he braved, the privations he endured are astounding! What was the mighty motive power that led to this? Surely it was the great Example of his Lord and Master, the Lord Jesus Christ. It was Himself as a peerless Object of his soul, One to whom he owed everything, One, who in the revelation of His person, captivated his soul.

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## THE SPIRIT OF TRUTH.

AT a recent meeting we were considering the coming of the Comforter, the Spirit of Truth. There was one thing in connection with His coming that we felt needed to be emphasized, as it gives a special character to His presence here on earth. It comes out in the Lord's words in John 16 13, "Howbeit when He, the Spirit of Truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth: for He shall not speak of (from) Himself, but whatsoever He shall hear that shall He speak." What seemed to us so striking was that His communications to us, which we have now in the Word, but which He only can unfold to us, are heavenly communications. Having come to dwell in us, He has not become detached from heaven. It is what He hears there that He speaks here. He is here as the Servant of the Father and the Son, to put us into living communication with them and to make

us wise as to their thoughts and words. So many talk much of the Holy Spirit without any thought of from whence He has come, and what the character of His communications are. They want power, but they forget that the only true power is *from on high* (Luke 24). It is heavenly and not earthly, it is from the Father and not of the world. They would bind up the Spirit with themselves and their work in the world, and they do not realize that He has come to bind them up with heaven, to give them heavenly hopes, heavenly communications, that they may bear a heavenly character and be pilgrims and strangers in the world. How much we shall miss if we lose sight of the fact that the Spirit has come from the Father and the Son, to bear witness to us of Christ and His glory, to take His things and show them to us, and to glorify Him.

# THE EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS. (HAMILTON SMITH.)

## Chapter 3.—*continued.*

### II.

#### *The Hindrance to the Heavenly Path*

(Verse 2).

Before proceeding to set before us the Christian path, the apostle pauses to give a solemn warning against those who were seeking to bring into the Christian circle *an earthly religion after the flesh*. He says, "Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers, beware of the concision." Here he alludes to Judaizing teachers who were troubling the assemblies in Galatia and elsewhere.

This danger did not arise from the open opposition of corrupt Judaism to Christianity, but from a corrupting movement inside the Christian circle. Corruption from within is ever more dangerous, and more evil, than opposition from without. For this reason, doubtless, the apostle denounces in scathing terms these Judaizing teachers. They were "dogs" acting in a shameless and conscienceless way: they were "evil workers" actuated by malice. They are not owned as true Jews, but referred to in contempt as "the concision."

The apostle sees that the great effort of the enemy is to draw the Christians from the heavenly Christ, the heavenly calling, and the heavenly path, by involving them in an earthly religion through a corrupting movement within the Christian Assemblies.

This was not the opposition of those in Judaism advocating a return to the Jewish system—a danger to which the Hebrew believers were exposed, and to meet which, the Epistle to the Hebrews was written. This was an effort by those within the Christian circle to mix Judaism with Christianity, law with grace, and ordinances with the work of Christ. The success of such a movement would mean the

entire loss of the heavenly character of Christianity. The subtlety of the snare lies in the fact that there is no suggestion to go back to Judaism, or give up Christianity. The suggestion is that Christianity should be made a little more attractive to the natural man by adding a little of Judaism. How well the enemy knows that this must end in the loss of every vital truth in Christianity.

### III.

#### *The Spiritual Character of Christianity*

(Verse 3).

Having denounced the corrupters of the truth, the apostle presents, in one short passage, an epitome of Christianity, which, if held in power, would deliver from the corruption. He says, "We are the circumcision, who worship by the Spirit of God, and boast in Christ Jesus, and do not trust in flesh" (N.T.).

The true circumcision can only be found in the Christian circle, for circumcision is no longer "outward in the flesh," but "is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter" (Rom. 2. 28, 29). Moreover, Christian worship is in the Spirit, making everything of Christ, and refusing everything of the flesh.

Thus, in Christianity all is vital. There is a work of God in the heart and worship by the Spirit. It has a living Christ for its object, and utterly refuses the flesh. The corrupting movement, within the Christian circle, would set aside all that is vital while retaining the form of Christianity. It would substitute the profession of Christianity, by subscribing to creeds, and submitting to forms, for the true circumcision of the heart. It would establish an outward form of worship by means of buildings, music, vest-

ments and ritual, in place of worship by the Spirit of God. Instead of having no confidence in the flesh, it would make every possible appeal to the flesh. It would end, as the apostle foretells in another epistle, in the corrupt Christendom of our day "having the form of godliness, but denying the power thereof." The Philippians were solemnly warned to beware of this corruption in its inception. We are warned to "turn away" from the corruption in its full development (2 Tim. 3. 5).

#### IV.

#### *Things left Behind in Taking the Heavenly Path (Verses 4-8).*

The apostle appeals to his own history in proof of the utter futility of the flesh in divine things. Does natural birth give any standing before God? Then Paul possessed this qualification in the highest degree, for was he not of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews? Is there any profit in ordinances? If so, in Paul's case, the ordinances had been duly observed. He was circumcised the eighth day, and the requirements of the law had been met with all the strictness of the Pharisee. Is there any gain in maintaining the traditions? If so, Paul, with the utmost zeal, had opposed the introduction of new light, by persecuting the church. Will man's righteousness avail before God? If so, Paul could lay claim to a righteousness beyond others, for, as touching the righteousness of the law, he was blameless.

What was it, then, that led Paul to count as loss the natural advantages of birth, the religion of ordinances, and the righteousness of man? He has one answer. *He had seen Christ in the glory.* From that moment he could say, "What things were gain

to me, those I counted loss for Christ." On the way to Damascus he had the vision of Christ in the glory. He saw Christ—a living Man in the glory—and a company of people on earth united to the Man in the glory and journeying on their way to share His glory. Moreover he discovered that, with all his natural advantages, his religious observances, his religious zeal and blameless life, he had no link with Christ in the glory and no part in the heavenly company on earth. Further, not only the religion of the flesh left him apart from Christ, but could never secure for him any part in Christ, and most solemn of all, he discovered it was the very thing which made him the most deadly enemy of Christ, and His people, that the world has ever seen.

The religion of the flesh might, indeed, give him a great place before man, but he saw that to be united to Christ in the glory—to be of the company on earth who are travelling on to the great day when they will be like Christ and with Christ in life's eternal home—must be infinitely more blessed than to have a place, however great, in man's small world through man's short day. Thus it came to pass, that, from the moment the light from heaven shone into his dark soul, his choice was made, and all that was gain to him as a natural man, before men, was esteemed as loss on account of Christ in the glory.

Surrounded by the world of corrupt Christendom, we see, in our day, a vast profession, built up according to the religion of the flesh, which destroys all that is vital in Christianity. We see that those who are most zealous for this religion of the flesh secure for themselves a great place before men, and are high in the honours of this world. It is a religion that has its gain in this world. Those, however,

who have heard the heavenly call, are well content to count as loss every form of religious flesh, with the worldly advantages it may secure, for they have seen a New Man in a New World—Christ in the glory.

Such was the experience of the Apostle Paul. From the start of his Christian career the glory of this world was dimmed by the light above the brightness of the sun, revealing to him Christ in the glory. Moreover, not only did he count all things loss at the start, but, when thirty years have passed, he still counts "all things but loss." It may be comparatively easy in the freshness of first love to count all things but loss, but in the presence of natural claims, the allurements of the world, and the ever present snare of an earthly religion offering an easier path to the flesh, it is not always easy to continue counting all things loss. Paul, however, not only counted all loss in the past, but he continued to do so. "Yea, doubtless," he says, "I count all things but loss." Further, he not only counted them loss, but he *suffered* the loss of all things. It was not with him simply an estimate of things formed in his mind, but he suffered the actual loss of all things. Finally, in regard to the things of which he had suffered the loss, he says he counts them but dung. We may be sure that he cast no regretful looks at the things he had left behind, for who would regret leaving a heap of filth behind. Our difficulty is to reach a true estimate of the religion according to the flesh, and to see that human righteousnesses, in the sight of God, are but filthy rags.

#### V.

*The Motives that held Paul in the Heavenly Path (Verses 8-12).*

Very blessedly the apostle passes from the things he had left behind to

speak of the motives that energized him in pursuing the heavenly path.

First, he says, "*that I may win Christ.*" He looked up and he saw Christ in the glory, and he looked on to the end of the journey when he would be with Christ and like Christ in the home of glory, and he says, as it were, "My one desire, in the course which I am pursuing, is to reach the goal—to win Christ."

Second, the apostle desires that he may "*be found in Him.*" Paul does not infer that he is not already "in Him" before God, but outwardly, before men, he is still in a body of humiliation as the result of being connected with fallen man. When at last he wins Christ, and has a body of glory, it will be manifest that he is connected with Christ—in His line—and invested with a righteousness which is "of God," secured "through" Christ, and received by "faith" in Christ.

Third, the apostle says, "*that I may know Him.*" For thirty years the apostle had known the Lord, but still he says, "that I may know Him." He is looking on to the time when he will be "face to face." Now, says he, "I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known." Then, too, he will realize the power of His resurrection. The power that was put forth in raising Christ from the dead, and setting Him at God's right hand in the heavenly places, is the exceeding greatness of the power that will set the believer with Christ in glory. To reach this end, Paul, who was in prison, might have to go through sufferings and death. Even so, for the apostle, suffering and death would be lightened by the knowledge that it would be fellowship with Christ in His sufferings, and conformity to His death. In the apostle's estimate, suffering, and a death of shame, were well worth the

while if in any way he might arrive at the resurrection of the dead.

Fourth, the apostle says, "*that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus.*" Paul had before him complete likeness to Christ in glory. This great blessing he did not yet possess, but he longed to "get possession of it" (N.T.). This was the perfection he had before him, and so owns that he is not "already

perfect," but he pursued his path having the prize in view.

These, then, are the motives which held Paul in the heavenly path. "That I may win Christ"; "that I may be found in Him"; "that I may know Him"; and "that I may get possession of it (the prize), seeing that also I have been taken possession of by Christ Jesus" (N.T.).

## "A Great High Priest."

*"Touched with the feeling of our infirmities."*—Hebrews 4. 13.

IN Him I see incarnate Love,  
Once bleeding, now triumphant for my sake,  
I mark Him, how by seraph hosts adored,  
He to earth's lowest cares is still awake.

The sun and every vassal star,  
All space beyond the soar of angel wings,  
Wait on His word; and yet He stays His ear  
For every sigh a contrite suppliant brings.

## Service

IN connection with your work, dear brother, seek the Lord's face and lean on Him. When the body is not robust one is in danger of doing it as a task, as an obligation, and the spirit becomes a little legal; or one yields to weariness, and is discouraged before God. Work is a favour which is granted us. Be quite peaceful and happy in the sense of grace; then go and pour out that peace to souls. This is true service, from which one returns very weary, it may be, in body, but sustained and happy; one rests beneath God's wings, and takes up the service again till the true rest

comes. Our strength is renewed like the eagle's. Ever remember, "My grace is sufficient for thee, and my strength is made perfect in weakness." May communion with God be your chief concern, and the sweet relationships in which we are placed with Him. All is well when we walk in them; then we discern and judge everything, day by day, which hinders communion, and so the heart does not become hard nor the conscience blunted, and we readily enjoy those communications of grace which give strength. Yes, seek, above all, personal communion with the Lord. (J.N.D.)

LARGELY Thou givest, gracious Lord,  
Largely Thy gifts should be restored;  
Freely Thou givest, and Thy word  
Is "freely give."  
He only, who forgets to hoard  
Has learnt to live.

# THE FATHER'S NAME FOR PRESERVATION.

(H. J. VINE)

EVERYONE who believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God; and those who own Him to be the Christ, the Son of the living God, have not learned this from flesh and blood, but the Father has *revealed* it to them. This we learn from the Lord's words to Simon Peter, in Matthew 16. Upon this rock the Son of Man is building His assembly. Those who know the Father, do so because it has pleased the Son to *reveal* Him to them; for, apart from this, no one knows the Father at all (Matt. 11. 27).

The Father's Name has been *manifested* by the Son, and He has also *declared* (or made known) that Name. In the Lord's prayer, recorded in John 17., He demands that *preservation* in that Name should be granted to those whom the Father had given Him.

Some seek for salvation and preservation in religious systems such as the Romish church, but the Holy Spirit emphasizes the fact that those are only found in Him who came in His Father's Name. Great evils began to invade the church of God, the assembly, very early in its history, and in view of this Jude addresses "the called ones, beloved in God the Father and *preserved in Jesus Christ*" (N.T.). He has made, and does make known the Father's Name for the welfare and blessing of God's children. It is their joy and privilege to learn of Him, as they abide in Him, and experience what it means to be kept in the Name He delights to endear to their hearts. The infinite blessedness of the grace, love and holiness of the Father—of all that He is—become increasingly known to them. While they are thus preserved in Him who makes this known to them, His own joy is fulfilled

in them; and they are kept from the evil, and in oneness of purpose and pursuit, as the Father and the Son. The incorruptible riches of the Father's Name are disclosed to this end.

"Love divine their present portion,  
Heaven's choicest store."

In regard to *men generally* Romans 1. 19, 20 says, "What is known of God is manifest among them, for God has manifested it to them—for from the world's creation the invisible things of Him are perceived, being apprehended by the mind through the things that are made, both His eternal power and divinity (*not deity here*)—so as to render them *inexcusable*" (N.T.). Then in regard to *Israel*, the out-called nation, in Deuteronomy 4. 32-39, we read, "Ask now of the days that are past, which were before thee, since the day that God created man upon the earth, and ask from the one side of heaven unto the other, whether there hath been any such thing as this great thing is, or hath been heard like it? Did ever people hear the voice of God speaking out of the midst of the fire, as thou hast heard, and live? Or hath God assayed to go and take Him a nation from the midst of another nation, by temptations, by signs, and by wonders? . . . Unto thee it was shewed, that thou mightest know that Jehovah He is God; *there is none else beside Him!* Out of heaven He made thee to hear His voice, that He might instruct thee. . . . Know therefore this day, and consider it in thine heart, that Jehovah He is God in heaven above, and upon the earth beneath: *there is none else!*" And Exodus 34. 5-7 gives *Jehovah's Name*; but it was the practical denial of this Name which brought about Israel's distresses,

and caused God's Name to be blasphemed among the Gentiles. It is the same in Christendom to-day as regards *the Father's Name*.

¶ Men are inexcusable if they disregard the voice of creation, speaking of God's divinity and power. Those who are wise will seek also to know God as made known to the fathers, and to the separated nations of Israel. The supreme manifestation of the Father, however, is by the Son exclusively; who said, "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father." The understanding of this, and the right appreciation of it, will give colour to the children of God at the present time, when Christendom largely ignores its surpassing favour. True blessing, and preservation also, are found there, nevertheless.

Jesus prayed, "Holy Father, *KEEP THROUGH THINE OWN NAME* those whom Thou hast given Me, that they may be one, as we are. While I was with them in the world, I kept them in Thy Name; those that Thou gavest Me I have guarded, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition, that the Scripture might be fulfilled. And now I come to Thee; and these things I speak in the world, that they might have My joy fulfilled in themselves. . . . I demand not that Thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that Thou shouldest keep them from the evil." Preservation, oneness, and His own joy in them, are the things Jesus desired for His own. He kept them in the Father's Name when on earth, and now He is on high He asks the Father also to keep them in His Name. Here we may discover the source of true preservation from the evil of the world to-day.

In this respect, it should be observed, God is addressed as *Holy Father*;

preservation from the evil of an unholy world being in view. So in verse 25, when the darkness and ignorance of this sinful world are contrasted, it is *Righteous Father*. When life in a world of death is the subject, the Lord Jesus speaks of Him as the *Living Father*; and referring to the glory and the love He had known along with Him before the world was, He says in intimate nearness, "*Father*"; and when He had put away sin by His sacrifice, and was risen from the tomb, He connected His own with Himself in eternal relationship of love, saying, "*My Father and your Father, . . . My God and your God.*"

"We bless Thee, God and Father,  
We share Thy Son's blest place;  
We know Thy love and favour,  
The shining of Thy face."

And in this connection His oft-repeated words should specially be noticed—"Those whom Thou hast given Me"—for these words express how deeply and divinely the Son valued the love-gift of the Father to Himself; and show how tenderly He cares for all those who are thus His in a unique way, having been given to Him by the Father as a worthy gift—poor sinners though we were—for His Son to cherish—made suitable by divine and intimate grace; taken out of an evil world to shine resplendent for His pleasure in heavenly glory. Well may the Father's Name be joy meanwhile, as that day draws nigh, so that we may be preserved for His pleasure.

At the very close of the Old Testament days, a picture of living interest and instruction is shown to us in Malachi 3. 16. A preserved remnant, *valuing Jehovah's Name* are seen in frequent converse! Nine times His "Name" is so mentioned in that short book, in which is disclosed the

sinful backsliding of both priests and people! The preserved, however, make no vain attempt at national recovery! but, falling back on the Name of their faithful Jehovah, they find a uniting Theme in Himself; and "they that feared Jehovah spake often one to another"! *They "thought upon His Name!"* What He is was their entrancing subject! and what engaged them called forth His special interest!—"the Lord hearkened and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before Him for them!" Moreover, so precious were they in His eyes, it is recorded, "And they shall be Mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up My jewels!" If the Lord so valued the preserved among His people, then, what must He think of those who are preserved in the Father's Name at the close of this day of grace? May that wondrous Name, manifested and made known by His Son, more habitually colour our converse as His coming draws nigh; and may no glamour or pride of worldly religion be permitted to rob us of our hallowed privileges.

Jehovah was often named, "*The Holy One of Israel*"; the Lord Jesus is often called, "*The Holy One of God*"; and the Spirit of Truth, the Comforter, given from the Father, sent by the Son, and come Himself, is named, "*The Holy Spirit*" In His prayer for our preservation, as we have pointed out, the Lord addressed God as "*Holy Father*"; for, although infinite grace and love mark that precious Name, holiness does also. Another vivid picture in the Old Testament strikingly emphasizes this. When Isaiah saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, he heard one seraphim cry to another, "Holy, holy, holy is Jehovah of hosts" (Isa. 6. 1-8). John 12. 41 says the glory of Jesus was seen then

—"These things said Esaias, when he saw His glory, and spake of Him." The King is there named; in Acts 28. 25 it says, the Holy Spirit then spoke through Isaiah; and the description, "Holy, holy, holy," is doubtless descriptive of our thrice holy God, for there it is also said, "*Who will go for US?*"

The children of God to-day are asked to "Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us"; the eternal and unchanging relation of children having been given to us by that love. Therefore we may well sing with grace and melody in our hearts,

"O Holy Father, keep us here  
In that blest Name of love,  
Walking before Thee without fear,  
Till all be joy above."

Salvation and the life eternal are ours now through Him who has made known the Father's Name! What a contrast this is to the condemnation and death which accompanied the law-giving to Israel and the proclamation of Jehovah's Name! for if the announcing of the law was followed by the death of 3000! the introduction of saving grace with the gift of the Spirit was blessed by the salvation of 3000! God's Name of grace and love has been disclosed! The Father is seen in the Son! His words, the words of life, have been uttered! When Jesus said, "No man can come unto Me, except it were given unto him of My Father," many ceased to follow Him; but Simon Peter said, "Lord to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of life eternal: and we have believed and known that Thou art the Holy One of God." The Son making known the Father's Name and the words of eternal life go together Peter was preserved by the Son in the Name of the Father

## JEHOVAH'S SERVANT—(Contd.).

(A J ATKINS)

Isaiah 49. 1-9; 50. 4-9.

IN these passages\* we hear Jehovah's servant speaking; they comprise for the most part His own testimony concerning Himself. The features of this testimony are remarkable, but so also is the fact that He does thus testify of Himself and yet we feel no incongruity. The Lord Jesus, both in prophecy and in the Gospels, makes most marvellous claims and assertions concerning Himself; and yet we always feel how entirely consistent they are with His Person and character. For example: "I am meek and lowly in heart"; "I am the Light of the World," "I am the Bread of Life"—how strange and almost revolting would these sound on the lips even of Paul! But on the lips of Christ they strike us as at once fitting and profound. The reason is to be found in the fact that *He* is both God and Man, and His Person gives character to all He is and says.

What is it that stands out in the declarations now before us? It is, we suggest, the *God-consciousness* of His Servant. It is plain that He lives and labours in the consciousness of God; and if He is to speak of Himself, it is but to declare what God has said, and what God has done or will do! Surely never was service so unmarred by self.

Let us listen to His words. "Jehovah hath *called me* . . . hath *made mention* of my name . . . hath *made my mouth* like a sharp sword; in the shadow of his hand hath he *hid* me, and *made* me a polished shaft; in his quiver hath he *hid* me; and *said* unto me . . . Jehovah . . . *formed* me (49. 1-5); . . . hath *given* me the tongue of the learned . . . *wakeneth* morning by morning

. . . *hath opened* my ear . . . the Lord God will help me . . ." (50. 4-9).

From the beginning to the end He attributes all concerning Himself and His work to God. That work originated in God's choice and call in God's strength it would be undertaken; and His glory would be its end.

Let us with unshod feet draw near to consider more closely this wonder. As we do so we observe that this consciousness of God manifests itself in three ways; first of all in *absolute confidence in God*. The Servant speaks of His words being effective like a sharp sword and like a polished arrow. A sword needs an arm to wield it; an arrow needs a hand to direct it: both are useless in themselves, and depend upon a skilled agent. They are instruments only. So does this Servant illustrate His relation to His God. If God's choice and call conditioned the fact of His service, it would be God's use of Him alone that would condition its success.

This confidence in God is maintained not only in days of success and victory but also in those of apparent defeat. It is then that faith is tested, and it is difficult not to lose heart. The words of Jehovah's Servant in this connection are deeply touching: "I have laboured in vain, I have spent my strength for nought and in vain." Were these the feelings of His heart in the circumstances narrated in Matthew 11., when the cities wherein His mighty works had been done had rejected Him, and the people were unresponsive and even His forerunner was beginning to doubt? Judged by circumstances His mission had even then failed, but all that is elicited from His heart is, "I praise Thee, O Father . . ." and "Come unto me, all ye that labour . . ."

\* The second one, viz., 50. 4-9, was inadvertently omitted from the reference in the previous article

And at the end failure appeared to give place to tragedy. The events that culminated in the cross almost completely overwhelmed the faith of His disciples. But His confidence in God was unbroken throughout. What unintended truth there was in the gibe hurled at Him on the cross: "*He trusted in God*"! God had indeed declared of Him, "He shall not fail, nor be discouraged"; and the Servant is able to say through all: "Yet is my judgment with Jehovah, and my work with my God. . . . Yet shall I be glorified in the eyes of Jehovah, and My God shall be My strength." This is the faith that honours God.

This, too, is the faith that God honours! What a magnificent response Jehovah gives! "It is a small thing that thou shouldest be My Servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and restore the preserved of Israel. I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that Thou mayest be My salvation unto the end of the earth." Universal salvation will result from this Servant's faith in His God.

Together with His absolute confidence in God, we see also His *entire dependence*. Indeed, we may say that these are always found in association. He who trusts in God, does not depend on himself. Independence of will is the essence of sin. In nothing, perhaps, is it more manifest than in the use of the tongue. "The tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity. . . . An unruly evil, full of deadly poison" (James 3. 6, 8). He who was Son as well as Servant might well have spoken what He would: but this is what He here declares. "The Lord God hath given Me the tongue of the learned (the instructed, the disciple), that I should know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary. He wakeneth morning by morning, He wakeneth Mine ear to hear as the learned." No

wonder it was said by His enemies: "Never man spake like this man!"; and by His disciples, "Thou hast the words of eternal life!" No wonder that weary, seeking souls marvelled at the gracious words that proceeded out of His mouth! Seven times in the Gospel of John it is declared that the words He spoke were given Him by the Father (7. 16; 8. 28, 46, 47; 12. 49; 14. 10, 24; 17. 8). They were words that came from God's heart and reached to the depths of man's. How striking, too, were His silences! His activities and His delays (John 11) illustrate the same. In all is seen His entire dependence upon God.

His consciousness of God is seen in the third place in His *perfect obedience*. "The Lord God hath opened My ear, and I was not rebellious: I turned not away back" Here is suggested the true "Hebrew servant" who would not go out free but was devoted to service for ever; and in this case to a *service that was to cost much*. Its keyword—as we shall see more fully later—was suffering. "I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair: I hid not my face from shame and spitting." As the New Testament declares: "He took upon Him the form of a servant . . . and became *obedient* unto death, even the death of the cross."

Nor did this suffering come upon Him unexpectedly. With us what a mercy it is that the future is all unknown! But He knew all beforehand, and "set His face like a flint."

What was the secret of this matchless steadfastness and fidelity? Is it not found in these words: "The Lord Jehovah will help me; therefore shall I not be confounded. . . . I know I shall not be ashamed. He is near that justifieth me. . . . the Lord Jehovah will help me; who is he that shall condemn me?" (50. 7-9).

# THE MISSION OF THE CHURCH IN THE WORLD.

(W. BRAMWELL DICK.)

*"He hath anointed Me to preach the gospel"* (Luke 4. 18).

*"Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel"* (Mark 16. 15).

**I**F it be the mission of the church, as we saw in our May Number, to continue the *life* of Christ in this world, so it is undoubtedly the mission of the church to continue the *service* of Christ in the world.

The first Scripture quoted above gives us His first utterance, after coming out on His public ministry, as recorded by the inspired writer, Luke; and his Gospel, as we know, is packed full of the wonderful preaching of Him who came from God with His hands full of blessing for men, to proclaim to needy sinners the marvellous story of His grace. We have only to recall the incomparable tripartite parable of Luke 15., yea, to read it once again, to have our hearts thrilled by a revelation of grace incomprehensible, unfathomable, divine. As we contemplate it, we wonder and worship. We cannot speak of Him as "the Prince of Preachers" because He stands alone in all His peerless dignity and greatness, the Revealer of the heart of God; the Exponent of His grace; the perfect expression, in His own Person, of all that He is. Having accomplished redemption, and having laid the basis for all the purposes of God to be fulfilled He has taken His place at "the right hand of the Majesty on High"; and from that exalted position He, in unison with "the Holy Ghost sent down from Heaven" (1 Peter 1. 12) is carrying on a great work.

Let us turn to Acts. 2. and see what happened. While the disciples, in number "about an hundred and twenty" (1. 15), were gathered together, the Holy Spirit descended—"filled all the house where they were

sitting" (2. 2) and filled the disciples (verse 4). At that moment Christ commenced the great work of which, "in the days of His flesh," He had spoken, as recorded in Matthew 16. 18. "Upon this rock I will build My church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."

The house of God, no longer a temple made with hands (Acts 7. 48), but "a spiritual house" (1 Peter 2. 5) was inaugurated. 1 Timothy 3. 15 makes it quite clear that "the house of God," as we are now considering it, is "the church of the living God." Now see what happened. These disciples at once declared to the astonished people "the wonderful works of God" (verse 11); in other words they preached the gospel. This was immediately followed by Peter's proclamation of the good news of a living Saviour in the glory of God through whom "remission of sins and the gift of the Holy Ghost" might be obtained (verses 36-38). That day a multitude numbering "about three thousand souls" believed the glad tidings, and the closing verse of our chapter tells us that "the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved." Further on in the book we read, of the apostles, that "*daily* in the Temple, *and in every house*, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ" (5. 42); and later, of the disciples, also, after the martyrdom of Stephen, were scattered abroad, it is recorded that "they went everywhere preaching the Word" (8. 4). Soon after this Saul was converted, "and *straightway* he preached Christ in the synagogues, that He is the Son of God." (9. 20). In due time he, who

became the apostle of the Gentiles, received the revelation of the great secret of eternity regarding the church as the body of Christ. In what was probably a valedictory address to the elders at Ephesus, after recounting some of his soul exercise as well as his persecution in his tireless service for his blessed Lord, he said: "None of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, *to testify the gospel of the grace of God*" (20-24). He went to Thessalonica and went into the synagogue three Sabbath days speaking to the people, and assuring them "that this Jesus, *whom I preach unto you*, is Christ" (17. 3). The result of this was the forming of the local assembly in that place, and to them he wrote in what is supposed to be the first epistle that the Holy Spirit led him to pen:—

"From you sounded out the word of the Lord not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place your faith to God-ward is spread abroad; so that we need not to speak anything" (1 Thess. 1. 8).

We trust we have not wearied our readers with all this, but we desire to show that the first business of those who formed the nucleus of the church on the day of Pentecost was to preach the gospel; probably the gospel of the kingdom in the first instance, then the gospel of the grace of God. The first result was three thousand souls added to the church. That number became greater day by day, and, as the company increased, the gospel testimony spread far and wide. All this shows *not* that the church preaches; it is obviously impossible for it either to teach or preach; but it is the centre

from which the good news radiates to all around. It is by the preaching of the gospel that souls are gathered into the church. God might have chosen some other means, but He has been pleased to choose that means and that means alone. Hence it is that in Ephesians 4. where we get in detail the gifts distributed by Him who is the Head of the body, after apostles and prophets come evangelists (verse 11): the evangelist who is in measure, intelligent in the truth, works from the assembly and has the assembly in view. He realizes that every person who believes the gospel is not only a sinner saved from the lake of fire, but that he, or she, is one more "added to the church." This gives great dignity to service for the Lord, and should be an additional incentive to go forth with the glad tidings. We cannot insist upon it too strongly that the only concern of the church as such, in relation to the world, is, first, as we observed in last issue, to be a transcript of Christ, in other words, that those who compose it should show forth the excellencies of Christ, and that in them His life should be reproduced; and, second, to see to it that "the gospel of the grace of God" is preached to those who can hear it only from the lips of the preachers, and who can see that grace expressed only in the lives of those who preach it and those who have been brought under its beneficent influence.

If our adorable Lord was "anointed to preach the gospel" it is not to be supposed that His testimony was to cease with His leaving this world. On the contrary, having made it possible by His death for the scope of the gospel to be as great as the heart of God, who is the Author of it, He commissioned His disciples, who were to form the foundation of the church, to

“preach the gospel to every creature.” Any idea of separating the preaching of the gospel and the teaching with regard to the church is entirely foreign to that which is set forth in the Holy Scriptures. He who preaches and who has not the church in view is unable to “declare all the counsel of God,” and to share in the joy of God when souls are saved, and he who enters into the thoughts of God with regard to the church must of necessity be tremendously in earnest as to the preaching of the gospel. He will want his children to know it, he will want the children of other people to know it; and he will want men and women of every nationality to know it, because he knows that to-day God is taking out from the nations a people for His Name (Acts 15. 14), and He is doing that by the preaching of the gospel. The fact that the church, as a responsible witness for Christ here, has so lamentably failed, in no way relieves us of our responsibility. That failure has not caused God to deviate a single hair's-breadth from His purpose. It is still by the preaching of the gospel that souls are being gathered into the church; and not until the church is completed and raptured to heaven will “the gospel of the grace of God” cease to be preached. The privilege, nay, more, the responsibility of those of us who form the church is—not to fold our hands and say “All is failure”; nor is it to lower the standard and seek to alter the terms of the gospel to suit present-day conditions, but to take to the world “the gospel of the grace of God” with not one jot or tittle altered, knowing that that gospel has still its ancient power, and that nothing else will God use for the accomplishment of His purpose in the salvation of souls, and in the completing of His church. It is just here that we come to the practical application, and

we desire very specially, in the first instance, to address ourselves to our dear fellow-believers who, it may be, are either influenced by, or who are perhaps groaning under Modernistic tendencies in the religious circle in which they move. The Modernist says, with a subtlety that is of the devil, “the truth has not changed, but it must be expressed in terms suited to present-day requirements.” That people to-day would not listen to such preaching as that of a century ago. That whereas in the days of our grandfathers people were converted through the preaching of salvation from hell, the present generation does not believe in that, therefore we must not preach it. In other words we must alter God's gospel to suit men's ever-changing ideas. These men get the highest positions in what is called by them the church, that is, in the various religious organizations. Year by year they deplore dwindling congregations; worse still, reduced revenue; and general lack of interest in their particular “cause”, failing to see that the ordinary man knows full well that what they give is not what he should get, and that he has nothing but contempt alike for them and for their so-called preaching.

The Secular Society, and its agents, are not required to-day, for their work is being much more successfully accomplished under the guise, or disguise, of religion. To the true believers who are mixed up with this, we would say read, on your knees in God's presence, 2 Corinthians 6. 14-18, Hebrews 13. 13; and Revelation 18. 4, and act upon it. You can count upon His support, no matter how trying the experience may be. To return, however, to that which is mainly before us, shall we ask ourselves are we individually, brother and sister, in

Christ, answering to our privilege of preaching the gospel? The sister may speak of Christ with meekness to those with whom she meets and who know Him not. It may be she speaks of Him to the children in her Sunday-school class. The brother speaks to his associates in business, at work, etc., and it may be he finds opportunity, if the Lord so orders it, of sounding out the glad tidings indoors and out of doors. In whatever way it works, we realize that God has called us to this great service, has commissioned and fitted us for this glorious privilege, and that if we fail to function *just where He has placed us* it is a serious matter. We do not say "Lord, and what shall this man do?" but we hear Him say to us, "Go ye!" and by His grace we seek to go. No service too lowly, no work too obscure; enough that we go at His bidding and seek to do His will. The architect of a great building may be honoured and fêted when his great work is accomplished, but the bricklayer's labourer, unknown and unrecognized, can say, "I carried the hod with the mortar, and I did my bit." It will be a great day when our blessed Lord puts the finishing touch on the great work of building His assembly, and, when all is complete and He is honoured, He will share that honour with the humblest believer who had any little part therein.

Now let us sum up:—

a. The gospel of the grace of God is, in the hands of the Holy Spirit, the greatest power in the world to-day (Rom 1. 18).

b. The result of the preaching of the gospel brings joy to the heart of God (Luke 15. 10).

c. The gospel, *and nothing but the*

*gospel*, meets the need of men and women (1 Tim. 1. 11-17).

d. The preaching of the gospel is the means that God has chosen for the forming of the church (Eph. 3 8-11).

e. The privilege and responsibility of those who form part of the church is to preach it (Rom. 10. 13-15), and to live it (Phil. 1. 27, first clause; 1 Thess. 1. 5-7).

f. The day of opportunity is fast drawing to a close (Rev. 22. 12). In view of all this we have to inquire: Is the church fulfilling its mission in the world in this respect? To come from the general to the particular; from the mass to the individual, we have each to ask ourselves: Am I, as part of that great whole, doing my bit? We are not doing so if we are inactive; nor are we doing so if the testimony that we render is nullified by a life that is not consistent with the message. Let us get deep down in our hearts the sense that we have each to consider ourselves and our responsibility and not that of our fellow-believers in general. Though we will pray that we and all our brethren may be aroused. Let us pray that we may be mightily impressed with the claims of the glory of God and of our peerless Lord and Master. That we may be conscious of the crying need all around for which the gospel is the one and only remedy. That we may appreciate the greatness of work that has as its object the building of Christ's Assembly. That the hope of the Lord's near return may so grip us that we shall realize that there is no time to lose. That we may feel somewhat like that prince of preachers when he wrote: "Woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel! (1 Cor 9 16).

# ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

## The Eternal Sonship of Christ.

"I have read your remarks on 'The Eternal Sonship of Christ' in your April issue, p 95. I send further correspondence on the subject. It is a vitally important one and I hope more will be said about it"—TORONTO.

IF your correspondent were an untaught believer who was willing to learn, and who had been drawn away through his ignorance into this error—the denial of the eternal Sonship of Christ—you might have patience with him and continue your endeavours to help him. But he writes as one who knows, and condemns those who hold the truth as being in error. Surely Titus 3. 10 applies to such a one. We could have no fellowship with one claiming to be a Christian as long as he persisted in pressing this teaching, for we believe it must sap our holy faith of its very life for all who accept it. J. N. Darby says of it. "It is of immense import, because I have not the Father's love sending the Son out of heaven if I have not Him as Son before born into the world. The Son gives up the kingdom to the Father (1 Cor. 15). I lose all that the Son is, if He is only so as incarnate, as well as the Father's love in sending Him"; and again, "The disciples believed that He came out from God but knew not yet in its fulness, known thus by the Holy Ghost that He *came forth from the Father*. In this they were dull: it is the life of the saints. And this is it that makes the notion of sonship in Christ only when incarnate so destructive to the very elementary joy of the church, and abhorrent to those who have communion by the Spirit in the truth" (Col. Writings, vol. 3, page 135).

Your correspondent builds up his argument upon the basis that the epithet, "Eternal Son," does not occur in Scripture, and claims that the Lord is not addressed as Son except in incarna-

tion. But the question is, does the Word teach us that He only became the Son when He became flesh, or does it teach that it was the only-begotten Son which is in the bosom of the Father who dwelt among us as a man to make known to us the Father whose love He had known from everlasting?

Now that God is fully revealed, how is He known? As the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. Is this a revelation of something that did not exist before it was revealed? Surely not for had that been the case it would not have been a revelation at all. The coming of the Lord into this world brought into revelation what had been hidden and yet that existed from all eternity, that God is Father, Son and Holy Ghost.

More than once the Lord declared, "I came forth from the Father," but if there was no Son in Eternity there was no Father from whom He could come forth. The Apostle says, "We have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world" (1 John 4. 14). But if He only became the Son after He was sent, the apostle's testimony was false.

Deeply solemn are the words, "Who-soever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father," and those who deny the eternal Sonship of Christ come perilously near to this. But we know that that eternal life which was with the Father has been manifested to us in the Son who came forth from the Father, and as this that we have heard from the beginning remains

in us we shall continue in the Son and in the Father (1 John 2. 24). Thus we have and enjoy a life and its relationship that are heavenly and eternal.

Your correspondent would admit that the Persons in the Godhead are eternal in their being. What was their relationship to each other? We can only know what has been revealed, and it has been revealed to us that the Father knows the Son and that the Son knows the Father (Matt. 11.). And

that the Son is the only-begotten in the bosom of the Father (John 1.). And that the Father loved Him before the foundation of the world (John 17).

We have briefly touched on this subject again because we hear of this false teaching breaking out in other places. To any in doubt about it we would commend a small volume, "THE SON OF GOD," by J. G. Bellett, 2/-, which may be obtained from the office of this Magazine.

## Healing the Sick.

"Seeing in 'The Scripture Truth' of March that you comment on certain Scripture about healing the sick, I'll ask you—What does Jesus mean in Mark 16. 15-18?"

"He does not say as on the first time He sent the Apostles: Go only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, but He says: Go ye into ALL THE WORLD. And these signs shall follow them that BELIEVE (verse 18). They shall lay hands on the sick and they shall recover.

"If these things were only for the Jews, why does Paul speak about healing the sick to the Corinthians (Cor. 12. 9).

"You must comment on this for me. Jesus made me immediately whole after I had kept the bed for more than two years. I was on the point of death when He healed me.

"I must now know if this was from the devil or from Jesus."—NORWAY.

**UNDOUBTEDLY** the Lord gave power to His apostles to heal the sick, and to perform even greater miracles than that, as the Scripture cited proves, and this power was evidently passed on to those that believed their word. Yet not to all of them, as 1 Cor. 12. 29, 30 proves. These gifts were distributed to the Gentile believers according to the will of the Holy Spirit of God. These powers were given as signs to those that did not believe. They were exercised to convict men of the fact that the word that was being preached was from God, but the word was the great thing. People are not saved, nor is faith produced by seeing great works, but by hearing wonderful words. John 2. 23-25 is proof of this, and "faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the word of God."

When the word spread and Christianity was established there was no further need for the signs that were given at the beginning, and they ceased. Even Paul, as we have pointed out, though all the signs of an apostle were seen through him, did not exercise the gift of healing upon his brethren (see Phil. 2. 25-27; 1 Tim. 5. 23; 2 Tim. 4. 20).

We do not question that the Lord does heal people in answer to the prayer of faith to-day, we know that He does, and we do not question your testimony to His mercy to you. But that is a different thing to the excitement and pretensions and exaggerated claims made by those who in these days conduct what are called "Faith Healing Campaigns."

## “The Time for the Breaking of Bread.”

“I was talking to a servant of the Lord the other day who said that to have the breaking of bread or the Lord's Supper in the morning was all wrong and unscriptural and error. It was evening when the Lord Jesus instituted it and it should be kept in the evening, and that the preaching of the Word and saving of souls should be first.”—SURREY.

**T**HIS servant of the Lord is not the first who has put the needs of men before what is wholly for the Lord. The disciples were in the same state of mind when they complained of the precious spikenard being poured upon the Lord instead of being sold and given to the poor, but nothing that was ever done in the Gospels received the same commendation from the Lord (Matt 26. 6-13). Let us give ourselves whole-heartedly to the preaching of the word and the salvation of souls, and we have seven days in the week in which to do it, but let us not put into a secondary place that which is wholly for the Lord, a sweet savour to Him

His Supper brings before the souls of His saints His great love that carried Him into death for them, and it was His special request, “This do in remembrance of Me.” In answering to that request they show their love to Him, and that they do not forget. Our spiritual instincts teach us that this should be first, that nothing could be more fitting than that the first day of the week—the Lord's-day—should begin with it.

It is true that the Supper was instituted in the evening, at the Passover Supper, and this was important as teaching them that the old had to give place to the new, but no time was specified as to the taking of the Lord's Supper as was the case with the Passover. It is also true that the Lord met His disciples on the evening of the resurrection day, but that was because they were not ready to meet Him before. He had had a day of gracious

activity in regard to them to prepare them for that meeting, if they had had faith they would have been at the Sepulchre very early in the morning, and He would have met them then. It is true that the disciples gathered in the evening to break bread (Acts 20. 7). But the first day of the week was not a holiday for them, and they gathered together as soon as they could. The question then might be asked, why not partake of the Lord's Supper at day-break? Because the Lord's Supper is a communion and not an individual feast, it is the feast of the assembly of God, and in the instructions given to us in regard to it we are told to “tarry one for another.” There must be mutual consideration and an hour fixed that will be most convenient to all. For while the Lord expects that our hearts shall put Him first, He wants us to consider one another. He puts us under no bondage and wants us to be unburdened, hence the twofold exhortation, “If any man hunger let him eat at home,” and “tarry one for another” (1 Cor. 11.).

We believe that nothing is said as to the time when the Supper should be taken, because in one sense it is immaterial, and the Lord would not put us under any legal bondage. It is a matter not for rule and regulation but for the heart, and if the hearts of His saints are right, it will be done rightly whenever it is done, but it will be the first thing before the soul and not the last, and no service, no matter how valuable in its place, will be allowed to displace it.

## OUR COMMISSION.

(J. T. MAWSON.)

A word to those who preach the Gospel at home and abroad.

*"Wist ye not that I must be about MY FATHER'S BUSINESS?"* (Luke 2. 49).

*"Thus it is written, and thus it BEHOVED CHRIST TO SUFFER, and to rise from the dead the third day; and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His Name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem"* (Luke 24. 46, 47).

*"And, behold, I send the promise of My Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high"* (Luke 24. 49).

WE must not make the mistake of dividing the work of the Lord into sections, or of thinking of what is done abroad and among the heathen as another work or a different kind of work from what is being done at home. The work of the Lord is one work, wherever it is being done, and there is no difference in the sight of our God between the proud white man who boasts in his liberty and progress, and the dark-skinned heathen in his degradation and superstition. One gospel only can meet the need of each and both. There is one Lord in the glory, the Master of all His servants, who directs them according to His sovereign will and wisdom, and one Holy Spirit on earth who is using the one gospel of our salvation with one great end in view. All who believe that gospel are brought into the one body of Christ—His assembly on earth which, when completed, will be presented to Him who gave Himself for it—His all-glorious bride, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing (Eph. 5. 2). What an end that is to have in view! and every bit of the work of the Lord that is being done on earth by His faithful servants is contributing to that great end. Who would not rejoice to have a part in it, or be willing to be sent abroad or to abide at home as the Lord may direct, in order to gather some out of the world for the Lord for the fulfilment

of this great purpose of God! It has been said that "there are vacancies in the heart of Christ and He has sent His evangelists into the world to find souls that will fill those vacancies." The thought is a sweet and true one; may it stir us up to diligently seek these souls out of every nation, kindred, people and tongue, for the joy of our Master and Lord.

### *Our Commission.*

If I were asked what right we have to preach the gospel and where we got our commission, I should say we got it from Luke 24. The commissions in Matthew's and Mark's Gospels have a Jewish character, they were given specially to "the eleven." The Matthew commission has yet to be fulfilled, and the Mark commission was fulfilled in apostolic days; but this in Luke's Gospel is ours and will continue until this gospel day is finished. It was given not to "the eleven" only, but to "them that were with them" also (verse 33), and we come in there. Luke's Gospel is the Gospel of unmeasured grace. In it the Lord is not presented as the King of the Jews, nor even as Jehovah's Servant to gather Israel, but as the Son of Man come to seek and to save the lost, whether they be Jew or Gentile. Indeed, I believe that I am right in saying that it was written by a Gentile to a Gentile, and

so it is very specially our Gospel, and while we value Matthew's and Mark's inspired presentation of the Lord—for every view of Him is wonderful and indispensable—we ought specially to prize the Gospel of Luke.

*The Father's Heart the Source.*

I want to show you the place that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost have in the sending forth of the gospel to the lost. This gospel has come from the Father. It is significant that it is in this Gospel of Luke that the Lord's words as a boy of twelve are given, the first of His wonderful utterances: "Wist ye not that I must be about My Father's business?" And if we are in doubt as to what that business was, let us listen to the Lord's own account of it: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because 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." You will notice that these were the Lord's first recorded words of public ministry in Luke's Gospel, as the others were His first recorded words in private. The Father sent Him, and the gospel that He brought into the world and that He has committed to us has come directly from the Father's heart. Yes, if you would find the source of it you must go past Calvary, past Bethlehem, up above all angels and spiritual principalities, to the very heart of the Father.

Nor must we forget that it is in this Gospel of Luke alone that the first words that broke from the suffering lips of Jesus on the cross were, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." He knew well the ear and heart into which He poured that

prayer. The Father makes merry and is glad over every soul that is won from the slavery of sin and brought back to Himself. We learn this from the fifteenth chapter of our Gospel, where the activities of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are shown to us in parable and story. As soon as the prodigal arose from the filth of the swine field, so soon did the father run to meet him. We are told that, "when he was a great way off his father saw him," for the eyes of love are very keen, "and he had compassion on him," for the heart of love is very tender, "and he ran," for the feet of love are very fleet; and before the prodigal could utter a word, he was kissed with the kiss of forgiveness, and the robe and ring and royal shoes were put upon him and the whole house feasted and was glad. It is a wonderful picture, painted for us by the Son of God. Is it over-coloured? Did Jesus exaggerate when He thus described the reception that is given to the repentant sinner by the rejoicing Father? Nay, that were not possible. He who is the truth could speak nothing but the truth, and thus He has described for us the way that God welcomes to His heart and home benighted, devil-oppressed, sin-laden sinners. What an indescribable privilege it must be to be the means of bringing about such joy as this, "Joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth"!

We have tasted the joy of such a reception, I trust, every one of us. We have felt the burden of our guilt, the misery of our sinful state, the hopelessness of our future, and we have turned—it was with great trepidation—to God, and He surprised us by the exceeding riches of His grace:—

"Trembling, we had hoped for mercy,  
Some lone place within His door;  
But the robe, the ring, the mansion,  
All were ready long before."

We know the joy and relief of being kissed by the Father and made meet for His house. But do we know this other joy? "Let US eat and be merry," said the Father. Are we having our part in that? Are we among the "US"? Are we in communion with the heart of the Father in the outgoings of His grace? This is our privilege, and now is our opportunity. **N O W**—now!

*The Sufferings of Christ the Cost.*

Our hearts are moved to gladness as we think of the Father's part in the outgoing of the gospel, but they will be solemnized, deeply solemnized, as we consider the cost. Hear the Lord's own words after He had opened the understandings of His disciples that they might understand the Scriptures: "*Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day; and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His Name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.*" My brethren, but for this the Father's love would never have been known; but for this sinners could never have been saved from death and darkness for life and glory; apart from this we should have had no gospel to preach, there could have been no way of repentance opened for men and no remission of sins for those who repented. "**IT BEHOVED CHRIST TO SUFFER.**" Thus it was written. It was no after-thought of His. His cross was not an accident, something unforeseen, it was written that thus it must be. It was written in the volume of the book of God's counsels before the world was founded, but written also in the Holy Scriptures that men of faith in former times might read and hope, and the Scriptures cannot be broken. Some have tried to break them, some have tried to tear from the Scriptures the foretelling and the fact of the

sufferings of Christ. They have only done it to their own destruction, for if Christ did not suffer, the Just One, for us the unjust, there is no way to God; and those who deny those sufferings and the reason of them, have no Saviour. It is intensely sad that a great number who profess to preach the Word are doing this very thing. It is bad enough that they should do it in this land, where the Bible itself is a sure witness against them, but how indescribably sad it is that many of this ilk should be going to the mission field carrying a gospel without the cross, a message in which there is no room for Christ who suffered for sinners and no redeeming blood! Thank God we believe the Scriptures, and nothing greater was written in them than this, "It behoved Christ to suffer." It was a necessity. Those hours of darkness on the cross, when He cried, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" were a necessity. He was delivered there for our offences. Divine, eternal justice demanded this if we were to be saved, and

"No victim of inferior worth  
 Could ward the stroke that justice aimed,  
 For none but He in heaven and earth  
 Could offer that which justice claimed."

You missionary brethren and all of us who serve the Lord in the gospel, need often to muse upon the cross. We need to consider the great price that has been paid before such a gospel as we have to preach could be committed to us. We need to feel deeply that the atoning blood is the very life of our message; to it we owe all our blessing, and it is the love that made our great Redeemer pay the price that should constrain us to proclaim the fact of the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.

"*And to rise from the dead the third day.*"

But there is more. He is risen.

In [the Name of God I urge you to preach Jesus and the resurrection ; proclaim a risen, triumphant Christ ; tell the people that God has put His seal upon the great work of Calvary by raising the Workman from the dead ; tell them that the price is paid and is enough ; that Satan's power has been annulled ; that death has been defeated. If you leave this out of your preaching it will be weak and ineffectual, " If Christ be not raised, your faith is vain : ye are yet in your sins " (1 Cor. 15.), but now is Christ raised from the dead and He was raised for our justification. Tell the whole truth of the gospel, for sinners need it all. Think of that solemn statement of Holy Scripture, " 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). Every man lies under the sentence of death—it is a risen, living Saviour that all need. Would you not be glad to carry to a man lying under the sentence of death in the condemned cell the news that another had suffered the full penalty of the law in his stead ? And if you could tell him that this one whose love for him was so great was alive again and was waiting to open his prison door and set him righteously free and wanting henceforward to be his friend and companion, would you not rejoice and make haste to tell him the good news ? But such a thing could never be ; but that which is impossible with men is God's gospel, and His gospel is much more than that, for those who are delivered from the power of death that lies upon them are set in Christ before God, and are for ever clear of all condemnation and stand instead in everlasting favour.

You have to preach this and preach it to men as they are. It is not education or civilization that the heathen

need ; we have both in this land, and the godlessness of it is increasing every day. It is this gospel of repentance and forgiveness and favour in Christ that they need and you may preach it to them freely, joyfully, and with confidence.

The gospel must be preached *in His Name*. You go out as representing Him, and this lays upon you a solemn obligation. So many who have taken up His service misrepresent Him by their tempers, their spirits, ways, manners, methods and associations. To go forth in His Name means to go forth as He would go, to bear His character, manifest His spirit, so that those to whom you speak not only hear of Christ, but see Him in you who speak. It is, as I have said, a solemn obligation that is laid upon you to carry the message in His Name, but it means also that He will support you in doing it. Indeed, the last sight of Jesus that His disciples had in this Gospel was with hands uplifted in benediction over them and in that blessing is all the grace and succour that is needed by every one of His servants on earth.

#### *The Holy Spirit the Power.*

How deeply stirred the hearts of these disciples of the Lord must have been as they listened to His words and had their understandings opened to grasp the meaning of them. The two disciples earlier in the chapter confessed, " Did not our hearts burn within us, while He talked with us by the way, and while He opened to us the Scriptures," and at this later talk this must have increased one hundred fold. We can understand how eager they would be to tell what they had heard to others, but the Lord could not allow them to do that then. Their lips were to be sealed until they received power

from on high. Until that happened they had to "tarry," and in this their obedience to Him and their knowledge of themselves would be greatly deepened. We have but to consider the gospel that they were to preach to see the necessity for this. It was planned in the heart of the Father. He is the source and fountain of it, and before it could reach sinful men in its redeeming blessedness Jesus had to suffer. It behoved Him to suffer, and His sufferings were infinite. He was God and Man. If He had not been Man He would have had no blood to shed; if He had not been God His blood would have been without avail. Now to give effect to this divine gospel in the hearts of men, divine power was necessary—a power commensurate with the Father's love and the sufferings and death and triumph of Jesus, and that power lies only in the Holy Spirit of God. The disciples had to wait until He came.

Do you not think that it is the most dreadful presumption on the part of any man to attempt to preach the gospel in his own wisdom and strength? Yet, alas, how often we have gone on with service with very little reference to the Holy Spirit. We have planned out our own work and asked God to bless it, and we have done it according to our own notions or in imitation of someone else and wondered why it was so fruitless. We need not to have wondered!

The Spirit of God is the great Servant. He is the One who is going into the streets and lanes of the city and into the highways and hedges to compel them to come in, that God's house may be filled (Luke 14.), and it is our business to work with Him, to be so under the direction of our living

Lord that we may be vessels meet for His use, in whom and through whom the Spirit can work. We are wasting time if this is not so; all our labour that is not in the power of the Holy Spirit is labour in vain, and worse, for powerless preaching means hardened hearers or probably empty pews. We are used to this kind of thing in these gospel-despising lands, but what a tragedy it must be when this sort of Holy Spirit-less service is done among the heathen, when the power of God is lacking in the gospel that is preached to them.

We seem to have largely lost the sense of the divine greatness of the gospel, and we seem to have gained (sad gain) an exaggerated sense of our own sufficiency. Hence the barren meetings, the lack of zeal, the decay of power. It is a matter that might well cause us to weep before the Lord.

Let us be assured that the Holy Spirit is still on earth and that His power has not abated one whit, and that He can and will still take up those who are obedient enough, and sufficiently emptied of self, and use them as He used the servants of the Lord of old. Consider them; day after day for ten days they waited and prayed. What obedient men they were! They knew that they were not sufficient for these things; they knew that their sufficiency was of God and they were not disappointed, for when they opened their mouths, "they so spake that many believed." So it is written, and it is written for our learning. May God Himself give to all His servants deep exercise of heart about this matter. Time is short. Our opportunity is **N O W**.

## A TREASURE!

(A. J. POLLOCK)

THERE shone in the sun, like a silver riband, the River Ahava, as it wound its ancient course to the ocean. Nature seemed in her most peaceful mood, yet there were lurking dangers from wild beasts, and from still wilder men, for brigands and bandits abounded in those regions.

What meant, then, that band of some 1700 men, besides women and children, unarmed and defenceless, as they fasted and prayed? It was a strange spot for a prayer-meeting. Those who prayed had come from afar and were travelling to a distant land. Moreover, they carried with them a great treasure, enough to have excited the cupidity of the robbers of the district, and lead to the little band being murdered for the sake of gain. Hide as they might their treasure, the news of these things has a way of leaking out, and leading to the undesired happening.

The story is one of the most beautiful in Holy Writ. The men were from Babylon, they were Jewish captives, and their leader was Ezra, the priest, descended from Aaron. The treasure they carried was the Lord's and their object was to carry it safely and intact to Jerusalem, to the House of the Lord.

The treasure consisted of silver weighing 750 talents, gold 100 talents, 20 basons of gold of 1000 drams, two vessels of copper precious as gold. Its value in our money would be well on to £1,000,000.

Moreover, Ezra had boasted of his God to the heathen King Artaxerxes, so that he was ashamed to ask for a band of soldiers and horsemen as a guard in this perilous journey. He relied not on an arm of flesh, for he trusted in the Lord.

The Jews could look back to the day when Solomon "reigned over all the kings from the river even unto the land of the Philistines, and to the border of Egypt" (2 Chron. 9. 26), when the wonderful Temple at Jerusalem was in its early glory, but now the inhabitants of the land were taken captive to another land, their harps hung on the willow trees by the banks of the rivers of Babylon (Ps. 137. 1-4) as they mourned over their condition. Jerusalem, the city of the great king, in ruins, the House of God destroyed, the land overrun with wild beasts; it was a mournful spectacle indeed!

We Christians can look back to the wonderful days of Pentecost, when the power of God brought multitudes to the feet of the Lord, when assemblies were formed in places where paganism had hitherto been unassailed. To-day we find the church of God broken up into fragments, the downgrade has set in for long, first love has long waned, ritualism has choked the real thing, rationalism, modernism, is sapping the very foundations of the faith, the apostasy is well on its way. Division, brokenness, weakness, alas! in many cases self-satisfaction, where sackcloth and ashes are more to the point, mark the present moment. Blasphemous sects have arisen claiming apostolic powers, in reality but snares of the devil.

Shall we in the face of this give up cleaving to the truth? Let the example of Ezra and his friends give us hearts of grace. There is nothing more striking in the Word of God than to listen to Haggai and Zechariah prophesying in a day of ruin. Haggai encouraged the broken remnant to care for the House of God; Zechariah's soul was aflame with the vision of "THAT DAY," when the glory of the Lord

What have we to learn from all this?

shall burst upon a repentant Israel, and all the promises to Abraham and David shall be fulfilled. There is nothing more striking than to see Zerubbabel, Joshua, the High Priest, and others setting up the altar of the Lord in the scene of Israel's disgrace, amid a howling wilderness, infested by the enemies of the Lord. How Jerusalem had fallen, yet the place where the Lord had set His Name was remembered for blessing. It is a wonderful spectacle to see the faith and courage of these men, a sublime sight indeed.

With this example before us, we may well take courage, and seek to care for the interests of the Lord and the maintenance of the truth, where on every hand it is being given up. That God raises men in all stages of the church's sojourn on the earth is the proof that GOD is working, and maintaining His interests in this world. How happy if He deigns to use the least of us in the carrying out of His purpose !

These men of old were carrying a vast treasure, not only of immense value, but likewise a sacred treasure, for it belonged to Jehovah and was destined for service in His House. Their concern was to deliver it intact, to be true to their trust. It was not in a spirit of careless bravado that they took their way through the enemy's country, for we read that Ezra "proclaimed a fast there, at the river of Ahava, that we might afflict ourselves before our God, to seek of Him a right way for us, and for our little ones, and for all our substance. For I was ashamed to ask of the king a band of soldiers and horsemen to help us against the enemy in the way : because we had spoken unto the king, saying, The hand of our God is upon all them for good that seek Him ; but His power and His wrath is against all them that forsake Him. So we fasted

and besought our God for this : and He was intreated of us " (Ezra 8. 21-23).

God was inquired of. He could protect His weak people and He did. You cannot match the extract just given from the Book of Ezra, written over two thousand years ago, in any of the writings of the ancients outside the Word of God. It is a delightful picture, full of literary grace that is positively charming, yet better still, it shows the divine work in souls, and how God cared for His interests in this day of weakness and ruin. The Book of Ezra, like all the books of the Bible, has plainly stamped upon it the hall mark of inspiration.

Following up the extract from the Book of Ezra just quoted, may we not remind ourselves that the God of Israel is our God, too, that He is unchanged in His power and in His interest in His own ? Their side was to fast and beseech God for His help and protection. God's side is expressed in the words, "He was intreated of us." Will not our God be intreated by us ? Have we not a marvellous opportunity given to us in these days of weakness ? We talk about days of weakness and emphasize too little God's almighty power and abiding interest in His own ; we talk too much about the ruin of the church and too little of the great Head of the church in heaven and of His unabated interest in His people and of His power to care for them in all circumstances.

Ezra and his companions carried a great treasure, doubly precious because it was God's and for the use of His earthly House at Jerusalem. They were anxious to keep it intact and deliver it without loss at the journey's end. We Christians, too, have a treasure, even the Word of God. If much profit was the portion of the Israelites in having the oracles of God,

the Old Testament Scriptures, committed to their trust, what can we say as to ourselves, who have the whole completed Word of God in our trust? Where the saints of the former dispensation had dim starlight, we have light above the brightness of the sun; where they had types, we have antitypes; where they had prophecies, we have fulfilments. In short all the truth is out. But there is a danger in not keeping the treasure intact. Remember if we do not practise the Word of God where we are called upon to practise it, we are losing the treasure. Many Christians pay lip homage only to certain parts of the truth; the practice of them would lead them into separation from the world and its evil; but in so doing they are losing immensely. If we part with any part of the treasure, we are losers; and through us the solemn truth is that God is the loser as to our testimony to the truth by our failure to practise it.

There is the wonderful treasure of the verbally inspired Word of God, the truth as to God, the Father; the Son; the Holy Spirit; the truth of the gospel; the truth of "in Christ" of new creation; of the necessity of the new birth; of the setting aside of the man in the flesh; of the atoning work of Christ; of His resurrection; His ascension; His session on high as Great High Priest and Advocate; the truth of His headship of His body, the church; the truth of the house of God; of the kingdom of God; of the second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ and His glorious millennial reign; of the government that is exercised both in the church and the world to-day. We mention these things as they crowd into the mind. We have no space to elaborate them, but it will answer the desire of the writer in putting pen to paper, if the reader is stirred to a desire to keep this treasure intact.

If we cease to evangelize, if we cease to teach the whole truth of God, we are practically giving up the treasure. If we emphasize Ephesians, for instance, and neglect Romans, we are giving up part of the treasure. If we pay little heed to the history and prophecy of the Old Testament, to the types, to the breathing of the soul in the Psalms, to the sage advice of the Proverbs or the experience of Ecclesiastes, we are in danger of losing some part of the treasure.

If we fix on some line of teaching that appeals to us and make light of those that do not, we are in danger of losing part of the treasure. If a man in the Corinthian assembly were to say, "I am of Paul," and neglect Peter and Apollos, he would assuredly lose treasure. Paul tells us that all things are ours. If the great Head of the church gives gifts we are to receive and profit by all. We have Paul, and Peter and Apollos, and all the rest, but in fixing on one to the exclusion of the rest we are really telling the Lord that His gifts are unnecessary.

It seems that if we become specialists in any one part of God's Word, we lose the right relation of that part to the whole, and the part we specialize in is put out of its proper perspective. If I specialize on Ephesians and neglect Romans, I shall not get out the value from Ephesians that I might if I valued and profited by Romans.

The truth is attacked on every hand. The inspiration of Scripture is assailed. How blessed if we value it as wholly inspired of God. The truth of Christ's Person is often attacked. How good to maintain the truth as to this in its purity and power. So we might go to one truth after another, and show how the enemy is seeking to rob God's people of this wonderful treasure.

# SOME OF THE SOLITUDES OF THE LORD JESUS.

(ENGLIS FLEMING.)

BLESSED indeed is the portion of the believer in that he is to be for ever with the Lord, enjoying with Him all that His love can bestow upon him; He, the Son of God, keeping back nothing which He can share with the objects of His love. But there are brought before us in the Scriptures times and positions in which our Lord was *alone*, where none shared with Him, where it was His glory to be solitary. And the believer loves that thus it should be, "that in all things He might have the pre-eminence." Let us consider some of these.

We see Him

## SOLITARY IN HIS MANHOOD.

He was the "holy thing" born of the Virgin Mary. Adam as created had innocent humanity; as fallen—and we are associated with him in his fall—his was sinful humanity. In Christ we see holy humanity: no taint of sin was in Him. As the Holy Ghost presents Him by Paul, He "knew no sin" (2 Cor. 5. 21); as He presents Him by Peter, He "did no sin" (1 Peter 2. 22); as He presents Him by John, "In Him is no sin" (1 John 3. 5). In Him we reach all perfection, and as we see Him in the manger of Bethlehem or in the house where the Magi offered their gifts, we glorify God and worship before Him. Glorious, unique humanity was His. Truly Man and truly God in one Person, "Made of a woman" yet "God manifest in the flesh," "Over all God blessed for ever."

"Image of the Infinite Unseen,  
Whose being none can know."

Prying eyes are forbidden to look too closely into this ark of God, for "No man knoweth the Son but the Father." He is the subject for our heart's deepest

adoration and not for our mind's keenest analysis.

"The higher mysteries of Thy fame  
The Creature's grasp transcend."

It must be so. The finite cannot contain the infinite. It is the creature's place to bow and worship as he exclaims with Thomas, "My Lord and my God."

## SOLITARY IN HIS LIFE.

If we see Him in His pathway, as portrayed in the pages of the Evangelist's, we view Him alone.

The apostles heard, saw, contemplated, handled Him as in their midst. He companied with them, but it is evident that they understood Him but little. Especially this was so when He spoke of His death; He "went before them; and they were amazed, and as they followed, they were afraid" (Mark 10. 32). As yet He could not bring them to the position His love had designed for them. He was pent up and could say, "I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I straitened till it be accomplished!" (Luke 12. 50). He could not declare to them all the deep secrets of His heart until that baptism of death and judgment for us had taken place and His atoning work was done, for, "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit."

Alone in His perfect pathway, He glorified His Father in every stage and step of His journey. But if the will of God were to reach fruition, then the Son who had come to do that will must die. No harvest of glory for the Father could be reaped apart from His death: no union for us with Christ in incarnation was possible.

We look upon Him and wonder at His words and works and ways, our renewed nature delighting in seeing the green track across the arid desert. Its beauty is forced upon us by the absolute contrast with all of ourselves. He could declare, "I came down from heaven, not to do Mine own will, but the will of Him that sent Me"; "I do always those things that please Him"; "Nevertheless, not My Will but Thine be done"; "Father, glorify Thy Name"—was His prayer even in view of His hour of deepest woe at the cross of Calvary.

#### SOLITARY IN ATONEMENT.

Here again we see Him alone. None could be with Him there.

"No victim of inferior worth  
 Could ward the stroke which justice  
 aimed,  
 For none but He in heaven or earth  
 Could offer that which justice claimed."

But who can tell the horrors of that awful hour? No mind of man can penetrate the darkness, or measure the distance, or fathom the depths known by the Son of God when "made sin for us," and bearing "our sins in His own body on the tree." He, the holy Son of God, was there the sin-offering, shut up with our judgment and thus forsaken of God. The forsaking by His disciples was borne in meekness; His turning and looking upon Peter, who denied Him in the judgment hall, telling of His heart's care for them in that hour of severest strain. The brutality of the multitudes of soldiers and civilians had led to His cry, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do!" But when abandoned by God in righteousness, then the exceeding bitter cry broke from the sorrowing Sufferer, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" He was alone in atonement that He might not be alone in glory. The judgment

storm broke upon Him and He bore its force and fury in solitude.

The Holy One of God had shrunk in His perfection from the drink of the cup. But in His perfection He took it and drained it, that the cup of unmixed blessing might pass to us.

Thus in resurrection He is able to bring us to have "part with" Him in all that is possible for us as His creatures. The will of God which He came to do has been done, and by that will we are set apart to God as worshippers.

Thus in Psalm 22., in which prophetically the agonizing cry is heard from the heart and lips of our Lord Jesus Christ, we find Him saying, when the darkness is past and He is heard from the horns of the unicorn, "I will declare Thy Name unto My brethren: in the midst of the church will I sing praise to Thee." No longer alone, He is in the midst of an assembly He has won for His Father and for Himself. He ministers down to them in telling into their ears the story of the Father's love and counsels, and He ministers up as He sings praise in the midst of those He has gained as worshippers for the Father.

#### ALONE IN WORTHINESS.

In Revelation 5. we find Him acclaimed as the Worthy One to open the seven-sealed Book of Judgment. In the vision of the Seer of Patmos we have before us the presentation of a heavenly scene before the pouring out of the judgments of God upon this world.

Heaven and earth are searched for one worthy to take the book, to break the seals and to open the scroll. When all the seeking has been in vain and none can be discovered, then the "Lamb as it had been slain" is seen. He comes and takes the book to open

the seals of it. Then it is the choir of the redeemed bursts out in their song of praise, "Thou art worthy . . . for Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; and hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth." The angels begin a great refrain, and this is caught up

by every creature and the volume of praise becomes universal.

Are we not glad, beloved, that thus it shall be and that in that day His glory shall be sounded by every voice, for He alone is worthy.

Bowing in adoration we shall cast our crowns at His pierced feet in that day.

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## TO THOSE WHO PREACH.

I BELIEVE we ought to preach the love of God to sinners and appeal to them more than we do. The preaching should be such that it should convict of sin, and the impossibility of sin and God going together, so that it should be well understood that there is need of reconciling. And here Christ at once comes in, and atonement and righteousness. Holiness precludes all sin from God, righteousness judges it. This I believe the sinner should understand, so that he should know what love applies to, yet that love should be fully preached. It does itself often convict of sin, for the conscience has often its wants already, and this draws them out, so that men find consciously where they are. But conviction of sin under righteousness is a very useful thing if grace be fully preached with it, and both righteousness and grace unite in Christ.

I think it very important that preachers should go to the world, especially now, with a message of distinct love to them. But it should be love manifested in Christ, so as to bring out the sinner's condition to himself; that it should not be mere easiness as to sin: that it is a gracious love to sinners—grace abounding over sin—grace reigning through righteous-

ness, than which nothing is more perfectly grace. Sometimes I think the love of God is so preached as if it were a kind of boon on the sinner's part to accept it. It is God's joy. Still, as a sinner, his being a debtor to God ought to be before his soul. . . . I count evangelizing the happiest service. Yet my heart yearns over the saints and the glory of Christ in the truth, too. Happy there is One above all who does all.

Repentance has to be preached, because there is God's claim over man and man's judgment of himself, but preached in Christ's name, which carries grace with it. It is easy to put the just line on paper. In preaching, love to souls and living with God—and God's love to souls, which involves necessarily His holiness—will alone give preaching its true character. I am sure, and it is evident, that conscience must be reached, or nothing is done. But that is power, and God's power. Law itself may be used lawfully, when there is a reckless conscience, and with blessing; only grace and remission must go with it. But the cross convicts of sin, where really understood, more deeply than anything.

(J. N. D.)

# THE EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS. (HAMILTON SMITH.)

## Chapter 3.—*continued.*

### VI.

#### *The Christian Experience in the Path* (Verses 13, 14).

For our encouragement the apostle sets before us the practical experience produced in his own soul by taking the path that leads to Christ in heaven.

First, he becomes a man of purpose with one object before his soul. He says, "One thing I do." How often the energy of the Christian life is wasted on many things. As with Martha of old, the Lord has to say to us, "thou art careful and troubled about *many things.*" The Psalmist could say, "One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life" (Ps. 27. 4). Paul with fuller meaning could take up this language, and say, "One thing I do."

Second, the apostle can speak of "*forgetting those things which are behind.*" In thus speaking he does not refer to the world as such, or his sins, or the old man—things which are evil and, for faith, judged in the cross. He refers rather to things which, in their time and place, were excellent, and gain to him as a natural man—the whole Jewish system with its worldly advantages and religion according to the flesh—things the glory of which had become "no glory" by reason of the glory that excelleth (2 Cor. 3. 9–11).

Third, the apostle not only forgets the things that are behind, but he is "*reaching forth unto those things which are before.*" This expresses the longing of a heart engrossed with an object that it reaches forth to possess.

Fourth, he says, "*I pursue, looking towards the goal for the prize of the calling on high of God in Christ Jesus*"

(3. 14, N.T.). His feet follow the longing of his heart. Thus through all the changing circumstances of time, in the face of all opposition of the enemy, and in spite of the failure of God's people, he held on his way, looking to reach the goal and obtain the prize.

Such was the blessed experience of the apostle. His mind was set on things above; the affections of his heart reached out to the things before, and his feet pursued the path that leads to the heavenly goal. He looked beyond the failure of the saints and the ruin of the Church to "the calling on high." From the moment of his conversion he realized that he was "chosen . . . out of the world," delivered "from the people and from the Gentiles" and called on high (John 15. 19; Acts 26. 17). This "calling on high" is set forth "in Christ Jesus." It is nothing less than full conformity to Christ where Christ is. It is not simply a "high calling" as stated in the Authorized Version, but "the calling on high." There is many a "high calling" on earth. It was a "high calling" to be an apostle by calling; yet how far short every calling on earth, however high, compared with being *called on high*—called to heaven to be with Christ and like Christ.

### VII.

#### *The Exhortation to Others to Take the Path* (Verses 15–17).

The apostle has set before us his own experience—the proper Christian experience that flows from accepting the path that answers to the calling on high. Now he exhorts others to take the same path. Joining others with himself, he says, "*Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded.*"

When the perfection refers to conformity to Christ in glory (as in verse 12) the apostle admits that, while on the journey, he can never attain this perfection. If, however, it is a question of having a perfect object before the soul, he can speak of himself and others as being perfect, or full-grown spiritually. Let all such—all who have accepted the true position of the Christian as called out of the world, and earthly religion, in view of the calling on high—be thus minded with the apostle. This is the mind that forgets the things that are behind and reaches out to the things that are before. If in the details of the path there may be differences of judgment, God will make all plain. Nevertheless, let us see that we are travelling the same road—"Let us walk in the same steps" (N.T.). Our view of the end of the road may vary according to the point in the road we have reached. Some with clearer vision may get a more distinct view of the end, but let us see that we are travelling to the same end by the same road. It is a path we can take in company with others, for, says the apostle, "Be imitators *all together* of me, brethren, and fix your eyes on those walking thus, as you have us for a model" (N.T.). We are each exhorted to take this heavenly road, and take knowledge of those who do likewise. We are to go on with those who are going on—having the apostle as a model.

### VIII.

*Warning against those who refuse [the Path (Verses 18, 19).*

Already in Paul's day the Assembly had departed from her first love. The apostle warns the saints against those whose walk was a total denial of the heavenly calling. Alas, even in that day, there were "many" of whom

he has to say, "many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ." They made a profession of Christianity—otherwise they would not be spoken of as "walking." Once they had given hope of better things—otherwise the apostle would hardly have wept over them; but their walk was such as to constitute them enemies of the cross of Christ. They allowed the things the cross condemned. They did not pose as enemies of Christ, but their walk denied the cross of Christ. They committed no sins that called for discipline, but their whole mind was set on earthly things. Their end was destruction.

### IX.

*The End of the Christian Path  
(Verses 20, 21).*

In contrast to those of whom we are warned, the apostle shows us the mind of the Christian and the end of his journey. Instead of minding earthly things, our "commonwealth" is in heaven. The riches we share in common are in heaven. Our interests, our blessings, our gains are there. From thence we look for the Lord Jesus Christ, as Saviour, to take us there. As Saviour He will deliver us from this body of humiliation, and give us a body that will be fashioned like His own glorious body. This glorious end of the journey will be brought to pass by the power whereby he is able even to subdue all things to Himself.

Such is the heavenly path and such the glorious end to which it leads. May we have the affection for Christ that takes it, and the grace to tread it, while looking for the Lord Jesus to complete it, by changing us into His own likeness.

## "MY FATHER."

(H. J. VINE.)

EXCEEDINGLY dear to the heart of our Lord Jesus Christ were the things which He spake of as "*My Father's*." Those who contemplated His glory on earth, afterwards said, when the Holy Spirit was given, it was "a glory as of an only-begotten with a father." That was what distinguished Him in their eyes, as in devoted love He ever sought to honour His Father, doing that which was well-pleasing in His holy sight.

What a contrast the Spirit shows us in Absalom, the son of King David! Outwardly attractive to men, he was inwardly a rebel against his own father's authority. He first "stole the hearts of the men of Israel," then he sent spies through the land, and when the trumpet sounded, it was proclaimed, "Absalom reigneth!" The rebellion was so strong that the royal father fled before the lawless son, and all the country wept with a loud voice when the king went toward the way of the wilderness, and "*passed over the brook Kidron*" (2 Sam. 15. 23).

Absalom sought to seize for himself what was his father's. It was the opposite with our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father. Obedient even to the death of the cross, He always sought and brought glory to God. He also went forth "*over the brook Cedron*" (John 18. 1), and entered personally into all the deep depths of suffering and judgment necessary for that. He offered Himself spotless to God through the eternal Spirit. He had said, "I love the Father, and as the Father gave Me commandment, even so I do." That commandment was treasured in His heart and carried out in His death and resurrection. When the hasty sword of Peter would fight on His behalf, He said, "Put up thy sword

into the sheath: the cup which My Father hath given Me, shall I not drink it?" Although the Father loved Him with an eternally perfect love, yet this devotedness supplied Him with a fresh motive to love His Son, to love Him in a new way, to love the Son who thus proved His love for His Father, and for what was His Father's.

The Gospel of John names THE FATHER far more than any other book of the Bible. Matthew mentions Him 44 times, Mark 5, Luke 17 but John 122; adding John's Epistles and Revelation, the Father is altogether named 144 times by John alone, whereas all the rest of the Bible mentions God the Father but 139 times. This shows the divinely inspired reason and importance of John's writings. The Old Testament may speak of God as the Father of a special nation, Israel, bought and put in responsible relation to Him; also of a typical and favoured King on the same ground; but only fifteen times in all. The first three Gospels may speak of the Father "which is in heaven" and of the "heavenly Father," also of the *character of "sons,"* but the expressions do not occur in John, where the Father and the Son are brought so intimately before us and the *nature of "children"* specially, begotten of God, loved sovereignly and unchangeably, so that Jesus said in resurrection, "My Father, your Father; My God, your God." And again, when in holy converse with His Father, "Thou hast loved them as Thou hast loved Me" (John 17. 23). Among the last words of an honoured servant of the Lord were, "My beloved brethren, I do add, let not John's ministry be forgotten in insisting on Paul's."

The Lord Jesus spoke of "the

Kingdom of My Father"; but this is suitably recorded in Matthew 26. 29. In John, however, we read of His Father's will, His Father's hand, His Father's love, His Father's commandment, His Father's works, and His Father's word; also of the cup which the Father gave Him; and it is here we read of Jesus speaking concerning "MY FATHER'S NAME" (5. 43; 10. 25); likewise of "MY FATHER'S HOUSE" (2. 16; 14. 2). We will refer to these two later, if God permit.

First of all the wondrous word of Luke 2. 49 may well claim our attention. There the earliest recorded words of the Son of the Father on earth are given. They show how entirely He was devoted to what He spoke of as "MY FATHER'S." That was what engrossed Him. Blessed be His Name. "I must be about MY FATHER'S BUSINESS," He said. In the temple, the place of Jehovah's Name, with the teachers there, He heard and asked questions; while His own answers and understanding astonished the hearers. And even honoured Joseph and Mary understood not when Jesus spoke of His Father's business. Many there are to-day who are astonished at the teaching of Christ, but have not themselves received Him as their own Saviour! Likewise many who have truly been saved by Him, little understand the vast business He came forth to carry out for His Father's glory. What other concern in the universe is comparable to that?

His very words, "*My Father's*," indicated His conscious relationship with God. His business involved the ministry of the truth, the manifestation of the invisible God, and the revealing of the Father; also the redeeming work, demanding His life's blood and the consequent reconciling by Him of all things in the heavens and on the earth.

It involved the putting away of sin, the salvation of sinners, and the commendation of God's love; also the administration of grace now and of glory soon to the praise and pleasure of God; likewise the completion of His mediatorial work and the putting of all things into the hand of Him who is God and Father in flawless suitability, that God may be all in all. What holiness and love, glory and blessedness, shall then obtain! His Father's business will be carried out faithfully and perfectly. Who He Himself is and what He has already done, leave us without one doubt. His life here, His words, His works, His death, His resurrection, His bodily ascension to His Father's throne, and the giving of the Holy Spirit, fully prove Him able to do so. Moreover, our own experience of the salvation which is in Him not only gives peace and joy, but causes praise and thanksgiving to abound already.

Coming into a world where all had sinned and come short of God's glory, He appeared among those to whom the oracles of God with the promises were given. All was in disorder among His people Israel. The law was not kept. There were two high priests instead of one. They were under a foreign power instead of being the head of the nations. The city of the great King, Jerusalem, was ruled by an Edomite and governed by a Roman. The opening of Luke 3. shows this. John the Baptist cried, "REPENT!" as he prepared the way of the Lord. And coming in the ordered way, our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of David, the Son of God, began early with His work, which He will carry right on to its glorious completion, the work which he called, "MY FATHER'S BUSINESS."

It is in the Gospel of John, as we have said, we find our Lord Jesus

speaking of "My Father's Name" and of "My Father's house." Both were precious to Him beyond telling.

A great imitator of Christ will capture the wonder of the religious world soon. He will come "in his own name" as the Lord foretold (John 5. 43). By blowing the trumpet of his own importance the many will accept him at his own valuation. His wicked career will be quickly ended by final judgment, at the appearing of Christ as King of kings and Lord of lords. In the verse quoted, Jesus said, "I am come in MY FATHER'S NAME." His Father's honour was pre-eminent in all His thoughts and doings. That made all the difference. Self praise and glory will be the other's governing motive and object, displacing God's absolute authority as far as possible. The result of Jesus carrying out His Father's business will be found in the rest and rejoicing of all blessed through that authority, and responsible worship flowing to Him fully made known by the Son.

Unregenerate religionists said the Lord Jesus was "making Himself equal with God" (John 5. 18), and they therefore sought to kill Him. He was here doing His Father's will, in dependence upon Him, and He explained that nothing was done by Him independently. Truly He did work which clearly proved who He was; "The work which the Father hath given Me to finish, the same works that I do, bear witness of Me," He said. But again, "The Father that dwelleth in Me, He doeth the works." It was for the Father's honour, and in His Name His works were done.

On another occasion they would have stoned Him, saying, "Thou, being a Man, makest Thyself God" (John 10. 33). The Lord Jesus had said, "I am the Son of God," also, "Before

Abraham was, I am"; but it was His Father's glory He ever sought. He had come in His Name. Doubtless His own glory was manifested also. It could not be altogether hid, and faith discerns what was made known. The Father honoured Him and the Spirit honours Him. The false Christ, who will come in his own name, honours himself, even "showing himself that he is God" (2 Thess. 2. 4). The Son never thus acted, but "humbled Himself," becoming obedient to the Father who sent Him, speaking and doing what His Father commanded; yea, and rather than evade the awful hour of the cross with all that it meant, He said, "FATHER, GLORIFY THY NAME."

To His persecutors He said, "If I do not the works of My Father, believe Me not." They could not deny those works of mercy, grace, love and power, done by the Righteous, Just, Holy and True. They manifested the Father's Name. They made manifest what the Father is to those who had eyes to see, as also to our faith to-day; for, as we have said, He came in His Father's Name. And again, concerning the wondrous miracles which He accomplished, Jesus said, "*The works I do in MY FATHER'S NAME.*"

Beyond all His toil on earth for God's glory and our blessing, beyond all the sufferings of the cross, our Lord Jesus Christ ever looked onward to His Father's house and to preparing a new place there for us. He said, "*In MY FATHER'S HOUSE there are many abodes*" (14. 3). He was well acquainted with that house. He spoke of it familiarly. With holy intimacy and affection He termed it, "*My Father's.*"

He had used those same words before of the temple, of Jehovah's house (2. 16). It was there, too, as we have seen, He was found hearing, questioning, and answering the teachers

(Luke 2. 47), when He said, "I must be about My Father's business." The revisers translate this, "My Father's house," but the context is against it. Still a man's business is carried on from and to his dwelling, and certainly the Son came thence and returned there; not to the earthly but the heavenly. He always had His Father's house in view. There is His loved abode.

It is helpful to observe carefully that Jesus called Jehovah's house, "My Father's house." It shows that Jehovah was His Father, while other Scriptures show that He Himself is also Jehovah, confirming His own saying, "I and the Father are one." Moreover, what is said in the Psalms, Chronicles, Ezekiel, and elsewhere, concerning Jehovah's earthly house (past and future), showing something of its temporal beauty, magnificence and splendour, bespeaks abiding and un fading glory and blessedness where Jesus has gone, since He completed on earth the work His Father entrusted Him to do.

When leaving His disciples to go to His Father, Jesus tenderly turned their thoughts thitherwards. He told them of that place. From the earthly temple, so dear to the Jew, He lifted their faith to the heavenly home. There are many abodes there, but He said, "I go to prepare a place for you." What could surpass a place in that home of unsullied bliss?

Nevertheless, our precious Saviour added still more, "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" (14. 3). Here we find the climax of our glorious hope! Received to Himself by Him who suffered and died for us! To dwell eternally with Him! His Father's house now our blest abode! Where He is we are to be also! What more could our happy hearts desire?

Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly! And meanwhile may the things which were so exceedingly dear to Thee, the things Thou didst call "MY FATHER'S," become increasingly dear to us.

## The Love of Christ for His Church.

*"No man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Christ ["the Christ" is the true reading, not 'the Lord'] the church" (Eph. 5. 29).*

THESE two words, "nourish" and "cherish," express in a wonderful way the affections of Christ for, as well as His intimate relationship to, the church. The first, "nourish," is the same word as in chapter 6. 4, there translated "bring up." It combines, therefore, three things, love, care, and watchful discipline; and all these Christ lavishes upon the church with a view to her final presentation to Himself in glory. The meaning of "cherish" is to warm, and hence to foster. The apostle uses the word when he says,

"We were gentle among you, even as a nurse cherisheth her children" (1 Thess. 2. 7); and we may find an illustration of its meaning in the Book of Ruth. When Obed was born, we read that "Naomi took the child, and laid it in her bosom, and became nurse unto it." (See also 2 Samuel 12. 3.) This will suffice to tell us something of the unspeakable love and tenderness of Christ for the church, in that wondrous intimacy into which He has brought her through union with Himself.

# THE EIGHT SIGNS OF JOHN'S GOSPEL.

## Sign I. The Marriage Feast at Cana.

(JAMES GREEN.)

Read Ch. 1. to 2. 12.

WE have seen that the primary object of our Lord's miracles was to lead to something beyond the wonder of the action. They gave indication of the grace and person of Him who did them, and thus stood in immediate connection with the spiritual world from which He came, and particularly in John's Gospel with the eternal life belonging to that world. In the scene at Cana we shall surely find a sign which has significance after the divine order, and may discover the spiritual veiled beneath the natural.

Marriage is the great creation law from the beginning when God created man in His own image, and made them male and female. It is central in the web of human life and the basis of all natural relationships. In its institution there is involved the type and shadow of a great mystery, to which the Apostle Paul alludes when he says, "I speak concerning Christ and the church."

The third day (verse 1) doubtless points out a dispensational meaning on this occasion, when the earthly counterpart of this mystery shall be seen in the restored relationship between Jehovah and Israel; the millennial day will bear witness to this, as in it also will be displayed all that the church is to Christ, His body and His bride. We are seeking, however, now to read the present values contained in the miracle.

Such an event as a marriage should ever be a bright and happy occasion, and fuller still is the joy when both Jesus is called and His disciples to the wedding. We may gather from His acceptance of the invitation that there was nothing out of place in His being

present with these simple folk, sharing their happiness and, indeed, adding to it. The Creator was viewing from His own side that which He had ordained, and behold it was very good. On their side they had, no doubt, sought to make ample provision for the feast in view of those who were starting the voyage of life together. To speak of disappointment or lack at such a time would indeed seem out of place, but it is that feature which was prominent at Cana. Possibly none of the company were aware of that which was disclosed in the words of the mother of Jesus, "Thy have no wine." She had discovered the need and instinctively turned to her Son on whose tender care and resourceful love she had often leaned her widowed heart. "No wine"! They thought there was ample, but alas, no. A vivid picture indeed of that which ever marks the life joys of earth, the end that comes all too soon. There is ever a spending, a running out, an ever drawing near to the bottom of the vessel which holds the wine. The pleasures which lie in the realm of the things which are seen have but short measure. This, indeed, is inherent in them, for they are but temporal, standing in sharp contrast to the things which are not seen which are eternal. Such is the first lesson of the sign.

The second is contained in the Lord's reply to His mother: "Woman, what have I to do with thee? Mine hour is not yet come." The answer, apparently abrupt, is not really so, but its form indicates the breaking of the natural link, which had already been foretold in the words of Simeon (Luke

2. 35), "A sword shall pierce through thy own soul also." This break was further conveyed when in the temple at twelve years of age He said, "Wist ye not that I must be about My Father's business?" (Luke 2. 49). It was emphasized in His words, "Who is My mother?" and who are My brethren?" (Matt 12. 48) It was final at the cross, but still with most tender compassion, "Woman, behold thy son . . . son, behold thy mother" (John 19 26). Eternal life is connected with a condition into which earthly links and relationships do not enter. It is far removed from the merely human sentiment abounding in many hymns, which carries over the thought of natural earthly relations into the realm where they neither marry nor are given in marriage, where there is neither male nor female, but Christ is all and in all. The lesson has to be learned, often painful to the mind, but bearing with it the knowledge of a fuller blessing and a deeper joy in the establishment of higher relationships by Christ Jesus, with those we love, and with whom we shall for ever live together with Him.

No earthly tie, even though as near as "the mother of Jesus," can direct the divine energy, which alone, when the hour is come, will act by its own sovereign power and bestow the blessing with which the heart of God is filled, surpassing all expectation with the best wine at the last.

Whatever may have been the purpose of the six waterpots of stone at the feast, that they were after the manner of the purifying of the Jews and that they were empty is surely significant. No outward ordinance, no divinely ordered ritual can alter the inevitable end of man's resources or stay the evil day. The subsequent action indicates that which must take place before the

fulness of supply can be accomplished. Dispensationally it will be the same with Israel when the outward forms and ritual of the Old Testament become filled with the power of the Word of Christ. Then shall He command for them the blessing of Psalm 133. 3, "Even life for evermore."

Note first the words of Mary to the servants: "Whatsoever He saith unto you, do it." Such a direction turns us back upon the presentation of His person in chapter 1. Implicit obedience, unquestioning subjection, is the primary law of blessing and service. None who apprehend aught of the glory of Christ can hesitate a moment to do what He says, regardless of consequences. There is much to exercise our hearts in this.

Next note His words, "Fill the waterpots with water." There was no half-hearted response on the part of the servants: "They filled them up to the brim." The wine would not have been there in its fulness if they had not, and this points a lesson, for the knowledge and joy of eternal life will not be the portion of any who neglect to fill their waterpot with the water of the Word. If space is left for aught else corresponding lack will inevitably follow. Let us not forget the servants' part, if we would know the joy of His banqueting house.

Next the result—wine Joy and satisfaction, better than anything that had gone before, where only disappointment had been. This marks the first stage in the journey of the soul into the blessedness of eternal life. It is freed from the disappointment belonging to the brightest earthly things and finds its rest in the sufficiency of Christ, the power of His Word, and the overabounding of His supplies. In the words of verse 11 He has "manifested forth His glory," and His disciples

know on whom they have believed. It was so with John at the waters of Jordan, when beholding the lowly Man whom he baptized receive the Holy Ghost, he bore record, "This is the Son of God." The like confession came from Nathaniel in the consciousness of His omniscience. The water was turned to wine for each of these. They had found One who was better than anything they had trusted in or which the law could give. They were drinking of the grace and truth which had come by Jesus Christ, and the great discovery was made that there was an abiding peace with Him in whom all fulness dwelt, the only begotten of the Father.

There seems an indication in the fact that only the servants who drew the water knew from whence the wine came, that those who at the present time are brought into the secret of eternal life in the Son shall be the bearers of its joy to redeemed Israel, who, though not in the knowledge of the secret source, will confess that the best wine has been kept until the last. That day will most certainly prove that God's last is better than man's first.

It was characteristic of the law-giver Moses, that one of his earliest signs was turning water into blood, for his ministry was one of death and condemnation; it was, therefore, most fitting that changing water into wine should mark the beginning of signs for a ministration of righteousness which would bring the rest and joy of God to the hearts of men.

"Manifested forth His glory." In that statement is gathered up all the rays of His own inherent perfection seen

in chapter 1. This significant act of power showed who and what He was: the Eternal Word, Creator, Life-giver, only-begotten of the Father; the Jehovah-Messiah of whom prophets and seers had foretold in holy records; the Lamb of God, the essential reality which had been conveyed in type by every sacrifice and offering from Abel downwards; the baptizer with the Holy Ghost, Son of Man, and Son God, in whom all finality is summed up.

Men, in the limitations of the human mind, reason from the slow processes that mark the natural world, that therefore in producing the universe the Creator was bound by the operation of His own laws and needed vast periods of time to evolve the present order of things. But in this miracle, as well as in the multiplying of loaves and fishes, the Creator Himself has given an example showing that He can produce in an instant that result which, under His laws, changes the rain of heaven into the blood of the grape by the slow process of the vineyard. Here at Cana, as in Genesis 1, "He spake and it was done."

There is, indeed, a call to beware of that artifice of Satan, which blinds the minds of men to the creatorial glory of the Son of God, and thus effectually shuts the door upon His new creation in which eternal life has its home.

It is also fitting that in this beginning of signs His Word should have prominence and emphasis, for upon this we are entirely dependent for the unfolding of the eternal verities which only He, the Son of Man who is in heaven, could reveal.

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[T is doubtful whether any greater commendation of a preacher could have been uttered than that which was said of Richard Baxter. "He talked in the pulpit with great freedom about another world, like one that had been there and was come as a sort of express from thence to make a report concerning it."

# ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

## The Judgment of the Living Nations.

"A kind friend has furnished me with 'Scripture Truth' for several years past, and I find much profit from your 'Answers to Correspondents' especially. Your issue of December, 1929, page 285, has some very helpful comments on 'The Disembodied Condition,' but I find a difficulty in grasping what you mean by the last paragraph on page 285. *Inter alia*, you say ' . . . there will be the judgment of the living nations of which you may read in Matt. 25.' I cannot understand how 'NATIONS' could be addressed in the language of that remarkable passage of God's Word. It appears to me as applying essentially to individuals. Will you be kind (and patient) enough to add a further word of explanation."—GLEN IRIS.

SCRIPTURE plainly teaches that the Lord will judge *the living* as well as the dead—Acts 10. 42, "It is He which was ordained of God to be the Judge of quick and dead"; 2 Timothy 4. 1, "The Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at His appearing and kingdom." There can be no difficulty about the judgment of the dead. This is described in Revelation 20. 11-15, and will take place at the end of the millennial reign of Christ over the earth. The judgment of the living will take place at the beginning of His reign when He shall come in His glory and all the holy angels with Him, as Matthew 25. 31 tell us. It is then that He will set up the throne of His glory, and verse 32 tells us that all nations shall be gathered before Him. This is the great sessional judgment of the living.

The nations stand specially in contrast to Israel, but also to the church (see 1 Corinthians 10. 32, "Jews, Gentiles, and church of God"). The Lord will deal with Israel in a special way, according to the relationship in which they stand with Him and for their special sin of rejecting Him as their Messiah. When it was said, "Whose fan is in His hand, and He will thoroughly purge His floor, and gather His wheat into the garner; but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire" (Matt. 3. 11), the discriminating judgment of Israel at the coming of the Lord was in view. Then

He will deal specially with Christendom, that part of the world where the gospel is freely preached and that professes to be the house of God. 2 Thessalonians 1. 7-9; Revelation 3. 16, 'I will spue thee out of My mouth'; 1 Peter 4. 17, "Judgment must begin at the house of God"—speak of this judgment. But Matthew 25. gives us the great sessional judgment of the vast majority of the living at the coming of the Lord, and it is evident that they will be judged as nations. They are those who have not heard the gospel of the grace of God which is being preached in the world to-day. To them the gospel of the kingdom, i.e., that the King is coming, will be preached. Matthew 24. 14 speaks of this, "And *this gospel of the kingdom* shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come." This gospel will be preached by Jews in whose hearts a work of grace has been done, *after the church has been caught up to heaven* (see 1 Thessalonians 4.) and during the great tribulation that Matthew 24. describes.

You will notice that there are three classes spoken of in this judgment. The Lord speaks of "My brethren" (verse 40), and there are the sheep and the goats. The brethren are these faithful Jews who shall go forth with His Word, and the nations will be judged according as they have treated them. Read Matthew 10. in this connection; there you will see that every-

thing depended upon the way that a house or city received His messengers, and He says, "He that receiveth you receiveth Me, and he that receiveth Me receiveth Him that sent Me" (verse 40). This chapter will be literally fulfilled when the gospel of the kingdom is carried forth to the nations, and those who receive the King's messengers will receive their word, and their Master, and these will be the sheep that shall stand on the right hand of the Son of Man and pass into blessing in His kingdom. And those who show their enmity against God and Christ by rejecting or persecuting the messengers,

will be the goats on His left hand and will go into eternal punishment. Matthew keeps nations definitely before us in this way (see chapter 28. 19). We have no doubt that the individuals who compose the nations will be truly converted or the reverse, but that is not the point. There will be great national movements in regard to the rights of Christ and He will then be received or rejected by nations as nations. Now it is different, for now God is gathering OUT OF ALL NATIONS a people for His Name (see Acts 15. 14; Revelation 5. 9).

## The Remission of Sins and Baptism.

"My second question is upon Acts 2. 38. In the light of such a definite and plain command as that of Peter's (who was putting into effect his 'commission'—*vide* Matt. 28. 19, 20, and Mark 16. 15, 16), how is it that you place so little importance upon baptism? Where is 'remission of sins' promised without baptism? A reply will be much appreciated. Thanking you for help already received."—GLEN IRIS.

**I**N this second chapter of Acts Peter was undoubtedly putting into effect the commission that he had received to baptize, but he was doing this as the apostle to the circumcision, i.e., the Jews; for to him the gospel to the circumcision had been committed, as the gospel to the uncircumcision had been committed to Paul (see Galatians 2. 7, 8). The Jews stood on different ground from the Gentiles. They had been in outward relationship to God as His chosen people, but they had finally forfeited every right that they had to His favour by crucifying their Messiah. For this they were an "untoward generation" upon which wrath to the uttermost was to come (see 1 Thessalonians 2. 15, 16). There was one way by which they could be saved from that wrath, and that was by taking up a new position, by identifying themselves in baptism with the Name of Jesus Christ who had been crucified by the nation as a malefactor. Only in this

way could they be separated from that great national sin. The same was true of Saul of Tarsus, who had been a leader of the Jews' hatred of Christ (see chapter 9.). By identifying themselves with the Lord they acknowledged His claims and dissociated themselves from the nation's guilt, and so had Him as Saviour instead of Judge; and their sins were remitted. All this runs on the lines of the commission given to the eleven apostles in Mark's Gospel. But it must be clearly stated and understood that this baptism had nothing to say to the eternal remission of sins or the eternal salvation of the soul; it was governmental remission, and for time, and if the whole nation had accepted it, would have been national. The right time for preaching it was at Pentecost, the people to whom it was preached were Jews, and the preacher was Peter; for the Gentiles it has been superseded by Paul's gospel.

When we come to Luke's Gospel, which has the Gentiles specially in view, for it was written by a Gentile to a Gentile, there is nothing said as to baptism in the commission given in chapter 24. There it is that "repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His Name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem"; and this commission was not given exclusively to the eleven, but "to them that were with them" also (verse 33). It is really our commission. So we find that in the first sermon preached to Gentiles in the house of Cornelius (Acts 10) Peter says nothing as to baptism being necessary for the remission of sins. His words are "through His Name whosoever believeth in Him shall receive remission of sins" (verse 43). And the Holy Ghost fell on all them that listened while Peter spake, proving that this blessing was theirs *before* anything was said as to baptism. Paul, in Acts 13., in preaching to a mixed company, says

nothing about it, but declares that "by Him all that believe are justified from all things." Then Paul, who was definitely the apostle to the Gentiles, tells us that Christ did not send him to baptize but to preach the gospel (1 Cor. 1. 17). Now if baptism had been necessary for the remission of sins among the Gentiles, Paul's gospel must have been lacking in what was essential.

We certainly do not make little of baptism. We desire to give it its true place and to clearly set forth what it teaches, and as other correspondents have written to us as to it we shall endeavour, if the Lord will, to take up the subject more fully. But be assured that whatever is the force and meaning of the rite it has no place in the remission of sins where Gentiles are concerned, they have that priceless blessing solely through the Name of Jesus, who died for them and rose again.

## The Truth as to the Church.

"Will you please let me have your remarks on the following suggestions (1) That the truth revealed to Paul (apparently at the close of the Acts period), hid until then in God, and recorded especially in Ephesians 3, marked the beginning of the church, (2) That church teaching proper for this dispensation is only to be found in the Prison Epistles, (3) That baptism, breaking of bread, Sabbath or Sunday observance, miraculous gifts, tongues, healings, Christian communism, ministry of angels, all found in Acts, in the Pentecostal period, are not characteristic of the 'church which is His body' Whereas I do not believe the above interpretation of truth, yet I find that these questions are being continually asked, and I have not been able to find a complete refutation of them"—LIVERPOOL.

**WE** should deny that the truth of "the mystery" which is unfolded in Ephesians 3. was only revealed to Paul at the close of the Acts period. It was involved in the first words that the Lord spoke to him at his conversion, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me?" which surely meant that the saints on earth are one with Christ in heaven; the members and the Head are one. That the truth in its fulness might become a fact, the Gentiles had to be brought in to be fellow-members

of Christ's body with the Jews, thus destroying all distinction between them.

Paul speaks of it in his Epistle to the Romans, chapter 16. 25, 26, and shows that the gospel that he preached from the beginning had the mystery in view: indeed they cannot be separated, the one flows out of the other. Nor was the truth of the mystery revealed to him alone, as is sometimes stated, for in this same passage he speaks of it "Being made known by the Scriptures

of the prophets (New Testament prophets) according to the commandment of the everlasting God." And again in Ephesians 3. he says, not that it was revealed only to him, but that "it is now revealed unto His holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit" (verse 5). They all knew the truth of it, though only Paul was made the minister or administrator of it.

We should affirm that the church began its existence on the day of Pentecost. The truth of it was not proclaimed that day, it could scarcely be until the body of Christ on earth had become a fact. It was the Kingdom that was preached by Peter, but the effect of that preaching was that those that believed were sealed by the Holy Ghost and the effect of that was greater than Peter predicted, for those who believed were gathered out of the nation and united to Christ, the Head of His body in heaven. The Lord's words to Saul of Tarsus (Acts 9.) prove that.

It was necessary that the Gentiles should be brought in that the full truth might be manifested, and it is interesting in this connection to see that Peter describes what happened in the house of Cornelius as the baptism of the Holy Ghost (Acts 11. 16). And this surely connects with 1 Corinthians 12. 13, the only place in the Epistles where the baptism of the Holy Ghost is spoken of.

Miracles and speaking with tongues were the powers of the Kingdom of God, and were sign gifts at the inauguration of this Kingdom on earth. The Kingdom of God and the church run on together, but are distinct truths. We are not told to expect a continuation of those early gifts, but baptism has a prominent place in the Epistle to the Colossians, and is also referred to in Ephesians, both of which are "Prison Epistles." It evidently has not to cease; and 1 Corinthians 11. tells us that in the breaking of bread we show the Lord's death until He come. It is evident, then, that it cannot be His will that that should cease either, for He has not come yet.

We believe that what are called the "Prison Epistles" should have a larger place in our thoughts and lives. They bring before us that which is vital and abides when what is external, as much that is presented in 1 Corinthians and 1 Timothy is, has fallen into ruins; but it would be a serious thing to lose these Epistles, for "all Scripture . . . is profitable . . . for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be thoroughly furnished," and 1 Corinthians was addressed not only to the church of God at Corinth, but to all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, and that surely includes every Christian on earth to-day.

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[T is a sad thing, but we fear true, that most men, even Christians, have more faith in GOLD than in GOD. There are thousands who can trust Him about their eternal welfare and for every spiritual thing they need, who are yet full of care as to temporal things. It is a thing to be deplored, for it is dishonouring to God. We feel that one of the greatest of our needs is to know God in His Fatherly care and to be contented with such things as we have, and to prove the truth of the words, "Godliness with contentment is great gain." But let us ask ourselves, in the secret of God's own presence, how we stand in this matter. Have we more faith in gold than in God?

# THE ALL-SUFFICIENCY OF THE SON OF GOD.

(J. T. MAWSON)

*"The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God"* (Mark 1. 1).

WHAT Jesus does flows from who He is, and who He is is clearly taught in every part of Scripture. This Gospel of Mark is the last of the Gospels in which we would look for the fact of His Deity; nevertheless it is here, and on the first page of it, that we may know who it is that has stooped to be the Servant of both God and man, for it is thus that Mark speaks of Him.

First we must hear the voice of the prophet who spoke of John as the forerunner of the *Lord*, for if He came as the Shepherd of Israel He must come in by the door, and the door was the appointed way of entrance, the way foretold in the Old Testament Scriptures by the prophets inspired of God. Next that same forerunner proclaims Him as the One who in His sovereign right and power should baptize His people with the Holy Ghost. He must be God who does that; the Baptist, a great man, could baptize them with water; that is, he could bring them into the place of death, which was their desert and God's judgment, but he could take them no further; but He who followed after John would bring them into the sphere and life and give them the power that belonged to that sphere which is God's prerogative alone. Then from the most excellent glory the Father's voice salutes Him, saying, "Thou art My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." And finally, He calls men from their occupations and their homes, putting His claim upon them before that of father, mother, wife and children; and who has a right to do that but God? We shall miss the beauty of this Gospel if we miss these testimonies to the glorious Person of our Lord, but if we realize what they

mean, then we shall not wonder at the power of His hand and His word, but we shall wonder at the grace and tenderness of His heart; we shall wonder and worship.

There are three spheres in which the Lord will exercise His power and grace if we will make room for Him to do it.

They are:

*The church sphere;*

*The domestic sphere; and*

*The sphere of the world's need.*

Every intelligent and conscientious Christian must feel how great is the need in all these spheres and those who feel the need the most will be most desirous of seeing it met. But *how?* is the question. May these incidents yield us some help as to this, for they illustrate for us the all-sufficiency of our Lord in these spheres.

## THE CHURCH SPHERE.

*"And they went into Capernaum; and straightway on the Sabbath day He entered into the synagogue, and taught. And they were astonished at His doctrine: for He taught them as one that had authority, and not as the scribes. And there was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit; and he cried out"* (Mark 1. 21, 22, 23).

We are not surprised to find that the Lord's service in this Book of service began in the inner sphere of God's interests—in what people would call the religious sphere—but we are surprised to find in that circle an emissary of the devil, an unclean spirit. We might expect to find the unclean spirit in the theatre or the picture house,

or moving in business and political circles ; but in the synagogue ! in the church ! Surely not. Yes, there was no doubt about it, the unclean spirit was in the synagogue, and it had a voice there, it cried out against the presence of Jesus there. Were the rulers of that synagogue ashamed of the presence of this unclean spirit ? We do not know. They may have endeavoured to cast it out or to bind it into some semblance of decency by chains and fetters, as the Gadarenes had done with the man whose name was Legion. If so their efforts had been in vain, the foul spirit was there when Jesus entered the place.

How good it is for us to learn that the power of evil was compelled to own that Jesus was the Holy One of God and fly before His rebuke. The people were amazed ; they had settled down, evidently, to the state of things and hoped for nothing better, when suddenly there had appeared in their midst One who with authority could command even the unclean spirits and they obeyed Him. The incident is recorded for our learning. Are we prepared for the lesson ?

Happy is that assembly of saints—and saints is the name given to all the children of God—that gives to the Lord a free and unconditional entrance into their midst, for wherever a door is opened to Him there He will surely enter. But let none suppose that they have the presence of the Lord because they profess to have it. He was outside the church of the Laodiceans (Rev. 3. 14–22), chiefly because of the spiritual pride that was there. He knows the proud afar off, and does not draw near to them or countenance their pretensions in anywise, but He looks to and comes to those who are of a contrite spirit and tremble at His word.

I suppose that few words of the Lord have yielded more comfort and encouragement to His saints than those recorded in Matthew 18. 20, “For where two or three are gathered together in My Name, there am I in the midst of them.” Yet those who have taken up these words in faith, and desire only to keep the Lord’s word and not deny His Name, are not immune from the attacks of the devil. The saints at Corinth were gathered in the Name of the Lord, yet it would appear that evil spirits had stolen into that assembly and were just as opposed to the authority of the Lord as was the unclean spirit in the synagogue at Capernaum. Is it not possible that spiritual pride and sectarian strife and evil speaking and bitterness of feeling and other works of the flesh that so often mar the peace of the saints and divide them one from the other and challenge the authority of the Lord in His own circle, are the result of the presence of evil spirits, agents of Satan, sent forth by him to do his fell work in opposition to the Lord and His work ? We believe it is so, for the flesh is pliable material in his deft hands. And how often have good and zealous men endeavoured to put things right that were wrong and made confusion worse confounded by their efforts, for every effort that is not directed by the Lord must be of the flesh, and the effort of flesh to correct flesh cannot produce true spiritual results.

Our Scripture would teach us that the Lord is not powerless as we are, but that He has authority before which every other power must yield. What wonderful results we should see if this were recognized by faith and if recognizing it we would condemn our own importance and give Him room to work ! He is more interested in His own circle of interests than the most

devoted servant of His could be ; He is the Head of His body and cares for all His members ; He is the Lord of His saints and servants, but He is also Lord of all ; He has been set over every principality and power and with authority He can command them and they must obey Him. We need a renewed sense of His greatness, power and authority, as well as of His love and grace. We need to look to Him who is the Head and Centre of His saints and humble ourselves before Him continually that He may speak the word that the works of Satan be undone, the flesh judged, His saints blest and His work prospered.

#### THE DOMESTIC SPHERE.

*“ And forthwith, when they were come out of the synagogue, they entered into the house of Simon and Andrew, with James and John. But Simon’s wife’s mother lay sick of a fever, and anon they tell Him of her. And He came and took her by the hand, and lifted her up ; and immediately the fever left her, and she ministered unto them ”* (Mark 1. 29-31).

There are some who would confine the Lord to the Sunday services and when they are done they would lock the door of their place of worship, as they call it, and would lock Him inside and live the rest of the week without any reference to Him. But I venture to say that if all they know about the Lord is confined to one day a week they don’t know Him at all, and further, those who really know Him would say that if they could only know Him in the Sunday services He would be of little more value to them than are the gods of the heathen to their devotees. They need Him every day. The Lord won’t be confined to one day a week, or to what we might term the religious side in our lives. He loves us too well for that and He delights to be with us

in our homes and to mingle with us in the joys and sorrows of our everyday life. I proclaim an everyday Saviour, a domestic Saviour, who understands domestic difficulties and knows how to meet them by His own power and grace.

*“ Forthwith He went into the house of Simon ”*—straight from the synagogue into the house. I am sure that Simon asked Him to go with him, but I am equally sure that He made Simon feel that it was the one thing that He desired to do. And there was trouble in Simon’s house, his wife’s mother lay sick of a fever and the whole house was disordered. What was it that had brought that fever on her ? Let us read something into the story that cannot be out of place and may the lesson help us all. A few days before, Simon had given up a lucrative calling. He had abandoned boat and nets and fishes to follow the Lord, and Simon’s wife’s mother saw very plainly that the Lord had nothing, not even a home ; He was a poor man without a place to lay His head, and if Simon followed Him, would he not be homeless, too ? It seemed a foolish thing that Simon had done, and his mother-in-law, practical body that she was, began to wonder and to worry about her daughter. And Simon was so headstrong a man, it was no use talking to him. The mother-in-law would have to shoulder the whole burden, so she supposed, and see that her daughter and the children did not want. And so she set to planning through sleepless nights, and the more she planned the more anxious she became, and anxiety deepened into continual worry until she lay fevered, sick and helpless. It was her love for those she dearly loved that brought it all about, and she did not understand that the more she worried about them the less she was able to help them.

We are going to travel from Simon's house to yours and see if the story does not touch your heart. You have worried and planned about things and you have been sure that everything was going wrong in your home life, and the more you have considered your difficulties the more they have seemed to be in a hopeless tangle, until you are indeed sick of a fever and you are adding by your fevered spirit to the difficulties that you have wanted to solve and the burdens that you have longed to lift. It will be well for you to face the question, not of these difficulties first, but of your own condition, and the worried and perplexed state of your own heart. But let us return to Simon's house. The Lord made Himself at home there, and they, the household, became so conscious of His sympathetic interest in them, that they tell Him of the sick woman. It is wonderful how the Lord invites our confidences if we let Him into our homes and lives. I heard of someone the other day who had burdens, personal and otherwise, and who longed for someone to whom he could tell them, but knew no one whom he could trust. Simon's family did not feel like that about Jesus, nor need we. Mark's laconic style makes it all very vivid. "Anon they tell Him of her. And He came and took her by the hand and lifted her up." He passed at once into that inner chamber and the moanings of the sick woman ceased as He took her hand, her pulse steadied, her temperature slid down to normal, she was instantly calmed. One touch of that sympathetic but almighty hand changed everything. Contact with Jesus assuaged the fever, *and He lifted her up*. He did not leave her lying in a state of helplessness, and there was no period of convalescence. She did not need to know Him a long time before she could trust Him wholly

about her daughter and the family. His touch, His look, were enough, she had nothing to fear if He was near, and *she stands up—the fever gone, and ministers unto them*.

I know the sort of woman she was, nothing gave her greater pleasure than to be serving those whom she loved, but the fever had stricken her down, she could do nothing to help them and had become a burden to those she would have served. But now she is free again, her heart can express itself in her activities, she can resume her normal life and serve the household that she loved, but she must have done it as she never did it before. Her experience of her own weakness in the fever and the strength that Jesus had imparted to her by His touch had made her wholly new in the way she served. His touch had transmuted the poor metal of her love into calm, unselfish, unostentatious service.

Again let us travel from Simon's house to yours, and instead of thinking of his mother-in-law, think of you. It is the contact with Jesus you need, His touch—"I will give you rest," He says, "Ye shall find rest to your souls." How wonderful it will be for you when you do find this rest! What a priceless treasure it is! Then will it be said of you, "In quietness and confidence shall be your strength." Then will you be a help and not a hindrance in your home, a glad servant of others' need, and the service you render will be the service of love, love first to the Lord and then to others.

Now let us bring to the Lord our burdens and cares. Our homes may be His kingdom. The world's door is a closed door, bolted and barred against Him, but we may open the doors of our homes to Him and constrain Him to come in, and when in

answer to our request He becomes our guest we may tell Him all. There is no detail too small for His grace and no trouble too great for His power. It makes a difference when the father and mother bend their knees in secret before Him and it increases the blessing when the family is drawn into the daily habit of prayer. If He is asked and allowed to handle things, peace and order and contentment will be the result, and the humblest home will be transformed into a royal dwelling if the Lord is there.

### THE CIRCLE OF THE WORLD'S NEED.

*"And at even, when the sun did set, they brought unto Him all that were diseased, and them that were possessed with devils. And all the city was gathered together at the door. And He healed many that were sick of divers diseases, and cast out many devils; and suffered not the devils to speak, because they knew Him"* (Mark 1. 32, 33, 34).

The news had spread that things had been put right in the synagogue. It may be that the condition of things there had been a scandal in the town and many who would have attended it to hear the Word of God read on the Sabbath days had stayed away because of it and interest in God's things had almost died out. But a new power had appeared, an irresistible authority, and one word had delivered that congregation from the blight that rested upon it. It was surely an event to be talked about, and those who had been fortunate enough to be at that morning service talked to the town. Then the One who was great enough to deliver the synagogue from the power of Satan was not too great to go into the house of a fisherman. He was surely as gracious as He was great, and He had interested Himself in the trouble there,

so that not only the synagogue but the house of His disciple had been transformed. It is not difficult to imagine how Peter and Andrew and John and James would spread the story of the afternoon's work and of the healing power of Jesus and of the gracious way in which He used it. And those who perhaps would have been unmoved by the work of the morning, became greatly interested in the work of the afternoon. The effect of it was a great stirring in the town, so that when the sun was set there were brought from every quarter of it the sick and the devil-possessed. What a sight that must have been! Was it possible that there was so much sorrow and pain and need in that one town? Only Jesus in all that multitude had known it all, and He knowing it all was able to meet it all. But who would have believed this? We can understand how anxiously Simon would look out from his doorway at the thronging crowd eager to be healed. Had his report of things brought all this need together? Suppose this multitude had to return to their homes disappointed? But the Lord was at his side saying, "Fear not, Simon, only believe." And they passed by that door at which the Lord stood, and His touch, His word, His look of compassion healed them all.

*"Oh with what divers pains they met,  
Oh with what joy they went away."*

The Lord's power was equal to the deep need of the town. And He is the same to-day, only now His power is put forth to heal soul-sickness and to deliver men from the yoke of sin and Satan.

Vast as the world's need is, He is able to meet it. Oh that men realized this. But how often they look upon the gospel message as an idle tale

because of the low condition of the church and the discontent in the homes of Christians. The evening's work on that memorable day flowed out of the morning's and afternoon's work, and if we are to rejoice again in the salvation of souls we must first secure the presence and blessing of the Lord in the inner circle of God's interests with which we have to do, and in our domestic and individual lives. Thank

God we can speak of the all-sufficiency of Jesus our Lord. There is no need too great for His grace and power. We may preach the glad tidings to all, even to the very worst and most remote from God, but we shall not do it effectually unless we can say, "He has done for us all that we are telling you He can do for you. See how He has blest us and come to Him that He may bless you also."

## "GOD CARES FOR SPARROWS."

(ANON)

*"Ye are of more value than many sparrows"* (Luke 12.).

THAT times are bad is admitted by everybody, nor do any signs of improvement show themselves. Many of God's children are full of anxious care as to how their needs are to be met, the difficulties seem too great for their faith, which really means to them too great for God. And these difficulties seem to be the greater because there seems to be less care for God's interests than once there was; it is a selfish day as well as a day of distress, and this spirit of the world has sadly invaded the lives of Christians.

It was on this line that my thoughts ran one night recently, and they brought a gloom over my spirit and gave me a sleepless night. Whence could God meet *my* need, for instance; the streams seemed to be drying up like Elijah's brook. It was not a happy or restful night that I spent brooding over these things. Then the clock struck the hour of six and I stepped out of bed to the window, really to see what sort of a morning it was. There was just one person in the

street below, a woman carrying a large black bag out of which she threw crusts and crumbs of bread, and behind her there stretched a line of chirruping and delighted sparrows. There was a parable livingly enacted before my eyes, God's answer to my night of gloom. If I had risen up a minute sooner I should have been too soon for it; if I had delayed a minute later I should have missed it and what a miss it would have been! That woman, whoever she was, did not know that she was ministering at once a rebuke and an encouragement to a child of God who watched her from an upper chamber. Hers was an act of kindness, to me it was a great sight and the voice of God.

And the Scripture spoke to me, "Ye are of more value than many sparrows" What could I do but go down before God and bless Him? Bless Him because He, my Father and yours, did not forget the sparrows and of course would not, could not forget His children. "Oh ye of little faith, wherefore did ye doubt?"

*"Father, I will that they also whom Thou hast given Me be with Me where I am: that they may behold My glory, which Thou hast given Me: for Thou lovedst Me before the foundation of the world"* (John 17:24).

# JEHOVAH'S SERVANT.

(A. J. ATKINS.)

(Concluded from page 161.)

WE now come to consider the third great passage in Isaiah concerning Jehovah's Servant, viz., 52. 13 to 53. 12, and would suggest that, generally speaking, we have here the Holy Spirit's testimony to this Servant, as in the passages previously studied we have Jehovah's testimony and the Servant's personal testimony. In a sense, we may say that all Scripture is the voice of the Spirit; but there are particular passages where this feature is more prominent, and this seems to be one of them. For undoubtedly we have here Israel's confession of contrition in the coming day when they will look on Him whom they pierced. Those readers who are familiar with the truth of the "remnant of Israel," that figures so largely in the Psalms and Prophets, will have no difficulty in discerning here the Spirit of Christ in the remnant. Nevertheless, the scope of the passage reaches out far beyond Israel, for the sufferings of Christ must necessarily have a universal bearing.

It is interesting to notice, in passing, that the passage is the very centre of the prophecy embracing the second half of Isaiah, as these chapters contain three divisions of nine chapters each (40.-48.; 49.-57.; 58.-66.); each containing three sections of three chapters. The middle section of the middle division is thus seen to be chapters 52.-54., and the middle chapter of this section is chapter 53.\*

We propose only to point out a few salient features of this precious portion and then to proceed to a practical application. As others have observed, the fifteen verses clearly divide into five sets of three. In the first, 52.

13-15, we appear to have a summary of the whole, the humiliation and glory of Messiah, Jehovah's Servant, and God's *counsels* concerning Him. Here, again, we find the striking call, "Behold My Servant!" In 53. 1-3 we see portrayed man's *rejection* of Him; in 4-6 the divine *meaning* of His sufferings, where we may almost hear the echo from Psalm 22., "But Thou art holy." In verses 7-10, His *personal perfection* through all is shown; and in 11-13, the glorious *result* of it all. A precious study indeed!

The passage is a sublime, succinct summary of the perfection of Christ and His sufferings and glory. What an exquisite epitome of the "early years" is found in the words, "He shall grow up before Him as a tender plant, as a root out of a dry ground"! How much that ministers to our affections is comprised in the title, "A Man of sorrows"! With what touching beauty is His meekness and submission described, "He opened not His mouth . . . as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so He openeth not His mouth"! What holy light is shed upon the nature of His atoning sufferings in the expressions: "Wounded . . . bruised . . . chastised . . . Jehovah hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all . . . stricken . . . it pleased Jehovah to bruise Him . . . His soul shall make an offering for sin . . . bear iniquities . . . bear the sin of many . . . made intercession for the transgressors . . . the travail of His soul"! The glorious results are not elaborated here, but how much is included in the pregnant phrases: "He shall be satisfied," and "The pleasure of Jehovah shall prosper in His hand"! Surely, this is indeed the voice of the Spirit of Christ "testifying beforehand

\* This should commence at Isa. 52. 13.

of the sufferings of Christ and the glories that should follow" (1 Peter I. 11). We see clearly illustrated in all this the divine principle, running throughout both the Word and the ways of God, that humiliation precedes exaltation; travail triumph, loss gain, apparent defeat manifest victory, and the cross the crown.

In the light of these wondrous revelations, can we not understand a little of the depths of divine delight expressed in those words: "Behold My Servant"?

Have these revelations a practical message for us? They have indeed. We observe that in each of these three passages this Servant stands alone as commissioned to carry out God's will and undertaking to do so.

The processes of love and labour, of sorrow and suffering, of faith and fidelity, are His own; as are also the mighty results. But when we come to the New Testament the fact emerges clearly, that the great work is not to be accomplished by Him alone; others are associated with Him. Let us note that word, *associated* with Him; it is a key-thought for our present study. Those thus described are brought into relationship to Him, they acknowledge His authority, become devoted to His person and possessed of His Spirit; and as the Father sent Him forth, so He sends *them* forth to serve.

In this connection we do well to reflect upon the care the Lord bestowed upon the training of the twelve, and upon the striking fact that each of the Gospels closes with a definite commission to service. Indeed, in the Acts, the Lord's earthly life is said to be "all that Jesus *began* to do and to teach"; that is to say, He would continue the work from heaven, from there "working with them and confirming the word." This is the situation still

to-day; and if so be that we are truly His, we each stand in this position of privilege and responsibility of being His servants. No one of His is exempt. We are called in and under the Lord to be "workers together with God"!

Now to all such the question is of paramount import: *What conditions success in this service?* True success, such as God counts it, depends at the least upon *our assimilation to our Lord, the Servant of Jehovah*. We may be sure that it is not merely by money or means; not by reliance upon human might or method; not by psychic power or personality; not by the influence of human emotion or eloquence; not by great amalgamations or by worldly advertisement that success is reached; but by following Christ, by His servant's likeness to Him. "The disciple is not above his Master; nor the servant above his Lord. It is enough for the disciple that he be as his Master, and the servant as his Lord" (Matt. 10. 24, 25). *As his Master*, that is the true servant's ambition; his badge and his guarantee of success.

When we say, "as his Master," we must make two great exceptions. In His *Person* the Master stands alone, He is the Son-Servant, "Jehovah's Fellow"; and in His *sufferings*—specifically those on Calvary—He also stands alone, for they had atoning value. In these respects none are associated with Him. But as to all else, is not Pascal's saying true, "It is one of the great principles of Christianity that everything which happened to Jesus Christ should come to pass in the soul and in the body of each Christian"?

What an example of this is seen in the Apostle Paul! How closely he followed we see from his word, "Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of

Christ" (1 Cor. 11. 1) How earnestly he wished to enter into the "fellowship of His sufferings" (Phil. 3. 10). How constantly he laboured to fill up that which was behind of the afflictions of Christ in his flesh for his body's sake! (Col. 1. 24) How he endured all things for the sake of God's elect! (2 Tim. 2. 10). How amazing is the list of his credentials! (1 Cor. 4. 11-13; 2 Cor. 11. 23-33). He tells us that he bore in his body the "marks (brands or scars) of the Lord Jesus" (Gal. 6. 17).

Far, far behind we come in all this; even perhaps in willingness to go this way. But we must not allow our failure (and how much this failure accounts for) to excuse our evasion of the truth, nor must we make it a reason for silence on this subject. The principle has been stressed by the Master Himself: "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die it abideth alone, but if it die it bringeth forth much fruit. He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal. If any man serve Me, let him follow Me" (John 12. 24, 25).

There is, in fact, one law for the Master and for the servant. The service of God is one grand whole. A single design is woven throughout it: it is the *cross*. An old Scotch preacher put it thus: "How true it is that our best and cleanest service is not our fussy officiousness, but our suffering."\* Can there, indeed, be any true service apart from *suffering with Christ*?† Whenever this truth ceases to be in evidence there is inevitably loss of

power, and accommodation to the *world*.

This, then, is the question we need to face. Does our service in some degree conform to the type of His? Does it arise from divine choice and call, from "the mighty ordination of the pierced hands"? Is it related to the *cross*? Is there any reproach of Christ in it? Does it *cost* anything? Is its aim and object God's will as revealed in His Word and the furtherance of His programme for the present time? Is it marked by confidence in the Lord, obedience to Him and dependence upon Him? Is the Lord allowed to control its details as well as its general direction? Is it in the Spirit's power? Does it stir up the devil at all? Is it marked by *grace* and accompanied by blessing from above?

Let us seek *grace*—and *grace* we all need—to face these questions. Looking into his own heart and life, who would like to say that they are superfluous or but morbid self-occupation? Certain it is that if these characteristics are missing, there is something seriously wrong. If, however, these characteristics are at all present, if, at least, desire and prayer stretch forward in this direction, let the feeblest of us take heart and press on. We are, surely, on the right road. Before us our Master has set an opened door; behind us He has left us a matchless example; to us He has imparted His own Spirit; and ahead of us He has set His own glory.

But if we are thus to serve, we shall need often to consider Him, *Jehovah's Servant*, our Lord Jesus Christ, for, indeed, only so can we become like Him, and only so will our hearts be moved to follow Him who endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of God.

\* Quoted on page 302 of Tilsey's "Dan Crawford of Central Africa", a life that is a deeply searching and stimulating illustration of the subject before us

† This is to be distinguished from suffering for Christ, though they are much allied.

## ILLIMITABLE WEALTH.

(SAMUEL LEVERMORE.)

“ *All things are yours* ” (1 Corinthians 3. 21).

COMPARED with the wealth of a believing labouring man, all the millionaires and multi-millionaires of earth are beggars, and all the Golcondas and El Dorados a scrap heap. “Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which He hath promised to them that love Him?” (James 2. 5).

Look up Jacob and Esau, typical men, in Genesis 32. and 33. A man of God and a godless man. Here was a time of testing for Jacob, the newly-made prince (32. 28). After “Galeed” (witness) came “Mizpah” (watch-tower) and “Mahanaim” (host of God), then “Peniel” the “Face of God.” God’s host prepares him for Esau’s, and the face of God for the face of Esau. Happy Jacob saw God’s host and God’s face: Esau saw neither. Esau said (33. 9), “I have enough.” Material things sufficed. He had no use for God’s things, but Jacob says, “Take, I pray thee, my blessing, for God hath dealt graciously with me, and because I have all things” (Heb. marg., verse 11). Jacob puts God and His grace into it; Esau puts neither. Jacob says, in effect, “I have all things in God and His grace”; Esau ignores both. No God, no grace.

Thus mankind is divided to this hour. God or no God. The “fool” (Ps. 14. 1) unfurls his flag with “NO GOD” upon it. “The fool hath said in his heart, No God.” In the days of the Psalmist he appeared to content himself with denying God “in his heart,” but now he displays his folly and proclaims it from the housetops. God or no God—heaven on one side

and hell on the other. The merely justified man has *all things in God*, but the Spirit-filled man puts *God into all things*, as Prince Israel in our text. A sure test, simple indeed, but conclusive. Jacob stood upon the platform of free and sovereign grace, rejoicing in his illimitable wealth.

“All things”: *all*—(italics mine as elsewhere). A perfect sphere without a speck or atom outside of it. A word of only three letters with the Triune God and three worlds in it. “All things”—persons, places, providences, provisions, doctrines, benedictions, powers and principalities. This episode of Jacob is one of many thousands of illustrations of the all things of temporal provision.

This Genesis incident is only the index, so to speak, but Romans 8. gives us the whole book.

*The “All Things” of  
God’s Providence in Grace.*

“All things work,” i.e., *actively*  
“Together” - - *harmoniously*  
“For good” - - *beneficently*

For whom?

|   |   |    |
|---|---|----|
| The “heirs of God”  | - | 17 |
| “Sons of God”   | - | 19 |
| The “redeemed”  | - | 23 |
| The “saved”   | - | 24 |
| The “saints”  | - | 27 |
| Those who “love God”  |   | 28 |
| Those who were “foreknown”<br>and predestinated, and are<br>“called,” “justified” and<br>“glorified.” |   |    |

Then we have "all things" again in verse 32, giving us the *imperative condition*. "How shall He not *with Him* also freely give us all things?" With Him everything—nothing without Him. As it is so beautifully expressed in Mary Bowley's precious advent hymn:

"Were the vast world our own,  
With all its varied store,  
And Thou, Lord Jesus, wert unknown—  
We still were poor."

Then come "these things" of faith's challenge in verse 31. "What shall we say then to *these things*?" referring to the *good* things which go before; and again in verse 37, "All these things," i.e., the seven evil things of verse 35 and the seven states of verses 38, 39. This expression of "all things" is very intensive and can be considered from many standpoints, one of which might be described as

*The "All Things" of  
Present Possession.*

Why say "I am of Paul" or "I am of Apollos" or "Cephas"? This is carnal and makes for division, envying and strife—because "all things are yours." All *gifts* therefore (vide Ephesians 4. 11, 12), and if you have *all*, individual domination ceases. "Let no man glory in men." The "world" is yours because it is His. It is yours to "use" (1 Corinthians 1. 31). Satan's lap is the cradle of the world (1 John 5. 19). By nature and by necessity you are *in* the world, by grace you are not of it. Conversion takes the believer out of Satan's lap and the world out of his heart. If you desire the Spirit's teaching as to the world in relation to the believer, 1 John 2. 15-17 will give it you and leave nothing to ask.

"LIFE" is yours. Israel in Egypt were the Lord's people and their life was not in Pharaoh's hands. God came in saying to the arch-enemy, "Stand off! Their life is Mine to dispose of, not yours."

"DEATH" is yours, for God to use for your deliverance as He used it for Israel at the Red Sea.

"All things" *generally* in 1 Corinthians 3. 21, but all things *doctrinally* in chapter 1. 30. All doctrine. Oh, what a mine of wealth is here! But as in Romans 8. 32, it is "*in Christ Jesus*, who of God is made unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption." "In Christ Jesus"—never forget that.

"Possessing Christ, I all possess,  
Wisdom, and strength, and righteousness,  
And sanctity complete."

The Christian also has

*"All Things" of  
Christian Life and Service.*

Cf. 2 Corinthians 9. 8 with 2 Peter 1. All *grace*—all *sufficiency* in all things. Three "alls" in Colossians 1. 9, 10, 11—"wisdom," "might" and "patience." Three "all things" (verses 16, 17) of Christ, who "created all things," who is "before all things" and "pre-eminent in all things." And in Him is found

*"All Things" of  
Divine Enabling.*

Cf. John 15. 5, "Without Me ye can do nothing," with Philipians 4. 13, "I can do all things through Christ who strengtheneth me." The grand secret of strength is indicated no less than nine times in seven verses in John 15. Abide in Him! Abide! Abide!

He is

- "Able to save" (Heb. 7. 25).
- "Able to succour" (Heb. 2. 18).
- 'Able to keep" (Jude 24)
- "Able to build you up" (Acts 20. 32).
- "Able to make you stand" (Rom. 14. 4).
- "Able to compensate" (2 Chron. 23. 9).
- "Able to deliver" (Dan. 3. 17).
- "Able to restore" (Rom. 11. 23).
- "Able to exceed expectations" (Eph. 3. 20).
- "Able to subdue all things" (Phil. 3. 21).

Let us now take a glance at

*The "All Things" of  
Gospel Blessing.*

"Come, for all things are now ready" (Luke 14. 17). The gospel surely is not a *fast* but a *feast*, and the believer who is walking "in the Spirit" and "filled with the Spirit" knows it right well. It is God's feast: "My supper" (verse 24), "My house" (verse 23), "His servant" (verse 17). God the host; Christ the feast; the Spirit the servant. *All* He invited refused the invitation (verse 18). *Some* were compelled. "Drawn" (John 6. 44), not driven. Divine compulsion. Irresistible grace, effectual calling. "All things are *now* ready" Cf. 1 Corinthians 2. 9. In Matthew 22. 4 the King says, "I have prepared My dinner." "The things that God hath prepared" Yes, but when? "Now" ready. "God hath prepared," cries the Spirit. Oh, what a feast! "Joy and peace in believing" (Rom. 15. 13). "Beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, and the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness" (Isa. 61. 3) "Eat, O friends; drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved" (Song of Sol. 5. 1). "He that drinketh of the water that I shall

give him, it shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life" (John 4. 14). Think of a traveller crossing the Sahara with a well of luscious, sparkling water *in* him! and exhaustless, too. "A miracle," you cry. Exactly, and such is grace. How else could "all things" be yours?

Further, when we pray, "Thy Kingdom come," we must think of

*The "All Things" of  
Kingdom Glory (Ephesians 1. 9, 10).*

Oh, what glories upon glory, what mighty Alps of blessing have God's chosen as they sit at God's feast as seen in Ephesians 1. "Chosen," "predestinated," "adopted," "accepted," "redeemed," and then taken into God's confidence (verses 9, 10), that in the glorious millennial days He will head up *all things* in Christ. Heaven and earth will centre in Him. "In whom also we have obtained an inheritance."

"Reserved in heaven for you," says Peter. He has gone to prepare the inheritance for us, and the Spirit by whom we are sealed has come to prepare us for the inheritance. And in those blissful days of the saints' everlasting rest, when the tabernacle of God shall be with men and He will dwell with them and they shall be His people, when God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes, and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, He that sitteth upon the throne will make "*all things*" new. "All things" of the eternal life and state Oh! Seraphic vision! Oh, glorious awaking! Oh, perfect consummation! "All things new." Revelation 21.

He maketh *all things* new. Then, verse 7, "He that overcometh shall inherit "*ALL THINGS*."

# THE ONE PERFECT LIFE.

(J J ANNING)

## Leviticus 2. 1-16.

I AM not going to attempt a theological interpretation of this wonderful chapter, but I think those who have carefully studied it will agree that in this meal-offering of fine flour we have shown to us in type what the life of the Lord Jesus Christ as a man here on earth was to God. It was a sweet savour offering to God, and I will ask you to look reverently into the detail of it with me. It was an offering made by fire, and the fire means testing. Jesus was tested from His birth to His death. He was tried to the utmost, but every trial only proved the perfection that was in Him.

The ingredients of it we read were the fine flour, the oil and the frankincense; and salt was to be added. If you want a good discourse on what the fine flour means I would refer you to the Synopsis by J. N. Darby, and there you can read in choice language what the fine flour means. If you run fine flour through your hands you know the feel of it, its beautiful smoothness, no grit or irregularity, and such was to be this offering, clearly depicting to us the One who was the Bread of Life, the One who was the Corn of Wheat which went down into the ground and died: all the blessed smoothness and perfection of it was seen by God's eye. We may admire the life of Peter, of Paul or of John, and yet as you go over their biographies you detect here and there unevenness, things out of balance, and so on—all human life fails when compared with the life of the One that we have here in this offering, the fine flour that was to be mingled with and anointed with oil. The mingling of the flour with the oil speaks of the supernatural birth of the Lord Jesus. He was conceived by the Holy Spirit

(Matthew 1.). For the oil is a type of the Holy Spirit, and in announcing His birth to Mary His mother, in Luke 1. 35, the angel said unto her, "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee. therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God" The anointing with the oil would take us to the 3rd chapter of Matthew, v. 16. When the Lord Jesus went into the water to be baptized of John the Baptist, and as He came up out of the water, the Spirit of God like a dove descended and abode on Him, and the heavens were opened and a voice came from heaven saying, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" To me it seems that God caused His searchlight to shine down from heaven to earth and fix itself upon Jesus, and all heaven was invited to look down on Him, the fine flour was mingled and anointed with oil.

The frankincense was to be added. This could not be omitted if the offering was to be a true type of the life of Jesus, for His life was fragrant to God, He was well pleased with it.

I think there is a great deal too much of what one might call Christian selfishness; we are all out for what we can get; how often we attend meetings simply to get a blessing. I have read this Scripture that we might look away from ourselves and our blessings and our position and look at God's side of things, and find communion with Him in that which delights Him. For four thousand years God looked down on a sorry sight upon this earth; man had been marked by disobedience, by independence and by self-exaltation,

and many other things that are hateful to Him, but now His eye rested on One who was the obedient One, on One who was the perfectly dependent One, and on the One who was the perfectly humble One. There never had been such a sight for God before on this earth, and well might He open the heaven and say, from the excellent glory, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." And so that offering went up to God, an offering of a sweet-smelling savour, every bit of the frankincense went up to God.

He tells us the six ways in which the preparation of the offering was to be made. It might be made cooked in an oven, it might be cooked in a pan or in a frying-pan. Does not the oven illustrate to us all the hidden testings, that which men could not see but what God saw, and the pan or frying pan that which was more open and seen by men; but whether it was fierceness of the testing that men never saw, that man never knew, or the open contradiction of sinners against Himself, God beheld His perfections in the midst of them, He feasted ever upon that perfect fragrant life. I direct your eyes back to the garden of Gethsemane, when He sweat as it were blood falling

to the ground, and to Calvary where His trust in God failed not, in all that, in that testing there was nothing but the frankincense going up to God, for this is God's offering, an offering for God of a sweet-smelling savour. And if you say, "Well now, don't we get anything of it, is there not anything in it for us?" will you turn for a minute to the sixth chapter, and read from the 14th verse to the 18th verse. Well might we sing, "How good is the God we adore." You notice it was to be for a memorial; is God going to forget that blessed life? No, it is a memorial *for ever*. And He gives to us a share in His joy in it, for as Aaron's children had their part of that offering, so may we joy in the perfectness of the life of Christ. Throughout eternity we are going to share with God His thoughts of His well-beloved Son.

There are other things in relation to this offering that I might have spoken about, but let this suffice. Under every condition, under the fiercest testing, the life of the Lord Jesus went up to God as a sweet savour. It is left for you and me that we may have it as our portion and share with God His thoughts of His well-beloved Son.

## "The Head, even Christ."

Read Ephesians 4. 10-16.

[ LEARN from this Scripture that one important consequence of our intimate relationship to Christ, as the Head in heaven, is that the condition of all blessing is that we have only to be receivers. I cannot be thankful enough to the Lord, if I have learnt, in ever so small a degree, this simple lesson. For I have known in past days what it was to long after spiritual blessing, and to seek earnestly to press

into it—not perceiving that I had fallen into the snare of supposing power in myself, of thinking that to obtain what I sought depended upon my own energy; and this involved looking to myself. But as is plainly seen from this chapter, all blessing flows entirely and immediately from the Head in heaven to the members of His body on earth; and hence we are to be simply receivers.

# THE UNVEILED MYSTERY.

(J. A. O. ALLEN.)

*“Great is the mystery of godliness : God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory”* (1 Tim. 1. 15).

Tune : *Speranza.*

O Mystery of Lowliness and Love,  
Who laid aside His glory from above,  
And took the humblest Servant's place below—  
GOD MANIFEST—in sorrow and in woe.

How holy, harmless, undefiled was He  
On Whom the Spirit came that all might see  
Heaven's highest Joy and unalloyed Delight,  
God's Dayspring gleaming through earth's gloomy night.

How wonderful it was in angels' eyes  
To see their Lord on earth in human guise,  
To strengthen Him in sorrow's darkest hour,  
To hail Him Victor o'er death's vanquished power.

How great the Mystery Divine unveiled  
When to the cross Incarnate Love was nailed,  
There opened eyes beheld God's marvellous grace  
And glory streaming from the Saviour's face.

How joyous God's Evangel of free grace,  
Proclaimed world wide to men of every race,  
For His great love to all the world flows o'er  
In Christ, His Gift of Life for evermore.

How blessed they who saw and Him believed,  
Who Love's assurance from His lips received,  
And clasping holiest feet that ever trod  
On earth, owned Him their Saviour, Lord and God.

How wide the glory gates were open swung,  
How sweet the song by countless angels sung,  
How welcome God's Beloved to His Home—  
With glory fadeless crowned on God's high throne.

\* \* \* \* \*

From earth, O Lord, we gaze up to Thy face,  
Where captured hearts its beauty love to trace.  
From heaven Thy love-filled eyes look ever down,  
Waiting the Day that blessed Hope will crown.

O Lord, when wilt Thou come to call Thine own ?  
When rise in gladness from Thy Father's throne ?  
When take Thy power and usher in Thy reign ?  
GOD MANIFEST—in glory once again.

# THE EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS.

## Chapter 4. Christ our Power.

(HAMILTON SMITH)

IN the former chapters Christ has been presented as our life, our pattern, and our object in glory. Our life to govern our path through this world, our pattern to characterize our walk, and our object in glory to give energy in pressing on. In this closing chapter, Christ is presented as our power to make us superior to all the circumstances of this present life.

The Christian is viewed in the Epistle as passing through an adverse world, opposed by a vigilant and unscrupulous enemy ever ready to use every means to turn the pilgrim from the heavenly path.

In his path, as set before us in this chapter, he finds the enemy against him; dissensions within the Christian circle; special trials peculiar to the Christian as such; the ordinary cares of life common to all; the evil and unlovely things of a world without God, and the adverse or prosperous circumstances of life. It will not, indeed, be found that all these things are specifically mentioned, but they are involved by the exhortations.

Furthermore, we have very blessedly set before us the One who alone can lift us above every trial and keep our feet in the heavenly path. Christ is our unfailing resource. His hand of power can alone enable us to walk in superiority to the dangers and snares of an adverse world, even as His mighty power enabled Peter to walk upon the water. Again and again the apostle delights to keep the Lord before us. He says, "Stand fast in the Lord," "be of the same mind in the Lord," "Rejoice in the Lord alway." Again he says, "I rejoiced in the Lord greatly," and, "I can do all things

through Christ which strengtheneth me."

### I.

#### *The Opposition of the Enemy*

(Verse 1).

The chapter opens with the exhortation, "Stand fast in the Lord." This supposes all the power of the enemy arrayed against us, and that the Christian profession no longer walks at the height of the Christian calling. With the devil opposing, true saints giving up the heavenly calling, and mere professors denying the Cross of Christ, what hope is there that any will remain true to Christ, be preserved from giving up the heavenly path, and drifting into an easy-going and lifeless profession? Our one hope, our unfailing resource, is Christ. We cannot "stand fast" in our own strength. We cannot stand fast in our brethren. They, like ourselves, are weak and failing. We can "stand fast in the Lord." He will never fail us; and in Him we shall find strength to stand against the enemy and all his wiles.

### II.

#### *The Dissensions of Believers*

(Verses 2, 3).

We have not only to meet the unceasing hostility of the enemy, but the ever present dissensions amongst the people of God. Even in the bright Philippian assembly the spirit of dissension was at work. Two sisters were not of the same mind. Nothing is more distressing, disheartening and wearying to the spirit, than the constant dissensions amongst the Lord's people. How often have such dissensions given the enemy an occasion, which he has

not been slow to use, to turn aside a weak believer from the separate path of the heavenly calling, to settle down in some easy-going religious system of men's devising!

Again, however, our true resource in the presence of our dissensions is the Lord. Why should we turn aside from the heavenly path, when difficulties arise, if we have the Lord to whom we can turn? Our differences will never be settled by mere discussion, or by way of compromise, or even by seeking to arrive at a common judgment, which might indeed be "one mind" and yet only our own mind. The only way to end dissension is for those who differ to turn to the Lord, seeking *His mind*. This, however, supposes the judgment of the flesh, the refusal of self-will, and subjection to the authority of the Lord. Thus only shall we arrive at the same mind in the Lord.

### III.

#### *The Special Trials of Believers*

(Verses 4, 5).

There are special trials that are peculiar to the believer as such. There are sufferings for Christ's sake, and sorrow of heart over the condition of the Christian profession. Paul, when writing this Epistle, was in prison for Christ's sake. He was sorrowing over those who were turning aside to their own things, and weeping over others whose low walk made them enemies of the cross of Christ.

In the presence of these special sorrows we are exhorted to "Rejoice in the Lord always." Thus only shall we be sustained whether the days be dark or bright. We cannot always rejoice in our circumstances or in the saints, we can always rejoice in the Lord. Others change, others pass away; He remains, and He is the same.

Paul had known the Lord when a

free man, and he had proved the Lord when a prisoner, and, from his own experience of the Lord's sufficiency, he can say, "Rejoice in the Lord always: again I say rejoice."

Moreover, this delight in the Lord delivers from the power of present things. If rejoicing in the Lord, and all the resources in Him; if confident that He is at hand, and that at His coming He will right every wrong; we shall not be over-troubled with the confusions in the world or the professing Church. We shall not be asserting our rights, or vehemently expressing our opinions on this world's affairs. We can afford to be quiet if the Lord is at hand, and thus be known by all men for gentleness and moderation.

### IV.

#### *The Cares of this Life*

(Verses 6, 7).

Not only are there special trials peculiar to the Christian, but there are the ordinary trials of life common to mankind. There are the everyday anxieties connected with our homes, our families, our health, our callings, and our circumstances. How are we made superior to these varied cares? It is evident that God would have his children to be free from all worry and anxiety. This, the word clearly tells us, can only be brought about by taking *everything* to God in prayer. It is not simply the great trials that we are to take to God, but the small worries. The little thing that worries might appear foolish or fanciful to others, nevertheless let us not weary ourselves with reasoning about it in our minds, but by prayer and supplication make it known to God. He knows all about the burden before we go to Him. We cannot tell Him anything that He does not know; but making it known we know that He knows. In

result we are relieved from anxiety. It does not follow that we get our request, but we obtain the peace of God to garrison our hearts.

The story of Hannah in the Old Testament affords a striking example of the relief afforded by prayer. Wearing by a trial that made her fret and weep, there came a moment when she "poured out her soul before the Lord," with the result that, though her circumstances were not altered or her prayer answered, she went on her way "in peace," and was "no more sad" (1 Samuel I. 6, 7, 15-18).

David, in the day of his great sorrow, could say, "I cried unto the Lord, and He heard me"; with the result that he could add, "I laid me down and slept." His circumstances were not altered, but his heart was relieved by casting his care upon the Lord (Psalm 3. 4-6).

Did not Mary of the eleventh of John learn the blessed effect of casting her sorrow upon the Lord when, having sent a message to the Lord concerning her trial, she was enabled to "sit still" in the house? (John II. 3, 20).

## V.

### *The Defilements of the World*

(Verses 8, 9).

The fallen world through which we are passing is characterized by things that are false, and mean, and wrong; things unholy and unlovely; things that are of evil report, vicious and to be condemned.

There is indeed much that is beautiful in nature, and the natural man is capable of producing and appreciating much that is beautiful in music and art and literature, and yet sets little value on that which is morally beautiful. How can it be otherwise in a world that could see no beauty in the One who is altogether lovely?

The evil of the world is ever present, flaunting itself in public, retailed by the daily press, and broadcasted by wireless. It is gloated over in fiction, depicted in places of entertainment, and exploited for gain.

How then is the Christian to be kept from the defiling influences of such a world? Only by having his mind occupied with things that are true, noble, just, pure and lovely; things that are of good report, virtuous and to be praised. These things find their perfect expression in Christ and in His people in the measure in which Christ is formed in them. Thus, again, Christ is our resource to lift us above the defiling influences of a world without God. The character is formed by what the mind feeds on. Hence the importance of the exhortation, "Think on these things."

The one whose mind is occupied with the things that are morally lovely, the things that Christ delights in, will be ready to do the things that are pleasing to Christ. Hence the "thinking" of verse 8 is followed by the "doing" of verse 9. Just as the evil thoughts of the heart find their expression in evil ways, so right thinking is followed by right acting. Thinking of things morally beautiful and doing that which is pleasing to God, we shall have, not only the peace of God in our hearts, but the God of peace with us in our walk.

## VI.

### *The Circumstances of Life*

(Verses 10-13).

In his passage through this world the Christian may be tried through seasons of adversity, or tested by times of prosperity. Either condition has dangers for the believer. In adversity we may be tempted by the devil to lose confidence in God and question His ways or His love. It was thus

Job was tested (Job 1. 20-22 ; 2. 9, 10). In prosperity we may grow self-confident and forget God. It was so with David (Ps. 30. 6). Moses warns God's people lest in days of temporal fulness the heart be lifted up and God be forgotten (Deut. 8. 14).

Speaking from his own experience, the apostle instructs us how to escape both snares. Tested in every way he knew how "to be abased" without being cast down and losing confidence in God ; and how to "abound" without being lifted up and forgetting God. What was it sustained Paul whether in fulness or hunger, whether abounding or suffering ? His answer, in one word, is "Christ." He had experienced the support of Christ in days of need as in days of plenty and he proved that in Christ he had strength for all things.

## VII.

### *The Need of Others*

(Verses 14-19).

If, like the apostle, we have "learned" and been "instructed" by the

support of Christ to be lifted above our circumstances, be they adverse or prosperous, we shall be ready to communicate to others. If overcome by need we shall think only of ourselves ; if overcome by prosperity we shall forget God and the people of God. If strengthened by Christ in every circumstance our hearts will go out to others in need. And as with the Philippians, so with ourselves, it is well to communicate in the afflictions of the needy. Such gifts comfort the needy, bear fruit to the giver, and rise up as an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well pleasing to God.

Thus in this closing chapter the apostle anticipates the opposition of the enemy, the special trials of the believer, the cares of this life, the defiling influences of the world, circumstances whether adverse or prosperous, and turns us to the Lord as the One who is able to sustain through all and lift us above all, that we may be kept for the glory of our God and our Father (verse 20).

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## "TAKING NOTHING OF THE GENTILES."

Read John's 3rd Epistle.

THIS insistence on the truth, as the test for the last days, is very remarkable ; and so is this preaching itinerancy by persons who took nothing of the Gentiles when they came forth, leaving it to God to cause them to be received of those who had the truth at heart, the truth being their only passport among Christians, and the only means by which the apostle could guard the faithful.

The apostle knew no authority which sanctioned their mission, the absence of which would prove it to be false or unauthorized. The whole question of their reception lay in the doctrine which they brought. The apostle had no other way to judge of the authority of their mission : there was then no other ; for, had there been any, that authority would have flowed from him. He would have been able to say, "Where are the proofs of their mission ?" He knew none but this—do they bring the truth ? If not, do not salute them (2nd Epistle). If they bring the truth, you do well to receive them, in spite of all the Diotrophes in the world.

J. N. D.

# THOUGHTS ON THE SIXTY-FIRST PSALM.

(E. E. CORNWALL.)

UNLIKE the two previous psalms, the sixty-first does not indicate the circumstances that led to its being written.

That it was David's own experience we do not doubt; it has also been that of the people of God at all times, and will yet be the language of a remnant of God's earthly people in a day now fast approaching.

The Hebrew word *Neginah* in the heading would seem to signify that this psalm was to be accompanied by an instrument of *one* string only, in harmony with the solitary feelings of the psalmist at that time.

King David, after unburdening his heart before the LORD, may have sent on his utterances direct to one of his musicians (Heman, Jeduthan or another) who would be able to set them to appropriate melody, for the service of Jehovah by His earthly people, over whom he reigned as king (on God's behalf) and for whom he was a representative man.

Commencing with a cry, the psalm ends with a song.

1. *Hear my cry, O God; attend unto my prayer.*

His bitterness of soul caused David to cry to God, but as the cry changes into prayer he gradually becomes calmer.

"Art thou afflicted? O beloved, pray!  
Why in grief's darkening twilight still abide?"

2. *From the end of the earth will I cry unto Thee, when my heart is overwhelmed: lead me to the Rock that is higher than I.*

It is to God he turns, even should he be far from the place where Jehovah had set His name. To be absent from Zion was to him as

"the end of the earth," but it was something higher than the hill of Zion his soul needed; David's spirit yearned for the comfort of the "Rock of Ages."

3. *For thou hast been a shelter for me, and a strong tower from the enemy.*

He knows by past experience to Whom to turn. In other storms Jehovah has sheltered him; on past occasions when pursued by foes, this "strong tower" has proved to be unassailable.

4. *I will abide in Thy tabernacle for ever: I will trust in the covert of Thy wings. Selah.*

He anticipates the relief expected, and will always remain in a place so safe and secure. God's presence he will and must abide in.

At this point *Selah* divides the psalm into two equal parts, and here there is a pause, as the musical interlude in a song, giving rest and breathing space to both singer and hearers.

If the first half of the psalm is marked by *prayer*, the second half is marked by *praise*.

5. *For Thou, O God, hast heard my vows: Thou hast given me the heritage of those that fear Thy name.*

Already David has the assurance that he has been heard.

"Thy cry of sharp distress in heaven was heard;  
Shall not the same wide heaven hear thee sing?"

He trusted in the God of his fathers—Boaz, Obed, Jesse, a noble ancestry. We also owe much to our upbringing. Born in a land of Bibles. Brought up

in a Christian home. A place of privilege among the people of God. This is the heritage belonging to many of us!

6. *Thou wilt prolong the king's life : and his years as many generations.*

David will make the most of his privileges ; length of days shall but add to his usefulness.

7. *He shall abide before God for ever : O prepare mercy and truth, which may preserve him.*

Mercy and truth shall be prepared for him ; mercy for his outward

circumstances, truth for his inward condition. The one for his body, the other for his soul ; and great David's greater Son abides "before God for ever."

8. *So will I sing praise unto Thy name for ever, that I may daily perform my vows.*

If praise is to be his everlasting occupation, he must first learn how to translate into daily life that which he has learnt in his soul. "Faith without works is dead."

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## SERVICE.

IF I understand service to the Lord aright, I shall acknowledge two things : (1) I am under an obligation to Him, for He has purchased me, I am His bond slave ; (2) I am in the closest relationship with Him and His love constrains me to service. Duty and affection combine to make me place myself at His disposal.

I must be ready to do what He tells me, I must serve under His direction, and in concert with His mind ; not like an officious servant who is always suggesting, instead of waiting for direction.

I must be ready to suffer, for my Lord suffered even unto death, and He has said, "If any man serve Me, let him follow Me." The lack of self-denial is the greatest check to service.

I must not be guided by opportunity, though I should be always ready for the opportunity, but I must seek His direction and do His pleasure. It is not a question as to how I succeed, but have I got the assurance that I am pleasing Him ?

To serve rightly I must spend time in the sanctuary of His presence and I must be there because He attracts me there, because His presence is better even than His service. And I must know that He delights to have me there, as He delighted in Mary when she sat at His feet, and in John when he reclined on His breast at supper. I must know that I am in His favour, then will I serve with a glowing heart and keep myself for Him.

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IT is a sense of union with Christ as our Head that gives us also the sense of union one with another ; and it is only when this is maintained in our souls that we can occupy our true place on earth, whether in our relationship to Christ or to His people. For example, when gathered to the Lord Himself at His table, we are never there according to God if we are not consciously one with Christ, and one with all the members of His body. It is only then that we rise above all sectarianism, and "comprehend with all the saints."

## CROSSING OVER.

FRAIL is my storm-tossed bark,  
 Its frame rough gales have strained ;  
 But God surrounds me on the sea,  
 Until the port is gained.

The deathless treasure given  
 My living Lord doth keep :  
 He holds the helm, and safely guides  
 Across the troubled deep.

When starless night obscures  
 The dangers lurking near,  
 His welcome greeting, "*It is I,*  
*Fear not,*" brings hallowed cheer.

Jesus with heavenly calm  
 Shuts out the tempest's din,  
 And worship to the Son of God  
 Springs up the heart within.

The Father's Name of love,  
 His favour maketh known ;  
 Though waves beat high, deep flows the joy  
 While taught by Him alone.

Nearing the longed-for goal,  
 Sweet songs the Spirit gives ;  
 The winds but speed me homeward, where  
 Eternal glory is.

Bright haven of the soul,  
 Dear ere the crossing's done,  
 I hail thy palaces, and bless  
 The Father and the Son.

*Greetings from one fellow-voyager to another.*

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## "Be Careful for Nothing."

LEAVE your cares, fears, circumstances with God, not because you feel that you can do no other, but as bowing to His sovereign will and wisdom, and trusting to His sure and constant love, and looking to Him with subduedness and confidence.

There are in Philippians two passages close together that have often been a great comfort to me—"Rejoice in the Lord *always*" and "Be careful for *nothing*." What sweeping words, leaving us without excuse for not being happy! For "*nothing*" includes everything, and "*always*" leaves no time out; only it must be "in the Lord." Christ suffices for all, whether "to be full or to be hungry." Make "*your requests*" known, and God's peace (for He is not shaken by or uncertain as to what is to come) will keep your heart and mind through Christ Jesus.

J. N. D.

# ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

## Are we Sinners or Saints ?

“ Kindly explain the following in ‘ Scripture Truth ’ at your convenience for our edification 1 John 1 8, ‘ If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us ’ If we have sin, are we not still sinners ? But in Romans 5. 8 we find, ‘ But God commendeth His own love toward us in that, while we WERE YET SINNERS, Christ died for us ’, verse 9, ‘ Much more then, being now JUSTIFIED (from sin) by His blood,’ etc ; 1 Peter 4 18, ‘ And if the righteous is scarcely saved, where shall the ungodly and SINNER appear ? ’, 1 Corinthians 6 11, ‘ Such were some of you but ye were washed, but ye were sanctified, but ye were justified,’ etc , Colossians 1 14 (Eph 1 7), ‘ In whom we have our redemption, the forgiveness of our sins ’, and the Epistles of Paul were all addressed to the saints and not to sinners So kindly reconcile the above Scriptures and say whether we are sinners or saints.”—BURMA.

OUR correspondent asks whether we are sinners or saints It is a question that every man must answer for himself, we cannot answer for any other But we can say what Scripture says, viz, that those who are washed, sanctified, justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God (1 Cor. 6. 11), are “ called saints,” chapter 1 2, and not sinners, and the new name describes a new position and state. This change in a person is the result of the work of the word of God in the soul. All who have believed the gospel of our salvation are called “ saints ” in the Scripture (Eph 1 )

But though all who have believed are saints by calling they have to learn that sin is still within them 1 John 1 8 tells us this, which every sincere soul knows quite well for himself, and it is a passage that should expose the folly and humble the pride of those who claim “ sinless perfection ” and declare that sin has been eradicated from their hearts. But while sin is in the believer it must not have dominion over him (Rom. 6. 14), it may, through the supply of God’s grace, be kept in subjection. But sin cannot be brought into subjection by his own efforts to overcome it. Each one has to learn what Philip Melanchthon learnt, that old Melanchthon was too strong for young Philip, yet there are supplies of grace that can make the believer more than

a conqueror, so that through Him that loves him, he may be not only a saint by calling but a saint in practice, he may manifest a saintly character.

All who have been saved by the gospel were once sinners, and it was then that God’s love was commended to them, with the result that they became saints, and saints they are—separated to God, for that is the meaning of the word—and if they commit sins they hate their sins and long for holiness and are unhappy until they know that they have received the Father’s forgiveness (1 John 1 9), and if they hate their sins they are no longer sinners by nature, for the sinner loves his sins and hates the thought of holiness.

Our correspondent must distinguish between sin and sins, 1 John 7. 8 refers to the former, Ephesians 1. 7 to the latter. Sin is the nature, sins the acts of the nature; sin is never forgiven, but always condemned (Rom. 8. 3) God has condemned it, and the believer must learn to do the same and reckon himself dead to it (Rom. 6 ). Sins are forgiven, thank God, and from them all that believe are justified (Acts 13 38, 39). This important distinction must be seen and understood.

We see nothing that needs reconciling in the Scriptures quoted. A sinner

in Scripture is one who does his own will regardless of God's, and is the designation of all who have not turned to God. A saint is one who is justified and sanctified in Christ Jesus; he

may commit sins, for sin is still within him, but he is not thereby a sinner for it is not his practice. He hates it and desires to do the will of God—and there is grace to enable him to do this.

## The Judgment Seat of Christ.

“Will you please comment on the following Scriptures: ‘We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ’ (2 Cor. 5. 10); ‘We may have boldness in the day of judgment’ (1 John 4. 17); ‘So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God’ (Rom. 14. 12); ‘What a man soweth that shall he also reap’ (Gal. 6. 7). Is it true that our whole history, past, present, future, will be reviewed at the judgment seat of Christ, and that the whole of our sins before conversion and after will be manifested? Does Scripture bear this out? It seems to unsettle souls.”—GLANTON.

THE Scriptures quoted by our correspondent—2 Corinthians 5. 10 and Romans 14. 12—have Christians in view, and it is the things done in the body that will then come up for review. Yet may they have boldness in the day of judgment, for even now in respect to it they are as Christ is, “as He is, so are we in this world” (1 John 4. 17). The one who fears the judgment and talks of sins before and after conversion coming out then, and who dreads the thought of it, cannot have realized fully how God has been glorified about every sin and how complete is the clearance from every charge of sin that the blood of Christ has secured for him; he cannot have realized what it is to be clear of all condemnation and justified in Christ Jesus the risen Saviour.

At the judgment seat of Christ we shall see our whole lives from their beginning as Christ sees them; we

shall there accept fully His thought about everything, and be glad to see that set aside for ever which has not been of God in our lives, and learn as we could not apart from such a review how much we owe to the death of Christ and the grace of God.

The thought should solemnize us but not appal us, it should solemnize us because it will be the winding up of our responsible lives, it should not appal us because we know how much greater than all our sin and failure is the grace of our God.

“What a man sows that shall he also reap” is true in this life. Let a Christian drop into fleshly ways and he will most surely reap corruption and misery; let him sow to the Spirit, i.e., give his heart and mind to the things of the Spirit, and he will surely reap life everlasting with its joys and blessings.

TAKE courage. The Lord watches over you, makes *everything* work together for those who love Him. He may exercise and chasten you, because He loves you, but His love is shed abroad in your heart by His Spirit which He has given unto you. He knows you in perfect grace. You are kept by the power of God. It is sweet to trust Him. Take Courage.

## OUR DAILY LIFE.

(J I MAWSON)

WE were asked recently if we could account for the lack of growth on the part of so many Christians who seem both unworldly and estimable. Why don't they develop in the knowledge of the deep things of God and become enthusiastic in the goings forth of the truth? Why are they so dull and heavy spiritually, when the Word of God clearly shows that they ought to be joyous, energetic and fruitful? We ventured to quote the words of the Lord Himself in answer "*And that which fell among thorns are they which, when they have heard, go forth, and are choked with cares and riches and pleasures of this life, and bring no fruit to perfection.*" And it is probable that it is the CARES OF THIS LIFE, more than the riches and pleasures of it, that burden those about whom the question was asked. Is there a remedy? We believe there is. It is a fuller knowledge of the Father and His care for them, and if they would know Him they must consider His beloved Son. The object of this paper is to turn the thoughts of those who are anxious and burdened in these days of testing to the Father who has been revealed to us by our Lord Jesus Christ.

Would it not be an immense relief to every child of God who may be in circumstances of trial and anxiety, or in any others that make demands upon them, if they knew that divine love had not only provided for their everlasting felicity, but that God Himself—even the Father—was taking a personal, constant, and minute interest in each individual case? Would not such knowledge, if it were the deep conviction of the soul, bring a great peace into the life and drive away dull care, and set the heart free to enjoy the children's place and portion? We know that it would.

Now to assure us of this God has taken infinite pains in His sure and holy Word: it is bright with many faithful sayings in regard to it, and beautiful with many concrete cases in which His perfect care for those who trust Him is illustrated, but nothing can be more conclusive and convincing in regard to it than the life of our Lord Jesus on earth.

Let us consider, then, how the Lord Jesus acted in regard to the matters domestic, and the general needs of those whom He loved, as shown us in

the Gospel of John. In which Gospel, be it remembered, He is shown to us coming forth as the Word, who was with God, and who was God—the great Creator of the universe become flesh for our blessing; and the only-begotten Son which is in the bosom of the Father, who came forth to declare what He is, and has done this so perfectly that He could say "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father."

Is it not, then, most worthy of note and full of comfort to all who need comfort, that in this Gospel, and this alone, He is shown to us as a guest at a wedding, rejoicing with those that rejoice? and is it not equally significant that in this Gospel, and this alone, He is also shown to us weeping with the bereaved sisters at the grave of their dead brother? He who came to show us heavenly things (chapter 3) and to give the power to all that believe on Him to enter into spiritual and heavenly relationships, did not pass by these earthly relationships as though they were beneath Him. He recognized and sanctified them by His presence.

The wedding is the beginning of the home life, and may represent its most

joyous period ; the sealed grave is the close and the break-up of it, the darkest day of all. And the Lord, who came to earth to show to us the Father, was at both ; and is there a day between the two when He is absent ? No. He has said : " I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee," and that, be it noted, again in connection with the home life (Heb. 13. 4-6). The sense of His presence will make the one who has it contented with such things as he hath ; for nothing burdens the heart like discontent, it is really rebellion against the will of God and must rob the heart of all joy and peace.

There are profound depths of spiritual meaning in these two incidents that we quote from John's Gospel, and we should certainly seek these, but in doing so do not let us miss that that lies clear and plain upon the surface. Jesus, who was the Creator, the only begotten Son of God, the revealer of the Father, associated Himself with His own in the joys and sorrows of their every-day life. Perish the thought that we may only know His presence at the meetings for prayer or worship, that He only connects Himself with what are known as religious services. If this were all, then our religion were artificial and dead, and our Lord useless to us in this present stress, and scarcely of more value than the dumb idols of the heathen. But He comes into the home life when He is allowed, comes in all the plenitude of an inexhaustible grace ; rejoicing if we rejoice, and Himself becoming the source of a joy that earthly circumstances cannot yield ; and standing by us in days of stress and sorrow, to sympathize with and support the heart that looks to Him. How near this brings Him to us ! how real it makes Him ! how tender and accessible it shows Him to be !

If this is the case, and only those who

do not know the Lord will deny it, then all we have to do is to bring our need to His notice. At the wedding in Cana and at the sorrowing home in Bethany this was done, and it was not done in vain. So that we would say to all who are afflicted and tested, Make your need known to Him—present your case before the Father, whom He was here revealing, and if in His love and wisdom He sees that it be for the blessing of you and yours, and for His glory, He will certainly hear your prayer and remove your trial, but if it would not be for your good to have the trial removed He will still hear you and carry you through it, and make you more than a conqueror in it, for His grace is sufficient for you, and His peace can keep your heart and mind by Christ Jesus and make you superior to the trial.

Commit your whole case to Him. He knows and sympathizes, and He will not permit you to be overburdened ; not a feather's weight more than you are able to bear joyfully will be put upon you, and though you may be reduced as to material comforts, you will be greatly enlarged in the knowledge of Himself, who is the Lord Almighty, and who has said : " I will be a Father to you, and ye shall be My sons and daughters " (2 Cor. 6. 18). Thus will you prove for yourself that it is possible to be without anxiety.

But these incidents took place during His life before the cross. May not He have changed since His death and resurrection ? Lest we should think so He showed Himself to His disciples after He rose from the dead, and His tender care for them was seen to be still the same, and the manner in which He showed Himself to them is recorded for us that we may be assured that He is the same yesterday, to-day and for ever. In John 21. the disciples set out to do the best they could for them-

selves without direction from their Lord ; and weary work it was, for they toiled all night, and cold and hungry bodies and disappointed hearts were the only results of the labours. But when they turned their eyes to their Lord, who stood in the rosy light of the morning upon the shore, they discovered that He had not forgotten them. **THEY WERE COLD.** He knew it, and so had gathered coals and made a fire at which they could warm themselves. **THEY WERE HUNGRY.** He knew it, and so had prepared them a breakfast of fish and bread for their need. Their faithlessness had made them **FEARFUL AND ASHAMED.** He knew it, and so invited them to sit down before Him, and made them quite at home by His grace, while He gave to them the food that those precious pierced hands had prepared for them. As He cared for those loved disciples, so cares He for you, who are loved as much as they were. And He and the Father are one in this care for you, just as they are one in your preservation from perishing (chapter 10).

Grieve not the tender heart of Christ by doubting Him. The gold and the silver are His, and the cattle that feed upon a thousand hills He sits above the water floods, and all power is given to Him in heaven and earth. He is to us the revelation of the Father, the sure declaration to us of the Father's care, and we may be at all times without anxiety, for "**WE KNOW THAT ALL THINGS WORK TOGETHER FOR GOOD TO THEM THAT LOVE GOD, AND TO THEM THAT ARE THE CALLED ACCORDING TO HIS PURPOSE**" (Rom. 8. 28).

"Your Father knoweth," and He can do better for you and yours than you could do even were your love and wisdom and power a thousandfold greater than they are. Then yield

yourself and your affairs to Him, not with resignation merely but joyfully, as those who have a perfect trust in perfect love.

God intends that great good should come to you out of every trial, and He will see to it that your faith in it shall remain undamaged. But there is more, in the midst of it your Saviour and Lord desires that your heart should be unafraid and that His own peace should be yours. How can this be? The peace that He gives is His own peace, and He gives it not as the world gives. The world stands at the doors of its splendid mansions and dispenses its benefactions to the poor and distressed that gather at its gates, but these same poor do not enter the homes from which the good things come. They are not welcomed to the luxuries and the warmth of the dwellings of their benefactors, they remain outside—aliens and strangers. But not thus does our Lord give His peace to us, and not thus could we know it. He opens the door of His dwelling to us, and bids us "Come and see." And His dwelling is His Father's bosom (chapter 1. 18)—the infinite, changeless love of His Father's heart. He shows us that that is our home, the place of our rest. He shares it with us as those whom grace has made His friends (chapter 15. 15), and His brethren (chapter 20. 17). Can any trouble disturb the deep serenity of the Father's bosom? Can earth-born storms create forebodings in the heart that dwelleth there? And this is your refuge, dear Christian heart; here you may rest in quietness and confidence. It is here that divine love displays its choicest treasures to the loved ones, and life is no longer one dull, monotonous care-laden thing, but the joy of Christ is known and the realities of eternal life. "*Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.*"

## QUIET RESTING-PLACES.

(L R)

*"My people shall dwell in a peaceable habitation, and in sure dwellings, and in quiet resting-places."*—Isaiah 32. 18.

"QUIET resting-places." What music is in these words! the soft echo of an eternal song! They bring before us visions of green pastures and still waters, of fair oases in parched deserts, of a covert from the storm, of the shadow of a great rock in a weary land. What a solace to our hearts is it to know that our God has ever purposed these quiet resting-places for His people.

The Scriptures unfold to us this purpose in the eternal past, working out in time, made known in our Lord Jesus Christ and carried on by Him, in all its fulness and perfection, into the eternal future. At the beginning we read that God planted a garden of delight, and there He put the man whom He had created in His image, and when all was complete He blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because that in it He had rested (Gen. 2. 3). Here He walked in the cool of the day—the Creator and the creature keeping Sabbath together. What a scene for our contemplation! Alas! that sin and death should have marred it all so soon.

In Noah's history the thought recurs. Noah and his family, just emerged from the ark, a new people in a new world, offer a burnt-offering, and God smelled a savour of rest. We see here, in figure, the place where God can, and ever will, have His rest; but we see also that it cannot be in man by nature, for almost as soon as the earth is dry, after the flood, sin is found again. Thus man's sad story continues.

It would not be possible in this brief paper to cite all the references to this theme, but it will be remembered that early in Israel's pilgrimage God led them to Elim, that the ark went before

them to search out a resting-place (Num. 10. 33) and that in the Sabbath and in the Feasts of the Lord, three times in the year, He bade them come to rest and rejoice with Him. But there was little response in them; they broke the Sabbath, and they brought their idols with them out of Egypt and were continually guilty of idolatry. Almost the last glimpse we have of them before the captivity is of men burning incense to creeping things and worshipping the sun, and of women weeping for Tammus, and burning incense to the queen of heaven.

The story of Naomi and Ruth is a very different picture, and a very beautiful one. Naomi says to Ruth, "Shall I not seek rest for thee, that it may be well with thee?" (Ruth 3. 1). And the rest for the stranger from a strange land is found in the house of the one who had showed kindness to her and who had redeemed her to himself. "Boaz took Ruth and she was his wife," and in him her orphaned heart could safely rest.

In 1 Chronicles 17. 16, "David the king came and sat before the Lord." He, too, had found a resting-place, but with David also there was the sad history of subsequent failure. How precious to learn, from these Old Testament Scriptures, that God had never changed His purpose for His people, and that He will yet rest in His love and joy over them with singing (Zeph. 3. 17).

When the Lord Jesus came into the world there was, for the first time, One in whom God could for ever rest, One who would bring all His purpose to fruition, One who could say, "Come unto Me, and I will give you rest"

(Matt. 11. 28). And, beloved, is it not in the apprehension of Him that we dwell now in quiet resting-places? We can look back to the time when we felt the burden of sin and the fear of judgment, and then, as the sweet hymn says:—

“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.”

That was a never-to-be-forgotten moment—our first experience of our resting-place, and it seemed as though heaven were already opening to us, and a new song was in our lips. Days passed on, the brightness dimmed, the song died away; we were learning the power of sin within, until the Holy Spirit brought us to a new resting-place. “There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus” (Rom. 8. 1) Oh, the joy of this! to see that God looked on Him, that we might take account of ourselves as in Him, that it was not I but Christ before the eye of God, and from henceforth it became our desire that this, which was true of us, might be more true in us. Again we journeyed and came to yet another resting-place. We learned that the Saviour who died for us, who lives for us, in whom we stand, is also our Lord; and, as illustrated in Joseph in Egypt, He brings those who own Him Lord, who are yielded to Him, into a place of plenty—cities to dwell in, where there is rule and where there is abundance.

There are other resting-places in Him, the apprehension of Him as High Priest, as Shepherd, as Teacher; there is such fulness in Him, and we learn so slowly. Then in many types in the Old Testament we have foreshadowed a very precious resting-place. It is strange and wonderful, passing all thought, it is set forth in Adam and Eve, in Isaac and Rebekah, in Joseph

and Asenath, and in many others; it is made known in St. Paul's words in 2 Corinthians 11. 2, and Ephesians 5. 23–30. Here is a new measure of the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge. He loved us when He gave Himself for our sins, but here the most intense form of human love is used to explain to us His love as our Head, His love as Head of the Church, His love as the Bridegroom for the bride—the deep love of intimacy—so that we may rest in the knowledge that we are precious to Him beyond what any words can tell. So are we drawn nearer and nearer. We linger at our resting-places, and presently we find the Lord has been tenderly leading our hearts to His resting-place in His Father's love, His Father's house; and as the beloved apostle, leaning on Jesus' bosom and loved by Him, we find an unchanging, eternal resting-place.

There is yet another resting-place on the way to the eternal Sabbath-keeping—the place where the Lord gathers His own around Him to partake of broken bread and of a poured-out cup in remembrance of Him. God had to say of His saints of old, “My people have forgotten their resting-place” May He grant grace so that this shall not be said of us, but that our hearts may gladly respond to our Lord's desire for us.

Our meditation on quiet resting-places may fitly close with Revelation 21. 3–5: “Behold the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away. And He that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new.”

# THE SUFFERINGS OF CHRIST.

(A. J. ATKINS)

THE sufferings of our Lord Jesus Christ have ever provided a precious theme of meditation for those who love Him. In other days this was perhaps more so than to-day; in the Middle Ages, for example, they had a large place in Christian thought and literature. We in this day, who rejoice in the light and liberty of a pure and full gospel, would do well to consider the sufferings of the Lord more perhaps than we do. As another has said, "There is no subject more full of blessing and profit—if the divine nature and perfectness of Christ be fully maintained—than the true humanity and sufferings of our Lord. (They) are the channel and expression of His love to us." They, surely, exercise a most gracious influence in endearing Himself to us; develop holy spiritual affections; produce tenderness of soul; inculcate hatred of sin; preserve from worldliness, and inspire to Christian courage and patience.

Moreover, "the sufferings of Christ, and the glories after these" (1 Peter 1. 11, N.T.) are, in truth, the mighty undercurrent of the stream of revelation. They are the undertones of all divine melody. They make up the warp and woof of all God's ways. And they are the norm and pattern of His people's development and destiny. Scripture is full of the theme. As has often been remarked, in the Pentateuch we have the *figures*; in the Psalms the *feelings*; in the Prophets the *forecasts*; in the Gospels the *facts*, and in the Epistles the *fruition* of the cross and sufferings of Christ.

It is our present purpose to consider the practical *value* of the sufferings of Christ. But it is needful to allude briefly to their *nature*, not to dissect

that which is of such infinite sacredness and preciousness, but by observing necessary distinctions, to clear the ground for scriptural and profitable meditation.

The most important of these distinctions is that between His atoning and His non-atoning sufferings. His atoning sufferings were directly *from* God, not only *for* God; they were limited to Calvary, to that place where and that hour when He, the holy One, *bore* our sins and was *made sin* for us. "With this nothing can be mingled and mixed up. Divine wrath against sin, really and truly felt in the soul of One who, by His perfect holiness and love to God and sense of God's love in its infinite value, could know what divine wrath was, and what it was to be made sin before God, of One, too, who was by virtue of His person able to sustain it, stands *wholly apart and alone*."

His sufferings of a non-atoning character were various. There were those due to the utter incongruity between Himself, God's holy and gracious One, and the scene into which He came. The pall of darkness over the face of all peoples; the condition of His own people especially; the ravages of sin, the pressure of death, and the power of Satan over men, were all felt in all their awful significance. What deep pain He felt at the hardness and unbelief with which both His words and works were met; and how He was cut to the heart by His rejection by His own people, and by the knowledge of their impending and inevitable doom! Even with His disciples, how greatly He was tried in spirit by their spiritual dulness, their lack of sympathy, their constant disputes and their

misunderstanding of His plainest words! In His life of love He really entered into the sorrows of others, and felt intensely all human misery and need. "He bore in His spirit all He took away in His power." He *endured* the constant contradictions of sinners against Himself; their wretched murmurings, their dogging of His footsteps, and their cunning traps. How hard, too, it is to be misunderstood! He *never was understood*\*. His family thought Him mad; His enemies attributed His works to Beelzebub (that is, to Satan); He was the song of the drunkards; and even at the cross they were hurling at Him their spiteful gibes.

What suffering must have been involved in His *perfect anticipation* of all that was before Him, reaching its climax in Gethsemane! Then, also, "He suffered being *tempted*"; there were the fierce and constant temptations from without which ever beset Him: "my temptations," He calls them (Luke 22 28). At the end there were the treachery, the desertion, the denial, the insults, the brutality, and "the violation of every delicacy which a perfectly attuned mind could feel"; and lastly, but not leastly, the terrible physical agonies of the scourging and the cross.

His sufferings were *unmitigated*, for no divine perfection saved Him from their full intensity, although He passed through them all in divine perfection. They were also *unrestricted*. As another (J. N. D.) has said: "I do not believe there was a single human feeling—and every delicate feeling of a perfect soul was there—that was not violated and trodden on in Christ. I do not believe one sorrow was wanting to Christ, nor one sigh of His which has

not infinite value, nor which is not precious for me, and . . . a part of my blessing."

All this is most precious and touching for the devout soul to contemplate. But it must not end there, for contemplation is to produce character; devotion to aid duty; piety to feed practice, and affections are to be attested by actions. It is striking to observe in this connection that, *generally, when the sufferings of the Lord Jesus are referred to in the New Testament, it is in a practical connection, that is to say, as bearing upon Christian character and conduct.*

The reason for this is simple. The Christian is one who possesses the risen life and Spirit of Christ. Everything, therefore, that took place in the life of Christ here below, is not only of interest to him, but has a vital bearing upon his blessing, development and destiny. Moreover, a Christian is also a follower of Christ; the path of Christ is that which is marked out for him. He is the Pattern, the Forerunner, and the Leader of our salvation. As believers, we not only belong to our Lord and Leader, but are *identified* with Him, as our baptism signifies, and this is a truth of far-reaching consequences. It goes far to explain the practical importance of Christ's sufferings for His people. "God has one Son without sin, but none without suffering" (Leighton). "The cross of Christ is so sweet and profitable—such is its gain and glory—that the saints might wish it were lawful either to *buy* or *borrow* it; but 'tis a mercy that they have it brought to their hand for nothing" (Rutherford).

"Christ once *suffered for sins*, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God" (1 Peter 3. 18). This passage speaks of the atoning work of Christ; but its purport, as shown by

\* Except perhaps by Mary of Bethany.

the context, is that all suffering *on account of sin* has been undergone by Christ; His death has settled not only the consequences of our sins, but has severed us from their companionship. If, therefore, as Christians we suffer, it is to be for well-doing, not for evil: in our minds and our judgment we have done with sin because Christ has suffered for it, and has brought us to God.

But how can this be made real and practical, seeing the flesh is still within us and the world around us? "*Christ then having suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same mind, for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin*" (1 Peter 4. 1). The sufferings of Christ are, we see, an essential part of the Christian's armour. In Him there was no sin; but around Him there was nothing else; and He overcame by refusing every solicitation and opportunity to please Himself. Christ's was the *suffering mind*, formed secretly with God during the hidden years; adopted at His baptism; maintained throughout His three years of public life; confirmed on the mount of transfiguration, and consummated at Calvary. This 'mind' constitutes the very heart of His personal perfection (cp. Phil. 2.); and adopted and cultivated by the believer, it destroys the influence of sin: and enables him to "put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and to make not provision for the flesh to fulfil its lusts" (Rom. 13. 14).

In a world where sin and Satan reign, the alternative will always be compromise or conflict; surrender or suffering. Again and again in the New Testament are we reminded that we have been *called to suffering* (1 Peter 2. 21; cp. Phil. 1. 29, 1 Thess. 3. 3), "even as *Christ also hath suffered for us, leaving us an example that ye*

should follow His steps . . ." (*id.*). What precious encouragement! The word 'example' means a model, literally a copy-book headline. Leighton sweetly observes: "He left His footsteps as a copy . . . to be followed by us; every step of His is a letter of this copy; and particularly in this point of suffering, He wrote us a pure and perfect copy of obedience, in clear and great letters, in His own blood." The blessed example of our Lord Jesus fortifies the fainting heart, removes all sting and prevents all bitterness, and enables the suffering to produce tenderness and mellowness of spirit and strength of character. Suffering *of itself* does not have this effect; sometimes indeed the reverse; but when it is "according to the will of God" (4. 19), "for the name of Christ" (4. 14), and "as a Christian" (4. 16) there is all the difference.

It is most encouraging to find *Peter* telling us this, and making suffering one of the chief topics of his Epistle. For once upon a time, he could not bear the thought: "Be it far from Thee, Lord!" But since then he had himself witnessed His Master's sufferings, and he had received the gift of the Spirit; his whole 'mind' had become changed, and he says: "Blessed are ye, for the Spirit of glory and the Spirit of God rests on you." "Rejoice inasmuch as ye are partakers of *Christ's sufferings*" (4. 13). Suffering had become transfigured for him by the grace and glory of Christ.

In this last quoted statement, Peter touches one of the great themes of his 'beloved brother Paul', who perhaps followed even closer than he the great Exemplar. The truth revealed in Paul's gospel of the believer's *identification* with Christ, carries with it the inevitable privilege of suffering *with* Christ, as well as for Christ. "Joint-

heirs with Christ, if so be that we suffer with Him that we may be glorified together" (Rom. 8. 17). He could say: "As the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ" (2 Cor. 1. 5). He longed "to know Christ, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings" (Phil. 3. 10), and to "fill up that which was behind of the afflictions of Christ in his flesh for His body's sake which is the church" (Col. 1. 24). And lest we should think that all this is peculiar to the apostle himself, in his closing epistle he says, "It is a faithful saying,

If we have died with Him we shall also live with Him; if we suffer we shall also reign with Him" (2 Tim. 2. 12).

Suffering of this order is really inseparable from the salvation which is in Christ Jesus; it is the sign of our sonship; and the token of our kinship with Christ, who Himself, as the Captain of our salvation, was "made perfect through sufferings," and "for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God."

## God's Attributes and Nature.

[F we take Scripture, we find there the attributes of God—the one true and only God—shine out, and in every page, with unclouded lustre. He is one, supreme, the Creator of heaven and earth, of all things; knows all things. If we go to heaven, He is there; to hades, He is there (Ps. 139.; Jer. 23. 24); can do all things. His eye and presence are everywhere; He is the eternal God; He is righteous and holy; His goodness is over all His works. The cravings of the heart of man are met with the clearest and fullest revelation of God. I refer to the Old Testament, because there God, as such—the one true God—is fully and specially revealed in contrast with idols and man's imaginations. It is its special direct revelation, with the law of His mouth—though promises and prophecies accompany it.

The New fully confirms it, I need not

say; but there is a much fuller revelation in the Father sending the Son for the accomplishment of His ways in grace, and this characterizes it. He does not give a revelation, He is revealed. Hence, though of course the attributes remain true, it is not attributes which characterize it, but what He is—light and love; righteousness and holiness necessarily coming in—but His own. In the Old we could say, "The righteous Lord loveth righteousness." "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" Now, He, Christ, is our righteousness; we are made the righteousness of God in Him. It is in the New Testament we find God revealed in Christ as light and love, and we, "light in the Lord," and partakers of the divine nature, have to walk in the light, and know, through the redemption that is in Christ, that perfect love that casts out fear.

"[ I HAVE commanded the ravens to feed thee THERE." When God chooses the place He is sure to command the provision. But if we forsake the divinely-appointed pathway, we forfeit the divinely-appointed provision.

The ravens visited Elijah by the brook twice a day. They did not bring a week's supply at once. Hence Elijah's faith was kept in exercise and his food was never stale.

# "A REPROACH UPON ALL ISRAEL." (J. T. MAWSON.)

Read I Samuel 12.

**Partyism is the greatest curse that the Church of God has known.**

NAHASH the Ammonite was a scoffer, and the condition into which Israel had sunk gave him the opportunity to scoff at what should have been amongst their most cherished possessions—their unity as a nation, and their care for one another as brethren. In Joshua's day they had fought shoulder to shoulder to make their God-given possessions their own, and even after Joshua's death something of this spirit survived, for Judah invited "*Simeon his brother*" to share with him in the battles of the Lord, and afterwards he went with "*Simeon his brother*" when his turn came to fight, and they were wonderfully successful in their God-directed campaigns (Judges 1). But in Samuel's days that spirit of unity and goodwill had vanished and I judge that it was this that provoked this grim and scornful humour on the part of Nahash. Tribal interests had superseded national unity, and even tribal interests seem to have narrowed down to what was entirely local and this made the cities of the land easy prey for their foes.

Jabesh Gilead had a sad and tragic history. When all Israel "from Dan even unto Beersheba, with the land of Gilead" was aroused to indignation at the terrible evil that had broken out in Benjamin, the city of Jabesh Gilead alone remained indifferent and neutral. It was evidently nothing to them that the Name of Jehovah had been greatly dishonoured and the people of Israel greatly disgraced, and Israel in their zeal had meted out the same judgment to them that they had executed upon the evil-doers and those that sheltered them. In this we feel

that their zeal outstripped their sense of justice. It was right to abhor and to judge the dreadful evil, right to treat those who sheltered the evil-doers as the evil-doers themselves, for they were accessories after the fact, and their refusal to separate from the evil only showed that at heart they were one with the evil-doers. So far Israel acted according to the Word of God, and we are instructed as to this same line of conduct in the New Testament (2 John). But the indifference of Jabesh Gilead was not the guilt of Benjamin, their conduct was bad and called for condemnation, but as there are degrees of guilt so there are degrees of penalties, and we feel that less drastic measures would have met the case and achieved happier and more godly results.

From that time the men that remained of Jabesh Gilead must have felt isolated from the rest of the nation and this may have been the cause of their willingness to yield to Nahash and hand over their city to him. They may have reasoned, We have neither friendship nor fellowship with the rest of Israel, why should we suffer in the endeavour to hold this outpost for the nation? Better yield to the enemy and be at peace. But the Ammonite intended not only to dominate their city but to lay a reproach on all Israel. He seemed to be determined to expose their divided condition. It had been their boast that they were one nation with one God, and often had they exulted in the song of Moses. "Happy art thou, O Israel: who is like unto thee, O people saved by the Lord?" He would give the lie to it all and show that they were no better but rather

worse than other nations, and so his terms of peace were that every man in the threatened city should lose his right eye. He over-reached himself, Jehovah would not permit His people to suffer such a reproach as that, but His way was to unite the people under one leader. The Spirit of the Lord came upon Saul and the people came out with one consent to deliver their brethren whom once they had all but destroyed. It was a heartening revival of care for their brethren, and Nahash learned to his sorrow that the unity of Israel at which he had scoffed was a reality after all when God moved among the people, while his followers were all "scattered so that two of them were not left together."

We might muse upon the story and enquire whether it has no lesson to teach us. May not the apparent many victories by the great adversary over the saints of God be the result of their disunity? And that disunity the beginning of his triumph? We have no doubt that often when questions have arisen in the church which have called for action in the Name of the Lord Jesus there has been "righteousness overmuch" and too little grace and brokenness of spirit; vindictiveness too has often played its sinister part, and zeal for a so-called principle which may have been nothing more than an opinion, has often been greater than care for the life and souls of the saints. In these things the deceiver has had his way, and, alas, when it was supposed that the truth had triumphed, it was the devil.

If a sense of the oneness of the saints as brethren was revived in our souls would there not with it arise a greater care for all? And would not this fill us with desire to stand by those who are harassed and afflicted by the enemy?

These times are analogous to those of 1 Samuel 12. Satan and the world scoff at the disunity of the church of God. It is the thing of which they reproach it above all else, it has become a byword, and because of it Satan has grown very bold and is making further inroads upon it. He has proceeded, in fact, to do what Nahash threatened to do, to put out the right eyes of many of those who at one time seemed to stand for the truth. We see denomination after denomination losing what light they once had, turning from the truth and embracing modernistic views that are in direct antagonism to it; we see companies of Christians, because of their isolation from other Christians, becoming more and more one-sided in their views, keen perhaps to follow one line of things and blind to another. It is the work of the Ammonite—the devil's work indeed. He has succeeded in shutting up one part of the truth in this circle made by man and not by God, and another part of it in another circle of a similar character, so that the whole of the truth may not be given out in delivering uniting power to all who desire to hear it wherever they may be. The sympathies of many who love the Lord are bound up and confined by these circles and do not flow out to all who call upon the Lord; it seems nothing to them that the devil is attacking and blinding so many of those who bear the Name of Christ; they do not realize that this is their reproach. This partyism is the greatest curse that the church of God has known.

There can be no victory over the saints as they obey the commandments of the Lord. The wicked one touches them not as they are subject to Him, for the hand of the One whom they obey becomes their protection; and His commandments are His expressed

will for them, and these are that they should love one another and be of one mind, that they should be united and not divided. While we grieve that the church has wandered from the practice of the truth, we may pray that we with many more may be recovered to it, but this can only be as we come afresh under the influence of the one Head and Leader of the saints of God—our Lord Jesus Christ. All the saints are united by the Holy Ghost to Him and in Him. How profound was the effect upon the late J. N. Darby when he awoke to the fact that his Head was in heaven, and that his Head, the exalted victorious Christ, was the head of every saint—of the whole church of God. That did not mean the building of another sect and so adding to the confusion, it meant deliverance from all sectarianism or

partyism; it gave liberty to walk in the truth. As the Spirit of God came upon Saul uniting all Israel under him in sympathy for their oppressed and threatened brethren, so would He work to-day, we believe, if saints were freed from their party prejudices and indifference to the state of their brethren in Christ and were carried out of their sectarianism by the fact that there is one Spirit and one body, and one Hope, one Head, one Leader and Lord, one God and Father of all, and that the saints are one.

*May God so work in the hearts of His saints that they may discern what an evil thing this partyism is, and refuse it as being of the devil and the flesh, and show renewed diligence to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. This is of God.*

**A** LANGUID faith in the disciples of the Lord breeds unbelief as surely as a decaying oak does fungus. In a condition of depressed vitality the seeds of disease, which a full vigour would shake off, are fatal. Raise the temperature and you kill the insect germs. A warmer tone of spiritual life would change the atmosphere which unbelief needs for its growth.

**T**HE Psalmist brings this plea: "Thy servant that trusteth in Thee" (Ps. 86.). He does not say, "I deserve to be answered because I trust," but "because I trust I am sure I shall be answered": for it is absurd to suppose that God will look down from heaven on a soul that is depending upon Him, and will let that soul's confidence be put to shame. Dear friend! if your heart is resting upon God, be sure of this: that anything is possible rather than that you should not get from Him the blessings that you need.

**T**HERE is no time when God is not; no place where His eye and hand, to use human language, are not. "I AM" is the proper expression of His existence. While time rolls on, "I AM" remains unchanged; and when time shall have rolled away, "I AM" shall exist the same.

**I**T is Christ's work which gives peace to the conscious; but it is a subdued will, having none of our own, which in great and in little things makes us peaceful in heart in going through a world of exercise and trial.

We like our own will; all in us, morally speaking, is sin, and having turned from that, we may live now in what the Father is for us, and on what Christ is, a wondrous change.

# THE TITLES OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST.

(A J POLLOCK)

[T is needless to say that these are not used at random in the Scriptures. We propose in this paper to put before the reader some few thoughts on the subject

The title, *Lord*, is the translation of three Greek words *Kurios* is by far the most frequent word used. It means authority and lordship as the result of ownership. "Ye are not your own, for ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's" (1 Cor. 6. 20). *Despotēs*, another word used, but only twice used of Christ. (See 2 Pet. 2. 1; Jude 4.) It is derived from *deō*, to bind, and *pous*, the foot. It has the meaning of unlimited despotic authority, which surely the Lord is entitled to. Thirdly, there is the word, *Rabboni*, which is the Aramaic for the Hebrew *Rabbi*, meaning my Master or Teacher. This occurs twice, once being translated, Lord (Mark 10. 51), and once transliterated, which means "to express the words of one language in the alphabetic characters of another" (John 20. 16).

Then, again, take the title, *Master*. It is thrice the translation of the word, *Kurios*. Twice we are reminded in the epistles that we have a Master in heaven. Everyone, the most exalted in this world should be in subjection to the Lord. In our treatment of those whom we may employ, we should never forget the fact that we have a Master in heaven. May we ever do His holy will. *Despotēs* is five times translated *Master* as applying to the Lord. *Oikodespotēs* (that is *master of a house*) is applied by the Lord to Himself in parables that he enunciated. *Epistatēs* occurs five times as addressed to the Lord, and means Superintendent or Commander. *Didasch-*

*kalos* occurs fifty-eight times, twice explained as meaning Rabbi. This word means *Teacher*, or, as we should say, *Doctor*. Our Lord, you may remember, sat among the doctors of the law, asking them questions, when a youth. *Kathēgetes* means a *Guide* or *Leader*, and is used three times, the Lord applying the title to Himself in Matt. 23. 8, 10. Then we have the title *Rabbi*, the Hebrew term for Teacher, transliterated into the Greek, as well as the Aramaic *Rabboni*.

There is in all this a practical challenge to the heart of every Christian as to how far the Lord is really Lord to him or her in daily life and in every way. It is possible to be content to receive the blessings of the gospel, and yet to live self-centred and selfish lives, and not allow the Lord to be our Lord, our Master, our blessed Despot, our Guide, our Leader. If this question is raised in our hearts the study of these titles of our Lord will not have been in vain.

We come now to the titles, "Jesus Christ," and "Christ Jesus." Of course the word, "Jesus,"\* is not a title, but His personal name. All others are titles. This we shall refer to later.

The expression, "Jesus Christ," varies in its significance in the Gospels and the Epistles. In the Gospels it sets forth "Jesus" as the Christ, the Anointed of God. The emphasis is laid on His name, "Jesus," but explaining that He is the promised "Christ." This expression only occurs four times in the Gospels.

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\* For simplicity's sake in this article we will refer to titles only, though ever bearing in mind that "Jesus" was our Lord's personal name.

In the Epistles it conveys the meaning that the One who was on earth in humiliation is now the glorified, ascended Christ. This is set forth in Peter's Pentecostal sermon, when he exclaimed, "Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ" (Acts 2. 36). He was both Lord and Christ when on earth, but the titles take on a new significance once He is the ascended glorified One at God's right hand.

So we find believers were baptized in the name of "Jesus Christ"; in the name of "Jesus Christ" the lame man at the Gate Beautiful received healing; the apostles were the apostles of Jesus Christ, as witness the superscriptions of the epistles, whether written by the Apostle Paul or the Apostle Peter. Never is it in this connection "Christ Jesus."

When we come to the titles, "Christ Jesus," in that order, the thought *begins* with Christ in glory, but that the blessed One there is "Jesus." This expression connects itself with the unfolding of the truths of Christianity in a remarkable way. "Redemption . . . is in Christ Jesus"; "the love of God . . . is in Christ Jesus"; we are "sanctified in Christ Jesus"; "our liberty . . . we have in Christ Jesus"; the believer is "in heavenly places in Christ Jesus"; "we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works"; God's "eternal purpose" is "in Christ Jesus"; "the high calling of God" is "in Christ Jesus"; the believer's "riches of glory" are "in Christ Jesus." And so the list might be extended with profit.

It is a great moment in the life of the believer when His thoughts are centred in glory, and our blessings and standing and joys are connected with "Christ

Jesus," the One who has established Christianity in His own blessed Person. It was not, and could not be, till He took His place on high that the Holy Spirit could be given, and the body of Christ be formed upon the earth.

It is significant that the Gospels never use these titles in this order. Only once in Acts is it used, and even there it is a question whether the Divine name should not be "Jesus" without any addition (Acts 19. 4).

It might be mentioned here that the title "Christ" is the Greek rendering of the Hebrew word "Messiah." The title in both languages means "*The Anointed.*" In the Old Testament we get three classes of persons anointed: the king for the kingly office; the priest for the priestly office; and the prophet for the prophetic office. The Lord was **THE Anointed**, to carry out the will of God, anointed to be the Saviour, the Revealer of the Father, **THE Prophet**; **THE Priest**; **THE King**; the Son of Man, with world-wide dominion; the Messiah, the King of the Jews; the King of kings, and Lord of lords, not a King *among* kings, *inter alia*, but a King **OF** kings. All that the world will ever know of blessing flows from **THE Anointed One**. The precious ointment was poured upon Aaron's head, ran down to his beard, and descended to the skirts of his garments (Ps. 133. 2), so all blessing flows from the position that our Lord has got as **THE Messiah or Christ, THE Anointed**. How securely the glory of God lies in those pierced hands.

The title, "Christ, the Lord," occurs only once, and is found in Luke 2. 2, and stands for "Jehovah's Anointed."

We come now to the three titles coupled together, "The Lord Jesus Christ." There is a peculiar power in

this combination. The answer to the Philippian jailer's earnest question, "What must I do to be saved?" was in the words, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved" (Acts 16. 31), words that have given rest and peace to hosts of troubled souls from that day to this. What could be more solemn and impressive than the charge of the Apostle Paul to the Corinthian church when he instructed them in their solemn duty to excommunicate the "wicked person" in their midst. Twice are the titles, "Lord Jesus Christ," found in that charge. "In the name of Our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ." Notice twice over "OUR Lord Jesus Christ."

Take the salutations at the beginning of the Epistles.

*"Grace to you and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ"* (Rom. 1. 7).

*"Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ"* (1 Cor. 1. 3).

*"Grace be to you and peace from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ"* (2 Cor. 1. 3).

*"Grace be to you, and peace from God the Father, and from our Lord Jesus Christ"* (Gal. 1. 3).

So we might go through all the Pauline epistles, and find this salutation substantially repeated in each epistle, save that in those addressed to individuals "mercy" is added to peace and grace.

"The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all," is practically the ending of all the Pauline epistles.

We have indicated enough to lead some, we trust, to follow up this interesting study for themselves.

There is, however, one important observation to be made before we leave this subject. The name of Jesus is of high meaning, "Jehovah Saviour"—Jehovah the name of God in covenant blessing with His people, yet it was the name given to our Lord when He humbled Himself, coming into this world as a Bondman, in order to die for the glory of God, and that He might be the Saviour, never less than "God, blessed for ever" (Rom. 9. 5), but having the name, Saviour, woven into it, by virtue of His atoning sacrifice on the cross. The disciples, be it carefully observed, never addressed the blessed Lord by this name, but always as Lord or Master. We have no record of anyone addressing Him by this name, the glory and moral dignity of His person would preserve from undue familiarity. So we read, "Thou shalt call His name Jesus: for He shall save His people from their sins" (Matt. 1. 21).

Now turn to the beginning of 1 Cor. 12. and we shall find a needed warning, and as much needed this day as then, as to spiritual manifestations. These are ever of two kinds, spiritual or demoniac, that is either of the Holy Spirit of God, or of demons, that is spiritism in its various forms, including Christian Science, and all the sects that deny "Jesus Christ come in flesh," and refuse the atoning character of His death.

Evil spirits will speak of "Jesus," but refuse to acknowledge Him as Lord. When you find professed religious leaders chary of speaking of Jesus as Lord, you may well be careful as to their teaching. "No man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost" (1 Cor. 12. 3). It may be that men may take that title on their lips to deceive, but no man can really say that Jesus is the Lord save by the Holy Spirit.

Sometimes we find true Christians speaking little of our Lord under the titles of "Christ Jesus," or "the Lord Jesus Christ," and much of "Jesus" and "Jesus Christ." In such cases it often means a defective knowledge of the truth concerning this subject as presented in the Scriptures.

We would beseech our Christian readers to weigh this matter over. We have ever felt the power of the full name, "Lord Jesus Christ," as it falls from the lips of the Lord's servants in testimony, and more especially in these days of spiritual slackness and apathy.

The title, Son of Man, is a deeply interesting one. This is a title that was ever on the Lord's lips as He testified of Himself as recorded in the Gospels.

Adam had dominion over all flesh given to him by God, but soon fell and forfeited this position. There have been futile attempts made in this direction by conquerors such as Nebuchadnezzar, Alexander the Great, Napoleon, and will be made in the future day by the head of the revived Roman Empire, signs of which are very assertive at this present time, but no one shall occupy that place save our blessed Lord Jesus Christ. The title carries with it the thought of universal headship and dominion.

It is interesting that over eighty times is the prophet Ezekiel addressed as "son of man." Eighty-four times out of the eighty-eight times this title is found in the New Testament, it falls from the lips of the Lord Himself.

There is this important difference, however, between the title as referring to Ezekiel and to the Lord. In the Old Testament when used of a human being it never has the article, thus rendering the expression a description

rather than a title, that is to say it emphasizes that Ezekiel was a human being. In the New Testament the title always has the article, emphasizing that it is indeed a title, the very highest as far as earthly dominion could go.

It is twice referred to in the Old Testament, once in Psalm 8, quoted in Hebrews 2. 5-9, ascribing universal dominion to the Lord, and again in Daniel 7. 9-14, where the Son of Man is spoken of as "given . . . dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve Him: His dominion . . . an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and His kingdom that which shall not be destroyed." (verse 14).

How touching then, in contrast to this, is the Lord's saying that the foxes have holes and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of man hath not where to lay His head; the Son of man has power on earth to forgive sins; the Son of man came eating and drinking, and they said, "Behold a gluttonous Man and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners"; the Son of man is the Sower of the good seed of the kingdom of heaven; the Son of man asks the question, "Whom do men say that I the Son of man am?" And the blessed answer is given, the revelation of the Father to the soul of Peter, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." The Son of man is Lord also of the sabbath; the Son of man came not to be ministered to but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many; the Son of man was to be betrayed, crucified, to rise again; the Son of man walks in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks (Rev. 2. and 3.); the Son of man will appear on the clouds, and set up His kingdom, and the knowledge of the glory of the Lord shall fill the whole earth as the waters cover the sea.

# THE PRECIOUSNESS OF CHRIST.

(T. OLIVER.)

Scripture Reference : John 12. 1-7.

AT the supper at Bethany the different functions of the members of that devoted family aptly illustrate the several main privileges and functions of Christians. In sitting at the table with the Lord, Lazarus sets forth the privilege of fellowship, even as Martha's privilege is typical of the servant, while Mary's action sets forth the return of the fruit of the heart in praise and worship.

The ointment was not merely of great value, literally "precious," but in Scripture this has always the meaning of "what is held in honour." What the world accounts as precious is merely what is an index of wealth, e.g., the diamond has certain superlative physical properties. It is the hardest of substances, and due to its having the highest index of refraction it is the most lustrous of all crystals, and combined with these outstanding qualities its scarcity has made it a costly stone. However, it has the same chemical composition as soot; its crystalline structure has been impressed by subjection to great heat and slow cooling under great pressure deep down in the earth. However, the conjunction of physical forces is conceivable whereby its lowly analogue could acquire such crystalline structure and the diamond would cease to be of abnormal value.

But Mary's ointment was not of that order at all. It was what she had treasured above everything else. There was nothing too good to bestow upon her blessed Lord, so she gladly anointed His feet and the house was filled with the odour of the ointment. In its primary description, reference is undoubtedly made to the material house in which they were supping, but in its application to the Christian

function, the fragrance of the ointment is only appreciated in the House of God, which is a spiritual entity composed of living stones, and thus the Apostle Peter goes on to say, "Unto you, therefore, who believe is the preciousness" (1 Peter 2. 5, 7). The appreciation of Christ is only amongst those who believe. The cultured philosopher may dilate to a great extent in marvellous language about the beautiful life of Christ and His moral influence and such like, but the fragrance of His name and the fragrance of the ointment from hearts in which God has wrought are known only by the believer. A grain of musk is said to be able to permeate every part of the air of a closed room for twenty years with its fragrance: the fragrance of Christ will fill every part of the House of God for all time, yea, for all eternity!

Jesus, Thou alone art worthy  
Ceaseless praises to receive.

Judas Iscariot's assessment of the value of the ointment was probably a true account according to the statistician, but was no criterion as to its value to the Lord. Judas's interest had an ulterior motive, as much of modern philanthropy has too. Judas was unfaithful, although externally he must have been able to make a fair show of honesty, else he would not have had the confidence of the other disciples to allow him to continue as their treasurer. Nevertheless he could not disguise the fact from the Spirit of God, who puts on record that he "bear" what was put in the bag, i.e., he was a secret purloiner. The Apostle Paul indicates that servants should not purloin but show all good fidelity that they may adorn the doctrine of God in all things (Titus 2. 10).

Mary's apparent extravagance received the Lord's commendation in the words, "Let her alone; against the day of My burying hath she kept this." Mary's thoughts were necessarily in prospect of that event, but the Christian's thoughts are in retrospect of His death, and the world's statistical assessment of our action is as cold and

severe nowadays. They say that we could certainly put the time to far greater purpose if we were occupied in helping the poor. But in obeying His request, "This do in remembrance of Me," we too will secure the Lord's approbation, the white stone of His approval. Anything else is not worth giving a thought.

## THE MISSION OF THE CHURCH IN THE WORLD. No. 3.

(W. BRAMWELL DICK.)

"*They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.*"—John 17. 14-16.

WE trust all our readers are prepared to subscribe to that which we have already suggested, plus a third point which we now indicate, viz., that the mission of the church in the world is to—

1. Portray Christ *before* it;
2. Preach Christ *to* it; and
3. Pray *for* it.

We have noticed that the mission of the church is to do the will of God. An important petition in the prayer that our Lord taught His disciples was: "Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven" (Matt. 6. 10). When Christ was here He did God's will perfectly. When the prayer "Thy kingdom come" is answered, men under the beneficent sway of Christ will do God's will. At the present time the Holy Spirit, who has taken up His residence in the church as the house of God, is working so that in it God's will may be done. To this end He labours with those who form the church, and whom He indwells, so that the natural will may not assert itself, and in order that in believers individually the doing of God's will may be the commanding object. We can see that if we are not subject to the Holy Spirit we are failing in our part in the great mission.

The doing of His will embraces the three things that we have enumerated, and of which we have considered the first two. Before we proceed to consider the last, let us be quite clear that the position of the church is that of separation from the world. Some one may say:

"I thought that as Christians our aim should be to leave the world a better place than we found it; and by putting Christian men into power municipally, politically, etc., to secure the betterment of our fellow-men."

The answer to that is: (1) What Scripture can be adduced to support such an idea? We know of none. (2) Christian men who have thought thus have been engaged in this endeavour for centuries. Is the world any better to-day? On the contrary, are not 1 Timothy 4. 1-3 and 2 Timothy 3. 1-4 being fulfilled to the letter?

Working conditions, housing conditions, hygienic conditions, may have improved; but has the moral condition of the world improved? *NO!* The world is the same because the heart of man is the same, and the attitude of the world to Christ is the same as when it crucified Him between two malefactors outside the gate of the city. In

other words, the world, unable to fit Christ into any of its schemes, has refused Him, and the verdict of twenty centuries ago remains unaltered to-day. The fact remains that *HE*, and *NONE BUT HE*, *CAN*, and *WILL PUT THE WORLD RIGHT*; but till then our place is *with Him* outside of it all. It has been always God's intention that His people, individually and collectively, should be separate from the world. If Enoch "walked with God" (Gen. 5 22), we may be quite sure that he walked apart from the world that had deliberately refused God (see Job 22. 15-18), and that this enabled him to testify against it (Jude 14, 15). Abraham was called out of his country, and from his kindred, and from his father's house (Gen. 12. 1). He was called out that he might go *in*, and that to a place which he should after receive for an inheritance; and he sojourned in the land of promise as in a strange country, because he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God; while he, and those who came after him, confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth (Heb. 11. 8-16). His separation gave him liberty and power in interceding with God for Sodom into which Lot had wandered, and from which he was so reluctant to be delivered. So much for the individual. The same principle applied to Israel collectively. How plainly and in what touching language is God's desire expressed in Deuteronomy 7.; and this is emphasized in the words put into the mouth of Balaam: "Lo, the people shall dwell alone, and shall not be reckoned among the nations" (Num. 23. 9).

The constant work of the enemy was to seduce God's people from that holy separation which He so much desired for them. In that he succeeded, and

therein lay their undoing. When our Lord Jesus Christ was here, He walked entirely apart from the whole course of things in this world. He declined to redress wrong whether real or imaginary (Luke 12. 13, 14). He submitted to the paying of tribute even though the claim appeared to be unjust (Matt. 17. 24-27). He neither advocated, nor promoted, any reform in the then existing order of government. He was the heavenly Stranger—ever doing good; always telling out by life, and lip, and action, the love of God; and in every detail doing God's will.

The world had no use for such a Person then, and it has no use for such a Person in this year of grace, Nineteen-hundred-and-thirty; nor has it any use for that divinely-formed and Spirit-filled organism which He has formed to continue His testimony in the world, and which He calls "My church." If the church is to fulfil its mission in the world and thus answer to Christ's intention, it will be only as it is maintained in uncompromising separation from it. We are aware that we do not read of the church in John 17. nor in any part of John's Gospel. It will be readily conceded, however, that the priceless ministry of our Lord as recorded in chapters 13. to 16. was addressed to, and the matchless prayer of chapter 17. was on behalf of, those who should form His church. Were not the apostles, who were the subject of the larger part of His prayer (verses 6-19), to be the foundation of the church, and were not those who should believe on Him through their word (verses 20-23) to be those who would be built into that spiritual structure? We can understand, then, His prayer that those whom He was leaving in the world should be kept separate from it; and also His very definite statement, twice uttered, that "They are not of

the world, even as I am not of the world" (verses 14-16).

He prayed not that they should be taken out of the world, because they had a mission in it; but that they might be kept from the evil, and thus be enabled not to declaim against the evil, but to manifest the good by showing forth that divine love that He Himself had so perfectly expressed (verses 25, 26). The Acts of the Apostles supplies the record of how the church in its early days maintained that separation; and while walking in strict integrity before the world, doing their business in it, and meeting their obligations to it, they confined themselves to the threefold mission suggested at the beginning of this paper. The constant endeavour of the enemy was to spoil that, therefore we can understand the deeply touching words of Paul to the assembly at Corinth:—

"I am jealous over you with godly jealousy, for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ. But I fear lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ" (2 Cor. II. 2).

This may refer more particularly to doctrine, but full well the enemy knows that whatever draws us away from Christ robs Him of our allegiance; and, once away from Him, association with the world that will not have Him becomes easy. The aim of the enemy ever has been, and is, to seduce and corrupt the church. That which is commonly called the church is so hopelessly in the world that it is impossible to distinguish the one from the other. We are dealing with that of which Christ spoke as "*MY CHURCH*," which exists in the world to-day, which has a mission to the world, and which will be removed to

heaven as soon as that mission has been fulfilled. The completion of the church will mark the close of the mission; and

"Then, then, the Church completed,  
God makes no more delay;  
Oh! Lord, with shouts of triumph,  
We pass into the day."

It may be asked: "If the church is in a state of *apparent* ruin, how can it fulfil its mission?" Therein lies our individual privilege and responsibility. We have to seek not to adapt the truth to present conditions, but to walk in the light and power of the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. Our blessed Lord knew the state of matters that would obtain in the day in which we live, and He has not given us any fresh communication for these days, but He *has* told us, through His servant—often telling us what these days would be like—to *CONTINUE* in the things which we have learned, and He has cast us right back upon His unchanging, infallible words (2 Tim. 3. 14-17). His work to-day is to sanctify and cleanse the church with the washing of water by the Word (Eph. 5. 26). In Israel's history there were faithful men who acted individually but in the light of the whole, and that at a time when everything seemed to have gone to pieces. If Paul before his departure saw the breakdown of that which he had been used to build up, he, to his last hour, prayed, wept, exhorted, laboured, in the furtherance of the mission of the whole. What greater honour could be conferred upon us than to be permitted, in all humility, to walk in the path of His will, to keep His Word, to be true to His Name, and under His direction each to do his and her own little bit, knowing that He will carry everything to perfect fruition, and that His ultimate triumph is assured, for He knows no defeat. Praise His Name!  
(*To be continued.*)

# THE EIGHT SIGNS OF JOHN'S GOSPEL.

## Sign II. The Healing of the Nobleman's Son.

(JAMES GREEN)

Read Chapters 2. 12 to 4. 54.

THE marriage in Cana stands at the beginning of our Lord's ministry, for chapter 3. 23 shows that it took place before John was put in prison, after which the preaching in Galilee was commenced (Matt. 4. 12).

The scene of the second sign is again laid in Cana of Galilee (chapter 4. 46-54). It is one of the great of the land who comes to Him, a nobleman of the important city of Capernaum. His heart is heavy; for over his household and over his dearly loved son hangs the shadow of death. Doubtless all that wealth, power, and the medical skill of the time could accomplish had been done, but in spite of all, death was there. The news of the first miracle must have been the talk of Cana and the country round, and hearing that Jesus was again in the neighbourhood, the father's thoughts turn to one last resource, and he sets forth on the journey of eighteen miles or so which lay between Capernaum and Cana of Galilee. The question must surely have been present to his mind, Can He who has shown by the first miracle that He is evidently Creator of all, arrest also this fell foe death? And if He can, will His grace extend so far as to come down and heal my son? The answer of the Lord throws the emphasis upon faith in His word. Not on that which appeals to the senses, signs and wonders, but upon His word alone must the soul rest if it is to know the power of life which He gives. How many to-day are hindered by the desire for something spectacular—tongues, miracles, healings are looked for, while as to the power of the life which is in Christ, souls remain barren.

"Thy son liveth"—brief as the word which spake the creation, it was enough for the father's heart and he went his way, to be met by the news not of slow progress to health, but of a new life imparted. But already the word of Christ had dismissed the fear of death from his heart for he returns not in anxious haste, as we may gather from his homeward journey on the next day. Life is in this case imparted before death takes place, a sign of the eternal life bestowed before the close of the natural life seals the sentence of doom. Further still, in this new life the fear of death is gone, for the soul has reached Him who is supreme over death, which has become the servant of Him in whose pierced hand are the keys of death and the grave.

In the light of the foregoing, let us consider the teaching which stands connected with this sign in chapters 2. to 4. In the close of chapter 2. the Lord finds at Jerusalem a condition akin to death. It is passover time, a season which should have recalled hearts to the claim of God in a very special way, but that which meets the gaze of the Son of God is only a scene of covetous selfishness, and that which should have been the place of prayer, He describes in scathing words as "a den of thieves." This stern rebuke accompanied by His following action shows that it is not a case of amendment that He looks for, and the sign He gives of His own death and resurrection plainly indicates the beginning of a work of God in the power of a new life. There is nothing in man to which the Lord can commit Himself, neither can He use the mere natural

astonishment to which His miracles gave rise. In chapter 3 this is further developed. Natural life at its best is seen in a man who may be described as a nobleman. Personally a Pharisee, touching the punctilious observance of the law, blameless, socially a ruler, one whom men looked to as a leader; religiously a teacher, stored with the wisdom of the ancients, an instructor of men; he is brought face to face with the unwelcome fact that none of these things qualify him for the possession of life, for which he needs to be born again from above and that by a power entirely above nature. Life can only be produced in him by the Spirit, by the word, from above, through the gift of God, who was giving His only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have eternal life. Further, this could only be brought about by the Son of Man lifted up, by no transmutation, emanation, evolution of the former old self-life, but by the judgment of God upon all that it is in the cross. Not an amendment, indeed, but a new life given.

So we see first in the people who saw the miracles that the merely natural is not the spring of life; the wonders may be convincing, the evidence overwhelming, but not by such is conversion of heart to God produced. In these people no real soul need was awakened, no repentance, no conscience of sin—all these Christ could have met. But the children of God are not born of blood—human nature—neither will the outward and visible ever produce the inward and spiritual in man. Then next we see in Nicodemus the inability of the intellectual powers to produce life; it does not lie in the sphere of man's will. Reason may readily admit a teacher come from God, may be open to any addition to its store of

knowledge aught that will minister to its pride of mind, but is far from the confession of sin and nothingness and dependence on the mercy of God. To Nicodemus the thing spoken of was impossible, nor can he explain how such a new condition could be brought about apart from natural means, nor does the Lord appeal to his intellect by explanations. Man is but "flesh," a word which describes not only his material body but his entire mental capacity of understanding, and stands in contrast to that which is produced by the new birth "spirit." The former dwells in and lives upon the things that are seen, and its horizon is bounded by the material world which is its home; the latter sees and enters a new kingdom where God is all, and dwells with Him amidst a realm of unseen eternal realities. The two agents producing this change are water and the Spirit, the word and power of God, illustrated in the sign of the nobleman's son, for it was these two things, the word of Christ and the power which went forth from Him, without visible contact, which caused life to take the place of death. At the close of chapter 3 verse 25, in connection with the question of purifying, the same two things are seen, for there is no self-purification by outward ordinances, but only by the power of a new life imparted by One who speaks the word of God and to whom the Spirit is given without measure (verse 34). This life-giving power, therefore, cannot be limited in its activity to the Jew, but must flow in cleansing effect to all that believe on the Son, forming thereby a circle of life outside of which must ever remain those upon whom the wrath of God abides, because they believe not on Him whom He hath sent.

Lastly, in the Samaritan woman of chapter 4 the incapacity of the moral

nature in man, the will of the flesh, is brought to light. We are carried to Samaria, outside of Judæa, to witness the word and Spirit again at work in the case of a woman at the very antipodes of the moral scale compared with Nicodemus. But great as is the contrast judged by human standards, they are on a common level in this respect that both are sinners and both come short of the glory of God. The legality of Nicodemus and the labour of Jacob's well are alike barren of satisfaction, and the woman herself confesses that frequently as she may draw, her thirst remains. Both combine to make a picture of the fruitless search for rest which characterizes the labour of the flesh, and to throw into contrast the gift of God which springs up into eternal life.

What a meeting; she, a sinner, in the isolation of her sin and shame, and He, the Son of God, in the unique glory of His person, lonely in such a world, yet seeking such as this woman that He might impart to her the life more abundantly of which He was the source. Death and life, darkness and light, sin and purity unsullied, not meeting in order to condemn but in infinite grace to save. Did she know? Does man know? Alas, no; or there would be the asking in conscious need, and on His part the joy of bestowing the living water. The process of grace is wonderful, as He seeks an avenue to her heart, so far from all thoughts of God. Such a spring as Jacob's well was in the language of the East, "living water" and "the gift of God," but how it was to be obtained without labour was to her an impossibility. But He leads her on from the material water that her thoughts turned around, to the spiritual reality which should be within her a perennial spring rising up to eternal life. She is still dull of compre-

hension and His words only convey to her some thought of relief from her daily toil. The Lord, however, explains not, for it is not her mind He is seeking, but her heart, and for this He must probe the conscience. "Go, call thy husband." Suddenly exposed by the divine searchlight, she might never have returned, but what added grace lies in the words, "And come hither." Come with thy sin uncovered, come hither without one plea, come back to the presence of One who of such as thou art is gathering worshippers for the Father. At first she hesitates, seeks to draw some cloak around her life of shame, until she at last is obliged to confess that she stands before One to whom nothing is hid. It was as though the Lord had Himself made confession of her guilt, "Thou hast had five husbands," and now thou hast the husband of another. To whom and where shall she turn? Will He direct her to Jerusalem or Gerizim? Nay, this last religious resource of man in the flesh must fail her, for not in outward forms of hoary antiquity, not even in that which under the law had the authority of God and served for the time of man's probation. All this now, like the Pharisaism of Nicodemus, was only blocking the spring from whence the living waters flowed. The hour had come when grace and truth were active to bring men into direct intercourse with God; the Father revealed in the Son of His love, to be worshipped by happy redeemed hosts in Spirit and in truth, as the sole spring and source of blessing. And now at last the living water is welling up in her soul, and a great longing fills her, not for things or even for the solving of her difficulties; her heart is seeking a Person, Messiah is coming, He will be the sum total of desire. The Lord read her thought so feebly expressed, and it was joy to His heart, to Him

it was meat that even His disciples knew not of. Another sheep was found, another piece of great value in His eyes, rescued from the dust and rubbish, another wanderer brought home to the Father, and so out of a heart filled with the eternal joy of the finder, He completes her blessedness by the revelation of Himself, "I that speak unto thee am He."

Thus the second sign shows a further stage in the progress of the soul into the joy of eternal life, by means of the faith which relies absolutely upon His word, and the springing well of the Spirit's power producing glad worship to the Father in the knowledge of the

Son of God. The first sign teaches the fulness of His supply, the second reveals that personal acquaintance with Himself by which the soul is delivered from the fear of death and lives in a new life with Him, whom to know is life eternal. The woman cannot keep her new-found joy, she is living, and the witness must flow forth, and soon others are at His feet, confessing their faith. Reader, canst thou say in truth with these Samaritans, "We have heard Him ourselves and know"? If so, thy doubts and fears must perforce have vanished, and in the blissful presence of the Son of God thou hast indeed begun to live in the eternal realities of the life more abundant.

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## ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

### Appointment of Deacons.

"Would you kindly answer through the columns of 'Scripture Truth' if it is right to appoint deacons in the assemblies in accordance with Acts 6. 3; also 14. 23; 1 Tim. 1. 3?"  
—I. M. P.

YOU will search the New Testament in vain for any word that gives to an assembly authority to appoint either elders or deacons. This was done by the apostles only and Titus who was instructed and appointed by Paul to do it in Crete (Titus 1. 5). But the qualifications for these important services are clearly given in Scripture (Acts 6. 3; 1 Tim. 3.; Titus 1.), and the Lord, who still cares for His saints, will still bestow these qualifications and maintain those to whom He gives them, so that the spiritual and material needs of His saints will be met. The work will be done by those whom He has fitted for it, not as being appointed to it by their brethren, but as having received grace from the Lord, for they are His stewards to faithfully serve

Him among His own. Faith in the Lord rather than being appointed to the office is needed for this. If there is true spirituality in the brethren they will recognize these qualifications of grace and faith in those who possess them and gladly encourage them, and show them fellowship and confidence in their service. This we believe to be more in accordance with the mind of the Lord in these last days, when all that has claimed authority and that is official has so completely failed. The chief concern of the elders is the spiritual good of the saints, while the deacons think of their temporal needs. A paper appeared on the subject of elders or bishops in the August, 1929, issue of this Magazine.

## PRESENT WEALTH AND FUTURE GLORY.

(J. T. MAWSON.)

HE would be a foolish man who spent his time looking into an empty purse full of holes and bemoaning his poverty when there was offered to him a bag of bank notes with the invitation to take all that he needed and more. But not less foolish is he who is continually looking into his own heart and life and grieving over his lack of goodness and his failures and inconsistencies when the fulness of Christ is held out to him for his enrichment and joy. To anyone who is guilty of such folly we would say, "Cast away the empty purse; turn away from self; do not let the failure of the past so fetter and embitter your spirit that you can do nothing but fail in the present; but awake to the fact that the Comforter, the Spirit of Truth, has been given to you, that He might take of the things of Christ and show them to you. Forget self and delight in Christ; talk no more of your poverty, but rejoice in His unsearchable riches, for they are yours, to enrich you, ennoble you and energize you, so that you may rejoice instead of mourn, and walk with steady step where once you hobbled on crutches, and be superior to your infirmities and a dispenser of blessing to others where once you were nothing but a burden and hindrance to their faith. God is not glorified by your false and self-centred humility, He is glorified when you rejoice in His beloved Son."

We must never forget how all the wealth of the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ has been brought to us, or what the price was that He paid to make us rich. "For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though He was rich, yet for your sake He became poor, that ye through His poverty might be rich." Most certainly we shall only appreciate it as the love

of our hearts goes out to Him in response to His great love to us, and it is only as we advance on this line that we rightly feel our own poverty and the need of His riches. We must learn also, that while all His riches are placed within our reach and we have but to stretch forth the hand of faith and take them, we cannot have them in living experience apart from the Giver of them. A bag of bank notes might be used away from and without a thought of the giver, but not so this spiritual wealth. "Come, buy of Me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich," He has said; and we might ask, "How can one who has nothing to show but his poverty, buy gold tried in the fire?" The answer is that the buying indicates a transaction with our Lord Himself, it means personal dealings with Him, and involves that soul-exercise that comes with the realization of our poverty and need, and the deep gratitude and attachment to the Lord that the experimental knowledge of His grace produces; and this personal dealing with Him must be kept up if we are really to appear as those who have been enriched and have resources that are more than equal to the demands that are made upon us. The Lord is the Source and Giver, and it is our privilege, and will be our joy if we know Him, to cleave to Him with purpose of heart; and the more simply and fully we are dependent upon Him the freer will be the flow of His wealth to us and our thanksgiving to Him, and in this happy condition we shall be those who have no confidence in the flesh but rejoice in Him.

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In the last letter that I received from a valued friend, now with the

Lord, he wrote, "A RUNNING HOUND NEVER LOOKS AT ITS TAIL." He was referring to Philipians 3. 13, 14: "*This one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before. I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.*" I shall never forget the trite saying, there is a volume of wisdom in it, as will be understood when it is seen that the reaching forth in the verse is the word that describes a hound at full stretch. But the Christian who is continually looking back, and brooding over the past and mourning over his failure, is like a hound that has ceased to run and is feeding on its own tail, if such a thing can be imagined. Nothing vitiates a man's spiritual energy like brooding on the past; nothing hinders him in the heavenly race like this, and it matters not whether it is his sins or his sorrows that he broods over, the brooding itself is fatal to all spiritual growth and strength. Both are dishonouring to God, for if a man broods over his sins he doubts the grace that abounds over them all; if he broods over his sorrows it is probably because he is at war with the will of God. Both sin and sorrow should humble us and make us walk in lowliness of heart before God, and not proudly or boastfully; but there is grace for the sin, and there is sympathy for the

sorrow, so that while we feel them, and feel them deeply, we are not to be overwhelmed by them but find our God and His resources in Christ Jesus greater than both, and finding this press onward to the place from whence the grace and sympathy come.

We would not have a man think lightly of his sins, but we would urge upon him that if he has felt them deeply and confessed them truly, he should have the comfort of knowing that he has been forgiven fully, and cast off the hindrance of occupation with them, as Peter did when on the day of Pentecost he charged the Jews with denying the Holy and Just One. They might have said, "You did it yourself, Simon." "Yes," he might have replied, "I did, and He forgave me and blotted it all out for ever, and I am not denying Him now, anyhow." Nor would we think lightly of the sorrows and losses of others, nor speak harshly of them if they seem to be overwhelmed by them, but we would warn them that brooding over them may grow into self pity and rob them of the comfort from on high that would enrich them through the sorrow, and it will most surely hinder them in the race to the glory where every sorrow will have its answer; and where the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus awaits those who run.

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**I**F a learner were to keep at the same lesson always he might feel his difficulty over, but so would his learning be over. Are you learning? Wherever you are you will find that you are in exacting circumstances, but the more you turn them to profit the more you are learning of grace, and the more useful you are in sharing what you have acquired.

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**Y**OUR weakness is exposed that you may acquire strength, and having received this of the Lord, you will then be called on to render unto others—to comfort others as you have been comforted of God, so that, whether a learner or a servant, you are always set in circumstances where there is exaction and not ease.

## FAITH HEALING.

THE first error in the so-called faith healers is that they put sin and sickness on the same footing. They say that the work of Christ clears us of our sins and sicknesses; that He bore our sins in His own body on the tree and that He also bore our sicknesses—that is, that He bore each alike when He suffered there. Now if this were true it would mean that our sins could come on us again, for it is evident that our sicknesses come back to us again. Here is their first unsoundness. They put no difference between sins and sicknesses. They will quote Matthew 8. 17, but they misapply it, for it is plain from the context of that passage that the healing of the sick during His lifetime is in view in it, and not His death upon the cross.

Next, they entirely overlook the discipline of the Lord with regard to the body. The body is the Lord's. He has washed away the sins of all who believe, but their bodies are His (1 Cor. 6. 19, 20), His vessels, the channels of His service here, and He disciplines them when acting in self-will. "For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep" (1 Cor. 11. 30). The bodies of His saints are to be presented to Him as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, and He allows those who are faithful in this to suffer in the body, if not by persecution, by other suffering for their own profit. "We who live are always delivered unto death" (2 Cor. 4. 11). Surely that is bodily pain.

Lastly, they misapply Scripture as to prayer. The Scripture is plain, "That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of

My Father which is in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them" (Matt. 18. 19, 20). The praying here clearly refers to something which the Lord approves of, and the Scripture implies that those who pray are gathered in His name and that He is there. They are representing Him and He gives them His presence and thus sanctions their request. We have known meetings of this kind when the special object has been prayer for the recovery to health of a saint or servant of the Lord, and His Father has heard and answered the prayers according to this word. But this is not unconditional, as the "faith healers" assert, but conditional in a very special way. It is not prayer for *every* case of sickness, as if it were a board of physicians, but such cases as to which some had previously agreed; and next, and of the deepest importance, that they gathered together to pray in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ. "Faith healing" professes to effect cures in every case of sickness where there is faith in the invalid, and this must be so when it is assumed that a case of illness is evidence that there is not faith there. Thus Timothy must have been lacking in faith, according to them, since he had a weakly body. It is clear from James 5. 14 that the praying is limited to the elders and that the answer depends on *their* faith. In the matter of sin anyone can pray for his brother, unless it be a sin unto death (1 John 5. 16). The "faith healing" system is like a board of health. Everyone may apply; there is no exercise about each case before the Lord. The Lord is not the One who counsels the prayer.

# THE MORE EXCELLENT WAY.

(DAVID ROSS)

Read the 13th chapter of the 1st Epistle to the Corinthians and in doing so substitute the word "love" for "charity" in the chapter.

SOME may ask, Why change the word "charity" into "love"? "Eros," a Greek word for "love," is never used in the Sacred Writings, and yet it was the ordinary classical word for love. That word had all sorts of unholy and immoral associations, and outside the city of Corinth there was erected a temple to the goddess of love. The gospel of the grace of God had come to these Corinthian devotees of that goddess, and they were washed and sanctified and justified in the Name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God (chapter 6. 11). They must have a fresh word to convey what the love of God was that lay behind all this. Further, there was at that time a tendency for this word which, like many another word the origin of which was bad, to become ennobled in its use, and writers were using it to indicate a longing desire after the ephemeral beauty of things—after something that was unpossessed. Shall not, therefore, the sacred writers use this word with its new and more beautiful significance? No, that won't do either for the Christian faith, because the gospel has not left us longing after something noble, but has brought it to us and made it ours. We have found the very God of love revealed in Christ. We see in Him incarnate, "God is love." Therefore the sacred writers, inspired by the Holy Spirit, coined a new word—a word that was not used before in classical Greek, and first occurs in the Greek translation of the Old Testament. And here it is put on the pages of Holy Writ in order to describe to us God's love—"the love of God that is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit given unto us."

Then when the Greek New Testament

had to be translated into the common language of the third and fourth centuries, which was Latin, Jerome, who gave the Version which is called "The Vulgate," didn't want to use the common Latin word which is "amor," for there were horrible and unholy practices associated with that word, and he used a new word, "caritas." When John Wycliffe came to translate the Bible into our tongue, he borrowed that word "caritas" or "charity," and the translators in 1611 held to it, and this is how we have got the word "charity"; but, alas! that word has fallen from its high meaning, and it no longer expresses the fulness, blessedness, and beauty of divine love.

I have heard some people who do not love the story of the Cross say, "1 Corinthians 13. is the kind of gospel we like; there is nothing about the blood in it; nothing about redemption in it." They say, "Take 1 Corinthians 13 and live up to that—that is what we want." But we cannot use Scripture like that. The 13th of 1 Corinthians is a beautiful gem, but it must be kept in its setting. In chapter 12. the church of God in Corinth is compared to a human body; and, just as the various parts of the body had their various functions to fulfil, they were given gifts in order that they might perform these functions. But how were these gifts being used? This chapter came in to show them and us the spirit in which all these gifts were to function.

If you were to preach this to me as the gospel, it would drive me to despair. I would say, It is a beautiful ideal, and then I would look at myself and at others and say, It is utterly impossible of fulfilment. You are setting me a far harder law than that of Moses. The

Israelites were brought up under the terror of Mount Sinai, a revelation from God truly, showing His majesty, His holiness and His justice. The law was given by Moses, but changed nobody. Man needed something more—man needed love. And is love contrary to law? No, love is the fulfilling of the law. And where has that love that is higher and nobler, deeper and grander than the law been revealed? Grace and truth and love divine came in Jesus Christ, and if we love at all, it is because *He first loved*, and we shall need to get to Calvary's cross before we can learn what this love is. For herein is love, not that we loved God but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.

The Lord Jesus Christ came here surcharged with the love of God, and we must of necessity get into touch with Him if we are to know His love and become like Him. His love is the cause, ours is the effect. As the text should read, "We love because He first loved us."

An Edinburgh professor used a figure which I think is a very helpful one. He spoke of a piece of iron. Now if a piece of iron comes into contact with a body that is electrified, by the process which is called "induction," it becomes electrified in turn and becomes magnetic, and will be able to lift up iron things. Do we understand? Here is this blessed One to whom we sing—

"Son of His bosom, come from heaven  
above,  
We see in Thee incarnate, 'God is love'"

In the Lord Jesus Christ we see One who is filled to fulness with the love of God. He is the embodiment and the revelation of it, and He is the magnetic power, as we sing—

'Thou didst attract the wretched and the  
weak,  
Thy joy the wand'ers and the lost to  
seek'

If this chapter is to do good to us, we need to be in touch with Him—in living, blessed, personal contact with Him who is love incarnate. That love was manifested in His life, beautifully manifested, but above all in His death. "Inscribed upon the Cross we see in shining letters GOD IS LOVE," and unless we have been to the Cross of Christ, where the love of God was fully manifested, we are utterly outside this chapter. We love, for He loved, and He loved even unto death. Dwell much in the thought of the Cross, and live in communion with the One who died there and rose again, and just as the electrified body sends out in its mysterious way the magnetic power to all the bodies in contact with it, so you and I will love, for He loves.

This beautiful poem—I shall call it such—is divided into three sections, and we see first of all why love is the greatest thing. In the church of Corinth there were some people who thought that gift was the greatest thing. No, love is greater than gift. And apart from it, all the gifts were utterly valueless—noise and nothing, so says the Holy Spirit. All these gifts that the Corinthians were making so much fuss about and were boasting in, he says, apart from love are utterly worthless; they are useless. They do not profit. Love is the greatest thing, and without love all the other gifts are unavailing. In those days there was given to the church the power to speak in other tongues. And what were they doing with this wonderful gift? They were using it to show themselves off, and it was utterly worthless. I believe personally that the day for these tongues is gone by, but let us apply it to our own time. Sometimes you hear people speaking about a preacher, and they say, "Isn't he eloquent?" But eloquence without divine love is just a

noise ; it may be a beautiful noise ; it will tickle the ear and please the fancy, but it will effect nothing for the good of the soul or for the glory of God unless it is charged with divine love. "Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels" ; though I have the oratory of a Demosthenes, the greatest of Greek orators ; a Cicero, the greatest of Roman orators ; or even rise above men to angels, what good is it apart from divine love ? Oh, my friends, the greatest eloquence is the eloquence of love. Think of the Saviour speaking on the Cross. He spoke in the Upper Room, and on the way to the Cross. I can remember a dear servant of the Lord speaking when I was just a little fellow, on the words, "Henceforth I will not talk much with you." I have never forgotten that. He said He was not going to talk any more, but He was going to act. He didn't say much on that Cross, but have we not been bowed again and again as we have listened to the seven brief words that fell from His lips when He was there ? Listen to the first of them, "Father, forgive them, they know not what they do." A poor Buddhist murderer who had never read the Bible and did not know about Jesus, read those words and fell on his knees in his cell and said, "This is God !" Then take the last but one—not many words—"It is finished." Love had done its work ; love had completed the task that God had given it to do. Oh, the eloquence of love divine ! the eloquence of the Cross !

And then these Corinthians were making a great fuss about the power of prophecies and knowledge of mysteries. In the Greek world they talked much about mysteries. In the Greek philosophies, like Freemasonry, there were different sets of initiations, and those who were initiated into the higher mysteries looked down in con-

tempt on those below them, and there was just a danger of this creeping into the Christian church ; those that had much knowledge despised the simple and unlearned. The apostle is not depreciating the gift of tongues, or of prophecy, or understanding of mysteries, or knowledge ; but I notice the word for "knowledge" is the same word as he uses when he says "knowledge puffs up." When he speaks in the 1st of Colossians of "being filled with all knowledge" it is a slightly different word. It is not a knowledge that is acquired with your intellect ; it is not knowledge, to use the students' language, that you can swot up ; it is a knowledge that comes to you through having the eyes of *your heart* enlightened, and it is through love that we really get the knowledge that counts for anything with God, and that is profitable.

Men say "knowledge is power," and "knowledge grows," says Tennyson, "but wisdom lingers" ; and oh, it is terrible to think what man may do with his knowledge. Just think of the next war, of the awful things that have been invented with which whole cities can be blasted. Knowledge is power ; let us not crave for power, let us crave for love, so that what gift we have, whether it is in knowledge or in action, may be used for the profit of others and for the glory of God.

Then he says of charity, "Though I dole out all my goods to feed the poor and have not love, I am nothing. I might do that to get a name. And though I give my body to be burned and have not love, it profiteth me nothing." You may say, What greater proof could a man give of his love to God than by dying for the truth ? But what greater proof could a man give of his stubborn self-will than by dying for his own ideas ? And it would be

quite possible for a man to give his body to be burned just for an idea. How different the aged Polycarp was when as an old man of eighty or ninety they came to him to deny that blessed Name, and he said, "For eighty long years have I served that blessed Master, and He has never given me any cause why I should deny Him," and he gave his body to be burned. There was love behind that: love to his blessed Lord whom he knew so well.

In the second section of this chapter we have what might be called an analysis of love; we get its properties. In chemistry you take a substance and analyse it, and you find all the properties of it; so it is here. Or, to take another figure—light. By means of a prism, light can be broken up into its seven component colours—red, orange, yellow, green, etc. I notice there are fifteen words used to give the qualities of love. Light has seven component colours, and here love is described to us in seven positive statements and eight negative statements. I am not making anything out of the numbers, but it will help us to remember them. In the 1st Epistle of John it is said, "God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all." John often puts things that way; he gives you the positive statement, and then in order to strengthen his statement he uses the negative. The sun is light, but the sun has dark spots. I do not know what they are, but "God is light and in Him is no darkness at all." And here you have "God is love," and if I may reverently paraphrase it, "God is love and in Him is no hatred at all."\*

Let us take the spectrum, as scientists would say, and look at these beautiful colours. "Love suffers long—" that

is love passive. "And is kind—" that is love in activity. To what lengths suffering love will go! But it is hard to do a kind act to the person who is making us suffer. When they laid wicked hands on the Lord in Gethsemane's garden and Peter whipped out his sword to cut off a man's ear, He said, "Suffer it to be so, Peter." He allowed them to heap all the indignity upon Him, but He did more. He touched the ear of the man who had insulted Him and healed it. "Love suffers long and is kind." I love that word "kind." I wish we saw more of it—loving-kindness. We are so harsh with one another, so hard, and we do kind things, perhaps, but how often do we do them in the right way?

"He did kind acts so kindly," a poet has written of our Lord.

"Love envieth not." Here is the first blot on our love—"envy." That was particularly true in Corinth. Here was a man with an outstanding gift and here was another with a gift that seemed of an inferior sort, and instead of being whole-hearted and rejoicing in the success of the greater gift, he is annoyed and loses the opportunity of using the gift that is his for the general good; but true "love envieth not." You may have heard of the organist who performed most brilliantly and received the acclamation of his audience. At the end of it, when all the crowd had gone away, the boy who blew the bellows at the back said, "Didn't we do well to-night?" He was not envious, he had his bit to do and he was not ashamed of it. Without the blowing of the bellows the musician could not have produced the music. There are some musicians in the church of God who are not producing the music they might produce because some people are too envious to blow the bellows.

\* God hates evil; this is a necessity of love, but it is not the hatred that works ill to others, but the contrary.

“Love vaunteth not itself.” What is that? Self-advertisement, forwardness, “I am it,” “I am Sir Oracle, and when I ope my lips let no dog bark.” Is that love? No! Look at the Lord Jesus Christ; look at love again. There are John and Peter and James, and they go into the upper room, and they say, “That is my seat—no, that is my seat,” and they are scrambling for the chief places at the table, and the Lord does not rebuke them with words—read the thirteenth of John: “And Jesus knowing the Father had given all things into His hand”—think of that, weigh this statement—“all things into His hand.” And what did He do? He took a towel and girded Himself and stooped to wash His disciples’ feet—a slave’s service!—and He is our model. The hands of Christ were the only hands capable of controlling all things, and those hands were not only nailed to the Cross a little later, but they washed the feet of His disciples. That was the way the Lord rebuked His proud disciples.

“Love is not puffed up.” There is no boastfulness, love delights to serve, love delights to take the low place, and this is true humility. There is nothing so contemptible as mock humility. Again we must look to our Lord to see love in its perfection. “Who being in the form of God, made Himself of no reputation, but took upon Him the form of a servant, and being found in fashion as a man humbled Himself.” That is love. And it is given in that chapter that you and I might have the same mind as He had.

“Doth not behave itself unseemly.” Love knows how to do the right thing. There are some people who think it is a good characteristic for a Christian to be brusque and rude and rough. It is nothing of the kind; it is a bad quality

—that is not the new man, that is the old man. Love knows how to act. That does not mean that you know all the rules of etiquette, but you know instinctively how to behave towards others. Love does the right thing, and it is courteous. It does not hurt people’s feelings; it does not behave itself unseemly.

“Seeketh not her own”—it is utterly unselfish. Thank God we see it in natural love. Many of us can thank God for the love of a mother that never thought of herself, that sacrificed the sleep that her body needed for our sakes. That is natural love, but what of divine love! The Lord Jesus Christ did not seek His own; He was utterly unselfish. He came not to be ministered unto, but to minister.

“Not easily provoked.” It is not self-centred, always on the defensive, passionate, and ready to flare up at the first fancied slight.

“Thinketh no evil.” Does not impute bad motives to others. What an abominable and unchristian habit that is! It is right that we should have a judgment about things, but our judgment is often wrong. You feel that a man is wrong, but when your surmise proves right, do you say, “I knew I was right,” and are you glad that your surmise proves to be true? That is not love. Instead of rejoicing when your surmise proves true, love is grieved; “It rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth.” It rejoices that truth is victorious. Love would be very glad to see that the surmise was wrong and that the person you feared might turn out badly has turned out right.

“Beareth all things.” I notice one translation, I forget which it is, puts it, “Love knows to be silent.” When you find out anything to anybody’s discredit, are you to tell everybody

about it? That is not love—love would send you to your room and get you to your knees to pray for that person instead of spreading the scandal.

“Believeth all things.” It is full of trust, even although its trust is sometimes misplaced.

“Hopeth all things” It is optimistic in spite of all that seems to be contrary. It goes on hoping, and it “endures all things.”

What a wonderful analysis of love, and you see it all in Jesus.

The last section tells you that love is the greatest thing because it is never out of date; it never grows old, and it never grows old-fashioned. You know as you see generation after generation growing up, natural love is not old-fashioned. It is in the constitution of things that when young men and maidens get to a certain age then love comes. Customs change, costumes change, and all sorts of things change, but in the nature of things there is something that remains, natural love, and it is a good thing there is such a thing in this poor world as natural love; but we are not talking about natural love here, we are talking about divine love. What were these Corinthians talking about? Prophecies. Well, these prophecies, when they were fulfilled, would be out of date. The “tongues” they were

making such a fuss about would cease. And knowledge, it shall vanish away. But love is not out of date. It never grows old; it never fails, for after all, the knowledge that we boast of, in the best of us is only a partial knowledge. “We know in part, and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away.” And then he speaks of children: “When I was a child I thought as a child, I reasoned as a child.” We are all more or less immature. And the most advanced only sees through a glass darkly. Are we not conscious of that? What does the glass mean? It is a mirror. They did not have the glass mirrors that we have got, that give you a perfect reflection; they were metal mirrors, and thus, instead of a true reflection, you got a distortion. Life seems like that to us often now, a riddle, an enigma. Have you ever felt like that? Some day we shall know. Some day we shall read the meaning of our tears and learn that God has made no mistake. The day is coming when there will be no mirror, and we shall know as we are known; we shall see face to face; we shall be fully grown, so to speak. We shall be in the presence then of Him who is love divine. Now abideth faith, hope, love, AND THE GREATEST OF THESE IS LOVE.

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**SERVICE** is most blessed, but the heart that knows anything of following the

Lord wholly has acquired a sense of what He is, which none of His interests or concerns can rival or bear resemblance to. It is a joy to serve Him, but service must always be secondary in our thoughts to Him. Seek first His company, cultivate intimacy with Him and you will be His bond slave, serving to please Him, slip away from this and self will gain a footing in your service that will spoil it all.

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**WE** shall do more for Christ and His gospel by exhibiting more of His Spirit than by many arguments—more by words of prayer to God than by words of reasoning with men.

## READY FOR EMERGENCIES.

WHAT a history of victories is the daily life of the one who depends wholly on the Lord! He begins the day with strength renewed, for he knows that the Lord is his strength and resource. He knows the Lord who can support him, though he does not know the peculiar tactics of the foe for the day. He cannot as in modern warfare survey the disposition of the enemy's forces from an airship, but without knowing from what quarter the attack may come, he is ready on every side, and he goes forth like the sun to run his course, resisting all evil, and contributing good on every hand. If he abides in Christ he is well qualified to do so. He is not watching the enemy to see how he can meet him, but he is cultivating the company of Christ in his heart by faith, and then he is prepared for every assault.

It is when the heart is most fully at rest that the hand is most skilful to shelter a friend or to confound a foe, and so when I know the rest of Christ dwelling in my heart, His strength is ministered through me according as the demand is made. Are you pre-meditating how you will act, going through drill and sword exercise in order to be up to the mark? or are you entertaining Christ as a guest in your heart and therefore provided with His grace on every side? What a difference! In the one case your heart is satisfied in its deepest enjoyments, because occupied with the Guest that commands the fullest circle of them; in the other you are in a state of suspense, at best occupied with the demand which is made on you, rather than with the strength of Him who would enable you to meet all demands.

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## THE HOPE.

(HAMILTON SMITH.)

*"Look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh."*—  
Luke 21. 28.

THERE is a world beyond this world of sight,  
 No eye hath seen, nor heart of man conceived,  
 For those who in the Saviour have believed:  
 A home of everlasting love and light;  
 A day of joy, that ends the long dark night;  
 A rich reward, for those who suffered loss;  
 The Lord's "Well done," for those who bore their cross;  
 The victor's crown for those who fought the fight.  
 Then art thou faint and weary by the way?  
 Lift up thy head, and hear the Master say,  
 "I am the Morning Star, the hope of dawn,  
 I quickly come, to call on high My own,  
 From shades of night, into the cloudless morn,  
 To see Me face to face, and know as known."

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BE it far from me to boast save in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. It will stand firm without our stays. Our business is not to *prop* it but to *point* to it.

# THE MISSION OF THE CHURCH IN THE WORLD.—Continued.

(W. BRAMWELL DICK.)

WE can PRAY!!! The first Epistle to Timothy sets before us the church as the house of God (3. 15), and tells us the sort of conduct that becomes it. Men are told how to pray, and women are exhorted how to dress, while those who occupy positions of responsibility in the house, also their wives, receive some wholesome, practical counsel. In former times the house of God had been "an house of prayer for all nations" (Isa. 56. 7; Mark 11. 17, *mrgn.*), and so it is to-day, only now it is not a material but a spiritual structure (1 Peter 2. 5). Therefore we read:—

"I exhort, therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men; for kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty" (1 Timothy 2. 1, 2).

It is our privilege, nay, it is our responsibility, to

*PRAY!* and *PRAY!!* and *PRAY!!!*

The world says "Vote! If you are a Christian, Vote! and Vote for the best men." God says *PRAY!* For whom? "For all men!" Persecutors as well as persecuted; tyrants and their victims; monarchs of all kinds; legislators, whoever they may be, *PRAY!* For what? That the world may become a better place? No. That Governments that some do not like may be defeated, and that those that some prefer may be returned? No. What then? That we who form "the house of God, which is the church of the living God," may "lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty." If it be objected that this seems selfish, we can only reply that it is not our word but God's. But is it

selfish? If God, acting in the interests of His church, exercises an unseen but none the less real restraint upon "the powers that be, which He has ordained" (Rom. 13. 1), will the world be any the worse for that? Then observe! We are to "pray for all men," and that because God has come out as "God our Saviour, who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth." He has, at infinite cost, found a means by which—yea, has found a Person through whom—He can thus make Himself known, and the testimony is going forth (2. 3-6). In the intelligence of this it is our privilege to *PRAY!* Here is a service open to all. Those lone invalids, shut off from the world, unable to take active part in the Lord's work, can pray. They are taking a noble part in the mission of the church as they pray "for all men." They may know only a few; but their thoughts, their sympathies, and their prayers can travel to the ends of the earth. How much the church owes, and how much the world owes to the prayers of the Lord's hidden ones! Go on praying, dear, afflicted saints of God. Praying for all men, you will naturally pray for all saints (Eph. 6. 18), that they "may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God" (Col. 4. 12). You will also pray for those permitted to engage in more public service, as Paul did for the Thessalonians:—

"Wherefore also we pray always for you, that our God would count you worthy of this calling, and fulfil all the good pleasure of His goodness, and the work of faith with power: that the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you, and ye in Him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ" (2 Thess. 1. 11, 12).

First Timothy 2., like the rest of the epistle, is careful to insist on the order of God's house. Hence the word :

"I will therefore that *men* pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting" (verse 8).

In what is called "Organized Religion," women are asserting themselves, and, whilst professing to serve God, are defying the plain injunction of His Word. In God's house there is divine order. When gathered in assembly, *men* pray. But whether prayer be in public or otherwise, there must be moral condition. Their prayers are valueless unless they can pray "lifting up *holy* hands, without wrath and doubting." Women do not make themselves conspicuous or odd-looking, but by dress and deportment carry the impress of the house of God.

Now for the practical application, Are we each in our own little corner—a very obscure one, it may be—seeking to contribute to the mission of the church in the world? Are we exercised about portraying Christ *before* it? If so, those with whom we come in contact will see Christ in us. Are we concerned about preaching Christ *to* it? If so, we shall find opportunities in abundance. Relatives may be unsaved, as well as our next-door neighbours,

our associates at school, at college, at work, at business. They are waiting for us to speak to them, man to man, woman to woman, it may be child to child, about the things that matter. Shall we go to them and tell them about our Lord Jesus Christ?

In conclusion: Are we desirous to engage in this greatest of all service to "*PRAY FOR ALL MEN*"? Oh, the inconceivable results that would follow if only *all* saints were to pray for *all* men! How immense the possibilities if *all* the readers of *Scripture Truth* were to pray for *all* men! Do not let us wait for others to do it, but if we have not done it, let us begin *to-day*; and if some of us have been doing so, let us pray more intensively and more constantly. Prayer in assembly should be brief, but prayer in the closet need have no limit as to time. As we pray our hearts will be enlarged. We will feel that He who is the Head of the Body, the Assembly (Col. 1. 18), has graciously associated us with Himself in His great work; and we will seek that we may be morally and spiritually fitted to engage in the carrying on of, while we will eagerly look forward to the triumphant completion of, the mission of the church in the world.

## PRAYING ALWAYS.

**BRETHREN!** turn all your wishes and all your annoyances into prayers. If a wish is not fit to be prayed about, it is not fit to be cherished. If a care is too small to be made a prayer, it is too small to be made a burden. Be frank with God as God is frank with you, and go to His throne, keeping nothing of your desires or of your troubles. To carry them there will take the poison and the pain out of wasp's stings, and out of else fatal wounds. We have a Name to trust to, tenderer and deeper than those which

evoked the Psalmist's triumphant confidence. Let us see to it that, as the basis of our faith is firmer, our faith be stronger than his. We have a plea to urge, more persuasive and mighty than those which he pressed on God and gathered to his own heart. "For Christ's sake" includes all that he pled, and stretches beyond it. If we come to God through Him who declares His name to us, we shall not draw near to the Throne with self-willed desires, nor leave it with empty hands. "If ye ask anything in My Name, I will do it."

# “SHE SPAKE OF HIM TO ALL.”

(A. E. WALKER.)

(Luke 2. 28.)

**T**HERE is something very encouraging as well as touching in the way Scripture speaks of this dear aged saint, surely an example to us all in her active and persistent path of faith and service—a great cheer to aged saints who are apt to think their opportunities of service are over—of an age few, if any, attain to in the present day, viz., about 108 years. She seems to have been as active as ever, though hers must have been a sad and lonely life, for we are told she had been a widow for eighty-four years, after a short married life of seven years; and yet things are said about her we could do well to imitate and so get *our* names enshrined in God’s annals of the faithful. The few words in which the sacred historian describes her remarkable career, speak volumes. She was a prophetess, the daughter of Phanuel, and of the tribe of Aser of which Moses had said, “Let him dip his foot in oil. . . . Thy shoes shall be iron and brass, and as thy days, so shall thy strength be” (Deut. 33. 25). She loved the presence of the Lord, for she departed not from the temple, but served God with fastings and prayers night and day.

Some are sometimes satisfied with only an occasional visit to the assemblies of God’s children where the Lord delights to be, or are only seen at Lord’s Day meetings and at no other time in the week; not so Anna, and the reason is not difficult to find—she was waiting and looking for her Lord to come. The prophets of God had foretold His coming and she, too, true to her calling, had one hope that filled the vision of her soul, and inspired her lip, for she spake of Him to all them that looked for redemption in Israel. There were many like herself who were

looking for the Redeemer and King to deliver them out of the hand of their enemies, that they might serve God without fear in holiness and righteousness all the days of their life (Luke 1. 74, 75).

She was guided of the Spirit and thus did things promptly and at the right time; she was not dilatory or she would have missed the one great hope of her life, but “at that instant” when Christ appeared, she was ready to receive Him of whom she loved to speak, and give thanks to God.

Is it so with us? Is the chief delight of our souls to speak of Him and our hope to see Him? When His heavenly summons shall be heard, “Arise my love, my fair one, and come away,” shall we be found so unencumbered by earthly things that we can say, “Even so, come, Lord Jesus,” and rise to meet Him in the air?

Anna’s service we can all do; apparently she had but little means for she was a widow, she is not commended for giving alms to the poor, but for fasting and prayers. She was a separate woman observing times when she would allow nothing to come between her soul and God.

And she not only did this in the day, but also in the wakeful hours of the night. Her tongue, too, was a vehicle of blessing, for she used it upward and outward, she spoke to God about her people and their need, and she gave out to others God’s thoughts about Him upon whom she was counting and for whom she was looking as the Saviour of Israel.

This quiet but unrelenting service is everywhere wanted to-day. Souls under the yoke of Satan’s bondage are calling everywhere for redemption. God give us grace to follow in Anna’s patient, persistent, priestly and priceless service.

## THE WELL IS DEEP.

(John 4)

THE well is deep,

Look back upon the purposes of God,  
And scan Eternity. Trace to their source  
His wisdom and His power. Fathom if thou canst  
His everlasting mercy Should thy brain  
Grow dizzy, and refuse to sound such depths,  
Confess thy feebleness, and meekly say,  
The well is deep.

The well is deep. Take for thy longest line  
The cords of vanity—the rope of sins  
Unnumbered Choose thee the heaviest weight ;  
Take thee thine own poor hardened heart of stone ;  
Now plumb the depths of God's unbounded love.  
Thy lead seems light, thy lengthened line runs out ;  
E'en with such instruments thou hast but plunged  
Beneath the surface of the tide. Below,  
Far, far below, in depths unfathomable,  
Springs undisturbed the ceaseless flow of love  
Embosomed in Eternity. Here rest,  
And humbly bend the knee and own again,  
The well is deep.

The well is deep. Mark now the wounded side  
Of Him who hung upon the tree. Haste thee  
To hide within that cleft, and as the springs  
Of living waters from the riven rock  
Gush freely forth, ponder the depths of woe  
From whence they rise. Behold that sorrowing heart !  
Say canst thou find the measure of His grief ?  
Hear that loud bitter cry from off the Cross,  
" My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me ? "  
Think of those awful words, " I thirst," when He  
Who was the mighty God, tasted the serpent's meat,  
And ate the dust of death. Search thus His depths  
Of woes profound, and worship, and exclaim,  
The well is deep.

Thus bursts the well of life from these three openings :  
God's infinite decree ; His boundless love ;  
And all those deep unuttered woes of Christ.  
Drink, stranger, drink, and quench thy thirsty soul  
From out of depths which ceaselessly abound.  
The more thy need, the fuller still the fount ;  
The more thy thirst, the deeper still the spring ;  
No sealed fountain this, no spring shut up,  
But flowing forth to every child of want,  
It cries, Come unto me, come unto me and drink,  
Invites the heavy laden to repose—cleanses  
Whilst giving life, and gladdens whilst it heals.

The thoughtless sinner, who at Jacob's well,  
Tasted the living waters fresh from God,  
Has yet to learn through all eternity  
The truth of words she ignorantly spake,  
Touching Samaria's failing earthly spring—  
The well is deep.

## GRAVE CLOTHES OR ANGELS IN WHITE.

(J. T. MAWSON.)

PETER and John looked into the tomb of Jesus and saw only the linen clothes lying, the wrappings of death. Mary looked into that same tomb and though her sight was bleared with weeping she saw what they had not seen—two angels in white sitting, one at the head and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain. Those angels were heavenly messengers clothed in the habiliments of victory in what was once the stronghold of the defeated foe. The men believed that the grave was empty of their Lord and returned with amazement to their home. The woman stood still, unable to leave that spot, and though equally amazed she saw further than the men, and she learned that heaven had something to say in the matter of that tomb. And then turning about she came face to face with Jesus her Lord, alive from the dead. She saw the angels within the tomb and Jesus without it. These great facts have often spoken to us, let them be as a parable to us to-day. How do we view things? Nothing could be to us as dark as was that grave to Mary and to John and Peter, for in their ignorance and unbelief it was the death of all their best hopes, and yet things have happened to us that filled us with amazement and perhaps fear, and made our way dark because of doubts and questionings.

There are many graves along the road that we have travelled. In some

of them lie buried our cherished joys, hopes, desires, ambitions. As we look into these graves, if we do look into them, what do we see? Do we only see the grave clothes, things that speak of death, and the last and utmost that we can do? Do we only see darkness, as though the grave was the terminus, the end of every hope and of all things? Is it to us nothing but disappointment and mystery? Or can we discern angels in white sitting? Angels from the other side, lighting up the tomb with a heavenly radiance and showing us that through those graves and apparent defeats that have meant so much sorrow to us there lies for us the way of victory and blessing?

Let us dwell for a while on this. Consider the difference between grave clothes and angels in white, and pray for eye-salve that we may see this light in the darkness and heavenly blessing that could only reach us through the sorrow. Then turn and come face to face with Jesus, your Saviour and Lord. He has triumphed over death and can be more to you than all that you have buried in those sad tombs. He is infinitely more than all that you can lose in this life, and He knows you by name, and can address you in such a way that your sorrow will give place to rest. Then He can send you from the scene of your sorrow with a message of light and gladness to others. This He did in Mary's case and He can do it for you.

# GOD'S ORDER IN WILDERNESS DISORDERS.

## A Brief Study of the Book of Numbers.

(H J VINE)

RICH with instruction for the redeemed of the Lord, who are journeying heavenward, is this Book of Numbers, the fourth book of the inspired Word of God. It unveils the resource and grace of God in carrying out His designs with ordered consistency when murmurings, revoltings and disorders amongst His people seemed to ensure the complete overthrow of those designs. The evident failure on man's part, however, only brings into clearer relief the triumph of God in Christ Jesus, which is typified in this Book, so that the keen vision of faith views with pleasure the grace, wisdom and beauty of divine order, gaining thereby present help in the pathway and beholding the predestinated glory of the future. The gains of wilderness schooling are great indeed, as the shining lamp of God's Word shows us His way.

"Light divine surrounds thy going,  
God Himself shall mark thy way;  
Secret blessings richly flowing,  
Lead to everlasting day."

Still deeper lessons are learned in the precious exercises divinely granted to the Calebs and Joshuas of to-day as Numbers indicates, for the sinful murmurings and misdemeanours of those who are outwardly in the same path cause them to turn the more wholeheartedly to God Himself, who gives them to appreciate His own faithfulness and unfailing consistency. They grow in the knowledge of Himself and that in an experimental manner.

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

The full knowledge of God for faith's appropriation is found in the Son of

God—"He hath declared Him"—and a four-fold view of Himself is given in the four Gospels. A fifth unfolding is shown in Acts, added to "the former treatise." A similar order is discerned in the early books of the Old Testament. The first four make God known in distinct ways, and Deuteronomy—meaning second law—is added with the land's possession in view. Acts shows the possession secured in Christ exalted and glorified at God's right hand. The fourth book, however, of both Testaments shows how life is made ours when the springs are poisoned and death otherwise prevails. For the brazen serpent, the Son of Man, is lifted up (Numbers 21. and John 3.); the springing well, the water of life, too, uprises in scenes of need (Numbers 21. 17 and John 4.); the Lamb is preserved without a bone being broken (Numbers 9. and John 19.), the word of God is expressed in the tabernacle (Numbers 1. 1 and John 1. 14, where "*dwelt*" should read "*tabernacled*"); the Bread from heaven is brought right down to men where they are (Numbers 11 9 and John 6.); but it is despised (Numbers 21. 5 and John 6. 41); nevertheless God was known, as both books show, in measure in Numbers 14. 18, but fully in John 17. 25-26 and elsewhere in the fourth Gospel.

In Leviticus 1. 1 we read of God speaking *out of* the tabernacle, in Numbers 1. 1 of His doing so *in it*, but in these last days He has not only spoken to us *by* but "*in His Son*" (Heb 1 2). The Son of God has spoken "the truth" to us, but He is Himself the truth. He has spoken the word to us truly, but He is Himself the Word who "became flesh and tabernacled among us" To-day we have the embodiment as well as the expression

of the mind of God in Him for He is the Logos—THE WORD.

Special prominence is given to the Levites and their sanctuary service as joined to Aaron, the high priest, who represented God's people in His immediate presence, a precious type of the way Christ bears His own up before God to-day, without a break, without ceasing. "*Levi*", meaning joined or united (Genesis 29. 34), was divinely marked out for this (Numbers 18. 2, 4), and the Levites were taken by Jehovah "for all the firstborn of the children of Israel" (8. 18) to be represented before Him in sanctuary nearness. In Christ Jesus to-day the uniting of the saints is still more intimate, for they are "members of His body," He Himself being the glorified Head of that body. Aaron entered the holiest. Jesus is in all the sunshine and favour of the Father's presence, and we are received into favour in Him. However distressful the disorders of the desert might appear, the arrangement and maintenance of order according to God is understood in the sanctuary.

The thought of uniting or joining together is clearly discernible in the first four books of the Bible. The little conjunction "AND" connects the one to the other, for the "NOW" of Exodus 1. 1 is the same word "AND" which commences Leviticus, and that again which unites Numbers to it. The Holy Spirit's use of this little word in the early scheme of inspiration thus is big with interest and meaning before faith's vision. The taches of gold and the loops of blue for the coupling together of the "curtains of fine twined linen, and blue, and purple, and scarlet, with cherubims of cunning work," were necessary to form the divinely designed tabernacle. God's order is delighted in by those who "have the mind of Christ." Apart from correct adjust-

ment in regard to Him, men's minds however much they be educated, are incapable of appreciating the universal order typically set forth in this inspired part of the Bible.

Chapter 14. shows an outbreak of murmuring and revolt against the Lord. They wanted a leader to take them back to Egypt! Many to-day desire to forsake the path of faith for the ground of nature and the activities of seducing spirits. Joshua and Caleb pleaded with the people, and Moses pleaded with the merciful and long-suffering Lord for pardon, who said, "I have pardoned according to thy word: but *as truly as I live, all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the Lord*" (verse 21). They would fail Him if His designs for world-wide blessing were entrusted into their hands, but verse 10 indicates His unchanging thoughts at the very moment when the people were about to stone the men of faith with stones, for we read:

"THE GLORY OF THE LORD  
APPEARED IN THE TABER-  
NACLE."

Seen there, then, His promise for the future is given:

"ALL THE EARTH SHALL BE  
FILLED WITH THE GLORY OF  
THE LORD."

Great things are opened before the eyes of faith for those who are going through the world as a wilderness, and they rejoice in the truth of God's Word: all the promises of God in Christ are yea, and in Him, Amen. Perplexities vanish, even when surrounded by contradictions, as faith discerns the mind of God in Christ Jesus.

The name of the book indicates the two numberings of the people, the first being given in chapters 1. and 2., the second in chapter 26.; but as to the

first we read, "they perished in the wilderness," and "there was not left a man of them" save Caleb and Joshua. The second was made up of the "little ones," which they said in their murmurings should be a prey; they were brought into the land of promise by the Lord. This teaches the same lesson—the old fails and perishes, the new is brought into abiding blessing! The "old man is crucified with Christ." "If any man be in Christ there is a new creation: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." Priests, princes and people, may all fail, but the subjects of divine love and saving grace in Christ, rejoicing, render as redeemed glory to the Prince of the kings of the earth, and sing, "Unto Him that loveth us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and His Father; to Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen." He shall be supreme, but along with Him, it is said, "We shall reign over the earth." God's ordering graciously triumphs.

The song of redemption shall not die out because Miriam fails and dies (Numbers 12. and 20.), for the redeemed sing a new song (Revelation 5. 9). The high priesthood does not disappear because of the gainsaying of Korah (Numbers 16.) and Aaron's own failure, for within the second veil was laid up the rod of Aaron that budded, pointing eloquently to Christ's high priesthood after the "power of an indissoluble life" (Hebrews 7. 16, N.T.), a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec. Moses may fail to enter in, but Christ has gone into heaven itself after having secured eternal redemption, eternal salvation, and eternal inheritance for us; and, being Surety and Mediator of the *new* covenant, He has given it the stamp of His own character, so it is

called now the *eternal* covenant, while the *first* is made *old* by His bringing in the *new*!

Hope is fostered and flourishes by desert dealings. It enters in where Christ has already gone, and rejoices in what will presently come out in public display. The tabernacle of testimony was known in the midst of Israel in the wilderness, and now God shows the heirs of promise what they are going on to; and if cities of refuge were marked out in Numbers 35., those who have fled for refuge to-day lay hold of the hope set before us, which hope enters within the veil, where Jesus has entered Forerunner for us (Hebrews 6. 20).

"And we our great Forerunner see,  
In His own glory there,  
Yet not ashamed with such as we,  
As Firstborn all to share."

Even Balaam, the advanced but unrighteous clairvoyant and prophet of Numbers, was made by the Lord to foretell the future prosperity and blessing of God's people (22. 24) in spite of Balak hiring him for other reasons, yet he gave counsel to corrupt them at Peor and was slain with the sword consequently (31. 8-16). Dark powers may energize against those who are blessed in Christ Jesus as we see in Ephesians 6.; they may ensnare them, but they cannot bring curse upon them; moreover, like the grapes of Eshcol, the first-fruits of the Spirit give a foretaste of the inheritance before it is reached, and hope rejoices; being sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is the earnest of our inheritance to the redemption of the purchased possession, we shall be to the praise of God's glory then (Ephesians 1. 14), even as present grace has glorified its exceeding riches by taking us into everlasting favour now. What a picture of it the evil but able spiritualist is forced to describe in Numbers 24.:

"How goodly are thy tents, O Jacob, and thy tabernacles, O Israel! As the valleys are they spread forth, as gardens by the river's side, as the trees of lign aloes, which the Lord hath planted, and as cedar trees beside the waters." Yet wilderness disorders were there, but only God's order was to be seen from beside that which typified Christ's death and ascension.

There are many fine examples of the prosperity of hope in desert surroundings. No sooner do we see "life for a look" at what sets forth the Son of Man lifted up, than we view those who journeyed onward pitch their camp "toward the sun-rising" (21. 11)! The Sun of righteousness shall soon arise with healing in His beams! The coming of the Lord draweth nigh! How beautifully becoming too is the way the flourishing of hope is illustrated in the very last chapter of desert testings, in the triumph of the faith of Zelophehad's daughters. The promised inheritance is secured before their feet touch its soil and that in spite of peculiar difficulties. The resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ from among the dead has begotten us unto a *living* hope, to an incorruptible and fadeless inheritance reserved in heaven for us! Blessed for ever be our God and Father who preserves us on the way!

Precious qualities and distinctions of a personal character also increased by wilderness experiences. Boldness of faith shows itself in Caleb and Joshua before the defection of the multitude. The knowledge of God's mind and obedience along with patience are increasingly seen in their long journey with impatient and murmuring companions. Temperance and forbearance along with dependence on God also increase. The wisdom of distrusting one's own understanding and relying entirely on the Word of God is learned,

while meekness is a quality of rich distinction added. In Moses it shone resplendant when Miriam and Aaron spoke against him: "The man Moses was very meek, above all the men which were upon the face of the earth" (12. 3). Nevertheless, although this pre-eminence belonged to Moses then, a greater than Moses, the coming King, shall surpass Him in this as well as in every other moral glory, for it is said, "THY KING COMETH MEEK"!<sup>1</sup> and when He first came as the lowly Saviour, the Son, He could say, "*I am meek.*" How fitting it is for those who are His through sovereign grace at the present time to be exhorted as the elect of God, holy and beloved, to put on not only kindness, lowliness and forbearance, but also meekness. It is a divine distinction seen in the Son, a royal distinction seen in the King. Another divine distinction expressed in Jesus and to be shown by the redeemed who are now priests to God to-day is graciously expressed in chapter 6. 22-27. "*Blessing*" is to mark them! "The Lord bless thee, and keep thee" is to be their language. The Lord says, "I WILL BLESS THEM"!

This brings out a most wonderful unfolding of God's order in the following verses. No sooner are the *blessings from God* through Aaron and his sons pronounced, and His Name put upon His people, than the abundant *response to God* is so rich from the princes of Israel day after day in silver, gold, incense, oxen, bullocks, rams, lambs, kids, and he goats offered to the Lord, that we are shown a crowning scene of holy nearness and intimacy illustrating Christ's place before God now as our ascended Leader: "When Moses was gone into the tabernacle of the congregation to speak with Him then he heard the voice of One speaking unto him from off the mercy seat that was

upon the ark of testimony, from between the two cherubims: and he spake unto HIM" (7. 89). Although our feet still press the desert sand our faith may nevertheless value God's sanctuary order, for "Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true, but into heaven itself now to appear in the presence of God for us" (Heb. 9. 24).

The Lord Jesus Himself is personally pointed on to in a special manner in Numbers. We see Moses superseded by Joshua, whose name is the same as Jesus, meaning, Jehovah Saviour. Aaron is superseded by Eleazar, meaning, God has helped, for "We have such an High Priest, who is set on the right hand of the majesty in the heavens." The passover lamb pointed on to "Christ our Passover" sacrificed for us (1 Corinthians 5. 7), and the serpent of brass spake of the lifted up Son of Man that we might have everlasting life, as we have seen. The manna which fell upon the dew and was as coriander seed and in colour as bdellium, told of the Bread come down from heaven; and being gathered, ground in mills, baken and made into cakes, tasting fresh and sweet, eloquently prefiguring the varied and precious ways Christ, the food of the saints of God, may be appropriated and appreciated. Of old, too, we read, "They drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ" (1 Cor. 10. 4). Much might be said of the Shekinah glory, the resting and guiding cloud of the mercy seat and the ark, but it should be noted

specially when the ark set forward it was said, "Rise up, Lord" (10. 35)! So Psalm 68. begins, "Let God arise!" and verse 18 tells as Ephesians 4. 8, of Christ ascending on high, going above all heavens in triumph, giving gifts to effect the perfectness already prefigured.

"Our Lord, our Life, our Rest, our Shield,  
Our Rock, our Food, our Light;  
Each thought of Thee doth constant yield  
Unchanging, fresh delight."

The ashes of an heifer, as we see in Numbers 19., might mean much to a godly soul, but the antitype who offered Himself without spot to God, has by His own blood entered the holy place, having secured eternal redemption and our place in the brightest glory. Moreover, being the Mediator of a better covenant than the old, based upon better promises, He has, blessed be His holy Name, through His own death, made an eternal inheritance ours, as we have said; but it is *Himself*, HIMSELF, HIMSELF to whom our gladdened gaze is turned by the inspired records, "In all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself" (Luke 24. 27)! It was that which made the heart burn with holy joy (Luke 24. 32)! Numbers 1. 1 tells us of God speaking in the wilderness, "*in the tabernacle!*" but Hebrews 1. 2 tells how in the end of these days He has spoken "*to us in Son*" (N.T.); and again and again the Word is divinely urged, "**HEAR HIM!**" Wilderness disorders may abound around us, but the more glorious shall we behold God's order in Him as we walk by faith while here below.

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**A** LANGUID church breeds unbelief as surely as a decaying oak fungus. In a condition of depressed vitality, the diseased germs, which a full vigour would shake off, are fatal. A warmer tone of spiritual life would change the atmosphere that unbelief needs for its growth.

# ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

## Two Knockings.

“What is the difference between the knocking in Matthew 7. 7 and Revelation 3. 20? Is the first addressed to sinners and the second to backsliders?”—ENQUIRER.

THE words in Matthew 7. 7, and Luke 11. 9: “Knock, and it shall be opened unto you,” were addressed by the Lord to His disciples. They were to encourage them to pray and to seek what they desired with earnestness and importunity. But they stand good for anyone who, though not a disciple, longs for the blessing of the Lord. Let such a one seek it, none who knock at His door in this day of grace are turned away. It will be different when the day of grace has come to its close and the door of mercy has been shut; then those who have refused to knock and enter

now, will knock in vain (Luke 13. 25).

The words in Revelation 3. 20 are addressed to a church that thought that it had all that is needed without Christ. This condition of self-sufficient pride is widespread in Christendom to day. Yet the Lord, though shut out, waits in longsuffering and patience and knocks at the door that is closed against Him, and will enter in and bless every individual that opens his heart to Him. The word is addressed to a backslidden church, but the blessing is for any man who will hear His voice, be he a backslidden believer, a mere professor or an utterly profane person.

## “Sin in the Flesh.”

“Your answer to the question: ‘Are we sinners or saints?’ (Sept. issue) should help Enquirer and others. I write just as to one point of importance. You may think a further reference to it advisable. You say, ‘God has condemned it (sin in the flesh) and the believer must learn to do the same and reckon himself dead to it’ (Rom. 6).”

“It is evident that sin in Romans 6. 10 cannot be sin in the flesh, but rather sin looked at as a sphere. The different ways in which sin is looked at in the three chapters—Romans 6., 7., 8. is instructive and worth calling attention to: Romans 6: Sin as a sphere in which the person once lived (similar to the world in John 1.). Romans 7: Sin as a power. Romans 8.: Sin as a principle within.”—WALSALL.

OUR correspondent is right in his statement that sin is shown to us in different ways in Romans, and that this is worth calling attention to. We do this briefly with a special reference to “sin in the flesh.”

*First.* In the first part of chapter 6. sin is viewed as a sphere of life, which is really death, in which we lived as being the sinful sons of a sinful progenitor—the “one man”—Adam, of chapter 5. Out of this sphere we have died and been buried by our baptism unto the death of Christ, that we should walk in “newness of life.” Hence the question, “How shall we that are dead to sin live any longer

therein?” The sphere of our life is “in Christ” now and not in Adam. The Ethiopian eunuch is the outstanding example of this (Acts 8.), when after his baptism he goes on his way rejoicing.

*Second.* In the second half of chapter 6. it is viewed as a master who once held us in bondage and drove us to our tasks. Now *we may reckon ourselves dead to this old master* and “alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.” This is the way of deliverance from the dominion of sin as a master.

*Third.* In chapter 7. sin is viewed as a law or principle in our members, that until deliverance is known works

always against the desires of the renewed mind to do the will of God, driving us into the utmost wretchedness. It is the last effort of the master, of the end of chapter 6., to keep us living *as to our experience* in the sphere of the early part of that chapter.

*Fourth.* In chapter 8. "sin in the flesh" is different to "the law in our members" of chapter 7 in that it is viewed more generally. In chapter 7. it is intensely individual, here it is sin in human nature, sin which has shown itself in its exceeding sinfulness in man. We must see it objectively in the human race rather than subjectively in ourselves, though what is true of the race is undoubtedly true of each member of it. Sin in Satan showed itself in rebellion against God's supremacy; "sin in the flesh" has shown itself in the flesh, that is in man, in rebellion against the goodness of God, as in Eden; against His holy law, given for man's blessing, as at Sinai; against His longsuffering and patience, as seen throughout his long history; and worse than all, against His love, when God sent His own Son into the world. It has broken out in man against God under every test, and there was absolutely nothing for it but complete condemnation, it had to be set aside utterly as being always insubject to

God and incapable of any right response to God. But in sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and as a sacrifice for sin God has condemned it and found a righteous way by which we can be set free from it, and be moved henceforward by a new power and principle—the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus, which is now in us since we are in Christ. Faith will lead us to take God's view of it and to rejoice in His way of deliverance from it, but it must be to each of us who would be free from its power a condemned thing, though it is still within us, for we shall not be rid of its presence as long as we are in these mortal bodies, though we may be free from its power. To walk not after the flesh is to condemn it, to reckon ourselves dead to its motions, to stand apart from it. To walk after the Spirit, is to "walk in newness of life" (chap. 6. 4), to reckon ourselves "alive unto God through Christ Jesus our Lord" (chap. 6. 11), "to serve in newness of spirit (chap. 7. 6), to be "free from the law of sin and death (chap. 8. 2) and to be spiritually minded"—or minding the things of the Spirit which "is life and peace" (chap. 8. 6). And for this we need an all-sufficient object without, which is Christ, and an all-sufficient power within, which is the Holy Spirit.

## Laying the Hand on the Head of the Offering.

"Will the Editor kindly explain the meaning of several passages in Leviticus—in reference to the 'Offerings'—where the words, 'He (the priest) shall lay his hand upon the head of the offering,' occur. Is there any Scripture for connecting this with Romans 6. 6.—'Our old man is crucified with Him,' etc. In what sense is the believer crucified with Christ?"—WESTON.

[T was the offerer who laid his hand on the head of his offering (not the priest) in the case of the burnt-offering, the peace-offering and the sin-offering. Aaron and his sons laid their hands on the heads of their offerings at their consecration (Lev. 8), and Aaron alone laid both his hands

on the head of the scapegoat on the day of atonement as he confessed the sins of Israel upon its head. The word translated "put" or "lay" in our Bible has the meaning of "lean with" (J. N. D.), or "lean hard with" (Newbery). The usual interpretation of his act seems to be the right one, it

was the identification of the offerer with his offering. The leaning hard upon it would indicate that it was not a casual or light thing with him, but that he knew that everything depended upon his offering as he stood before God; it was his one hope and plea. The act was a confession of his need of a substitute and of his faith in the one with which he stood identified. The blood of the sacrifice that he brought and upon which he leaned made atonement for him, and this atonement was the basis of *his acceptance*, as in the case of the burnt-offering; *his peace and fellowship with God*, as in the peace-offering; and *his complete clearance from the charge of sins*, as in the sin-offering. All this was typical of what the sacrifice of Christ means for us as we look wholly to Him and lean alone upon Him as our holy and all-sufficient Substitute.

We should connect "our old man being crucified with Christ," with the burning of the whole carcase of "*the sin-offering*" outside the camp. The sin-offering was not a sweet savour offering, and the burning of it completely at a distance from the camp spoke in type of the condemnation of God, which could spare no part of what is spoken of as "our old man," falling upon our sinless Substitute when He was made sin for us. All that we were as having our part in the

old and sinful Adam life had to come under God's judgment and did so when Christ was crucified. We should not link this up with the act of laying on of the hands, for our acceptance of the fact does not make it more a fact than it is. It is part of the truth of the gospel that we are to believe and know. This knowledge should be full of comfort and peace for us, for it means that whatever we may have found in ourselves that is hateful and distressing as belonging to "our old man," met its full desert and condemnation when Christ was crucified, even as our sins did.

"I am crucified with Christ" (Gal. 2. 20), gives us what the laying on of the hands would signify. It is the acceptance and practical application of the truth of Romans 6. 6 to the individual life. The curse, condemnation, shame, utter rejection, all these had their part in the crucifixion, and Paul says, All that was my desert and portion, and Christ bore it for me, and now the outraged and broken law that would have put me there has nothing more to say to me. I am dead to it that I might live to God; and this I do, for Christ lives in me, and Christ and not self is the object of my life, for He the Son of God loved me and gave Himself for me. There is here a very definite identification with Christ in His death as well as participation with Him in His victorious risen life.

## The Rich Man and Lazarus. Luke 16.

"Will you kindly show what is the point in the parable of Luke 16. 19-31? Is it to show *how* one is to get saved? But here I do not see this as it is explained in Romans. Rather, the parable seems to convey the idea that one is saved because one is poor ('a beggar'). May there be a connection with Luke 6. 20, where the Lord states that the kingdom of God belongs to the poor? This seems to place 'the poor' on the same platform as infants in Matthew 19. 14. In Matthew 11. 5, 'the poor have the gospel preached to them,' is ranked with the other miraculous credentials of our Lord's mission; in what way can it be a miracle? This has kept me bewildered."—J. P. R., BRAZIL.

THIS story, we should not call it a parable, drawn by the Lord Himself, does not teach the way of salvation, but is a solemn commentary upon the position and spirit and

views of the Pharisees, and must be read in relation to what precedes it in the chapter. The parable of the unjust steward teaches that a man is only a steward of whatever he may

possess in this life, and in view of the fact that he is soon to be put out of his stewardship by death, his wisdom lies in using what he possesses with the future in view and not for present selfish enjoyment. In pressing this the Lord declares that no man can serve two masters; it is impossible to make the best of both worlds, one or the other must dominate him. "*Ye cannot serve God and mammon.*" These words were spoken to the disciples, but it brought the Pharisees into immediate conflict with the Lord. They were covetous men, yet withal they professed to serve God, and they believed that their prosperity was a mark of God's favour, that "gain was godliness," and so the solemn truth only provoked their derision, so blinded were they by their covetousness (verse 14).

The Lord's reply was at once a rebuke and an illumination. He shews that the great parade that they made of living for both worlds, which gave them a high standing among men, was an abomination to God, for He knew the incurable selfishness of their hearts; their covetousness governed them and they were really living for this world only, they were serving mammon and not God (verse 15). They professed to uphold the law and the prophets, but they were transgressors in both parts of the law, for they could not love the Lord their God with all their hearts while they selfishly served mammon, and by the loose way in which they treated the most intimate relationship of the second part of it—thy neighbour as thyself—they were transgressing that too (16–18), and it was their covetousness and selfish living for the present that caused them to transgress. Then follows the solemn story. The certain rich man is shown in his ease and pleasure, a man that would have been envied and

applauded by them as being most surely an object of God's special favour, but the Lord shows that the future is the great test, and that everything must be valued in view of the future, where God has the final disposal of all things; and the man who had nothing to commend him but his wealth and luxurious living, is stripped of everything and goes to hell, deprived of the very smallest mercy.

Lazarus gives the other side of the story; his name *Eleazar* (Heb.) means, God his helper, and the fact that he is named while the rich man is not, would indicate that he was an object of interest to the Lord; hence the angels, who are sent forth to be ministers of the heirs of salvation, carried him into Abraham's bosom. The man who had no help but in God, and could not trust in uncertain riches, was helped of God indeed. The figures used are Jewish and would give vividness to the truth, and would impress those who received the words with the fact that present gain meant neither present favour nor future blessedness, which was the Jewish idea. The coming of the kingdom of God (verse 16) into a world where unrighteousness prevails and where even possessions are the mammon of unrighteousness (verse 9), had changed all that.

The gospel being preached to the poor runs on these lines. God always cared for the poor, as is evinced in the law and in many of the prophecies, but this was the special character of the Lord's ministry, it was to those who had no hope or help but in God, and this position the rich man must take if he is to receive and be enriched by the gospel. This does not put the poor on the same platform as infants, for the poor who refuse God's mercy and riches will be lost equally with the rich who do this.

# TO EVERY MAN HIS WORK.

(J. T. MAWSON.)

Read 1 Chronicles 23.

"Now the Levites were numbered . . . man by man, 38,000."

THE "dole" was not known in King David's realm, or if it was it did not operate for the Levites, for the simple reason that none among them were unemployed. There were 38,000 of them fit for the work, and of these 24,000 were labourers, and happy to be such we should judge, 6000 were officers, "4000 were porters and 4000 praised the Lord with the instruments which I made, said David, to praise therewith," they were the singers. Thirty-eight thousand men and not an idler among them.

These Levites were an interesting people and their position in Israel a most important one, and a few remarks about them will be necessary before I come to my theme. They were taken by Jehovah instead of the firstborn sons of the whole nation. These firstborn sons had been sheltered from judgment by the blood in Egypt, and Jehovah claimed them as His own, but took the tribe of Levi instead of them for special service in His house and for His Name. They were a privileged people, called to devote themselves to God's interests and to be specially cared for by Him (Numbers 3. 40-51 tells us all about this). They were a type of the whole Christian company to-day, and their service, as ordered by King David, shows us in type the place and spiritual service to which we have been called. Indeed, we are designated "the church of the Firstborn, which are written in heaven" (Heb. 12. 23).

Let us clearly understand, then, our place, privileges and responsibilities, if we have been redeemed by the precious blood of Christ. God who has paid that great price for us has claimed us for Himself and we have no option but

to respond wholly and heartily to His claim. He has taken possession of us by the indwelling of His Holy Spirit, and we are now His church and called by this very remarkable name, "*The church of the Firstborn, which are written (or enregistered) in heaven.*" We are the Levites of this day. The honour of the family falls specially upon the firstborn, it is his duty and privilege to devote himself specially to its interests and to carry out his father's wishes, and this is our place by the infinite grace of God. When we see how high and honourable the service is to which we are thus called, we shall be neither idle nor lazy.

There is a difference between being idle and being lazy; a man may be idle because he does not know what to do. We are familiar with the parable of the labourers. At the eleventh hour of the day the householder went forth into the market-place and found men standing there and said to them, "Why stand ye here all the day idle?" And they answered, "Because no man hath hired us." They were ready to work, but did not know what to do. A lazy man is one who knows what he ought to do and does not do it. How shameful is laziness! If any of my readers are inclined to be lazy as to God's work, I would suggest to them that they read *The Proverbs* and mark and consider all that the wise man said about the sluggard in contrast to the diligent man. My desire is to instruct the idle and to stir up the lazy and to encourage all who are serving the Lord with diligence.

The service of these Levites had to be carried on in three spheres; verses 27 to 32 of our chapter tell us of these. Their office was to wait upon the sons

of Aaron for the service of the house of the Lord, in the courts and in the chambers, and in purifying of all holy things and the work of the service of the house of God.

### “ IN THE CHAMBERS.”

The chambers were where the Levites lodged, and would show what sort of lives they lived. The key to everything lies in the chamber. What a man is when alone and able to do just as he pleases, that he is really and as God sees him. All true service to God begins in secret with God. How necessary it is that we should heed the words of the Lord Jesus, “ *When thou prayest enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father in secret ; and thy Father that seeth in secret shall reward thee openly* ” (Matt. 6. 6). It is here that service begins, and it is here that we are prepared for service in public. A man who has not been with God in secret soon betrays the fact in public. He will think more highly of himself than he ought to think, and be boastful and forward or perhaps show an exaggerated humility, which is even worse. But the man who makes good use of the chamber will walk in the fear of God all the day long ; he will not fear others, but he will be a self-judged man.

We get sober and right thoughts of ourselves in secret with God and we judge others according to their true value also. We learn in the chamber how precious to God and how indispensable to Him are all His saints, and this will cause us to pray for them. What a blessed chamber-service it was that Epaphras rendered ! “ *Always labouring fervently for you in prayer that ye may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God* ” (Col. 4. 12). There was nothing spectacular about that service, but so important was it that

the Spirit of God has recorded it in the Holy Scriptures as a pattern and encouragement for us.

But unless we come under the power of two necessities the chamber is sure to be neglected. There are two great “ musts ” that must operate in our lives and make God’s presence indispensable to us or we shall not be vessels meet for God’s use. The first is our need. We must go to God, we must seek His presence in secret, because without Him we can do nothing. We have neither strength nor supplies in ourselves, and the neglect of the presence of God soon becomes apparent in the service of a man though he may endeavour to deceive himself and others as to it. And in this connection it is interesting to see that the word used by the Lord in Matthew 6. 6 means not only the chamber, but THE STOREHOUSE. The secret presence of God is the storehouse of all His riches in Christ Jesus, and there we are enriched. OUR NEED MUST DRIVE US to that inexhaustible storehouse. But there is also the attractiveness of God’s presence. If what we are in our nothingness should drive us to Him, what He is in the fulness of blessing should draw us to Him. “ *As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after Thee, O God.* ” He has been revealed to us in Jesus ; His perfect love has cast all fear out of our hearts. His presence is our home. Surely His love has made it essential to us to be often in secret communion with Himself, and has made us ready to put ourselves wholly into His hands, with the prayer in our hearts and on our lips, “ *Search me, O God, and know my heart ; try me, and know my thoughts : and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.* ”

It is when we have reached this

point of reliance upon the love of God and complete surrender of ourselves to Him that we are fit to be trusted with service to Him in public.

### “ IN THE COURTS.”

The priests and Levites would congregate in the courts. There they would talk together of their service and of the things that they had in common. There they would have fellowship together, and the greater their enthusiasm for the service of God in His house and their joy in it, the happier their fellowship would be. As they viewed things sanely they would see that each had his place to fill if the service of God was to be a complete service, and hence they would encourage each other not to be slack, but to show continual diligence and endeavour to work together and in harmony. Hebrews 10. 24, 25 is a passage which would show us the application of this to ourselves: “*Let us consider one another to provoke unto love and good works: 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.*”

Important as is our individual life with God, it is not everything. Indeed, as we look at things as we ought, we see that it has its place in view of the one great work of God in the world. We are each of us a part of a whole work. We have been called into the one fellowship of God's Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, and into the unity of the Spirit. The saints of God are the house of God and not one of them can be omitted from this. For the full development and expression of Christian life we must take our part in Christian fellowship. To use our type, we must serve in the courts as well as in the chambers. Whether we will or not we

must have some sort of intercourse with our fellow-Christians, and we are either a help or a hindrance to them. Our business is to promote the fellowship, to strengthen it and enrich it, and to avoid the things that would mar it.

Divine wisdom and grace are needed if we are to fulfil our service in the courts. We are queer creatures. It is astonishing how selfish we can be in spite of the grace of God that has saved us. And we can talk, and talk very glibly, about the cross and the crucifixion of the old man and of self-judgment, and yet we are keener and more ready to judge others than ourselves. We often speak of the Twelve who, on the road to Jerusalem, and at the very supper table, disputed as to who should be the greatest, and we marvel that they could have done this when in the company of the Lord, but who marvels when we do precisely the same things who have the Holy Spirit dwelling in us? We are queer creatures, and it is not in such a spirit as that that fellowship is promoted. If the Levites had been of that spirit there would have been strife and bitterness in the courts instead of harmony and happy fellowship in the work of God. We need a pattern—a standard, and the Lord Himself has given us one. “I am among you,” said He, “as he that serveth,” and we are told that “even Christ pleased not Himself.”

We need His Word and the grace that He gives along with it. “*A new commandment I give unto you, He said, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye have love one to another*” (John 13. 34, 35). This is the law of the courts, the spring and the power of Christian fellowship. Let a man be ever so brilliant and gifted,

and learned, if this is lacking he is nothing, and worse than nothing in the service of God in the courts. There are other words that must be heeded, which have been given for our instruction by the Spirit of God ; let us think of them as being upon the walls of the courts for us. "*Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory ; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. . . . Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus*" (Phil. 2.). "*Walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, with all lowliness and meekness and longsuffering, forbearing one another in love. Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace*" (Eph. 4.). These are exhortations that have their special bearing upon our fellowship together. They show the spirit and character that must prevail if we are to be together according to God. There are many others ; indeed the whole force of Paul's Epistles seems to flow along this channel. Consider Colossians 3., which is a searching and beautiful passage showing the only suitable clothing for those who serve in the courts : "*Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering, forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any : even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye. And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness. And let the peace of God (Christ) rule in your hearts, to which also ye are called in one body ; and be ye thankful.*"

While the Epistles give us the beautiful qualities and spirit by which fellowship may be promoted, they also warn us as to what will hinder it, and wise and gracious brethren will avoid these things, "*But foolish and unlearned questions avoid, knowing that they do*

*gender strifes*" (2 Tim. 2. 23). "*But avoid foolish questions, and genealogies, and contentions, and strivings about law ; for they are unprofitable and vain*" (Titus 3. 9). How sadly the harmony of the courts has been disturbed, and the work in them wrecked, because we have refused to heed such warnings as these. We do not now discuss whether we ought to be subject to the law of Moses, or whether the Jew is a better man than the Gentile and more favoured of God than his Gentile brethren, but the devil has seen to it that other laws have been formulated and that other questions equally unprofitable have taken the place of those of old time ; and we often love to have it so, for "the Jew" lives more or less in every one of us, and he will fight for the religious position that he favours and claims regardless of the fact that the fellowship of God's Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, languishes in consequence.

#### "THE WORK OF THE SERVICE OF THE HOUSE OF GOD."

But our secret life with God and our fellowship with our brethren flow naturally on to our approach to God in worship. The great end of the service of these Levites was that God should have His own portion in His house. So they had to prepare the burnt sacrifices, and the meat-offering, and the shewbread, and to see that nothing hindered the priests from lifting up their hands in God's holy presence. All this was only typical of what in the New Testament is a great reality. Peter tells us, "*Ye are an holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ*" (1 Peter 2. 5). And how wonderful is that exhortation, "*Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which He hath consecrated for us*

through the veil, that is to say, His flesh; and having an high priest over the house of God let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith" (Heb. 10.). How profoundly these words should move us! It is looked upon as a great honour to be summoned to meet the king when he holds court; but here it is God Himself who calls us to draw near to Him, and that not in relation to our need, for all that is met by the one offering of the body of Jesus, but in relation to His own glory, "that we might behold the beauty of the Lord" (Ps. 27) He delights to have us near Him because of the love He bears us, and it should be our earnest desire to answer to His wish. This is the place of honour in which the church or assembly stands, and we should look diligently lest we fail to appreciate it and fulfil it. It is our privilege to feed upon Christ, and to consider Him in His death in its various aspects, which the sacrifices that these Levites had to prepare typified, so that we have something to offer to God that is acceptable to Him when we come together.

This worship is the worship of the church or assembly. "I will declare Thy Name unto My brethren, in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto Thee," said the Lord, as the risen Leader of His church, and shall we think little of this? But where there is no fellowship there will be no worship in this sense of it. If two Christians have bitter feelings in their hearts against each other they do not worship, no matter how correct in doctrine the hymns they sing or the words they use when they come together. And those bitter feelings will not disappear from their hearts unless they have to do with God in secret about them. Hence we can see the need of true exercise of heart in the chambers and the courts,

if the service and sacrifices in the house of God are to be acceptable to Him.

"TO STAND EVERY MORNING TO THANK AND PRAISE THE LORD, AND LIKEWISE AT EVEN."

I have more to say about these Levites and their service to God, but it must be reserved for another time. One thing, however, must be noticed in this closing month of the year, which, I think, we shall find seasonable, and it is not less important than any that we could consider—their days had to be belted with praise. They had to stand up and break into songs of praise every morning, and the day had to close in like manner. Really if they knew Jehovah whom they served they could do no other, and can we, who know Him as "our Father," and "the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ"? If we are in a backslidden condition or if we are allowing burdens that should be laid at His feet to weigh our souls down, we shall wake up each morning with sighing instead of singing, and lie down at night with depression; but if we sleep with a sense of His care for us and with His peace keeping our hearts and minds, we shall wake with praise and thanksgiving. We shall stand up as those who have been strengthened and ennobled by His grace and we shall praise Him. The poet Addison surely felt that this was right and fitting when he sang:

"When all Thy mercies, O my God,  
My rising soul surveys,  
Transported with the view, I'm lost  
In wonder, love and praise"

His mercies are new to us every morning and our praise should be new as well. And if we begin our day with praise and thanksgiving and faith and hope, we must end it with thanks and

praise, for its needs and vicissitudes do but bring out the trustworthiness and the resources of our God. Extend the day to the year. We knew not what would befall us in the morning of 1930, but we began it rightly—we began it with praise and thanksgiving: we have now reached the evening of it, has God given us any reason to murmur or complain? As we forget not all His benefits are we not constrained to praise and give thanks? Or extend the day still further. Think, Christian, of the morning of your Christian life, when first you were saved by the grace of God. How brightly you sang:

“Happy day, happy day,  
When Jesus washed my sins away.”

That morning may have long since passed and the evening of your day may be drawing in, but you can still sing sweetly. You can sing the morn-

ing song and can add to it, for you have learnt much more than you knew then; the day has revealed more of the treasure that you have found in Christ, and while you do not give up the morning songs you have your evening hymns also which are sweeter if less exuberant, and surely not less triumphant.

“If here on earth the thoughts of Jesus’ love  
Lift our poor hearts this weary world above;  
If even here the taste of heavenly springs  
So cheers the spirit that the pilgrim sings:  
What will the sunshine of His presence  
prove?  
What the unmingled fulness of His love?  
What hallelujahs will His presence raise?  
What but one loud eternal burst of praise?”

He is the Alpha and Omega, the beginning of our blessing and the end and object of our praise, and unto Him of whom and by whom are all things, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen.

## THE CROSS AND THE GLORY.

THE Spirit of God delights in contrasts, and could there be a greater one than the beginning and the end of the first Epistle to the Corinthians. In chapter 1. Paul preached the cross. He would know nothing in that gay and proud city save Jesus Christ, *and Him crucified.* And this preaching was to the wise of the earth foolishness, “the foolishness of God,” and “the weakness of God,” and those who were reached by it were not the wise and mighty and noble, but the foolish and weak and base and despised. In the eyes of all who seemed to be anybody it appeared altogether despicable. But come to the end of the Epistle. Read chapter 15. 51-57: “Behold, I show 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? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

This glory could not be reached except by the cross. The cross is the tree of which this wealth of glory is the fruit. The lowest depth is answered by the highest height, and the shame and weakness by the honour and power, and we who at the beginning of the Epistle are saved by the cross of Christ, are at the end of it glorified by His power.

# THE CROSS OF CHRIST.

(A J ATKINS)

*THE cross of Christ!* We have grown so familiar with the expression that it ceases to startle us. It does not fill us with the awe and wonder that it did the disciples of early days. Let us pause, and think afresh what a conjunction is here signified; and, still more amazing, that the conjunction is an inseparable one! Christ and the cross cannot be understood apart from each other. Certainly, He is not now on the cross; He is risen from the dead; but He is still *the crucified*, for in His risen personality is found all the virtue and value of His cross. In the light of this fact, we can readily understand that apart from Christ, and the truth concerning Him—His Person, His atonement, His resurrection—the cross itself would be an insoluble enigma, indeed, an appalling moral tragedy. With Christ, it is radiant with light, pregnant with power, and glorious with hope. But we may equally say that Christ cannot be understood apart from the cross. “When ye shall have lifted up the Son of Man ye shall know that I am” The cross is the key to Christ’s Person. Ritualism worships virtually a cross without a Christ; Modernism wants practically a Christ without the cross; the believer needs and exults in *Christ and Him crucified*. For, in fact, it is this that is the essence of the gospel; as we read, “The word of the cross which is to them that perish foolishness, but to us who are saved it is the power of God” (1 Cor. 1. 18, N.T.).

What do we mean by “the cross”? Not the thing itself, for in the providence of God it perished long ago. We mean, what the cross signifies; first, in human judgment, and then, more important still, in God’s account and purpose. Actually, as we know, it was a Roman method of death, cruel

and shameful in the last degree, reserved for the basest criminals, the meanest slaves, or wretched prisoners of war. Our words “gibbet” and “the gallows,” but feebly reflect the utter shame, horror, and execration with which the cross was associated in the minds of men. And this was the death demanded by His own people when they clamoured, “Crucify Him!”

From the standpoint of Divine purpose and revelation, the cross represents generally the *death of Christ*, according to the counsel and foreknowledge of God, and “according to the Scriptures” That death is said to be “the death of the cross” (Phil. 2. 8); and the blood shed, “the blood of His cross” (Col 1. 20). The cross, therefore, embraces the central truth of *redemption* by means of propitiation.

The “cross” in the New Testament is not at all synonymous, however, with the “blood” and the “death” of Christ; it has its peculiar meaning and message. We will consider it. (1) In relation to the Lord Jesus Christ; (2) In relation to the world; (3) In relation to the Christian; and (4) In relation to Christianity.

1. The Lord, it is clear, knew perfectly well what death He would die. “He, looking on from the beginning to that end, regarded it always as being laid upon Him by a certain divine necessity, into which He entered with the full submission and acquiescence of His own will, and from the beginning knew that Calvary was the work for which He had come. . . . The divine purpose failed of its realization, and His whole mission failed of its meaning, unless He died for men.” This death was the subject of His converse on the holy mount, and His

words on the matter became more and more explicit as the event approached. "The Son of Man shall be betrayed unto the chief priests . . . and they shall deliver Him up to the Gentiles to mock and to scourge and to crucify" (Matt. 20, 18, 19) These disclosures filled His disciples with dismay and horror. To us, now, more enlightened, it is clear that in the mystery of God's plan the cross was inevitable, and that it was nothing less than *the culmination of His mission*.

In the Philippian letter we see that it was also *the limit of His obedience* to the Father: "He became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross" (Phil. 2 8). That matchless obedience is only equalled by the greatness of the stoop and sacrifice it entailed. We cannot measure it; never shall be able. We can only meditate upon it until it commands and constrains our whole being. Truly, it was a "limit" that was illimitable!

We learn, too, from Hebrews 12, 2, that the cross was also *the extent of His endurance*. Other witnesses for God had endured and suffered for their faith and hope, but He went to the bitterest end and down to the lowest depth no sorrow could be like His who "tasted death for every man."

The cross, too, was *the exhibition of His weakness*. "He was crucified through weakness . . ." (2 Cor. 13, 4). There is much involved in this. Calvary sets forth the "weakness of God that is stronger than men" (1 Cor. 1, 25). What an amazing expression, *the weakness of God!* But "thus it behoved Christ to suffer"

"By WEAKNESS and defeat  
He won the mead and crown;  
Trod all our foes beneath His feet  
By being trodden down"

The cross stands as the exemplification of a profound principle in the

ways of God, viz., that life comes out of death; glory out of suffering; joy out of sorrow; *might* out of *weakness*; and triumph out of apparent tragedy. Let us think of this. It is still true: Christ's strength is perfected only in weakness.

The cross was, moreover, thus *the ground and guarantee of His triumph*. Though seemingly it was utter defeat, actually it was real victory. "Having spoiled principalities and powers, He made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it (the cross)" (Col. 2, 15). As has been said: "The malefactor's gibbet became the victor's car." Again, in the words of Calvin, "There is no tribunal so magnificent, no show of triumph so distinguished, no chariot so elevated, as is the gibbet upon which Christ hath subdued death and the devil." For there death was "abolished," the devil "destroyed," all evil powers exposed and vanquished, and captivity led captive

Calvary is in all this the great expression of *Christ's personal perfection*. What love and loyalty to the Father; what courage, patience and lowliness; what infinitude of grace to us sinful men, there shines forth! Surely it will be our eternal theme of praise and holy wonder!

2. The cross necessarily stands related to "the world." "Now is the judgment of this world." In His wisdom God had allowed one race—Israel—to manifest, after ages of divine light and culture, the utter *helplessness* of man; and another, the Greek, man's entire *ignorance*: the one was for ever seeking righteousness and the other wisdom, and both utterly in vain; and the cross was the test of both. *Then* became apparent, as never before, both the world's impotence and ignorance, when the "princes"—the leaders—of the world crucified the Lord of glory.

And not only its impotence and ignorance, but its enmity was there demonstrated. It was sin's high-water mark. "Man's philosophy, man's power, man's religion—the Greek, the Roman, and the Jew—behold their work, the Christ of God upon a gallows!" Satan's "world," with all its pride and pretension, was thus "in the wisdom of God that is wiser than men" fully exposed by its own act in the cross; and finally condemned by God's act in that same cross!

And we need to remember that the world has not changed *essentially*, though nearly twenty centuries have rolled by. It\* has assumed a Christian garb, adopted the form of Christian manners and even appropriated the cross as a symbol of its advancement and a factor in its "evolution"! But the fact has to be faced, that it is still at heart hostile to God and to His Christ, as we may each prove for himself by exercising a little faithfulness in the confession of His Name and loyalty to His claims. In God's estimation it is still "spiritually Sodom and Egypt, *where also our Lord was crucified*" (Rev. 11. 8) As heaven looks down, the world is still shadowed by the murder of the Son of God.

3. Now what is the cross to the *believer*? Paul tells us in one grand word: "God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ . . ." (Gal. 6. 14). It is *the believer's glory and boast*. Because it is the revelation of God, the settlement of sin, the vanquishing of the devil, the channel of all blessing, and the ground of all confidence and hope. But more; it is the means by which we become identified with Christ. "If we have become identified with Christ in the likeness of His death" (Rom. 6 5, N.T.). J. N. D. has an important

note on this passage, he says: "Grown up with and so become thoroughly one." The word, according to the authorities, means to be "formed together vitally"; and the form of expression indicates that this vital union *commences* at this point. We must not by any means omit the Holy Spirit from our thoughts as to union with Christ, but it seems quite clear that our identification with Him arises from our identification with the death of Christ, set forth in our baptism, the "likeness" of it. The point to bear in mind is, that this identification is not merely judicial; it is vital.†

We start, then, as we must always do, with God's facts. "Our old man is (that is, *was*; it is a decisive, accomplished thing) *crucified with Christ*" (Rom. 6. 6). This is a fact true of every believer. Then we read, "They that are Christ's have crucified‡ the flesh with its affections (passions) and lusts" (Gal 5. 24). Here the fact with its implications has been definitely accepted by faith. Then, we read again, "I am (that is, I was and I am still) crucified with Christ, and no longer live I . . ." (Gal 2. 20). Here the accepted fact has become a part of the believer's life and experience. *He is a crucified man*. It is in this way that the cross becomes a positive principle and power in the Christian's life, forming his spiritual character; and maintained by the Holy Spirit, secures his release from the dominion of sin, and the bondage of "self," and, as we shall see, from every worldly fetter. Let us note the order. In the mind of God, and therefore to the faith of the believer, this "crucifixion"

† The writer would suggest that this verse is one of immense importance and has not always received the attention it deserves

‡ Here again the thought is of a definite accomplished act. May this not allude to our baptism?

\* We speak, of course, of Christendom.

is a thing accomplished finally and forever at Calvary. In practice, however, it is a continuous process. This is not to be deemed an ingenious piece of mysticism; it is an intensely practical spiritual matter, affecting the whole man and the whole life, working from the heart at the centre of the man to the entire circumference of his activities and relationships. Without the truth of the cross, there can be no discipleship. Indeed, it may be said, that if faith in *the blood* makes us believers, the acceptance of *the cross* makes us disciples. There can be no lasting consecration apart from crucifixion.

Had not our Lord this in mind when He spoke, as He so frequently did, of *taking up the cross* and following Him? Notice, it is "*his cross*," the disciple's cross. Not his troubles and trials; but his *cross*. The believer becomes so identified with the cross of Christ that it becomes his own cross. It is a definite voluntary thing; not something only that is laid upon us, but something we "*take up*." Touching and searching word! "And He said to them all, If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and *take up his cross daily and follow me*" (Luke 9. 23). Yes, it is to be *daily*. Can this mean ought else but that we lay it down when we go to rest at night and take it again when we awake to each fresh day?

Is it not here that so many of us fail? We know all about the "*end of the old man*." We have accepted the fact as part of the tenets of our faith; may even have accepted it truly in faith, and consented to the Holy Spirit making it a reality in our lives; but we fail daily to "*take up the cross*"; we do not cultivate the mind to "*suffer in the flesh*"; and consequently there is so little follow-

ing Christ, and so little spiritual power and joy. As has so often been said, we may engage in strenuous "*self-denial*"—the religious man likes this—without really denying self; *that* can only be through the cross. Apart from the continual application of the cross to our flesh, how easily we are enticed into pleasing ourselves, and seeking a place for self even in the sacred things of divine service.

Well has it been said: "Any relaxation of watchfulness, any weakening of self-discipline, will give the former life of self-pleasing an opportunity, of renewing its hold upon the will. . . . Our place of death with Christ and of life in Him is only maintained practically by watchfulness, self-denial, dependence, and prayer."

Does all this seem hard and difficult? Easy it will never be! But let us not fail to remember the blessed compensation of the love of Christ revealed to the soul and of sweet fellowship with Him. As has well been said, "*The cross bears those who bear the cross*"; and again, "*The cross of Christ is so sweet and profitable—such is its gain and glory—that the saints might wish it were lawful either to buy or borrow it—but 'tis a mercy that they have it brought to their hand for nothing.*" Those words are worth weighing.

All this helps us to understand, too, how the cross separates the believer radically from the world, where sin prevails, and self is catered for in every way. "God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, *by whom the world is crucified to me and I unto the world*" (Gal. 6. 14). Think of it. a reciprocal crucifixion! The world to the believer gibbeted and remaining so; and the believer to the world. What a deliverance! But, surely, it is only as Christ's love constrains us with its mighty appeal that

we shall be prepared to accept this in a practical way. "The offence"—the scandal—"of the cross" has not ceased, we may be sure.

4. Lastly, we would just mention that the cross is the *ground of reconciliation*, as regards the universe by-and-by (Col 1 20), and among believers now; "that He might reconcile both to God in one body *by the cross*, having slain the enmity thereby" (Eph 2. 16). Every element that makes for discord and division was there divinely dealt with, that Christ only might remain. Doubtless, the only power for unity is the Holy Spirit; but *He is able to work only where the cross has been*. And we suggest that it is in a defective apprehension and application of the cross that is to be found the ultimate cause of all the divisions and troubles among God's people.

The cross of Christ, then, is central and supreme in our most holy faith. So judicious a writer as Saphir has said: "Jesus Christ and Him crucified is the centre as well as the sum and substance of all Christian knowledge and preaching and experience. . . . To trust in Christ crucified, and to be made conformable unto His death, is the whole of Christianity."\*

Yes, the *cross is crucial*. It is supreme in the purpose of God, in Christianity, and in the believer's life.

\* He meant not the whole in extent, but in principle, it is all latent there.

It is the essence of the gospel, the touchstone of faith, and the infallible test of men and spirits. It stands for the method by which God always brings to pass His triumphs. It is the avenue to victory, and the only way of power. It is the masterpiece of God's wisdom. It is the solution of every problem. It is the badge of discipleship. It is "the way to the heavenlies" It is the key to the knowledge of Christ Jesus our Lord. To apprehend it is to be initiated into God's hidden wisdom. To be mastered by it is to be released from all other bondage. Whosoever falls on it is broken, and *made*; on whomsoever it falls in judgment it grinds him to powder. "Let us so boast of it, so exhibit in our lives its power, so spend ourselves in serving it, that we may justly claim from all men homage toward the Crucified. . . . *If we triumph in the cross, we shall triumph by it.*"

"Lord day by day I view Thy wondrous cross,  
The cross of Calvary,  
By faith each day I stretch my hands thereon  
And die with Thee

"I daily see a surer deeper death  
To self and sin,  
I daily see the great delivering power  
That lies therein.

"Oh ! gracious Lord, how good to take from  
Thee,  
The daily cross,  
And know I cannot separate for evermore  
Its gain and loss.

"The daily cross is daily loss of all  
That keeps from Thee;  
The daily cross is daily gain of all  
Thou art to me."

FOR learning or service everyone is placed where there is demand on him.

The boy at school is not in the easy circumstances of the home or playground. The circumstances we are placed in are the ones in which we can best learn and be most useful. The fact that there is difficulty in them proves that we are not proficient and that it is necessary that we should be subjected to circumstances which disclose to us what we require to learn, or draw from us what we can render.

# MASS PRODUCTION.

(F. B. HOLE.

## A Word of Warning.

THE church of God, though not of the world, is *in* the world, and hence there is always the tendency for it to conform to the ways of the world. The more spiritual the church, the more this tendency is neutralized; the more carnality prevails, the stronger the tendency is. This we can see illustrated in the Corinthian assembly. The state of affairs in their midst was a very sad reflection of the state of affairs in Corinth. But then the Apostle Paul had to tell them plainly that they were "yet carnal."

We are not surprised, therefore, to note that great world movements of to-day are reflected in the state of the church of God—in *our own histories*, as Christians. Were our eyes fully opened to the state of affairs, we should see in how many details this is the case, but for the moment we confine ourselves to one point.

We are living to-day in the factory age. The day of the skilled individual craftsman is over, though a few specimens survive and eke out an existence. No longer have we a Stradivarius to produce a violin, nor a Chippendale to construct furniture of distinction and originality. Indeed, we not only live in the factory age—that commenced in early Victorian years—we are in the age of mass production. Articles are turned out in their thousands or their millions. They are quite serviceable and useful, all of one pattern, made to have a life of no great length and then be scrapped in favour of something else.

We are not opponents of mass production. It looks as though it had come to stay, short of a complete collapse of our present civilization; and we are quite content to accept it as it

stands, as regards world conditions. What we are concerned about is the tendency to import this order of things into the Christian circle. So surely as we come under the commanding influence of man, or man's systems and organizations, shall we be like mass produced believers. The more we are marked by individual faith, and courage, and exercise, and waiting upon God, the more shall we be delivered from it.

The danger is particularly marked as regards *young* believers, for youth is the time when character is being formed. Here, for instance, are thousands of dear young folk, happily converted to God, as we trust, through a movement started by earnest and gifted men. Their tendency is to take on just the character of the movement. They are "bright," even "jolly" Christians, but in so many cases the individuality of faith and exercise seems to be lacking. As a result, there is a sameness and tameness about them from a Christian standpoint, which savours of mass production.

Here, again, are hundreds of equally dear young folk, whose one outstanding feature is their attachment to a movement. The movement in their case may be far removed in character from the other. They dutifully attend the meetings and imbibe a rather second-hand knowledge of truth at Bible-readings and addresses. They certainly could not be called "jolly" Christians, not even "bright" perhaps, but certainly they are far more "instructed." Once again, however, we miss any individuality of faith and exercise. It is a case also of spiritual mass production.

Many cases like unto these there

are. In mentioning the above, we merely allude to two that have come particularly under our notice. We throw stones at nobody in particular, for in this matter we are all of us more or less guilty.

Now we wish to emphasize that God's way is to deal with us individually. We are each to have our own spiritual history as under His eye. We are well aware that He has set one and the same ultimate goal before us all. We are to be "conformed to the image of His Son" (Rom. 8. 29). Still we are each different in our minds and constitution and He has a different way with us each as regards our spiritual education.

Have we all noticed how much time and attention the Lord Jesus gave to individuals when He was on earth? John's Gospel particularly records these personal interviews. The Lord's dealings with Nicodemus, the woman of Samaria, and the man blind from his birth, are specially noticeable. The first was instructed as to the *work* of God. The second led to the recognition of the *gift* of God. The third led to the knowledge of the *Son* of God.

Let us take the second of these cases in a little more detail. Turn we to John 4.

We start with the woman of Samaria in verse 7. She approaches the Lord in complete ignorance of Him. Sin, unrest, dissatisfaction, marked her.

The first words of the Lord reveal Him to her as a kindly and unprejudiced "Jew" (verse 9). This was a phenomenon sufficiently rare and unexpected to put her into the position of an *enquirer*.

Her enquiry elicited a truly astounding declaration concerning "the gift of God" and Himself the Giver. It begins to dawn upon her that here is

one, possibly "greater than our father, Jacob." On the Lord making His great announcement, she advances beyond mere enquiry and expresses a very hearty *desire* (verse 15).

Whereupon, comes the home-thrust from One who knew the full truth about her. She instantly perceived Him to be "a prophet," and under *conviction* she attempted to parry the home-thrust by a digression into religious discussion. The Lord takes occasion, by the digression she started, to deepen her conviction. She shows that not only was she wrong morally, but also wrong religiously. In fact, He so speaks as to bring before her mind the Messiah Himself. Whereupon He calmly presents Himself to her as the Messiah. Her subsequent actions indicate to us that this was the moment of her *conversion*.

For see, at once she retraces her steps to the city, leaving her water-pot behind. A testimony this, doubtless, to the fact that she quite intended to return, and only wished to rid herself for the moment of what would retard her steps. She would carry a message truly, but she had no intention of losing sight of the Messiah now she had found Him. Still it also reveals her to us as one who had already so experienced the truth of the Lord's words concerning the fountain of living water which was to be in the believer, that mere natural water was displaced and forgotten. She was a *satisfied* woman now!

Lastly, she goes forth to the men of her city in *testimony*. She can testify of the Lord's individual and special dealing with her soul. No mass production believer was she! He had told her all things that ever she did—all could be comprised in that one word, SIN! He had revealed Himself to her as the Christ of God! Her testimony

was effectual. It brought the men to experience for themselves an interview with Jesus (verse 30). It led to their belief in Him (verses 39-42).

Here, then, we see our Lord Jesus, the great Master-Workman, dealing with a solitary individual, creating her anew, and fashioning her in her thoughts and affections with inimitable skill. And her case was not the exception to the rule, but the rule. It is the way He deals with all.

Yet, alas! how often we hinder. He does not walk in Judæa, Galilee, and Samaria, to-day. He is seated in the heavens. Would we experience His Master-touch? Then must we seek His presence in prayer and in quiet meditation over His Word. We must allow Him to address Himself to us, with a readiness of mind to let His Word govern us, and alter and amend our ways. Merely to go with the crowd, even the believing crowd, with whom we happen to be most closely associated, and conform to what is "the done thing" in such a circle, is just the way to hinder.

Let us earnestly seek that personal touch that comes from the Lord Himself. Let us cultivate acquaintance of heart with Him. This is not something reserved for those called to places of special importance in His service. Every believer is to have these dealings with his Lord, as we see in Acts 14. 23. On their outward journey the apostles had done the work of the evangelist. Now on the return journey they took up the work of the pastor in confirming the souls of the disciples. They ordained elders in each church, but having done so, they commended the disciples, not to these elders, as we might have expected, but "to the Lord, on whom they believed."

They said in effect, "You have not believed in us, who brought you the gospel, nor on these who have just been chosen to exercise rule and care in your midst, but on *the Lord*. Having started by personal faith in Him, go forward in personal faith-contact with Him." Were the apostles amongst us to-day, they would assuredly exhort us similarly, and the more urgently so, seeing that the outward order and unity of the church is so broken up.

In regard to many things we rightly enough have to declare that there is no royal road that leads to Him. But there is a royal road that leads into this. The name of it is **OBEDIENCE**. Not just doing things that happen to be right because they are commonly done in circles where we move, but that obedience which is the fruit of an intelligent understanding of the Lord's will, on the one hand, and of love, on the other.

Then shall we have some experience of that of which the Lord spoke when He said, "He that hath My commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth Me: and he that loveth Me shall be loved of My Father, and I will love him, and will manifest Myself to him" (John 14. 21).

And again: "If a man love Me, he will keep My words: and My Father will love him, and We will come unto him, and make Our abode with him" (John 14. 23).

Love and obedience on our part will be followed by these individual manifestations and dealings on the part of the Father and the Son. This will stamp us with a spiritual individuality far removed from what is possible under the mass production order of things.

## YOUR OPPORTUNITIES.

To a young Christian desiring to serve the Lord.

[F the love of Christ is real to you, you will have a true care and solicitude for others who belong to Him. This loving care for others will make demands upon you, but you will meet them gladly. You will be ready to deny yourself and make sacrifices for those who are dear to Christ, not because they are kind to you, but because they belong to Him.

The love of Christ being in your heart will bring you into this most delightful sphere of service, for love must serve, and those that are nearest to Christ, the members of His body, will be your first thought.

To cherish this care for others will promote your own growth and blessing, it is really the love of Christ flowing in and through you, and nothing could enlarge your soul more than this.

Do not think because you are young and uninstructed that in this service you can have no part. You are able to attend meetings for the ministry of the Word; pray that you may profit by what you hear, not for yourself only, but that you may carry what you have got to others who are not so privileged

and share it with them. This is fellowship, having things in common, and as you do this you will prove how true are the words, "There is that that scattereth and yet increaseth"

Many members of the body of Christ are sick and infirm, and may not often be cheered by the visit of a fellow-Christian. You could find out some of these and take your hymn-book with you as well as your Bible. A song of praise might start again some melody to the Lord in a heart that had ceased to sing. And if you are observant you might see the opportunity for some act of loving service that would mean much to the sufferer, and you would have the joy of knowing that the Lord takes notice of all that is done for His own. His word "inasmuch," is full of encouragement.

Pray that you may learn the great truth that Jesus is not only your Lord and Saviour, but your Head. Meditate upon Ephesians 4 1-16. Learn that the whole body must draw its nourishment from its Head, and that you have your part in this for the good of the whole body, for you have your part in that of which verse 16 speaks.

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## DEPENDENCE ON GOD.

CHRISTIANS often depend on God only partially, while leaning at the same time on some mercy of His hand to them, as children walk by the assistance of go-carts. To walk without any seen thing to lean on is a new and peculiar path, and as a child pauses and fears ere he attempts it, though desiring it, and glad when he has succeeded in ever so small a way, so with us; we see we ought to depend on God, we feel we may, we pause, we fear, we attempt, we succeed, we are glad! God's sufficiency is known to our souls. The first time a child walks by himself is a new era in his life, and though the mere beginning of it may be forgotten, the fact and nature of the act is known to him all his life long; and if it be interrupted, either by accident or infirmity, he feels it sadly.

When we have learned to walk in simple dependence on God we can never happily substitute anything else for it. If failure or loss of communion deprive us of it for a season, there is always the craving of the new nature to return to an order of strength so normal to it, and so natural to us as being children of God.

# ARE WE AFRAID?

(L. R.

"Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid."—John 14. 27.

"Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same; that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage" Hebrews 2. 14, 15.

WHEN the Lord Jesus was about to leave His disciples, He spoke to them often about joy. His desire was that His joy should remain in them, and their joy should be full (John 15. 11). They might indeed sorrow because He was absent, but, nevertheless, their hearts should rejoice. He knew that Peter would be crucified, that James would be killed with the sword, and that John would suffer long years of exile at Patmos; yet in His prayer to His Father (John 17. 13), He desires that they may have His joy fulfilled in themselves. Now He is gone on high, but He would still fill the hearts of His saints with joy.

But there are many things by which this joy is hindered. One of these is the fear of death, which overshadows and clouds many a heart. This is especially true of those who are advanced in years, who know that in the ordinary course of events they will soon be passing out of this world, and though they hardly acknowledge it to themselves, they have the feeling expressed by a little child, "I am frightened to go, but I shall not be frightened when I get there."

May the Lord use the few words following, to comfort such and to "help their joy."

The fear of death is quite a natural feeling. The love of life has been implanted in us by the Creator, otherwise life in some circumstances could hardly be preserved. Then, also, the world in which we live has become a familiar place. Life-long habits are formed, and unconsciously we may

have thought it would all continue and ourselves with it. There are all the dear surroundings of home, too, and it hardly seems possible that our chair will soon be empty, and that we shall have gone to some unknown and untried country.

Perhaps one reason for this fear is a lack of apprehension of the ground on which the believer stands before God, a failure to grasp the greatness of God's salvation, and the perfection of the work accomplished by the Lord Jesus Christ. It is sometimes said, "I thought I was converted and I have always considered myself a Christian, but now I am not quite sure, I hope all will be well with me." But the Lord has some better thing for us than such a faltering hope as this, else why did He triumph over death and over him that had the power of death, at such a cost? (Heb. 2. 14, 15.) How satisfying is the assurance of His Word! "He that heareth My word and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death unto life" (John 5. 24) And again: "Ye were not redeemed with corruptible things as silver and gold . . . but with the precious blood of Christ" (1 Peter 1. 18, 19). A beloved saint lay dying and the verse he kept by his bedside was, "The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin" (1 John 1. 7). How simple just to take the trouble to the Lord Himself, and say:

"Just as I am without one plea,  
But that Thy blood was shed for me,  
And that Thou bidst me come to Thee—  
O Lamb of God, I come!"

And those who come find indeed that He can and does turn the "shadow of death into the morning" (Amos 5. 8).

Let us seek, with His help, to gather up a few helpful thoughts about it all. First, it is very likely that we shall not die. We look for the Lord, for His speedy return to raise those who sleep, and to change the living. When the Samaritan who had befriended the man fallen among thieves was going away, he took out two pence and gave them to the host at the inn—two pence only—two days' wages, the day he went away and the day he came back. The day He went away is long passed, for "one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day" (2 Peter 3. 8); the day in which He is coming back hastens to eventide, any moment we may hear His voice bidding us rise to meet Him in the air. Oh, to be listening, and watching, and with this hope burning brightly in our hearts, occupying until He come.

The Lord loves His saints so dearly and He knows just the right moment to call them to be with Him, and He deals with them so tenderly that very few know anything about their dying hour. Here and there, one and another may be conscious to the end, and then He seems to reveal Himself to them in such a wonderful way that their joy and triumph abound; but much more often He gently hushes them to sleep here and awakes them there where He is, so that they never see death. What rest of heart, then, to leave ourselves, in life or death, in His hands, those hands of love once pierced for us on Calvary's tree.

It has been suggested that if we knew more about heaven it would seem easier to leave all that is here. But the one thing above all others, which is said, is surely sufficient: we

shall be "with the Lord" (1 Thess. 4. 17); "With Christ which is far better" (Phil. 1. 23); "Absent from the body, present with the Lord" (2 Cor. 5. 8). When the Lord was here on earth His disciples were with Him; we see Him caring for them, teaching them, guiding them, using them to do His errands, and filling their hearts with gladness; and **BECAUSE HE DOES NOT CHANGE** we can think of Him in the midst of His disciples there in heaven, and rejoice in the prospect of being so near Him. Some of us can recall brief seasons of joy, even here, when His nearness so filled our hearts that there was room for nothing and none beside; the joy was unspeakable and full of glory, and was surely a little foretaste of what it will be to dwell for ever with Him. And in that fair land whither He is gone there is no pain, no sorrow, no bereavement, no weeping, only joy unhindered and light undimmed.

We may compare our life here to the day's labour which is man's appointed lot—"Man goeth forth to his labour until the evening" (Ps. 104. 23)—but as the hours of labour draw to a close, how delightful is the thought of home! The tired man's pulse quickens as he thinks of his home, all that he loves best is there, and there he rests from his toil; and did not the Lord say, "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" (John 14. 2), and when He says to His tired servant, "Come home," who would not gladly arise and go?

"There shall all clouds depart  
The wilderness shall cease;  
And sweetly shall each gladdened heart  
Enjoy eternal peace."

It is often urged that it all seems so unreal and intangible, but faith

takes firm hold of the Word of God. True, there is nothing the eye can see, nothing the mind of man can take account of, but faith says, "I BELIEVE GOD." Neither our long years of Christian life and service, nor all our long studies and experiences of divine things, can ever take the place of the faith of a little child. To the end of our earthly path we need this, and the help of the Holy Spirit whose mission it is to take of the things of Christ and show them unto us (John 16. 15).

It must not be forgotten that the enemy of our souls is ever ready to harass the weak and sad, but greater is He who is with us, than all that can be against us. Moreover, we are the heirs of a long entail of sin and suffering, and there are conditions in which the burden of darkness and depression is as much a part of the illness as bodily pain, to be endured with submission and patience in the same way, but even so, the Lord can and does give the sense that in spite of the darkness, "GOD IS THERE," and it is with the saint as with one of old who drew near to "the thick darkness where God was" (Exod. 20. 21).

There is in Gloucestershire, not far from Painswick, a green, sweet spot, which is locally known as Paradise. Some years ago a little girl on the lonely road thither, went up to a

gentleman going in the same direction with the artless question, "Please, sir, are you going to Paradise?" At first he thought she was enquiring as to his eternal destiny, but he remembered and answered that he was on the way there. Then she asked, "Please, sir, may I go with you?" In the kindness of his heart he took her little hand in his and kept her at his side until Paradise was safely reached. All her fear vanished and with his protection she felt safe and happy.

Beloved, this is a very simple parable. Oh! to put our hand in His along the way, and if He says to one of His own, "To-day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise" (Luke 23. 43), just to answer most gladly, "Lord, I come." May we covet so to walk with Him here, that the suited ending to the path may be to be with Him there. Let us remember that whatever troubles us, whatever makes us afraid, the Lord Himself is our unfailing resource. He can do so much in such a little time. We know how often He has stooped down to take the trouble out of what troubles us, so that though the circumstances are unchanged, the trouble is taken out of them. We know how often He has allayed our fears and given instead His peace, and we can assure our hearts that He will be ever the same, because, "Having loved His own which were in the world, He loves them unto the end" (John 13. 1).

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**YOUR** soul must be for itself before God. We are not saved in the multitude, but saved individually; and in all our life, the more simply we have to do with God Himself, for ourselves, as if there were none other, the more fitted we shall be for fellowship with others, and to serve the ends for which God has united us together.

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**THE** mistake with many saints in the present day is that they think because they can describe a truth that therefore they have learnt it. But when a truth is really accepted the conscience demands that there should be accordance with it.

# THE EIGHT SIGNS OF JOHN'S GOSPEL.

## Sign III. The Paralytic. Read Chapter 5.

JAMES GREEN.

THE first sign teaches the fulness of supply that the presence of the Son of God brings; the second shows the power of His Word by which the soul is delivered from the fear of death; the next two will show how the new life is energized and sustained.

The scene of the third sign is laid in Jerusalem. It is the time of a feast, not called as in Leviticus 22. a feast of the Lord, but of the Jews. John is emphatic in his references to the Jew; some sixty-four times he uses the term, whilst Matthew uses it only five, Mark six, and Luke five times. Eternal life is the antithesis of the legal system, and in these last days, when Christianity has been corrupted by Jewish principles and pagan additions, the writings of the beloved apostle are of all-importance for those who seek to live in the power of life.

The feast in John 5. is a mere lifeless form devoid of power; all the more significant is this if it was the time of Passover, as it probably was. The mention of the sheep market would lend colour to this conclusion, but whether it was so, or as some think the feast of Purim which took place a month earlier, the 15th of the last month of the Jewish year, the incident stands at the beginning of the second year of our Lord's ministry. This was the year of His rejection, as the first year was that of His manifestation to Israel.

The surroundings are typical of the law of commandments contained in ordinances, and the weakness and unprofitableness thereof are clearly seen. In order to take advantage of the provision there was a demand for power on the part of him who came, and it was just this which in the case before us was lacking.

Picture the scene. Bethesda, its pool, and its five porches filled with a sightless, lame, utterly helpless multitude of which the man who had so long lain there was a sample; expectancy of Divine help, but no power to take advantage of that which was provided; the Sabbath day but no rest. And in the midst of this scene of human helplessness stands One who alone has power that He can impart to others, the Son whom the Father has sent that He might work the works of God.

Bethesda, meaning "house of mercy," shows us the powerlessness of the law to remedy man's condition. If one could get into the pool at the moment of its troubling, there was healing, no matter what the disease, but what can impotence do?

The lesson of the sign is concentrated on the man who lies in the presence of a remedy which is of no avail to him, and for which he finds no help in others. The pool itself contained no power of healing, for like the law as first given its waters were only a sign of death and condemnation. Grace, however, had made it a house of mercy, the angelic interference being a witness of this. Such mercy was provided in the writing of the second tables of the law, still the law, but at the same time a proclamation of a God gracious and merciful. This was a provision that faith might find refuge in, but after all this mercy was but a troubling of the principle of law by a contradictory principle, which left the condemning power of the law unaltered, and power still being needed to fulfil its requirement, "This do and thou shalt live."

Under pure law no soul could have lived, but by means of a system of outward symbolic ordinances connected

with a mercy-seat, provision had been made by which man's sinful condition could be covered, sins passed over through the forbearance of God, but no removal of them, and in consequence a remembrance made of them year by year continually. This was as far as the thought of an atonement went (Heb. *kaphar*, to cover). But this brought no real rest, and the lesson that the sign of the paralytic teaches, is that no power for walk could be obtained under the old covenant because of the weakness of the flesh. The law was given under angelic control, but the power exercised although great, was powerless to impart strength or give life to those beneath its sway.

How reminiscent are the thirty-eight years of the wilderness journey, during which Israel was tested and her utter helplessness made manifest in the presence of mercy.

"Five porches." Five is the number of man's capacity, his ability to do, like the five fingers of his hand for work, or the five toes of his foot for walk, in both of which his limitations are evident. Some have thought the five porches symbolical of the law contained in the Pentateuch, and with good reason; for as another has said, "The law was given to the end that it might bring to light the sick, not that it might raise them up. These sick men might have suffered their sickness more secretly in their own homes, if those five porches had never existed. They were brought out in the eyes of all in those porches, but the porches did not heal them."

The Lord passes by the pool altogether. The man seems to think that it is the means the Lord will use, but no, He acts entirely from Himself and by His word, "Rise, take up thy bed, and walk." Instantly, power and conscious victory are evident, and he is seen carrying that which before carried him.

"The same day was the Sabbath." "I gave them my sabbaths, to be a sign" (Ezek. 20. 12), Jehovah had said, a witness to Israel's responsibility to keep the old covenant of the law, and which being set aside, indicated the loss of the promised blessing which depended upon obedience to the covenant. Henceforth all was of grace, but this aroused the enmity of the Jew, the religious man of the flesh, who, having no conscience of need, refuses the grace which leaves him without ability to boast, even in the outward observance of the law, as before God.

The man casts the whole responsibility of his action in carrying his bed upon Jesus, and the Lord accepts it, asserting that it was no time for God to rest in the presence of the condition of sin and want in which the man lay. "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work." But such a statement involved the acceptance of His person, and this they would not have.

The progress of the truth indicated in these signs is plainly seen, for the Lord now proceeds to speak more definitely of the Father than He had hitherto done. It is the Father who works, the Father who directs, the Father who loves the Son, the Father who has given all authority of judgment to Him, the Father who raises the dead and quickens, the Father who has life in Himself, and unites the Son in manhood, with Him in this, yea, the Father who has sent the Son and bears witness of Him.

But in order that the soul should practically be controlled by this manifestation of the Father, it is needful that all creature dependence should be abandoned, and resource found alone in the power and grace of the Son, who in all that He does is the expression of the Father from whom He has come.

The sign of the paralytic points the lesson of Romans, chapters 6. and 7.,

where the soul learns through deep experience, its own powerlessness to serve God as it desires, and the inability of the law to help in this respect is vividly portrayed. The man in John 5. willed to be made whole, but this only caused him distress, for neither in himself nor in any other, nor in the Sabbath, sign of the best that the law could do, was a cure available. To will was present with him, but how to perform that which was good he found not. Nevertheless, the moment of his weakness is the occasion of his deliverance. Wretched man that he was, he found, not in another man as powerless as himself, but in the Son whom the Father had sent, the power which could and would deliver. Happy is he who discovers in Christ the power which rises above the domination of the law of sin and death, and is set free in the working of the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus. Until this is received there can be no onward progress in a walk that is pleasing to God, no living in the conscious joy of life eternal. We have noticed before that the teaching of the cross is fundamental to the whole of John's Gospel, and the allusion to the thirty-eight years fitly recalls the figurative incident of the brazen serpent. For thirty-eight years Israel had wandered about the wilderness in their powerlessness to do good or make any forward progress. A typical lesson is provided in this, that they that are in the flesh cannot please God. Then at last they are brought face to face with death, the poison of the serpent within them, an evil for which there was no human remedy. In God, however, there was provision for this emergency, and in the serpent of brass they beheld the image of that which was working death in them. The way of living was by looking, not at Sinai's burning mount, but at the serpent lifted up. A look, not at law, but at grace, not at a ministry

of condemnation, but at a ministry of righteousness in type, by which life was given.

The spiritual reality is more wonderful than the type, 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 eternal life" (John 3. 14, 15). "For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh (just like the impotent man at Bethesda's pool), God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: that the righteousness of the law (its holy requirement, namely to love God, and in that love to do the will of God) might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit" (Rom. 8. 3, 4).

The whole outlook of Israel was changed after their deliverance by the serpent of brass. Upward from the valley they go from the springing well, onwards with their faces towards the sunrising, until they reach the mountain heights of Pisgah (Num. 21.). So in the teaching with which our Lord followed the sign He had given in John 5. He projects the outlook to the coming hour, when those who during this present time hear the voice of the Son of God, shall come forth to the resurrection of life, the full display in glory of that which is already possessed and enjoyed. A deep and serious warning is added for those who refuse God's last word spoken by His Son, for whom there remains but the resurrection of judgment which will disclose the eternal consequences of sin. Between these two resurrections stands the "Verily, verily," of the Son of God, "He that heareth My Word, and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment; but is passed from death unto life."

## ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

### Is this period the Night or Day?

"We were reading 2 Peter 1 15-21, and in connection with the latter clause of verse 19, 'Unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the Day Star arise in your hearts,' and during the discussion it was stated that we, as Christians, were passing through the night, whilst the world were having their day. The parable of the Ten Virgins was referred to, where at midnight the cry arose, 'Behold the Bridegroom cometh' (Matt 25), and also to the fact that as Christians we were exhorted to work, 'for the night cometh when no man can work' Opinions were divided on the question as to its being the world's day and our night. Any help you may give us on this subject will be greatly appreciated."—YORKS.

[IN one sense it is true that this is "man's day." J. N. Darby in his New Translation, translates 1 Corinthians 4. 3 in this way: "It is the very smallest matter that I be examined of you or of *man's day*." It is the period in which man is being permitted to develop his powers to the full and to judge everything by his own standard, only to prove his own folly and impotence in contrast to Christ, the wisdom and power of God. But apart from this it is the night. When the Lord came He was the Light of the World; it was then the day (John 9. 4, 5; 11. 9), but He was cast out and the night set in. For the world the darkness will not pass until the Sun of Righteousness arises with healing in His wings (Mal. 4. 2); for the Christian the Day or Morning Star is already shining (2 Peter 1. 19; Rev. 22. 16)—Christ is both.

Take a Scripture like Philippians 2. 15, for instance. It is because it is the night that we are said to shine as lights in the world. The moon is the figure used, or the planets; they appear when the sun is hidden but they have no light in themselves; if they shine it is because they are facing the sun and they catch and reflect its light. So Christians are said to be light in the Lord (Eph. 5. 8). So that while it is the night, they are not in the darkness, for they are children of the light and children of the day; they are not of the night, nor of the darkness (1 Thess. 5. 5).

This puts upon us who know the Lord a great responsibility; we are to walk as children of the light (Eph. 5. 8) and if we have fallen asleep like the world and become indifferent to the Lord's claims and glory and our responsibility, the call comes, "Wake up, thou that sleepest, and rise up from among the dead, and Christ shall shine on thee" (Eph. 5. 14, N.T.). If Christ shines on us we shall give out the light that we receive, as the moon reflects the sun's glory when nothing intervenes to obscure it.

The world sleeps as to the claims and glories of Christ because it is in the darkness, but the exhortation comes to us, "Let us not sleep as do others, but let us watch and be sober. For they that sleep, sleep in the night; and they that be drunken, are drunken in the night. But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breast-plate of faith and love, and for an helmet, the hope of salvation (1 Thess. 5. 6-8).

As to the passage in question in 2 Peter 1. The prophetic word, that is, the Old Testament Scriptures, are a lamp to guide us to Christ. And these Scriptures were made surer—they were confirmed to the apostles by the glory of Christ. We ought to prize them, for they direct our attention to Christ and His glory, and guide us through this dark or squalid place, as the word really is, the world. The end is that Christ, as the Day Star may be already shining in our hearts. The prophetic

word foretold His coming; we can say we know that word is true, for He has come, and we know this because He has enlightened us, we know Him as the light of life, and we do not walk in darkness.

So that while it is the night of the Lord's absence, the Christians are in the light, and their privilege and responsibility is to shed that light in the

darkness. The church has largely forgotten this and has become merged in the world, so that the Lord has to say to it, "If thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee" (Rev. 3. 3). Almost the identical language that is used as to the Lord's coming to the world (see Matt. 24. 43; 1 Thess. 5. 2, 3, 4; Rev. 16. 15).

## The Right Effect of the Truth.

"There is something about which I am troubled, and wonder if you could help as to it. For years past we have had teaching as to the place of privilege enjoyed by saints in this dispensation, as being before God in all the infinite acceptability of the Lord Jesus Christ, as is often said, according to God's thoughts of Him, and not only so, but as being brought home to the Father, as sons. Now one would not weaken this on any account, but do you not feel that 'spiritual things are made known to spiritual persons by spiritual means,' and that it is dishonouring to the Lord and damaging to our souls if we have these blessed truths in terms only, rather as matters of doctrinal knowledge than of soul experience? Can these things ever be apprehended apart from deep soul exercise and self-judgment? Surely the Holy Spirit will lead to this that Christ alone is exalted instead of self, and the test of the REALITY of our acquaintance with Him and with truth will be that a deep humility is produced instead of a measure of spiritual pride."—CORRESPONDENT.

WE are sure that there is a great need for deep heart-searching about this question raised by "Correspondent." It is very easy for those who are well acquainted with the doctrines of grace to be satisfied with this knowledge while their manner of life remains unaffected by it. This is a snare into which a large proportion of intelligent Christians have fallen. Like the church at Ephesus they know that they have been "raised up and made to sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus" (Eph. 2. 6), they know that grace has done this for them, but like these same Ephesians, that knowledge has not kept them from leaving their first love, and they are fallen Christians (Rev. 2. 1-7). He was a wise servant of the Lord who warned his hearers against trafficking in unfelt truth, i.e., talking glibly about truth known in the head and not felt in the soul. Nothing could be further from the mind of the Holy Spirit for us than this, and nothing

could be more damaging to our own spiritual good. When God saved us by His grace it was not to make theologians of us, but to have us imitators of Himself as dear children. Grace has reached us, not to fill us with spiritual pride and make us look down upon others, but to teach us how to live soberly, righteously and godly (Titus 2.). The truth has come to us that we might obey it (Gal. 3.), and the glory of the Lord has been revealed to us that, beholding it, we might be transformed into the same image (2 Cor. 3.).

Only have we been rightly affected by the truth in that measure in which self has been displaced to make room for Christ. The spirit of the Baptist, when he said, "He must increase, but I must decrease," is the only right spirit for the one who is growing by the knowledge of God. Indeed, we must go beyond this to-day and take the place that Paul took when he said, "I

am crucified with Christ ; nevertheless I live ; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me ; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me" (Gal. 2. 20). This is the Spirit's work within us. It may be the result of a long process in which we learn by painful experience that the flesh within us will only have so much of the truth of God as it can turn to its own exaltation, after the manner of the Corinthians ; or it may come as a sudden flash as the truth of the cross bursts upon our souls and we realize the love that led the Son of God to stoop to the shame of it for us. It is this that completely displaces self and makes Christ pre-eminent. We do greatly need to be exercised in our hearts as to this.

There are other tests. If the truth that I profess to know does not enlarge my heart to think in affection and with faith of all the saints, and if it does not increase my desires to see all men

saved, it is held in terms only and has done not good but harm. If it has not made me separate from the world and less earthly-minded, so that I have set my affections on things above where Christ sitteth, it has done very little for me. If, as I have acquired more truth, I have not developed in that love of which 1 Corinthians 13. speaks ; and if I am not kinder to others, less censorious of them and more ready to rejoice in all the good I see in them, then I have gained nothing by my knowledge, and it is certainly time for me to seek the presence of the Lord in brokenness of heart and confession of my pride and sin. It is our desire for ourselves, our readers, and for all the saints, that the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ may be upon us all as we learn the truth, and that we all may become more like Him.

"Like Him in patience, meekness, love,  
In every beauteous grace ;  
From glory unto glory changed,  
Till they behold His face."

## MY PURPOSE.

MORN, noon and night,  
Through days o'ercast and bright  
My purpose still is one :  
I have one end in view,  
Daily one thing I do,  
Until my object's won.

Behind my back I fling,  
Like an unvalued thing.  
My former self and ways ;  
And reaching forward far,  
I seek the things that are  
Beyond time's lagging days.

I have the prize in view,  
Whose worth no words can show ;  
This prize I seek alone :  
All things are dung and dross,  
All things I count but loss,  
For Jesus fully known.

The day declineth fast,  
At noon its hours are past,  
Its lustre waneth now ;  
That other heavenly day,  
With its enduring ray,  
Shall soon light up my brow

Oh, may I follow still—  
Faith's pilgrimage fulfil—  
With steps both sure and fleet !  
The longed-for goal I see :  
Jesus waits there for me.  
Haste ! haste ! my weary feet.