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*“SANCTIFY THEM THROUGH THY TRUTH :
THY WORD IS TRUTH”*

John xvii.

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Scripture Truth.

VOL. XXIII.

“Speaking the Truth in Love.”—*Eph.* 4. 15.

No. 1.

SALT IN A NEW CRUSE.

(J. T. MAWSON.)

“He tarried at Jericho . . . and the men of the city said unto Elisha, Behold, I pray thee, the situation of this city is pleasant, as my lord seeth : but THE WATER IS NAUGHT, AND THE GROUND BARREN. And he said, Bring me a new cruse, and put salt therein. And they brought it to him. And he went forth unto the spring of the waters, and cast the salt in there, and said, Thus saith the Lord, I have healed these waters ; there shall not be from thence any more death or barren land. So the waters were healed unto this day, according to the saying of Elisha which he spake.”—2 Kings 2. 18-22.

[T was a new year, and a happy one for Jericho, when Elisha went and abode there. Before then it had been THE CITY OF DISAPPOINTMENT, for the situation of it was pleasant, but—and it was the mayor of the city that made the confession—the water was naught and the ground barren. From the time that the city had been founded on the ruins of its predecessor, a curse had been on it, and its waters were tainted at the spring of them, and the land about it yielded only thorns for the labour of its people. It had not always been like that, for at one time it had been called “the city of the palm trees,” but that was a matter of ancient history ; and yet, with that fact on record and the feeling that there was the possibility of better things in it, for its situation was pleasant, the inhabitants had hoped and laboured—but all in vain. It is more than likely that they had reached the point of despair when Elisha, the man of God, paid his memorable visit to them. And “he tarried there,” and I am sure I am not far from the truth when I say that he did so because he desired to bless the city, and he dwelt among them until they were humble enough and honest enough to tell him the predicament they were in.

Some of my readers have dwelt in the city of Jericho for a long time. Expectation and disappointment have alternated in their experience. How eagerly they have hoped for better things, how sincerely they have vowed and resolved, how earnestly they have reached out after a better and more fruitful life than they have known, but they have missed it. Yet they feel that this ought not to be. Is not man’s chief end to glorify God and to enjoy Him for ever, and to be supremely happy and a blessing to others in doing it ? Then why are the waters of their lives so bitter, and the land of it always barren ? Let us see if we can discover the reason and find the remedy.

First—and please do not be afraid of a little doctrine, for we cannot understand the situation without it—when man was created in the image and likeness of God, he was unquestionably “the city of the palm trees” ; fresh and beautiful and with unimpaired powers he was capable of bringing forth fruit for God, and of being a channel of blessing to all. But he fell from that high estate. Just as the city of Jericho set itself in defiance against God’s will, so Adam deliberately and wilfully

turned away from God's commandment, and in that day of folly he fell as surely as did Jericho.

It was only natural that the sons of Adam should have endeavoured to recover their lost position and powers, but they have endeavoured without God, and their labours have been in vain. The sentence of death lies upon the race, as it lay upon Hiel, the Bethelite, who rebuilt Jericho and lost his eldest son when he laid the foundation and his youngest when he finished the gates of it, his whole family under death—"for by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned."

In Paul's masterly Letter to the Christians in Rome, he stresses this great doctrine in chapter 5., but when he comes to chapter 7., he shows how it works out in the life of the individual who has been awakened to what is right and desires to be what he feels God would have him be. What a history it is! What struggles! How poignant is the experience! We can almost hear the gasps and sobs of the man's soul as he is learning the bitter lesson that "the water is naught, and the land barren," until at last, realizing that his efforts are all defeated and his struggles are useless, he cries, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" And with such an experience as this in their souls and such a cry upon their lips, some of my readers have closed up the old year and begun the new.

Now a word as to Elisha, so rightly called the man of God. He was a great contrast to Elijah. Elijah represented the law and pressed its demands upon the people. He came to tell them that the Lord, He is God! and to urge His just claims, and to tell them what they

ought to be and do, and because they did not yield to God His rights and were not what they ought to be, condemnation and judgment always accompanied his ministry among them. But Elisha came not demanding, but giving. He shewed out the goodness of God to a wretched people. He was a dispenser of grace and mercy, and all sorts of people were blest by him; nor did he turn away any who came to him acknowledging their need. There is no greater figure in Old Testament history than Elisha, for he is pre-eminently the one who foreshadowed our Lord Jesus Christ, in His present glorious place as the Administrator of the grace of God. He is the great Deliverer, whose compassions reach down to men in their miseries and whose grace can free them, and, having freed them, is sufficient to make them more than conquerors through Him.

There was no hope for Israel in Elijah's ministry, and there is no hope in the law for us. It is "weak through the flesh," declares Paul, who knew it by experience. It cannot make us what we ought to be. It cannot change the barren land or sweeten the bitter waters; it can only expose and show up the barrenness and the bitterness and condemn us. It has done so already: we lie under its sentence if we have invoked its aid. It is when we have reached that point in our soul history, that we are ready for the truth of Elisha and the salt in the new cruse.

I like the man who spoke for the delegation that waited on the prophet; there was a directness and brevity about his speech. He made no apology for their condition and did not hide it; he stated the case in a few blunt words and waited. He did not even say what they would like the prophet to do. He felt that it was enough to tell him the need. It was enough, and his confidence in Elisha was met by an instant

answer of grace and blessing. And, mark it well, it was Jericho, the one cursed city in the land, that got the blessing. Elijah had been to that city and left it as he found it, and the inhabitants of it do not seem to have cared to appeal to him; but while Elisha tarried among them they must have been encouraged to approach him by his words and ways. He was the man, surely, to whom they could go, for he seemed so accessible, so sympathetic, so attractive. And thus did he foreshadow our Lord Jesus Christ. Those who have been to Him in their distress can all bear witness to the fact that He is gracious.

There are no more blessed words in the Bible than those in John 1. 14-17: "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us . . . full of grace and truth . . . and of His fulness have all we received, and grace for (upon) grace. For the law came by Moses, but grace and truth came by (subsist in) Jesus Christ." How wonderful was the love that brought Him down to us and to tarry with us in the barren lives and world in which we lived, not to demand from us and force the claims of the law upon us, or to condemn us for our iniquities and sins, but to save us. "For God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved." He came in grace; He was full of it. He came to give; we have no need to listen to another talking of Him in order to learn this, for He has told us Himself, "If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of Him, and He would have given thee living water" (John 4. 10). "Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto Me, and drink. He that believeth on Me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living

water" (John 7. 37, 38). He came with the new cruse, which was grace. The truth in the old cruse, which was the law, could only condemn us, for the blessings of which it did speak could only be gained and held by absolute and continual obedience to its commands, and its curse rested upon all who continued not in all things that were written in it to do them; but the truth in the new cruse brought nothing but blessing, for it was the declaration that God is love, and that His love was bent upon blessing men.

No illustration, not even those that are divinely given, can nearly equal the truth, and these Old Testament stories were but the shadows of good things to come and not the very image of them. The good things have come now, the substance has appeared and that substance is Christ. He has done for us what Elisha never could have done for those men of Jericho, for "He hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, cursed is everyone that hangeth on a tree." How great was the love that moved Him thus! and as we meditate on such a statement of the truth as this, do not we feel constrained to say, "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." And again, "For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh," and this happened that there might be no more "death or barren land," but that "the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit" (Rom. 8.).

Yes, the truth (which is salt indeed) as to what we are and what God is, has been brought to us in surpassing grace. It is "the grace of God that brings salvation"; and as it comes into our souls we realize our own barrenness, and how utterly beyond all hope of improvement the flesh is, for in it good does not dwell, and we turn from it and cast ourselves completely upon Christ. Then the truth that we have often read in the Word, but never received into our souls, becomes at last living to us and in us. "The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus makes us free from the law of sin and death" (Rom. 8.). And now deliverance from barrenness and death lies in cultivating the flesh no more, but in honestly confessing that there is no good thing in it, and in turning to Christ who bore its condemnation for us when He was made a sacrifice for sin. We know that He was raised again from the dead, for it is part of the truth of the gospel which we have believed, and for us this means justification from all our offences (Rom. 4. 25). It is grace that has justified us from the guilty past, but upon this absolutely sure and righteous basis, so that the question of our guilt will never be raised again. And that same grace transfers us from the old Adam life, that lies under condemnation and death and could bring forth no fruit, to Christ, our risen Saviour, and it is thus that where sin abounded, grace does much more abound (Rom. 5. 20), that now being made free from sin, and having become

the servants of God, we might have our fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life (Rom. 6. 22).

But that is not all, for we read, "It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us" (Rom. 8. 34). He died that we might be justified; He lives and intercedes that we might live as justified people. But it is all Himself—the truth is in Jesus. It has come to us in wonderful grace and it is this that changes everything and enables us to close the chapter of earnest resolutions and bitter disappointments and open the new one of perfect rest in our Lord Jesus Christ and fruitfulness to God, His Father, and blessing to others.

And the city of Jericho became "the city of the palm trees" once more (2 Chron. 28. 15), and there the naked were clothed and the hungry were fed, and the feeble were helped, and there long-separated brethren were united again and the people were obedient to the Word of God. So it shall be with everyone of us who turn wholly to the Lord and cleave to Him with purpose of heart. The grace that began with our salvation will not fail us; it is sufficient for our whole lives in every phase of them. And while it teaches us to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present evil world, it assures us of a new year (Exod. 12.) of liberty, fruitfulness, and blessing, and such a year must be as happy as it is new.

Let those who serve the Lord, and this surely all christians should do, consider this: "The Interpreter had him into a private room, and Christian saw a picture hang up against the wall; and this was the fashion of it. It had eyes lifted up to heaven; the best of books was in its hand; the law of truth was written upon its lips; the world was behind its back; it stood as if it pleaded with men, and a crown of gold did hang over its head."—*Pilgrim's Progress*.

THE FATHER AND THE SHEEP.

John 10.

WHEN we realize that the Father's heart is the source of all the love and blessing that has reached us, it does win and enlarge our hearts. We rejoice in the love that led the Good Shepherd to lay down His life for us, but as we read and meditate upon this great fact told us in John 10., we must not dissociate it from the prior fact that this commandment He received from His Father. This opened up a wonderful and entirely new range of blessing for us. We were the objects of the Father's care and love, He gave us to His Son (verse 29), and gave commandment to His Son to lay down His life for us and to take it again, because we could not be saved from "the wolf" by any other way. How wonderful must be the interest of the Father and the Son in us; no wonder that the hands of both are stretched forth to hold us in everlasting security.

But our security is not all, nor would it satisfy the Good Shepherd or the Father. He would lead us into a precious intimacy with Himself, for this is surely what His words mean, "I know My sheep and am known of

Mine." And here our Authorized Version spoils the meaning of this by the full stop between verses 14 and 15. The passage should read, "I am the Good Shepherd, and know Mine, and Mine know Me, even as the Father knoweth Me, and I know the Father, and My life I lay down for the sheep." The knowledge is of the same character as that which existed between the Father and the Son when the Son was on earth. Love, life, relationship, intelligence, all enter into it, and it is in this mutual knowledge that the goodness of the Shepherd is most blessedly known. Let these two statements stand together: "I am the Good Shepherd, the Good Shepherd lays down His life for the sheep," and "I am the Good Shepherd, and know those that are Mine, and am known of those that are Mine, as the Father knows Me, and I know the Father and I lay down My life for the sheep." Thus has He delivered His sheep from death, with the end in view that He might lead them into the knowledge of the Father and Himself, which is the more abundant life.

GOD THE SOURCE OF OUR BLESSING.

IF there had not been the desire to bless in the heart of God, the Father and the Son could have gone on together in the excellent glory without us. But there was that desire in God's heart. The Son came forth to carry it out; the only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, hath declared Him. In answer to the love of God we are saved, but in answer to the love of Christ we have been given to Him, to be His body and His bride, for He loved the church and gave Himself for it, and He will present it to Himself a glorious church,

without spot or wrinkle or any such thing. But we must begin with the heart of God. He delighted to bless, and His Son only could do it effectually. He delights in His own works, and how great His works are, but I must not lose the sense in my heart that He delights to bless me, so that I am not only to be in heaven as an appendage to the glory of His Son, though through grace I shall be that, for I am a member of His body; but I am also there for my own deep, eternal blessing and God's heart has decreed it for me.

WHAT THINK YE OF CHRIST ?

WE have never had a doubt but that the truth as to the Person of our Lord Jesus Christ is the central truth of Scripture. If we are right as to this and hold the truth in faith and love, we shall not go far wrong as to any part of the truth, but if we are astray as to this we are right in nothing. Let this go, and we lose the true revelation of God to man, as well as the manifestation of what man is according to God's thought. Upon the truth as to the Person of Christ there depends redemption, resurrection, and coming glory, the establishment of righteousness and the final overthrow of all evil. The following paragraphs are reprinted from papers which have appeared in *Scripture Truth*, and we publish them again to bring freshly before our minds the glories of the One who is God's Beloved and ours.

The Creator.

In John 1. 1 the WORD was the Creator: "In the beginning was the Word . . . and all things were made by Him." In Hebrews 1. 1, 2 the SON was the Word, the Creator: "God has spoken to us in the Person of the Son, by whom also He made the worlds." In Colossians 1. it was THE IMAGE OF THE INVISIBLE GOD, who made all things. And to whom do these great names belong, and this great power by which the worlds were made? To JESUS. Certainly these names were His before He became the Man Jesus Christ on earth; but He has not given them up, that could not be, and now He is inseparably Man and God, and Head of all things. Moreover, He went down into death for the church, and rose again from the dead, and is the Head of His body, the church, also. If any one denies that He is the eternal Son of God, or

denies that He was eternally in relationship with the Godhead as the Word, then they deny the glory of the Person of Christ, and for themselves have destroyed it.

(G. J. Stewart.)

The Light of the World.

He could say of Himself that He was the "Light of the World," excluding all other. Light—self-witnessing, as light is: so that rejection of it proved that men loved darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil. And this light was not merely that of His sayings, a message that He brought, a revelation that was committed to Him, though there was that also: but HE WAS HIMSELF THE LIGHT, as He says in the exactest possible way defining this: "As long as I am in the world, I am the Light of the world" (John 9. 5).

"God is light": and here is One who claims to be so absolutely that, that when a disciple expressed a desire to have the Father shown to him, the Lord rebuked him with the words, "Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known ME, Philip? he that hath seen Me hath seen the Father" (John 14. 9).

Nothing could be more absolute in statement that as to God Himself, morally there was none else to see—there was no one back of Him, who was "the brightness," or, as in the Revised Version, "the effulgence of (God's) glory, the exact image of His Person" (Heb. 1. 3); "the Image of the invisible God" (Col. 1. 15).

(Grant.)

John 1.

In the first chapter of John there is clearly stated the facts of the Deity

and Incarnation of the Lord and the purpose of it.

"In the beginning was the Word" (verse 1).

His eternal existence or being.

"And the Word was with God" (verse 1).

His distinct personality.

"And the Word was God" (verse 1).

His essential and personal deity.

"The same was in the beginning with God" (verse 2).

His eternal co-existence with God, the Father.

"All things were made by Him; and without Him was not anything made that hath been made" (verse 3).

His universal creative energy.

"In Him was life; and the life was the light of men" (verse 4).

His inherent vitality and the enlightening power resulting for men.

"And the Word became flesh" (verse 14).

His real and personal incarnation.

"And dwelt among us . . . full of grace and truth" (verse 14).

His suitability to man's need, without the sacrifice of God's glory.

"And we beheld His glory, glory as of an only begotten with the Father" (verse 14).

His personal glory in manifesting and upholding the Father's glory.

"The only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father" (verse 18).

His eternal and unchanging relationship of love and oneness of nature with the Father.

"Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world" (verse 29).

His ability to deal with sin in His death and by His power remove it for God's glory.

"The Same is He which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost" (verse 33).

His present glory as the risen Head binding all believers to Himself as members of His body.

Hereafter "ye shall see the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man" (verse 51).

His glory as Man with universal dominion.

God and Man.

In Philippians 2. 6-8, it is the One who was in the form of God who descended to the death on the cross. In Psalm 102. it is the One whose strength was weakened in the way, and whose days were shortened, to whom the work of creation and the change of all things is ascribed. The One who seems to despair of life is the Creator. It was the same Jesus that went back to the Father who had come from Him. He was the living bread that came down from heaven, which He says was His flesh to be given for the life of the world. And when they were upset by such a statement, He says: "What and if ye shall see the Son of Man ascend up where He was before." None of these statements could have been made concerning Him had He not been God, and none could have been said had He not been Man.

He was here in manhood, seen to be a Man, "a Man that was called Jesus," come of a woman, born into this world. He says to Pilate: "To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world"; and to the Jews who were determined to take His life: "Ye seek to kill Me, a Man that hath told you the truth." And in the same chapter: "Before Abraham was I am." What a glorious mingling of the divine and human. "A Man among men, yet in all that He said and did *Godhead* comes to light."

“ There see the Godhead glory
Shine thro’ the human veil,
And willing hear the story
Of love that’s come to heal.

“ We cling to Thee in weakness,
The manger and the cross ;
We gaze upon Thy meekness,
Thro’ suffering, pain, and loss.”

He was a Man here before the eyes of men ; Man in the whole texture of His bodily and spiritual being, but God and Man in the complex and inscrutable unity of His adorable person ; as truly God as Man ; nothing lacking as to Godhead, for its fulness was there ; and nothing lacking as to Manhood, for perfection characterized Him in whatever way He may be viewed. How the human and divine were from the moment of the conception of this glorious Person formed in unity and mysteriously blended, so that the two were not separate existences, but interwoven and combined in the most perfect oneness, no one knows but He who could say of Him : “ *The Man that is my Fellow* ” (Zech. 13. 7).
(*J. Boyd.*)

God Manifest in the Flesh.

When the Lord came into manhood, or, to use the exact words of Scripture, when “ the Word became flesh ” (John 1. 14, N.T.), He did not cease to be, as to His person, what He always was before. We read, “ the Word was God,” and this was as true of Him when He tabernacled among us—a man in circumstances of poverty and trial—as ever it was in those mysterious ages of eternity. As He lay in the helplessness of babehood in the manger of Bethlehem His great name was Emmanuel—God with us (Matt. 1. 23). He was then the One WHOSE GOINGS FORTH HAVE BEEN OF OLD, FROM THE DAYS OF ETERNITY (Micah 5. 2, margin). “ He was in

the world, and **THE WORLD WAS MADE BY HIM**, and the world knew Him not ” (John 1. 10).

In John’s Gospel the fact of His Deity is definitely stated and is specially in evidence, but it cannot be hidden away in any of the Gospels. Who but the Creator could have fed the multitudes when they hungered ; commanded the fish for the nets of His servants ; subdued the tempest into immediate and complete obedience ; raised up the dead to life and strength ? Who but only God could read the unspoken thought ; relieve the heart of its burden of sin, and present Himself to all men as an object for faith ? These things which Jesus did proved that He was God, though at the same time actually a man with human sympathies and feelings. He suffered hunger and weariness ; felt deeply the slights and ingratitude of men ; kept the law which God had given of old to men and made it glorious ; fulfilled the relationship in which man stood to God without failure and to God’s delight, in spite of all the attempts of the devil to turn Him from it, and was, as the Scripture says, tempted in all points like as we are, sin apart (Heb. 4. 15).

In resurrection also the fact of His Deity is strikingly affirmed ; for when He appeared to His disciples a Man with wounded hands and side, Thomas confessed Him as his LORD and his GOD ; and the Lord accepted his homage without rebuke. Now He has ascended to the glory of God, and **HE IS MAN UPON THE THRONE OF GOD**. Yet the glory of His person is still kept clearly before us, for it is written, “ In Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily ” (Col. 2. 9).

He ever was—and will never cease to be—over all, “ God blessed for

ever," one in the Trinity with the Father and Holy Ghost, yet He became Man in order to fulfil the counsels of God and die for us, and He never will cease to be Man, for it is by Him, the Man, Christ Jesus, that all God's counsels will be fulfilled

(J. T. Mawson.)

Hebrews 1.

"God hath spoken by His Son"

He is the One by whom God has come into full and final expression.

"Whom He hath appointed Heir of all things."

The wide universe, filled with the glory of that which He has expressed, is to be His possession

"By whom also He made the worlds."

He was the One, at the advent of time, by whom all things were created.

"Who being the brightness of His glory."

He exists as the radiance of the uncreated splendour of the eternal God.

"And the express image of His Person."

He is the accurate and most exact resemblance of the eternal, infinite, and ineffable substance of God

"And upholding all things by the word of His power."

He sustains and controls by His omnipotent Word the universe that He created, and which He is to fill with the glory that He has declared.

"When He had by Himself purged our sins."

The oblation that He has offered to God for our sins is complete and of infinite value, since that offering was Himself, and was offered according to the glory of His own person.

"Sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on High."

He has assumed His rightful place in the position of honour and power—at the right hand of the eternal Majesty.

IT was Peter who said, 'I must shortly put off this my tabernacle, even as our Lord Jesus Christ hath showed me,' who could also say, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ . . . who hath begotten us again to A LIVING HOPE." It was Paul who said, "I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand," who could also say, "Our Saviour Jesus Christ, hath abolished death, and HATH BROUGHT LIFE AND IMMORTALITY TO LIGHT through the gospel." How the hearts of these men glowed with the joy and triumph of the life that death cannot touch, and what a small and even welcome thing death seemed to them

CAN you trust God for eternal blessing and yet doubt Him as to to-morrow's necessities? This is strange. You know that it is His will that you should be conformed to His Son in glory, but has He no will as to your earthly life and its needs? He surely has His will and His way for you in everything. It has been said that His will begins in heaven and reaches down to the kitchen, and faith recognizes this and doubts not.

THE JEWS!

(A. J. POLLOCK.)

THE Jews, a people without a country! Palestine, a country without a people! Here we have something without parallel in the history of the world. How is it that the Jews have not been tracelessly absorbed in the countries whither they have been scattered? No ordinary answer will satisfy this question. In no natural way can this phenomenon be accounted for. It is the finger of God! How is it that the land has not been absorbed by its conquerors, and all trace of its ancient people lost? Again there is no answer on natural grounds. It is the finger of God!

The Jews are an ancient people, a nation with a proud history long before the Babylonish Empire reared its proud head. Yet the Babylonish Empire has ceased to be, leaving no trace of its former glory but a few ruins. The Medo-Persian Empire has disappeared. The Grecian Empire has ceased. The wonderful Roman Empire is no more, though one day it will be revived. How is it that all these empires have disappeared, and yet the Jew, older than them all, is with us to-day? Driven from country to country, the object of dislike, too often the subject of bitter persecution, the Jews are more numerous than ever. They are more vigorous than in the palmy days of King Solomon.

How is it that the Jewish nation is not absorbed among the nations, in which they find themselves strangers and sojourners? The answer can only be found in the abhorrence in which the Gentile nations hold them because of the murder of their Messiah, whom Christendom, at least nominally, reverences as the Saviour of mankind.

The Jew on the other hand, cordially dislikes the Gentile, especially as the Jew's bitter hatred of Christ leads him

to hate all those who revere Him as a divine Person and the promised Messiah of God. So much for the preservation of the people as distinct from the nations.

How, then, is the land preserved for the people? The answer comes from a quarter very unexpected to all but the student of Scripture. A friend told me that years ago when he was a boy his school teacher told him that the Bible was not reliable, for it stated that the Holy Land was "flowing with milk and honey," whereas, as a matter of fact, it was practically a desert. This was true then, for the writer heard a traveller in Palestine describe how he rode from six in the morning till six at night, never seeing one human habitation, and as far as the eye could reach nothing meeting his gaze but thistles as high as his horse's head. But the teacher only showed his ignorance of the Scriptures, and of the climatic variations of the country.

The reason why the land "flowing with milk and honey" became barren and sterile is found in Deuteronomy II. 17. God threatened the people that if they did not keep His commandments the latter rain would be withdrawn, and the land reduced to sterility. The threat was carried out, and for centuries there was no latter rain in Palestine. It is in this way that the land has been preserved for the people. There was no inducement to the Turk, the conqueror of the land for centuries, to populate a land that was practically desert, and unable to support its inhabitants. If the teacher had not been so ignorant he might have discovered that the Bible is reliable.

But God promised to Abraham, the progenitor of the Jewish race, that in his seed all the nations of the earth should be blessed. This promise will

be carried out to the letter. Let us see how things are shaping to this end.

There is a wonderful verse in Isaiah 65. 24. "*And it shall come to pass, that BEFORE they call, I will answer: and while they are speaking, I will hear.*" This Scripture is being fulfilled under our very eyes. The Jew is unaware how God is preparing the answer to their bitter importunate cry of the future day, when as a nation they will realize their awful sin in the refusal of their Messiah and the murder of the Son of God.

A most significant part of the fulfilment of this promise is the gradual return of the latter rain after having ceased for centuries. It may be explained that there are two rainy seasons in Palestine, the early rain and the latter rain. There are weeks of sunny rainless days between these seasons, and the land is absolutely dependent on them for successful agriculture. In 1869-70 the rainfall was 12½ in. There was then no latter rain. The mean rainfall of Palestine, now the latter rain has returned, is over 26 in., considerably higher than that of London or Berlin. Surely this is the finger of God! No human hand could encompass this.

Then, again, see how the tide of emigration to Palestine has set in. When Sir Moses Montefiore, the great Jewish philanthropist, visited Palestine in 1827, he found only 500 Jews living in that land in abject poverty. In 1926 it was computed there were 180,000 Jews resident in Palestine, and the numbers have increased since then.

The advent of the latter rain encouraged agriculture, and with that the return of the Jew to their own land. Under the régime of the Turk this was slow work, yet before the Great War there were about fifty agricultural colonies, some of them of great size,

employing hundreds of settlers. Thus was fulfilled Isaiah's prophecy of over 2600 years ago, that the day would come when the land should be planted with pleasant plants, and set with strange (that is *foreign*) slips. The writer has a wine bottle label pasted in his Bible against this striking prophecy of Isaiah 17. 10. It reads:

PALESTINE.

GUARANTEED TO BE THE PRODUCTION
OF VINES,
TRANSPLANTED FROM PORTUGAL TO
PALESTINE.

One colony—Rishon le Zion—planted 400,000 fruit trees and 3,000,000 vine slips imported from Spain. Thus startlingly do we see prophecy fulfilled under our very eyes.

In 1896 the great Zionist movement began for the founding of a Jewish state in the Holy Land. True the movement is infidel and antichristian in character, but this is just what the Scriptures lead us to expect.

In 1914 the Great War broke out. Turkey blindly put herself on the side of Germany, invaded Egypt, which resulted in the British Expedition, which led to the capture of Jerusalem and the end of Turkish tyranny in that distressed land.

This is surely part of the answer that God is preparing for His ancient people, for the celebrated Balfour declaration in November, 1917, clearly stated that "The British Government view with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, and will use their best endeavours for the achievement of this purpose." Thus the way was opened for the return of the Jew to his own land.

Towns are springing up. The Jews are going back in such numbers that immigration has to be regulated accord-

ing as the opening up of the country agriculturally and commercially calls for fresh settlers. The vast chemical deposits of the Dead Sea are to be exploited. Good roads, railways, motor buses, electric light, the revival of the pure Hebrew language, in fulfilment of Zephaniah 3. 9—all tell the tale of changed conditions.

Can the Christian be indifferent? If God's hand is in this, and it is most undoubtedly, the Christian must be deeply interested.

But matters are taking a turn on other than material lines. Ethically and spiritually there is a great change coming over the Jew in his attitude to Christ. In many quarters there is no longer the rabid intolerance that existed for so many centuries. The Jewish schools in Palestine have begun to teach the scholars "The Life of Jesus." One day recently the Haifa Bible Depot sold over fifty Hebrew New Testaments and fifteen Greek New Testaments to Jewish lads. When asked why Greek New Testaments were required, they replied, "We must study these matters in the original." There is a strong tendency to look upon Christ as their nation's most wonderful prophet and to become acquainted with His life.

It is conceded that in this there is probably not more than what is ethical and national. The movement is not spiritual, as meaning the deep inward work of the Spirit of God leading to a true recognition of the Lord, carrying with it eternal blessing. That day will yet come as prophesied by Zechariah, but things are undoubtedly leading up to this.

This change of attitude has taken a very remarkable form. It is proposed to revive the ancient Jewish Sanhedrim at Jerusalem, and its first consideration is to be the examination of the trial and death of the Lord Jesus Christ,

with a view to coming to a definite judgment as to whether He was rightly or wrongly condemned. If the verdict is that He was rightly condemned, they hope the evidence will be of such a nature as to convince the world of its justice, and lift the opprobrium the Jewish nation has been resting under in the minds of the Gentile world. On the other hand, if the verdict is that He was unjustly condemned, then it is proposed to confess the sin to God and the world.

Two men stand out prominently in connection with this movement. In Denver, Col., U.S.A., there lives a Jewish lawyer of outstanding ability, Solomon Shwayder by name, and he is devoting all his time to the great task of reviving the Jewish Sanhedrim for the purpose named. He is in touch with the leading Jewish Rabbis and Authorities in the world. He is a rich man, and has established an office, employing a secretary to cope with the work he is doing in this connection.

With him is closely connected a Gentile Christian, Dr. David L. Cooper, of Los Angeles, California, who has written a book, entitled, *The Eternal God revealing Himself to Suffering Israel and to Lost Humanity*. In it he quotes the astounding fact of twenty-six leading Jewish Authorities, writing and speaking in praise of the person and character of Christ. A hundred years ago that name would have been scorned. What a significant change! This does not necessarily mean the acknowledgment of Christ as Saviour. On the contrary, the Scriptures lead us to expect that the Jew will go back to his own land in unbelief, and not till the nation is purified by the terrible three and a half years of the Great Tribulation will it really awake to the acknowledgment of Christ as their Messiah.

How graphically and beautifully this is prophesied in the Scriptures: "I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplication: and they shall look upon Me whom they have pierced, and 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 first-born" (Zech. 12. 10). Then shall the great day of atonement be kept rightly and truly for the first time since the death of Christ; not as anticipative as in the Old Testament; but as commemorative of that wonderful redemptive death on Calvary's cross, through which alone they will come into blessing.

In reconstituting the Sanhedrim it is proposed tentatively that it shall consist of twenty-three Rabbis of great learning and piety, twenty-four scholars and scientists of outstanding attainments, and twenty-four business men, hard-headed, practical, possessed of keen analytical brains—seventy-one members in all.

It is proposed to spend three years in the careful choice of the members of the Sanhedrim; four years in the collecting of evidence from leading representative Christian men, as well as from Jews of position and attainments; and four to six years to prepare the results that shall be published to the world.

It may be pointed out that this means a very considerable stretch of time, and the question may be asked, Would it not be possible to come to a deliberate judgment in this matter in as many days, or even hours, as they propose to take in years?

This would be so if it were a personal decision, and it is hoped and believed

that it will be so in the case of many who will take this matter in hand, and that their inquiry will end in their personal salvation.

But it must be borne in mind that this is an attempt to bring the Jewish nation and the Christian world at large to one mind in a matter in which there has been sharp and bitter divergence for centuries.

A little reflection will convince the reader that the time proposed is none too long for the task that lies before them. To write to Rabbis and leading Authorities all over the world, to get their replies, to answer their inquiries, will take considerable time. Many approached will decline the honour of serving on the Sanhedrim; others will have to be approached. Anyone with experience of organization will understand something of what this great scheme will involve.

Further, the fresh study of the subject and the putting together of evidence, will take lengthened periods of time, especially with busy men whose hours are filled up in attending to onerous duties, for the subject is an intensely serious one, and will need careful re-search and thought.

Surely this is a most significant sign of the times, and one of the deepest interest to the Christian to-day. We shall follow its development with deepest concern.

A recent writer speaks of the next ten years with great apprehension, and well he may. The world is surely and swiftly drifting down the rapids. Soon the headlong plunge must be made. The signs of the times, the things Scripture leads us to expect, are multiplying on every hand. The coming of the Lord is very, very nigh. How welcome will be His summoning shout!

WHAT IMPRESSED ME.

(CONTRIBUTED)₂

The Yea and Amen.

"All the promises of God in Him are yea."—2 Corinthians 1. 20.

WHAT impressed me most at a recent meeting for the ministry of the Word, was the remark made about this statement. It was, Where will you go for blessing? If you want the forgiveness of sins, can you get it at Sinai? If you go to the law of Moses for it, it can only answer, Nay; but if you go to Christ for it, He will answer, Yea. The law says, It is not

in me, go to Christ; the ancient sacrifices and all the ordinances of the Jews' religion say, It is not in us, go to Christ. But this and every other blessing is in Christ. If you go to Him, He will say, Yea, to your cry of need, "for all the promises of God in Him are Yea, and in Him Amen, unto the glory of God by us."

If God be for Us.

"If God be for us, who can be against us?"—Romans 8. 31.

"Present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service." Romans 12. 1.

It was nothing new that another speaker pressed upon us, as he spoke from these Scriptures, but the truth came with unction and freshness to me: "God is for us." How convincingly and conclusively He has proved it. He could not have done more, for "He spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all." And that greatest of all gifts is the pledge of every other gift that God can give us *with Him*. Yes, this great truth came full of encouragement and freshness to

us, and prepared us to listen to what followed. In chapter 12. God is saying, I am for you, *now I want you to be for Me*. I delivered up My Son for you; I want you to deliver up your bodies to Me. Such a sacrifice is *acceptable to God*, and when and as we make it we prove that His will is acceptable, as well as good and perfect. May we all be impressed by these two things, the Revelation and the Response—God is for us and we must be for Him.

Christ Died for Us.

"Scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."—Romans 5. 7, 8.

What power there is in these statements that seem so simple and elementary. I felt this when one speaker called our attention to these words: "It is not likely," he said, "that anyone would die for a righteous man; for a good man, one who was a friend and kind and generous, some might die, perhaps, for human love can go that length, and greater love than this no man hath, *but who will die for one who is neither righteous nor good?*

Who will die for one who has no merit, who has nothing to commend him, who is but a sinner, a guilty wretch? Christ, He will, and He has, blessed be His Name, and in His death for sinners God's love is commended to us. When we were enemies, with no desire for either God or His love, then He loved us, and then Christ died for us to prove it. So are we reconciled to God by the death of His Son."

WHERE CHRIST IS SEEN ON EARTH.

IS Christ my Head in heaven, and am I a member of His body on the earth? Yes, this is the truth that is revealed in the simplest language in the Word. I know that *He is my Saviour*, that He died for my sins to deliver me from their penalty and to bring me to God, He is Jesus to me, and I rejoice in what I have learnt as to the meaning of that name. *He is my Lord* also, for He has been raised up from the dead and exalted at the right hand of God to have authority over me, and I desire to bow heart and knees before Him in the acknowledgment of His rights over me. He is the Lord Jesus in whom having believed I have not only a Saviour but the Dispenser of the grace of God, which grace is enough for all my need as long as need shall last. But He is also the Christ, *He is my Head in heaven*. And this means that I am united to Him who is the Object of my heart, and to whom I owe everything, who loves me with a love that passeth knowledge. This is true of every Christian, and yet many do not understand it. What, think you, ought to be the great object of the members of Christ's body on the earth? It is clear from Colossians 3. that it ought to be to reproduce Christ on earth. No man could demonstrate what was in his mind apart from his body; his body is the vehicle by which he gives expression to his thoughts. It is even so with Christ and His body. He has one

way by which He shows forth His gracious characteristics, His thoughts and nature and ways, and it is through His members upon earth. They have been united to Him by the Holy Ghost, and if true-hearted they will not be satisfied if they are not standing perfect and complete in this, which is the will of God for them.

You might gather together a mass of Christians with one purpose, but it is not the number of Christians but the relationship in which each stands to Christ which qualifies each to be an atom in setting forth Christ, because each is in closest union with Him, being really part of Himself, as He said to Saul of Tarsus, "Why persecutest thou Me?" It is a truth that we need to ponder, a fact that should humble us greatly and yet make us rejoice. It is plain that the evil flesh and the things that belong to the "old man" as given in Colossians 3. 5-9 could have no place in it, and being members of the body of Christ it is equally plain that these must be mortified—put to death. It is also plain that what is incumbent upon each as a member of Christ is set forth in verses 12-17, for there Christ Himself is portrayed—Christ the Head in the members of His body. In carrying out the truth each one would decrease and be greatly diminished as to self, but what deep joy and satisfaction there would be in saying, "Not I, but Christ."

A LIVING faith is a growing faith. Growth is a necessity of life; and when life is eternal life, there is here no limit of it reached as in natural growth. We grow on until we reach eternity. Important it is to realize this—salvation is so often simply looked at as the end itself which is to be reached, instead of the beginning, that which starts us upon the road. It is Christ in glory who is the end before us, and if we are really travellers, the light of that glory will be shining upon us more and more fully all the way.

UNTO THE PERFECT DAY.

(A. J. ATKINS.)

"In them that perish . . . the savour of death unto death ; and to the other (them that are saved) the savour of LIFE UNTO LIFE."—2 Corinthians 2. 16.

"(In the gospel) is the righteousness of God revealed FROM FAITH TO FAITH."—Romans 1. 17.

"Of His fulness have all we received and GRACE FOR GRACE."—John 1. 16.

"Changed into the same image FROM GLORY TO GLORY."—2 Corinthians 3. 18.

"Like . . . Moses, whom the Lord knew FACE TO FACE."—Deuteronomy 34. 10 ; cp. Numbers 14. 14.

"They go from STRENGTH TO STRENGTH."—Psalm 84. 7.

"The inward man is renewed DAY BY DAY."—2 Corinthians 4. 16.

THESE passages, it will be observed, each contain a similar form of expression ; and although they are taken from various parts of Scripture and are not strictly connected exegetically, when put together they present certain aspects of truth intimately related to the "life that pleases God," and which we may perhaps specially consider as having a message for us appropriate to the beginning of another year.

The first passage brings before us that by means of which all Christian blessing has reached us—we mean the gospel of Christ. The metaphor in the immediate context is taken from the triumphal procession of a victorious general, such as was often witnessed in Rome of old. At the head of the procession were set the persons who were to be spared ; and at the rear those who were doomed to death. To the former of these the incense that was waved on such occasions was a symbol of present deliverance and future safety ; to the latter it was a token of present condemnation and a premonition of approaching death. So is it with the gospel, which may indeed be regarded as Christ's triumphal march and the celebration of His glorious victory at Calvary. The essence of the gospel is that it is a "sweet savour of Christ to God" ; its issues are the division of men into two classes,

"lost" and "saved" ; and its alternatives, death and life, each having an eternal bearing. The point we would now particularly stress is that if we are numbered among the "saved" ones, we owe it to the sovereign mercy of God alone. To be saved, is to have been spared from a deserved and dreadful doom in order to be witnesses to the grace and power of the Conqueror ! It is to be "vessels of mercy." God be praised, if in His infinite mercy the gospel has been to us a savour of life ! And if "of life," it is "of life unto life" ; that is, may we not say, of a life spared unto a new life bestowed and realized : eternal life ! "As many as were ordained to eternal life" (Acts 13. 48), conveys a similar thought.

Our salvation, then, is to be attributed altogether to God's sovereign grace and mercy. It is, nevertheless, a moral result, provided for us on moral grounds, even by the cross of Calvary ; offered to us on moral terms in the gospel, that is to say, "for the obedience of faith" ; and received and enjoyed in a moral way, that is, by faith. Salvation is, indeed, a miracle of God's mercy ; but it is neither magical nor mechanical. God's methods with man, whether in grace or in judgment, are always moral in character : and hence the vital importance of faith in the Christian system.

This is borne out in the second

passage quoted. "The righteousness of God"—the first and representative blessing of the gospel—"is revealed from faith to faith." Again, we read, "By grace are ye saved through faith." Faith is the indispensable condition of all blessing. It is our moral response to God's Word, a response involving the assent of the mind; the acknowledgment of the conscience; the consent of the heart; and, above all, the submission of the will to God. Faith is the point in the gospel plan where God's sovereignty and man's responsibility meet, for it is our act and attitude Godwards; but it is His "gift." For the fact is, that though as men we have the capacity and are responsible to believe God, our whole nature is so utterly ruined that, apart from His own work and "gift," we are unable even to believe Him! All blessing, then, is from faith to faith, that is, on the principle of faith, and such that only faith can receive. And this principle characterizes the whole of the life to which the gospel leads: God's just ones *live* by faith. As old Matthew Henry helpfully says: "Faith is all in all, both in the beginning and progress of the Christian life. It is not from faith to works, as if faith put us in a justified state, and then works preserved and maintained us in it; but it is all along from faith to faith . . . it is increasing, continuing, persevering faith, faith pressing forward and getting ground of unbelief."

There is a simple and profound reason for this. "It is by faith that it might be by grace." Faith is the only principle that is consistent with God's grace on the one hand, and with our need on the other. Grace and faith are thus inseparably connected. Faith gives God His place; and it puts us in ours. Grace is God giving; faith is our receiving; grace is God

undertaking; faith is our taking. Can we not each say with hearts overflowing with gratitude and praise as a thousand memories of His great goodness crowd to our minds, "Of His fulness have we all received, and *grace for grace*"?

What abundance of provision is indicated in this last expression! It is literally, "*grace instead of grace*"; that is, one grace succeeding another like wave upon wave on the sea shore. And the source is also the measure: "His fulness." The only limit is that set by our small capacity and lack of willingness to "receive." And let us not forget that to "receive" means to accept, to appropriate, to *take*; it has an active sense. Such "receiving" is most pleasing to God. Another has well said, "They bring God most glory who get from Him most grace."

Yes, "we are complete in Him." In Him is all grace, all measure of grace, and every kind of grace; redeeming grace and delivering grace, preserving grace, restraining grace, constraining grace, sanctifying grace; grace for us, grace with us, grace in us; grace for worship, grace for service, grace to speak, and grace to be silent; grace to act and grace to wait; grace to live, and (if need be) grace to die. May the heavenly music and power of the last word of the New Testament be with us throughout this year, if the Lord tarry, "the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ." "Grace upon grace," surely, just describes it.

As we "receive" this abundance of grace, and live on it continually, we become less and less self-conscious, and more and more occupied with Christ from whom the grace comes. The life that we have lives by its objects; and faith is thus a formative principle of Christian character. Every act of look-

ing away from ourselves to God and to the Lord means spiritual advance : and while it is our manifold need that oftentimes stirs us to do this (and is meant to), the heart comes increasingly to know, value, and love Him for His own sake ; and to "consider Him" with great delight. And to be engaged with Him, in His life, His death, His resurrection, and especially in His glory, is the Christian's privilege and necessity. "We all looking on the glory of the Lord with unveiled face are transformed according to the same image *from glory to glory*, even as by the Lord the Spirit" (2 Cor. 3. 18). What an absorbing Object for our hearts ! What a blessed means of transformation ! What a privilege to live in the day of unveiled vision ! What spiritual possibilities are indicated in "from glory to glory"—"from one degree of radiant glory to another" ! What a glorious Pattern—"according to the same image" ! Yes, we may be sure that Christianity is not the "imitation of Christ," but the "assimilation of Christ." We are formed by our Object : and "our spiritual qualities are reflections." Our Object is none other than God's beloved Son, Christ Jesus our Lord !

All these aspects of truth, viz., life, faith, grace, and glory, suppose and produce that real fellowship with God which has been the privilege of saints of all time, although it is our privilege as Christians to know Him in the fulness of Christian revelation. What a thought that God desires intimacy with us ! Surely this is the end of all "the truth" we learn, that we should enjoy personal fellowship with Him. Of what use is it if it does not lead to this ? How hollow is familiarity with sacred things if it does not result in this ! Is it not our weakness that so much of our religious life is second-hand, as it were ? Not that we can

afford to despise any of the means available for our help ; but what we really possess we have learned *from God*. "They shall be all taught of God." Someone has said that we have truth in spiritual possession only as we have communion with God about it.

This intimate fellowship is sweetly expressed in the word : "whom the Lord knew *face to face*." That the Lord is "seen face to face" by his people is one of His glories (Num. 14. 14). Of old it was the privilege of a few elect souls like Moses ; now it is the privilege of all His children. The Spirit is given to us for this very purpose. Let us be content with nothing short of a "face to face" knowledge of the Father and the Son, to whom we have in grace been brought so near. We shall have this in the measure in which we truly desire it, and are prepared to put away everything inconsistent with that holy presence. "Then shall we know if we follow on to know the Lord."

In what we have been considering lies the secret of being enabled to go "from *strength to strength*." Physically it is the reverse with us, as we know. The outward man perishes ; as age advances the vital powers begin to fail, and weariness is often felt. And this physical infirmity may all too easily affect the spirit ; but we cannot really afford to allow our spirits to become weary. If our faces are towards "Zion" ; if in our hearts are the "highways" thereto (Ps. 84. 5) ; if we are drawing our supplies from an unseen, unfailing source ; if we have learned the secret of waiting upon God "face to face," then it will not be so with us spiritually, but we shall go "from strength to strength." "We grow as we advance if heaven be our goal. If we spend our strength in

God's ways we find it increases." As another has said: "We go from strength to strength; in the experience of strength all through, even while this strength leaves us in ourselves the consciousness of perfect weakness—and it will and it ought, for so is it plain that the strength is of God; and the *tenderness of divine love gains on us continually*: the power for us is also the power *over us*."

This brings us to the seventh and last of our passages. The tenderness of divine love takes perfect knowledge of us, and adapts itself continually to our needs. God would have us simple, happy, care-free children. He knoweth our frame; and our human frailty is not hid from Him. And in His providential mercy He has broken up our lives into those little spans we call days, each a small lifetime in itself. We awake in the morning to the newborn day with fresh hopes and fresh trust and to those unfailing compassions that are new every morning. We go through the day in the will of God, seeking to walk with God and to practice what we know in an easily compassed span, measured at the most by a few hours. And then, when the day is over, we commend all

to Him, and lie down to rest in His love and care. This is life itself on a small scale! Scripture supports this thought of *daily* living. "The inward man is renewed day by day." "Give us *day by day* our daily bread." "The priests praised the Lord *day by day*." "Sufficient for the day is the evil thereof." Daily we have to "take up the cross"; daily we need to be "watching at Wisdom's gates"; daily to "exhort (encourage) one another." Daily, we may be sure, is the keyword of the life of dependence. And the precious promise of Matt. 28, 20 is, literally, "Lo, I am with you *all the days*, even to the end. . . ."

These precious phrases from the pages of God's word have thus a message of stimulus and encouragement for us at the beginning of this another year of grace. Let us think of them once again. "From life to life"; "from faith to faith"; "grace for grace"; "from glory to glory"; "face to face"; "from strength to strength" and "day by day." These are the characteristics of the "way everlasting," and "the path of the just (that) is as the shining light (the radiant dawn) that shineth *more and more unto the perfect day*."

WE shall set ourselves for the prosperity of the church if we see that it is Christ's interest on the earth and the Father's purpose for His Son; at the same time it is for the fullest blessing of His chosen ones. Just as the happiness of a true wife lies in the love and goodness and nobility of her husband, so our happiness for ever will lie in the love and glory of Christ, and it will be without measure.

THE man who believes that a divine Person, the Holy Spirit, dwells in Him, to enrich his heart with Christ, and to lead him to testify of Him, will rely upon the power of the Spirit and turn away from the world and the flesh as being useless to him and a hindrance in his testimony. The Holy Spirit will be sufficient.

THE SAME, THE FIRST AND THE LAST.

(H. J. VINE)

(Isaiah 41. 4; 44. 6; 48. 12; Revelation 1. 17; 2. 8; 22. 13, N.T.)

AS in days gone by, there are also now those who call upon the Lord Himself out of a pure heart, following righteousness, faith, love, peace together; and that, notwithstanding the "difficult times" in which our lot is cast, as 2 Timothy 3. 1 foretells. To be rightly maintained in that path, simplicity and growth in the knowledge of the Lord are essential. Mark, it is the *Lord Himself* upon whom the sincere call (2 Tim. 2. 22), rather than *the Name*, as is often said. To "*know Him*" was the earnest desire of Paul; and to call upon Him consequently becomes both habitual and intelligent.

Every believer has his beginning in this, and progress normally follows. No one should allow himself to be sidetracked. Grace and strength are supplied and we are told to be "strong in the grace which is in Christ Jesus." It was a man that was born blind who became the subject of a work of divine power and grace. This eventually resulted in his becoming a worshipper in the immediate presence of the Son of God Himself (John 10.). He *knew* the change which the Lord had brought about, and when the arguments of the religionists of that day failed to turn him from his simple confidence in Jesus, they ostracized him; but we read, "Jesus heard that they had cast him out; and when He had found him, He said unto him, Dost thou believe on the Son of God? He answered and said, Who is He, Lord, that I might believe on Him? And Jesus said unto him, Thou hast both seen Him, and it is He that talketh with thee. And he said, Lord, I believe. And he worshipped Him." That was good progress from a good

start, a rich result of a genuine beginning.

"Ye did run well," wrote Paul to some who began rightly; "Who did hinder you?" (Gal. 5. 7). Surely the heart's desire is to be unhindered; but having begun through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, we would follow on to "*know Him*" increasingly, and not be diverted from simplicity as to Christ. Having been saved and justified freely by God's grace, through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus, we surely seek a fuller knowledge of the One in whom our eternal blessing is secured. What sad things might be said of any soul who did not seek this?

What more precious lesson could the Holy Spirit instruct us in, and what other instruction could produce more practical results in us well-pleasing to God? The apostle who wrote, "He has taken us into favour in the Beloved; in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of offences, according to the riches of His grace," also wrote in the same letter of "the edifying of the body of Christ, until we all arrive at the unity of the faith and of *the knowledge of the Son of God*" (Eph. 1. 7; 4. 13). In this way souls will be happily sustained in calling on the Lord Himself sincerely, and true worship in His presence will flow responsively. To know Him produces this both habitually and intelligently in an increasing measure.

The desire is not new. Saints in Old Testament days longed for and sought after the knowledge of the Lord Himself. In these days, however, when the out-called from among the nations

are formed into the assembly by the Spirit, when they have the honour of association with Christ in the period of His rejection by the world, when the Holy Spirit unites them to Him where He is accepted in heaven, when they know Him there as their glorified Lord, Saviour, High Priest, Advocate, and Head of the assembly, they certainly have Him made known to them in a fuller measure than was granted in olden days; for even before His ascension to God's right hand He said to some, "Blessed are the eyes which see the things that ye see: for I tell you that many prophets and kings *desired* to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them" (Luke 10. 24); and when Thomas saw the Lord alive from among the dead, and did Him homage as his Lord and his God, Christ indicated still greater blessedness in the knowledge of Himself for those who are brought to Him now He is on high; for He said, "Thomas, because thou hast SEEN ME, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have NOT SEEN, and yet have believed." It was when He had gone up to God's throne, Peter wrote thus of those who believe on Him at the present time, "Whom having *not seen*, ye love." Yet it must be remembered that, long before this peculiarly favoured and parenthetical period, the knowledge of the Lord Himself was earnestly sought, as we said.

JACOB was blessed at Peniel (meaning the "*Face of God*"), where "a man wrestled with him until the rising of dawn," and Jacob said, Tell, I pray Thee, Thy Name. He received His blessing, but not the name as he desired, and "Jacob called the name of the place, Peniel. For I have seen God face to face, and my life has been preserved" (Gen. 33. 30, N.T.). MOSES asked, "Show me now Thy way, that I may know Thee"; and

again, "Show Me Thy glory"; and He said, "Thou canst not see My face: for there shall no man see Me, and live." Yet He added, "Thou shalt see My back parts: but My face shall not be seen." And Jehovah descended and proclaimed the Name of Jehovah (Exod. 33. 23; 34. 5). MANOAH, when he would offer an offering to the Lord after "the man of God" had appeared to his wife, said, "What is Thy Name?" and the answer was, "Why askest thou thus after My Name, seeing it is secret?" or, more correctly, "Wonderful" (Judges 13. 18). It was ISAIAH who later wrote, "His Name shall be called Wonderful, . . . the mighty God!" And yet, although he said this of Him coming as "*a child*," in chapter 9. 6, afterwards, with impetuous desire he exclaimed, "Oh, that Thou wouldest rend the heavens, that Thou wouldest come down . . . to make Thy Name known"; but the Spirit caused Isaiah to add further words, which pointed on to this present period, as is shown in the citation of 1 Corinthians 2. 9, Never have men heard, nor perceived by the ear, nor hath eye seen a God beside Thee, what He hath prepared for him that waiteth for Him (64. 1-4). The godly constantly yearned after a fuller revelation of the Lord.

The full revelation awaited the due time when God would be manifested in flesh. It needs no explanation—it is plain enough to an ordinary man's mind—if the Lord Himself were to be fully made known to men He must come as Man. This He did. "The Word," who "was God, . . . became flesh and dwelt among us." Had He come in angelic or any other form men could not have understood. He came in an intelligible manner, in the right and proper manner, and in the way which He in grace and love chose; but before that we find Him speaking

words which carry us a long way. Only He could speak as He did through Isaiah thus, "I am He" or "I AM THE SAME, 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" (43. 10, 11). "Thus saith Jehovah the King of Israel, and his Redeemer the Lord of hosts; I am THE FIRST, and I am THE LAST;

and beside Me there is no God" (44. 6). "Is there a God beside Me? Yea, there is no God: I know not any." None but the Eternal One could speak thus; and, surely, when it would please Him to do so, He could and would reveal Himself. Bless His holy Name. In this way life eternal, the blessing of blessings, should be ours.

(To be concluded.)

THE FIRST AND THE LAST MIRACLES.

The Beginning of Miracles.

THE miracle at Cana, was, we are told very expressly, the beginning of miracles. Here the Lord tolled for the first time the great bell of the universe that summoned men to listen to His sermon. In it God, as a bountiful benefactor, provided for His creatures' happiness. He had said at the beginning, It is not good for man to be alone, and His first miracle was a benediction upon that primal institution; and as marriage is a season of gladness, He provides a fit accompaniment, provides it of the best, and in such large measure as has amazed and alarmed the timid moralist. The quality and greatness of the gift were worthy of God; and we see the generosity all the more clearly when we remember that *this bountiful Creator had a little while before refused to create bread to relieve Himself of hunger pangs.*

(Nicholl.)

The Last of Miracles.

The glory that began to shine at Cana shed a greater brightness at the close of those eventful years, when He was being led to the cruel trial—not surrounded, as at the marriage feast, by smiling faces, but by frowning, threatening foes. Malchus, a base slave of the high priest, had evidently offered a gross insult to the Lord, and Simon, wrath-moved, smote at him with his sword, cutting off his ear. Restraining His indignant disciple and asking for the use of His bound hands, the Lord touched the ear and healed His wounded foe; and though in their furious hate His enemies were all unmoved by this strange mark of love and power—love manifested to His enemies in their madness, power manifested when He seemed to be weakest—we have leisure to mark the deed, and to see the revelation which for us is highest and most welcome, the revelation of a God showing mercy to sinners in the height of their sin.

IT is to those who hold in living power that which they have received that God can give still more abundantly.

THE PEACE OF CHRIST.

(T. OLIVLR.)

"Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you."—John 14. 27.

PEACE is a familiar term in Scripture, but its significance depends on the particular context or setting in which it is found. In its connection with Christ, the initial idea is that He made peace by the blood of His cross (Col. 1. 20). In the peace-offering of the third chapter of Leviticus, the elements of communion or fellowship are taught on the basis that peace is made in the death of Christ. The natural chaos which reigns in the human heart has been done away, and a new domain has been introduced in which everything is controlled after God's order.

The individual bowing the knee, believing in the heart unto righteousness, confessing Jesus as Lord, finds that the same basis on which he is justified provides him with the second of the kingdom blessings in its initial aspect of "peace with God" (Rom. 5. 1). But the blessing does not stop there, he finds that he is enclosed in a new envelope of peace into which the confusion dominating the world has no ingress.

Sin in the flesh has been condemned before God and put away by the death of Christ (Rom. 8.). Moreover, the whole order of man, whose sole aim was his own glory, has been removed through the same death; that is, for God and for faith. And while he still fills the world with the confusion of his own lawlessness, yet his trial is over and he only awaits the execution of God's just judgment.

In the Levitical type, we eat the peace-offering in the presence of God (which would naturally inspire fear), rejoicing that God has ended the confusion, and that there is a sphere into which we can withdraw from the world

to feed on the offering of Christ. "He that eateth My flesh, and drinketh My blood, dwelleth in Me, and I in him" (John 6. 56). Could there be any experience equal to that? What a transition from the husks which the world affords, to feed on the finest of the wheat! He who offered Himself by the Eternal Spirit without spot to God, is alive from amongst the dead, and He is our peace (Eph. 2. 14). This is the first consequence of His having made peace.

He has broken down the middle wall of partition separating Jew and Gentile; but they are not merely fused into one entity retaining their natural characteristics, for He made in Himself of twain, one new man, so making peace, that He might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross (Eph. 2. 15, 16). These two dissimilar elements are no longer marked by their original features once they are found in Himself, i.e., in the one body. Moreover, the Scripture goes on to say that "through Him both have access by one Spirit unto the Father." He who rose from the dead has given His Spirit to all who believe God; so Jew and Gentile receiving the Spirit have the enmity emphasized by the Law of Commandments applicable to the flesh set aside. The intrusion of the flesh can only introduce distance between Christians.

Speaking metaphorically, if the six-inch brick wall separating Jew and Gentile was obliterated in the death of Christ, what about all the brown paper partitions which have been erected by over-zealous legalists, separating Christians from each other? It is certain that they will be reduced to pulp by the infiltration of the water of life—

the Word of God. So we need to be under the influence of the Word. No other agency will effect the practical union of Christians.

The world is characterized by chaos. Men conjure pictures of the Utopia in which all confusion and the strife of tongues will have ceased, and so a League of Nations vainly operates in the midst of jealous nations preparing for war as fast as their shattered resources will admit, notwithstanding the profession of peaceful aims. Scripture shows that the League of Nations is a forlorn hope, destined to prove a disappointment and failure. The only sphere where peace is really known is where the Lordship of Christ is owned.

When the Lord cast a legion of devils out of the demoniac, the latter was found sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed and in his right mind. He was no longer the sport of demoniacal influence, but at the disposal of his new Master. The man was in a state of peace, typifying the conditions obtaining in the millenium, when all the confusion will have been brought to an end. But the Gadarenes preferred the presence of demons to the presence of the Lord, and they besought Him to depart from them. The curiosity-mongers were afraid of the state of peace, although they were not afraid of the devil's power. The imaginary state of peace is one in which every person may do what is right in his own eyes, but that must necessarily result in confusion, as there is no consonance in the human will. There is a complete resolution of these forces into a common resultant, viz., the Lord's will, when the gospel, which is the power of God, intervenes.

So the Lord's words on the night of His betrayal, "Peace I leave with you," have a special inflexion of meaning in the further communication, "My peace

I give unto you." Again, the apostle enjoins the Colossian Christians, "Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts" (Col. 3. 15). There must be complete acquiescence in the will of God if peace is to supervene. In being transformed by the renewing of our mind, we prove or test what is that good, acceptable, perfect will of God (Rom. 12. 2). The Scripture says "let," i.e., "allow," which suggests that there are hindrances to the peace of Christ having a free course of control, but we are responsible to remove these hindrances.

There will be no need for a president in our discussions if the peace of Christ presides at our council board, for that is the present purpose of our being called in one body, and in the process we shall be marked by thankful hearts. The natural tendency is for everyone to have a right to express his opinion, and so a Babel of voices will proclaim the failure of human effort in bringing about millennial conditions.

"In the world ye shall have tribulation." But the Lord spoke words of comfort to His own in order that they might understand that in Himself they might have peace (John 16. 33). His peace is given to us; not as the world gives, in a conditional way, since His gifts and calling are without repentance, i.e., there is no retraction of what He gives.

The result of truly apprehending the significance of His unchanging peace given to us, and our being enclosed in an impervious envelope of peace, is that we are found conducting ourselves soberly, righteously and godly in this present world; being marked by acquiescence in God's will and confidence in Him that He can, in His own convenient time, effect His own will.

Meanwhile, the personal peace of Christ rules in our hearts, giving a practical demonstration of God's dwelling in His house.

BEHOLD, THE BRIDEGROOM.

(J. T. MAWSON)

"*They that were ready went in with Him to the marriage : and the door was shut.*"—Matthew 25. 10.

WHO can deny that the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ is one of the chief themes of the Bible? Not those certainly who study its pages. However much they may differ as to the manner and the meaning of it, they must all agree that it is kept continually in the forefront of God's communications to men. The first of all the prophets cried, "The Lord cometh with ten thousands of His saints." And as prophets, priests and kings strayed from the right ways of God, and the world's problems became more involved, and its miseries increased, the coming of the Lord, as Deliverer and Judge, became more and more the burden of the men who spoke for God, and the hope of those who believed.

If we had only the Old Testament and not the New, we should find it difficult to understand why in one place His coming is said to be for suffering and humiliation and in another for glory and power and world-wide dominion; how and why His visage would be more marred than any man's, and yet He be exalted and lifted up and made very high and astonish nations by the splendour of His majesty. The New Testament is the key to the Old, and by it the whole subject of the coming of the Lord is opened up for us, and we learn that two comings were in view, at the first of which the sufferings of Christ would be fulfilled and at the second, the glories that should follow. Our position lies between the two.

He came once, not to be ministered unto but to minister and to give His life a ransom for many. Then He was wounded for our transgressions;

then He died for our sins, according to the Scriptures; and was buried, and rose again the third day, according to the Scriptures. After that He showed Himself by many infallible proofs to His disciples, and ascended to heaven in their sight. With hearts aglow with devotion to Him they gazed with wonder after Him as the cloud of glory received Him, and immediately two heavenly messengers stood at their sides and announced to them the fact that He—this same Jesus, and not another—would so come, as they had seen Him go. It was the first message from the glory after His entrance into it, and it became an integral part of the apostle's preaching—the testimony of the Lord. He had been here, and He had returned to heaven from whence He came, but He would come back again. He would come in glory to judge the world in righteousness, and rule the nations with a rod of iron, and banish sorrow and crying from the earth, and bring in gladness and peace. Those that hearkened to the preaching and believed it, "turned to God from idols, to serve the living and true God and to wait for His Son from heaven." The coming again of the Lord Jesus was a living hope and not a doctrine only to those early Christians; it affected them mightily *and they went forth to meet the Bridegroom*. The world was well lost for them as they rejoiced in the hope of the coming glory of the Son of God, even Jesus, who had delivered them from the wrath to come.

But while He tarried, the deep slumber, against which they were warned again and again in the epistles of Paul, overcame them, and the prophetic

parable of our Lord was fulfilled, "they all slumbered and slept." The church became totally indifferent to the truth of the Lord's return, and all were alike in this, wise and foolish, true possessors and mere professors, settled down in the world that He will judge at His coming, as though there was no difference between them and it. Their lamps burned but dimly, and the darkness steadily deepened until was reached that period known as the Dark Ages. This was the midnight hour indeed, when the church that professed the Name of Christ, and which should have shone with a great light in the darkness to guide the feet of the people in the way of truth, robbed them of any light they might have had by its gross sensuality and apostasy from the truth.

The history of the church on earth was faithfully forecast in those solemn messages from the Lord to the seven churches in Asia (Rev. 2. and 3.), and the period of this dense darkness is described in the central message of the seven, that to the church at Thyatira. In it the depths of Satan were known as nowhere else on earth. At that time popes, cardinals, priests and monks lived openly wicked lives, they turned the most sacred things into subjects for their obscene jests, they were profligate in conduct and profane in their conversation. It was a common saying: "If there is a hell, Rome is built over it: it is an abyss whence issues every kind of sin." But worse than all, the people were corrupted by these ministers of Satan, and to them were sold indulgences which granted them pardon and secured them from the punishment beforehand of any crime that they wished to commit. And as the great dignitaries of the church required money in order to pursue their rascalities, the people were urged

and forced to buy these indulgences or lose their immortal souls. Standards of right and wrong were obliterated, for the people could do what they pleased as long as they paid, and this was called the "richly offered grace of God." "We Italians," said a historian of that period, "are principally indebted to the church for having become impious and immoral."

It is in the message to the church of Thyatira, which describes this midnight period, that the Lord brings out afresh the fact of His coming. There were those in the midst of all its corruptions and darkness who were faithful to Him. A small remnant they probably were, but they were precious to the Lord, as were those who feared Him and talked together about Him in the days when Malachi prophesied. To these the Lord said, "I will put upon you none other burden, but that which ye have already, *hold fast till I come.*" And wonderful words must those have been for those who had ears to hear during that dark period: "*I will give him the morning star.*" In the records that have come down to us from those days we find that there were some who "trimmed their lamps," many more no doubt than we could know of, for the Lord has always had His thousands who would not bow the knee to Baal.

But were they many or few that heard the cry, "Behold, the Bridegroom," in this midnight hour, it is certain that the Lord then commenced in a special way to prepare a people to meet Him at His coming. He formed and fitted Luther for this purpose, and the most blessed truth of justification by faith instead of works was proclaimed and believed by many. The consequence of being justified by faith is the sealing by the Holy Spirit. We are taught in Romans 5. that when

justified by faith the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit that is given unto us; and this is confirmed by Ephesians 1. 13. "In whom (Christ) ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise." Only those in whom the Spirit of God dwells are ready to meet the Bridegroom when He shall come, for the oil that the wise virgins took in their vessels is unquestionably a symbol of the Holy Spirit. He only can keep the lamps of our testimony burning during the absence of the Lord.

From that time the coming of the Lord began to have, more or less, a place in the preaching of the Word. But it was not understood by the preachers, nor clearly preached, for the distinction between the church and the world was not discerned, and this great truth, along with all prophetic truth, must be obscure to all who do not see and maintain this distinction. It was thought and preached that the world would first be converted by the preaching of the gospel, and that then the Lord would come and establish His kingdom of righteousness, and this by pious men who no doubt read and studied their Bibles. It is still a popular notion, but as false as it is popular. How it could have gained currency is difficult to understand with such a solemn passage in the Bible as that in Revelation 1. 7: "Behold, He cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see Him, and they also which pierced Him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of Him. Even so, Amen." A converted world would surely receive Him with acclamation and not wailing. There are many other passages which are equally emphatic, such as 2 Thessalonians 1. 7-9: Revelation 6. 15-17; 19. 11-16. But

men believe what pleases them, and the thought of the intervention of the Lord in judgment is not pleasant to those who love the world or are involved in its great schemes for its own greatness.

After the Reformation the church soon again settled down in the world. It has been said that the ambition of the Romish church is to dominate the world; it did in former days, and will do so again, and that in Protestantism the world rules the church; it certainly does in the state churches where its very doctrines are secured and fixed by act of Parliament. Hence in the message to Sardis which describes this condition of things, the Lord says, "Thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead." And, "I will come on thee as a thief," which is the character in which He will come to the world, which cares nothing about His coming, except to scoff at it, or hate the thought of it, thus will He come to the unwatchful and indifferent church.

But the cry which went forth first at the midnight of the church's history is sounding louder now, for in the message to the church at Philadelphia the Lord says, "Behold, I come quickly: hold fast that which thou hast, that no man take thy crown." And this word has awakened a response in many hearts, and these bear in some degree Philadelphian characteristics, which are, loyalty to the word of the Lord, devotion to His name and love to all the brethren. May they greatly increase and grow for His name's sake.

Numbers have been recovered to the truth of the Lord's coming. It has become again a real and living hope, but it is only real and living to those who have trimmed their lamps, for two things are infallibly united, devotion to Christ and witness to the world. Those who are really looking

for Christ, who are truly saying, "Come, Lord Jesus"; will by their very lives bear a witness to the world, they will shine as lights as they pass through it, for they will not settle down in it. Their testimony will be that the Lord is coming and that they are going forth to meet Him. The world's fashions and ways, and schemes and ambitions will not engage and entangle them, for they know that it lies under judgment, along with Satan, its god and prince, and that its time is short and its doom is sealed. Yet they will not be indifferent to the needs of men, they will mingle with their testimony the evangelistic cry: "Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely."

This cry, "Behold, the Bridegroom," is a great test. It finds us out. It tested these awakened virgins in the prophetic parable, and we learn from it that the test is intensely individual. To what community you belong is not the test, nor what profession you make, everything depends upon whether you have the oil in your vessel—Have you received the Holy Spirit? And none can receive Him for another, or having received Him, impart Him to another. Each must receive Him for himself.

The time is short. Fleeter than these foolish virgins imagined were the

feet of the Bridegroom, for while they went to secure the oil for their vessels, He came, and they that were ready went in with Him to the marriage, and **THE DOOR WAS SHUT**. It was too late then for them to buy the oil or enter the door, and their knocking was in vain. The Bridegroom only knew those who possessed the oil, and only those whom He knew passed with Him in to the marriage feast.

Are any who read in doubt as to this vital and indispensable possession? and do they ask, Where can we buy the oil? To buy indicates a personal transaction. You must have personal dealings with God, first as to your own sinfulness and need of a Saviour and then as to the Saviour that He has provided. Paul preached, "repentance towards God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ," and Peter declared, "The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye (Jews) slew and hanged on a tree. Him hath God exalted with His right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins. And we are His witnesses of these things; and so is also **THE HOLY GHOST, WHOM GOD HATH GIVEN TO THEM THAT OBEY HIM**" (Acts 5. 30-32).

"All things have been created by Him and for Him" (Col. 1. 16). **BY HIM**. The force which has summoned the worlds out of nothingness into being, is His; He wields it; He is the one Producer and Sustainer of all created existence. **FOR HIM**. He is not merely an inferior workman, as Arianism afterwards pretended, creat-

ing for the glory of a higher master, for a God superior to Himself. He is the end of created things as well as their immediate source; and in living for Him every creature finds at once the explanation and the law of its being. For "He is before all things, and by Him all things consist."

(Liddon.)

THERE are three sources of evil: a legal mind, a morbid conscience, and a self-occupied heart. The cure for a legal mind is *grace*; the cure for a morbid conscience is *truth*; the cure for a self-occupied heart is *Christ*.

“ WHERE IS *THE* GUEST-CHAMBER ? ”

(W. BRAMWELL DICK)

“ *And He said unto them, Behold, when ye are entered into the city, there shall a man meet you, bearing a pitcher of water ; follow him into the house where he entereth in. And ye shall say unto the goodman of the house, The Master saith unto thee, Where is *THE* guest-chamber, where I shall eat the Passover with My disciples ? And he shall show you a large upper room furnished : there make ready* ”—Luke 22. 10-12.

ON the dark night of our Lord's betrayal, when all the world was against Him, and when it seemed as if every door was bolted and barred to prevent His entering, there was a spot which He called “the Guest-chamber,” where He could have His disciples as His guests shut in with Him. There might be other guest-chambers in Jerusalem, and doubtless there were, but only in “*THE* Guest-chamber” could the company of the Son of God be known and enjoyed. Observe ! It was in the city, with all its rush and bustle, where all were going their own way, immersed in business, pursuing their calling, and seeking the advancement of their own interests, amid that throng there was one man who was probably a humble man, and of all the people in the city it might be he attracted the attention of only two men, and they as humble as himself. He was the bearer of refreshment, for he carried a pitcher of water ; he evidently had an objective, for he was going toward a certain house ; he was unconsciously influencing others, for these two men followed him into the house where he entered in. There these two disciples met “the goodman of the house” He also is nameless so far as the narrative is concerned, but he evidently knew the Lord and understood what He wanted, for when the messengers said, “The Master saith unto thee, Where is *THE* Guest-chamber, where I shall eat the Passover with My disciples ?” at once he showed them “a large upper room furnished” The bearer of the pitcher of water disappeared ; the goodman

vanished from view and we are left to contemplate *The Guest-chamber—The Host—The Guests.*

1. *The Guest-chamber.*—It was an “Upper room,” removed from the din and confusion of the world—in the world and yet above it. It was “a large upper room.” There was room there for all whom the Lord invited. He invited them because He loved them and valued their company, and if on their part there was reciprocal affection for Him and appreciation of His company, how readily would they leave everything here to be with Him there. Notice further, it was “a large upper room furnished”—furnished with all that was necessary for the comfort of the guests in the presence of their Lord, that free from all distraction they might feast with Him. Honoured indeed were they who were His guests in “*The Guest-chamber*” on that memorable night !

2. *The Host.*—Who was He ? The Son of God, the Lord of Glory, Who had come into a cold, dark, joyless world, and had brought with Him the love, and light of that world whence He had come and whither He was about to go. The world had refused Him and was just about to crucify Him. There were those whom He had attracted to Himself their eyes had been opened, and in Him in whom men saw in that day, and in whom, alas, men see in this day, only the Carpenter of Nazareth, they contemplated the Word that became flesh, and they beheld His glory. He had made Himself indispensable to them, for He had shielded

them, cared for them, ministered to them, and His words were to them the words of life, in fact, He had become everything to them. They were the objects of His love. When "He came into His own (things), and His own (people) received Him not" (John 1. 12); He called these men around Himself; He called *them* "His own," and He loved them to the end. Now He was about to leave them, and these precious hours of His last night upon earth were to be spent in their company. A memorable night indeed it was!

3. *The Guests.*—These were not the great men of the world. They had not, so far as we are informed, distinguished themselves in any way to call for notice. A few fishermen, a publican, and, altogether, in the estimation of the men of the day, they would be considered probably of no account. If it were not that we know our hearts to be capable of doing what they did, we might be severe in our judgment of them. The traitor had gone out to do his dreadful work, but there remained one who that very night would deny Him, and ten more who at the crucial moment would forsake Him. Yet He loved them; as we have remarked, He claimed them as "His own"; and we feel sure it brought comfort to His heart on that night to take His place as the Host, and to minister, as He did, to His guests. They reciprocated His love in more or less degree. There was "one of His disciples, whom Jesus loved," and he "was leaning on Jesus' bosom."

Let us picture this scene a little further. Outside was the cold, dark night. His enemies were plotting for His life. Inside there was the calm, the warmth of His presence and His company. There they were to eat the Passover; there He was to institute the Supper; there they were to listen

to ministry that was intended, in the first instance, only for themselves; there He was going to communicate to them secrets, that none others could understand. It was

HIMSELF AND THEMSELVES.

If one disciple thought of himself as "the disciple whom Jesus loved," he learned that he was one of the eleven, one of "His own," and that it was in the company, and to the company, that divine communications were made. These they might be unable to understand then, and indeed they could not until the Holy Spirit was given, but we can look back and see a model of that which the Lord desired that "His own" should know and enjoy right down during the night of His betrayal, the night of His absence, until He comes again. This brings us to the practical application of that which we have been considering, and raises the important question—

HAS THE LORD GOT A GUEST-CHAMBER TO-DAY? If He has, and if we hear Him ask, "*WHERE IS THE GUEST-CHAMBER* where I shall eat . . . with My disciples?" what is the answer? In the first place, let us say emphatically, we believe there is still "the Guest-chamber." There the Lord is to be found in the midst of "His own"; His presence is known; His supremacy is recognized; His voice is heard; intimacy with Himself is enjoyed; and the divine Host and His guests feast together. Was not that the Guest-chamber in which the Lord appeared in the midst of "His own" on the evening of the resurrection day; when He revealed Himself to them; spoke the word of peace; showed unto them His hands and His side; and made their hearts glad? (John 20. 19, 20). Was not that *the* Guest-chamber in which the disciples, "on the first day of the week

... came together to break bread" ? (Acts. 20. 7). Is not that "the Guest-chamber," "where two or three are gathered together in His name," with Himself "in the midst of them" ? (Matt. 18. 20). Let us see what it means for us to-day. Where "His own" realize His presence ; own His supremacy ; acknowledge His authority ; and give Him His rightful place ; there is "the Guest-chamber." To that hallowed spot He invites, and over those who respond to His call He presides. Consider it, dear readers ! Outside is the world, coldly indifferent, with no more heart for Christ than when it cried, "away with Him." From all its schemes it excludes Christ. It has a vast religious system, but there *the Christ of God* has no place in it. Inside "the Guest-chamber" is our Lord. Everything there must be in keeping with the greatness of His Person ; the holiness of His name ; and the character of that place, as has been noticed ; He is the Host ; He surrounds Himself with those whose hearts beat true to Him, and who are prepared to be shut out by the world if only they can be shut in with Himself. There we may rest under His

banner of love and find His fruit sweet to our taste. There we may rest in His love, as John put his head upon the bosom of Him who dwelleth "in the bosom of the Father." Is all that available for us now ? It is. For whom is it available ? For all who love Him in sincerity, and are therefore prepared to sever every link, however fond, for the luxury of His company in "*the Guest-chamber.*" Why should we hanker after the world ? or remain in any system where He is not, when *He* seeks *our* company and desires to have us where He can display to us love's treasures, make Himself known to us, and reveal to us the Father's name and the Father's heart.

Oh, that we apprehended better when gathered around Himself on the first day of the week to remember Him, that we are in "*the Guest-chamber*" with Himself ! What joy it gives Him to have us there ! How He loves to communicate divine secrets to us ; to satisfy us with His company ; to fill our hearts with His love ; to call forth songs of praise to Himself ; and to cause us to join in the song that He sings in God the Father's ear.

WHAT DO WE REMEMBER ?

HOW we older folk love to be reminiscent. We recall the storms that we have weathered through the mercy of our God. We tell of their severity and of our experience in them. Let us beware, for there is danger in this. What was it that the disciples talked of when the great storm became a great calm ? They did not say, what a great storm it was ! or, what fears we had, or courage, or what manner of men were we in it ; but, "What manner of Man is this !" Christ engrossed them ; what He had done and the way He had done it filled them with wonder. It is well if our reminiscences run on this line, if in looking back we recall His deliverances, His mercy, His power, the way He revealed Himself in the hour of our deep need, then do we glorify Him and show that the trial of our faith has yielded true gold for His treasury and ours. Yes, if the trials have made us think more of Him and talk of all His wondrous works, it is well.

“THAT I MAY KNOW HIM.”

(L. R.)

THERE is a knowledge that is unapproached by any other, unique in its surpassing excellency—the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The aged Apostle Peter, just about to lay down his life, gives it as his last exhortation to the beloved saints among whom he had laboured, that they should “grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ” (2 Peter 3. 18).

The Apostle John records the Lord’s own words in His prayer to His Father, “that they might know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent” (John 17. 3), and he writes to the “fathers” among his children in the faith the same words twice, “Ye have known Him that is from the beginning” (1 John 2. 13, 14). So wonderful is this knowledge, he adds nothing, no warning, no encouragement, this knowledge is sufficient.

The Apostle Paul in the Epistle to the Philippians expresses what had been his life’s desire and purpose thus: “That I may know Him” (Phil. 3. 10), and this, not at the beginning, but long after he had counted all things loss for the excellency of this knowledge; still there were unsounded depths, and he presses on, still desiring “That I may know Him.”

There are other kinds of knowledge to be earnestly sought after, but which, if they could be attained, without this surpassing knowledge, would leave us poor indeed. There is, for example, doctrinal knowledge, and we should thank God for any acquaintance with the great doctrines of grace. A Christian teacher once said, “Doctrines are like the scaffolding of a house: if your doctrines are wrong your house will be all wrong.” It is hardly necessary to stress to the readers of *Scripture Truth*

the importance of the great doctrines of the Christian faith.

There is prophetic knowledge of the blessing God has purposed for the world to come; looking back to the past eternity of God’s foreknowledge, and looking forward to the blessings of the future, when everything shall be subdued under the Lord Jesus Christ, and love shall reign triumphant.

There is the knowledge of the truth of the church, the assembly of called-out ones, and precious it is to know that the Lord will have a bride meet for Himself, the pearl of great price for which He sold all that He had, for “He loved the church, and gave Himself for it” (Eph. 5. 25).

There is also the knowledge of the Father and of our place as brought to Him in a blessed and abiding relationship, but we do well to remember there could be no knowledge of the Father apart from the Lord Jesus who came to reveal Him, as He said, “he that hath seen ME hath seen the Father” (John 14. 9).

We should be jealous of our hearts, lest the greatness of the knowledge that has been vouchsafed to us should dim in the least the light of the knowledge of Him, a real personal knowledge. It is an ever-present danger; knowledge is so wonderful, our minds can rejoice in it, and all our mental faculties can be engaged in acquiring it; but if the heart is cold, and there is very little growth in the knowledge of Him, how will it all look in His eyes? How will it all look in our eyes when we see Him face to face, and gaze upon the wounds wherewith He has been wounded in the house of His friends.

How, then, may this knowledge be gained? It will not be gained without exercise, not without the self-judgment

of a lowly contrite heart. There must also be a measure of true surrender to Him who was the meek and lowly One, and the constant dependence on His grace. This knowledge cannot be claimed as a *right*, it is all of grace. There must be a desire after moral suitability to Him, as was once well said, "The Lord gives Himself to those who are suited to Himself." It may be said that it is being made too difficult. It is difficult from our side, else why is He so little known amongst His saints? Why is there room for so much beside Him? But it is worth while. How abundantly worth while!

There are three ways in which the Lord is made known.

First, by His Word, unfolded to us by the Holy Spirit; second, by His presence in the assemblies of His saints, made known also by the Holy Spirit; and third, in receiving from Him in our pilgrim path a never-failing ministry of help and comfort.

We know Him as revealed in the Word; if it were not for this we could not know Him, our thoughts would be mere idle imaginings. But we have seen Him there: the types foreshadow Him, the prophets and the Psalms tell us of His sufferings, His sorrows and His glory. In the Gospels we have traced His ways of grace with all the deep need of those who surrounded Him. We have heard His words of love, we have seen His acts of power, we have marked His tears; we have "surveyed the wondrous cross on which the Lord of glory died," and we have seen the stone rolled away and the shining messengers saying, "He is risen." We know Him in resurrection as "this same Jesus," and we see Him crowned with glory and honour, "the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever" (Heb. 13. 8).

We may know Him in the assemblies of His saints. The Holy Spirit delights to bring before us at different times His varied glories. He presents Him as the suffering One who endured the cross, as the Victim, the Lamb without blemish and without spot, or as the exalted One to whom all the universe shall presently bring a tribute of praise; or again, perhaps, as the loved One of the Father coming to do His will, the beloved Son in whom He was well pleased. He will make Him known to us as He is known in heaven, until we gladly say with the apostle, "To Him be glory, both now and for ever, Amen."

And now, to-day, He who dwells in the Word as in a holy shrine, He who fills the assemblies of His people, He who inhabits eternity, He consents to walk with His saints in their earthly path, and there to make Himself known to them. When sickness came, or poverty or pressure of circumstances, or sore bereavement, then He drew near and in ways no words can tell He solaced our hearts; and when joy was our portion, and songs of thanksgiving, we knew that He rejoiced in our joy as He sorrowed in our sorrow, and over all was His perfect love, "the love of Christ that passeth knowledge."

It is in Him, and in His blest presence we learn what holiness is—the holy love that loves so much that it spares not, but rebukes our unbelief and slowness of heart, "sparing not for our crying," but correcting by making us know Him. And all the time He is saying to us, "I am coming again." The pilgrim way is only for a very little while, and in it we are learning to think His thoughts, and to answer, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus."

It is very comforting to know that what we have meditated on is the privilege of all saints. There was only one Apostle John, one Paul, one Peter,

but above 500 brethren were witnesses to His resurrection; there was one Mary of Bethany, and one Mary Magdalene, but there were many women who followed Him and ministered to Him of their substance. Even in apostolic days there were a few rightly

honoured names, but there were *many* unnamed saints who, in obscure places, were sharers in this knowledge of the Lord, and so in whatever quiet place we are set by Him, we may be growing "in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."

THOUGHTS of the Christ may rise at every turn
 And hold us all day long,
 Alone or in a crowd we still may hear
 His Name as the sweet song;
 E'en pain and sickness make Him to our hearts
 Nearer and dearer seem,
 Till life becomes a story sweet though sad,
 Of which He is the Theme.

THE GLORY OF CHRIST.

(A. J. ATKINS.)

GLORY all belongs to God; it is His peculiar attribute. He is declared to be "the God of glory." Glory is equally an attribute of our Lord Jesus Christ. He is declared to be "*the Lord of glory*." Twice in the New Testament we have this title: once to emphasize the depth of wicked ignorance that crucified Him (1 Cor. 2. 8), and in the second place, to signify that in His presence all men's petty class distinctions are of no account (James 2. 1). There is a similar Old Testament title: the *King of Glory* (Ps. 24. 7-10). Both titles are full of majesty, and denote not only the ineffable dignity but the essential *Deity* of Him to whom they relate. He who shares the glory, that God has declared He "will not give to another," must Himself *be God*.

J. G. Bellett, in his beautiful *Meditation*, has reminded us that the glory of Christ is threefold, viz., *personal*, *moral*, and *official*. His personal glory is what He is essentially in His Person. In relation to God, He is the eternal Word; the eternal and only-begotten Son; the Image of the invisible God;

the effulgence of His glory and the exact expression of His substance. He is God (John 1. 1; 1 John 5. 20). He is the Son. In relation to creation He is in rank the Firstborn (Col. 1. 15), for in Him, by Him and for Him it was made; and in virtue of Him it "consists," that is, holds together as an ordered whole.

He who was, and ever is, all this, "emptied Himself and took upon Him the form of a servant," "became flesh," so in wondrous grace veiling His personal glory "save when faith discovered it, or occasion demanded it." Now and again some were permitted glimpses of the glory shining through the human veil. John, speaking for them, says: "We beheld His glory, the glory of an only-begotten with the Father." At Cana of Galilee it shone forth for an instant; "He manifested forth His glory." And there was one supreme occasion when He was transfigured before the chosen three, and "they saw His glory" in the holy mount; it illuminated not only His countenance and form, but even His apparel. Peter, one of the three, wrote

later: "We were eyewitnesses of His majesty . . . when we were with Him in the holy mount" (2 Peter 1. 16-18). Normally, however, it was hidden, for He had come, sent of the Father, not to display Himself, but to serve, to suffer and to save.

By His voluntary stoop from heaven to earth, and the renunciation of the "form of God" for the "form of a servant," as well as in every step of His pathway, in every act and in every word, His moral glory—His obedience, faithfulness, love, and every beautiful trait—was manifested; and it illuminates still every page of the Gospels. As another has said, "from the virgin's womb to the heavens" it was one track of moral glory.

But of these, His personal and moral glories, we do not now speak particularly, desiring to study for a little His *official* glory, that is to say, the glory that He has acquired and with which He has been invested as Man; the glory that is the correlative of His sufferings and death. "*Official*" is a cold word, but it is used to signify the glory He has won and has been given, recognized now by faith, but to be acknowledged ere long by all. Not that we can separate these glories; they are all part of Himself and related to each other. The threefold distinction that we have mentioned simply serves as a prism, revealing to us the three primary colours that compose the glorious light that fills all heaven with its radiance.

Before His death, but clearly in view of it, He could say: "Now is *the Son of Man glorified*, and God is glorified in Him" (John 13. 31); and after His passion, when He was risen: "Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to *enter into His glory*?" (Luke 24. 26). This is, we understand, the glory referred to by Peter in his first

epistle, when he declared that the prophets testified of "the sufferings of Christ, and the *glory that should follow*" (1. 11). These glories can only be understood in relation to the humiliation and the sufferings that preceded them.

Outwardly, the career of the Lord seemed to become less and less glorious as His popularity faded, His rejection became more apparent, and His "hour" drew near. His was "a downward, losing path." At last the "hour" came, and human treachery and wickedness were allowed to do their worst. The Lord of glory was crucified. God's precious "corn of wheat" fell into the ground and died. The stone in Joseph's garden covered Him who was the Glory of Israel and the Light of the World. Seemingly, the Christ had perished; hell had triumphed; the divine promises had failed; and all was lost in hopeless gloom. Was it possible that glory could arise from the tragedy of the cross and the grave of the Messiah?

It was possible *to God*. In point of fact, the grave of Christ was not, after all, the grave of all hope but the "door of all hope." It was, as it were, but the lowest step on the ladder of His humiliation; He "descended into the lower parts of the earth"; and from this very point the great reversal and the great revival commenced, a reversal in respect of every enemy and a revival in a new creation. Yes, it is from this point that "*the gospel of the glory of Christ*" begins. For while all gospel, and indeed all blessing, depends upon His personal glory as the Son of God, neither this, nor His mighty condescension, nor His perfect life, nor even His atoning death, would have availed for blessing, *if these were all*; we should be yet in our sins (1 Cor. 15. 17). But the prophetic word had declared, "God

hath set Him to be blessings *for ever* " (Ps. 21. 6, marg.); and we proceed to trace how this has been brought about.

The "glory of the Father" visited that grave (Rom. 6. 4), and by the power of God the Lord Jesus "rose and revived" and was "brought again from the dead," so becoming "the Firstborn from the dead." This was the first step in His glorification, and was necessarily followed by the ascension, for the highest place in heaven was His by right of His Person and His work. He who was "God manifest in flesh," having been justified in the Spirit (by His resurrection, cp. Rom. 1.), was *received up in glory* (1 Tim. 3. 16, N.T.), an expression denoting, we should gather, the majesty and splendour of His ascension to and entrance into the heavenly places. What divine simplicity marks the gospel account of this momentous event! Someone has beautifully remarked, that it was "the ascension of Him who, not rapt in a chariot of fire, nor needing the cleansing of that fiery baptism, nor requiring a whirlwind and chariot to bear Him up (as Elijah), did in the far sublimer calmness of His own indwelling power rise from the earth, and with His human body pass into the heavenly places." What a spectacle it must have been to all heaven when, as the Lord of Hosts (His Person), and as "mighty in battle" (His work), the MAN CHRIST JESUS entered in through the "everlasting doors" and was acclaimed the *King of glory!* (Ps. 24.).

Many Scriptures refer to this event. "Him hath God *exalted* with His right hand" (Acts 5. 31). "God hath *highly exalted* Him" (Phil. 2. 9). "He *sat down* on the right hand of the Majesty on high" (Heb. 1. 3). "The God of our fathers hath *glorified* His Son Jesus" (Acts 3. 13). "God . . . *set Him at*

His own right hand in the heavenly places, *far above all* principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world but also in that which is to come" (Eph. 1. 21). "Who is gone into heaven and is on the right hand of God, *angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto Him*" (1 Peter 3. 22). "God hath *made Him both Lord and Christ*" (Acts 2. 36). He has been "*crowned with glory and honour*" (Heb. 2. 9). God has "*given Him a name which is above every name*" (Phil. 2. 9) and given Him *all power* in heaven and in earth (Matt. 28. 18); "*put all things under His feet, given Him to be Head over all things to the church*" (Eph. 1. 22), and ordained Him to be the "Judge of living and dead" (Acts 10. 42). Moreover, from His prayer in John 17. 5, "And now, O Father, *glorify Thou Me with Thine own self* with the glory which I had with thee before the world was," we gather that, on being thus exalted, He was reinvested with all the glory which was ever His rightful possession as the divine Son.

"Lord of glory, we adore Thee,
Christ of God ascended high!
Heart and soul we bow before Thee
Glorious now beyond the sky!"

And all this, while affording deep joy to the faith and affections of the believer, is *gospel*: it is "the gospel of *the glory of Christ*" (2 Cor. 4. 4, N.T.), the word glory here, not expressing merely a quality (as in the A.V.), but the very essence and subject matter of the gospel.

Let us think of it. Jesus Christ our Lord is in glory; that is, a *Man* is in the glory of God! Surely He is there in personal right as the Son and according to the counsels of God, but, equally surely, He is there in virtue of what He has done, i.e., the "finished work" of Calvary. He is there because God

has been glorified in respect of sin ; because peace has been made. He is there as the accepted Victim and the acknowledged Victor ! And it is the God who " made Him to be sin for us," who has thus exalted Him ! The very " glory of God " shines in His face, the face once marred for us. " Every ray of that glory is the proof that my sins are gone . . . the glory itself is proof that I am saved ! " *Is not that gospel ?*

But that is not all. From that excellent glory the Spirit has come, the witness in history (for Pentecost is *history*) and in experience (for Pentecost stands for most blessed experience) that Jesus is there. And by the Spirit, from the glory, there is being " ministered "—supplied and applied—to us, not the death and condemnation of the legal order, but life and righteousness, a life of which the glorified Jesus is the source, and a righteousness of which He is the measure ! So we need not be afraid to look, as the Israelities were afraid to look on Moses of old, nor turn away to our sins or our " religion," for the more we look, if we look at *Him*, the more our blessing, peace and power. Moreover, " Beholding the glory of the Lord, we are *changed* into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord " (2 Cor. 3. 18). The rays of that glory are actinic, like the chemical rays of the sun. We need more exposure to them ! What a deliverance from all the religion of the flesh, from the misery of self-culture, from the bondage of legality, from slavery to human ordinances, and from the deceit of spurious systems of " holiness. " * In the knowledge of Christ in glory is found the fulness of

salvation, the fountain of satisfaction, the true means of Christian sanctification, and the spring of holy energy.

But this glorious Christ on whom we " look " is hidden ; and we, however richly blessed in Him, have therefore to look and to live every moment by faith while we are awaiting the *revelation of His glory* at His " parousia. " Leighton says sweetly : " Let us be frequently considering the glory where He is, and have our eye often upon that, and our hearts solacing and refreshing themselves frequently with the thoughts of that place and condition wherein Christ is, and where our hopes are, ere long to behold Him, both to see His glory and be glorified with Him. " *For His glory is ours.*

It is going to be revealed when " *He shall come in His glory,* " and, according to His own words, " sit upon *the throne of His glory,* " and enter upon His kingdom splendours. The " glorious honour of His majesty " and the " glorious majesty of His kingdom " shall be acknowledged by all, when " He shall reign before His ancients gloriously. " It was to these glories, particularly, as " following " the sufferings that the prophets of old looked forward. Blessed to know, that we shall be with Him then ; shall " appear with Him in glory " (Col. 3. 4). We have been called to " the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. "

Even more blessed, however, than the glories of the " revelation " and the reign will be heaven's inner circle, where " love's treasures will be displayed, " and where will be realized the answer to the prayer : " Father, I will that they also, whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am, that they may *behold (gaze upon) My glory,* which Thou hast given Me : for Thou lovedst Me before the foundation of the world " (John 17. 24).

* We refer, it need scarcely be said, not to true movements for holiness among God's people (thank God for such !), but all systems which inculcate a perfection in the flesh, and tend to substitute a sanctified self or a " subjective work " for a *glorified Christ*—and a cross.

THE EPHESIAN EPISTLE.

(J. BOYD.)

IN the Epistle to the Colossians the Apostle Paul speaks of himself as minister of the glad tidings, and also as minister of the assembly. There was a sense in which he could not be viewed as a minister of either the glad tidings or of the assembly. The gospel that he preached he had directly from the Lord by revelation. He says to the Galatians: "When it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by His grace, to reveal His Son in me, that I might preach Him among the heathen" (Gal. i. 15, 16). He was pre-eminently the minister of the gospel (Col. i. 23) and alone minister of the church (verse 25).

Jesus as the Son of God was the subject of his testimony. Peter, who was sent to the circumcision, proclaimed Him as the Messiah, the Son of David, in whose presence here among the Jews were fulfilled and given to the people the promises made to the fathers: but never, as far as we read, presenting Him as Son of God, though in this character he confessed Him on earth (Matt. 16. 16). But when Saul was converted: "Straightway he preached Jesus in the synagogues, that He is the Son of God" (Acts 9. 20). We have Peter's testimony in Acts 2. and 10., and in neither passage is he said to speak of Jesus as the Son of God. But when we come to the testimony rendered by Paul among the Gentiles (chapter 13. 32, 33), at once he announces Him as the Son of God. And this involves adoption for us (Gal. 4.); that is, the position of sons of God. There is another word used for son which involves begotten of God (*huios*); but the word translated adoption (*huiothesia*) does not, though we could not be in the place of sons unless we were begotten. When we speak of our

being begotten of God we have no previous history to this act of God's sovereign will. But as regards the truth of adoption, it means for us a transfer from Adam to Christ; and this is early referred to in this Epistle to the Ephesians.

In the Epistle to the Romans we have the gospel as preached and taught by Paul; and in this to the Ephesians we have the assembly as administered by the same apostle, to whom this administration was committed. Therefore he does not associate another with him in the writing of these two epistles, as he does in his address to each of the other assemblies.

Romans sets before us the intervention of God on our behalf for our deliverance from everything that held us in bondage—our sins, sin, law, and all else that fettered us—in order that we might be free to present our bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God—our intelligent service. In the teaching of Romans we do not get our position in the heavenlies. We rejoice in hope of the glory of God, and await adoption, which here involves being in the image of God's Son (Rom. 8. 23, 29, 30). But we are not viewed as taken away from connection with earth. The kingdom is before us, and the glory in which we shall have part when it is revealed.

But in Ephesians we have operations of God for the fulfilment of His own eternal counsel. Another world than this one—I might say, another creation—opens up before the vision of our souls. We are blessed with every spiritual blessing in the heavenlies in Christ. And that is "according as He hath chosen us in Him before the world's foundation, that we should be holy and blameless before Him in love." This was His purpose before

the ages of time. Whatever may have been allowed to come in afterwards only served to the fulfilment of these counsels. Everything must serve to the end that the all-wise and all-powerful Creator has in view. The ruin of this earth before it was formed as a dwelling-place for man, the ruin of the man for whom it was prepared, the introduction of this present fallen Adamic race—sin, darkness, death and misery—all must serve to the one glorious end, the bringing to pass the glorious conception of the eternal God. And with this the epistle we are considering is occupied.

In the ways taken by God to accomplish His great thoughts we were in Adam before we came to be in Christ; but in the purposes of God we were in Christ before we came to be in Adam. We were chosen in Christ before the world's foundation. We were to be holy; and this involved a knowledge of good and evil, and this was acquired by the fall. We were not to be *innocent* beings in intelligent relationship with our Creator, but in the position of sons before the face of the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, able to call God *Father*; not in the earthly head, Adam, but in the heavenly, Christ; not in the natural, but in the spiritual.

And all the wealth of blessing that is ours, we inherit by the good pleasure of His will, and to the praise of the glory of His grace, wherein He has taken us into favour in the Beloved. Indeed all His activities have their source in His own sovereign will, apart from any claim on our part for this intervention, for claim we have none, and all these activities are in perfect righteousness and consistency with all the attributes of God, and also with His nature and character. The blood of the Beloved has been shed for

our redemption; and now we have redemption, as far as forgiveness of offences goes, and this according to the riches of His grace. The *riches* of His grace is seen in the death of the Beloved on our behalf, and the *glory* of His grace will be seen in the day when the full effect of that grace comes to light in manifested display.

The riches of His grace He has *now* caused to abound toward us in all wisdom and intelligence. He has given us intelligence to enter into the counsels of eternal wisdom, making known to us the mystery of His will concerning the great work that He has set Himself to accomplish in Christ, and the part that we shall have with Him in that day, the day that is called "The dispensation of the fulness of times." The substance of all that was foreshadowed in past dispensations shall be taken up in Christ, and then it will be apparent that Christ was the One who was ever before the mind of God, and that Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, Aaron, David, and Solomon, were but figures of Him that was to come. What was set forth in them will be taken up by Him. They could not continue by reason of failure, and because of the weakness and unprofitableness of the various systems in which they served during the probation of Adam's fallen race. But in that day it will be manifested that Christ is the One capable of bearing up the pillars of the moral universe, as from the beginning He has borne up the pillars of the material universe. Everything in heaven and earth will be headed up in the Christ, in whom we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated to be to the praise of His glory. And the pledge of our inheritance is the Holy Spirit, by whom we have been sealed to the day of redemption.

(To be continued.)

THE EIGHT SIGNS OF JOHN'S GOSPEL. (JAMES GREEN.)

Sign IV.—Feeding of the Five Thousand. Read Chapters 6. and 7.

[N the spiritual significance of the first three signs, we have seen how the Lord sets the heart free from disappointment, by the satisfaction which His word commands; from the fear of death, by the power of a new life bestowed; from the impotence of the flesh, by the authority which the Father has given Him over all things. He thus shows His supremacy in the scene of love over the power of death, and His consequent right to execute judgment. There is yet one thing to be learnt before the soul can expand its wings in the pure air of life eternal, which is not of this world but of the Father. The soul must prove the famine of material resources, the instability of dependence upon the things that are seen, and must loose its hold upon the things of earth, which so often render the soul barren of its proper joy in God.

The scene of the sign is laid at the time of the third passover of our Lord's ministry. The first marked the commencement of the year of His manifestation; the second, the following year of His rejection; and this marks the beginning of the last year in which He unfolded the counsels of God, connected not with earth, but with heaven. From chapter 6. onwards all the action and teaching is included in this third year. The contents of John's Gospel may be set forth thus: Chapters 1. to 7. are occupied with the great question of *life* and its support; chapters 8. to 10., the shining out of the *light* and what is involved thereby; chapters 11. to 21., the unfolding of love—shown in chapters 11. and 12. as positional, in chapters 13. to 19. as personal, in chapters 20. and 21. as relative.

This is the only sign which is recorded

by all four evangelists, and on the surface it bears witness to two things: first, that the long-looked for Messiah of Israel had come, who was to bless abundantly her provision, and satisfy her poor with bread (Ps. 132. 15); second, that the Creator was present amongst men, opening His hand to satisfy the desire of every living thing (Ps. 145. 16).

The first three evangelists depict the anxious care of the disciples for the feeding of the multitude, but John records the question which the Lord put first to them as to what their resources were, producing the answer which Matthew, Mark and Luke record, and revealing the scantiness of the supply, for which after all they were dependent on the lad with his five barley loaves and two small fishes. Not only was the inadequacy of the provision exposed, but the poverty of the faith of the disciples, "Send the multitude away, that they may go and buy."

The Lord now proceeds to act, but first there must be rest: "Make the men sit down." How often does the soul, perplexed, distressed, restless, anxious, need the quiet restraint of this word, "Be still and know that I am God." Here is the balm of peace, and in this is developed the expectancy of faith towards Him, who knew then, and does now, how to meet all necessity out of His own fulness.

The multitude have been fed, and now with their bodily needs satisfied they would have made Him a King, but the Lord has far greater purposes than the highest earth could give, and He begins to unfold the spiritual meaning of the sign He had wrought.

"Labour not for the meat which perishes." Seek not the things of earth, there are things above much greater than these; it is the meat which endureth unto eternal life that alone matters, and this the Father is giving through the Son of Man.

It is important to observe the context in the four records of the miracle. Matthew chapter 14. is followed in chapter 15. by the narration of the storm on the lake, and the Lord's walking on the water, in which He associates Peter with Himself. The point here is one of circumstances. The Lord walks where no human power can avail, and as Peter is held by His hand, he can do the same, and only so. He who can create loaves and fishes is sufficient to uphold in all circumstances, apart from that which gives confidence to men who trust in their boat. In Mark the craving of the heart for certainty in respect of Divine things is in evidence, and the Lord teaches of many things, and in this Gospel the miracle in chapter 6. is followed by the Lord's discourse on the traditions of men in chapter 7. Great is the famine of the human heart that seeks food from such things. The many religions, idolatries, and 'isms' invented by the imagination of the mind bear witness to this. These things are less able to satisfy soul hunger than was the provision of the lad to feed the multitude. Only the pure word of God, which the traditions even of the most religious of men render void, can supply the need of rest and peace which the soul desires.

In Luke 9. the context is the scene of the transfiguration, and here it is the famine of the heart for love, which is met by the revelation of the love of the Father for the Son, into which others are brought. Wrapped in the

cloud of glory, what satisfaction, peace and joy are found, and the heart's deepest need is met in knowing God Himself, whose very being is love, and love expressed in His deep affection for the Son of His love. No longer then does the heart turn even to the best of men, or the chiefest of servants, but listens with enraptured joy to the Father's voice upon the holy mount, "This is My beloved Son, hear Him." In John's Gospel another theme is touched by the miracle, viz., the support of life, and this is distinctly seen in the discourse that follows upon "The bread of life."

"I am the bread of life"—the bread come down from heaven, providing the inexhaustible satisfaction which knows neither hunger nor thirst, which, having no ingredient of death in it, abides to life eternal. All is secured by the unchangeableness of the Father's will which is centred in the Son. From the Father He came, His sent One, to Him the Father draws, concerning Him the Father teaches. The Father was the source, support and object of His life; so also shall he who appropriates Him as his sustenance and food, live by Him.

But this brings us to the full expression of love in the deep wonder of the cross, and it is in knowing this that the soul is fed with the bread come down from heaven. By this life is received, apart from it all is death. "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, ye have no life in you." It is hardly possible more vividly to picture the appropriation of faith than by the figure used, of eating the flesh and drinking the blood of Christ. The difference between the two is this, that His flesh given sets forth the Person of the Lord in all that blessed and unique humanity in which He passed through this world, the bread from heaven.

But this leads on to His sacrifice on the cross, His blood poured out, given upon the altar in expiation for sin. There was no drinking of blood under the law, for it was the witness of death as the judgment of sin, and this no blood on Jewish altars slain could take away. But now, that fact being accomplished by the one offering of Himself, all is changed, and death becomes the way of life, and a means by which faith possesses a vital union with Him who lives beyond death. It is not His flesh alone, but this in connection with shed blood in which, by the appropriation of faith, life is found. The entrance then into the power and joy of eternal life lies in this, to pass in soul experience through Christ's death, into a life outside of the world with its hopes, its gains, its ambitions, and all that makes up the life of man here, and to find the light of love in the knowledge of God revealed in His Son.

In chapter 7. is seen the result that follows upon this feeding upon Christ

as the support of life. It leads on to the great eighth day of the feast of Tabernacles, the eternal day, to which the millennial rest set out in the seven days of the feast are the prelude. The Lord has eternity and eternal life in view, and so does not manifest Himself until then, but He shows that already he who drinks of Him shall anticipate that day, and from that formed within him shall become a channel of supply by which the grace and goodness of God may be brought to others. It is the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit which can accomplish this, by bringing the abiding reality of Christ into the innermost affections, and producing an internal character of life, which, filling to satisfaction the man himself, must needs overflow in witness to Him who is glorified. Such a result, if it is to be a living experience, depends upon the nourishment the Lord has indicated in chapter 6. and the practical control of the indwelling Spirit (John 7. 38, 39).

NOTES FOR PREACHERS.

"That they might be with Him, and that He might send them forth to preach."

HERE is the first, the deepest, the absolutely vital qualification of the preacher who is to be true. Personal knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ and companionship with Him, "nothing between," was the first requisite for the preaching apostle; and it is the first requisite assuredly for the man who, in any sense instinct with life and power, would be the preaching apostle's successor. To come evermore to Him, to deal at first hand with Him; to get, in that company, direct acquaintance with what He can be "unto us of God," in all the range of our profound, our many-sided need of "wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption"—that is the

grand prerequisite. And then the man goes forth to preach, because his Master sends him. To go at his own bidding would be intolerable, it would be a pillory of open shame, if we could not be sure that He had sent us forth, sinners that we are, to preach. But what is not the rest and power of that thought, He hath sent us forth?

And then, coming forth from that presence, from the feet of our Lord and Master, from the Cross of that Redeemer, what shall we go forth to preach? Not our ideas, but His Word. Not our guesses at a thousand things, but His revelation of the "one thing needful"; and the one thing needful is Himself—our Lord Jesus Christ.

THE SAME, THE FIRST AND THE LAST—*Contd.*

(H. J. VINE.)

(Isaiah 41. 4; 44. 6; 48. 12; Revelation 1. 17; 2. 8; 22. 13, N.T.)

THE truth as to Christ opens out to us the true meaning of all the Scriptures. When He rose from the dead, He expounded to those on the Emmaus road out of "all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself" (Luke 24. 27); and He afterwards opened the disciples' understandings to understand the Scriptures, having shown that the law, the prophets, and the Psalms, all spake concerning Him (verses 44, 45).

Clearly, then, Scripture itself shows that the knowledge of Christ is the explanation of all Scripture, and therefore of the remarkable verse in question, how Jehovah along "*with the Last*" is the Same! Just as might be expected, it is in the closing chapters of the Bible God and Christ are named together thus in various ways: "Priests of God and of Christ" (Rev. 20. 6); "The Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple" (21. 22); "The throne of God and the Lamb" (22. 3); and, it is added, "His servants shall SEE HIM," not "*them*," as might be expected; and it continues, "They shall see HIS face, and HIS Name shall be in their foreheads." We are told that Christ is "over all, God blessed for ever, Amen" (Rom. 9. 5); but the same verse tells us that "*according to flesh*" He came of the fathers of Israel; and we are also told He "*became flesh*"; and that He is "*the last Adam*" (1 Cor. 15. 45). When He takes a place in creation or any other circle, the first place is His, because He is both Creator and Reconciler (Col. 1. 16, 18, 22); and if we view Him entirely from the standpoint of His Deity, looking backward into eternity or forward into eternity, there is none before Him and none to come after Him, He is "the First and the

Last"; but, as become flesh, as the redeeming Lamb, the Christ of David's royal line, the Son of Man "of Seth, of Adam, of God," the Man of God's counsels, He is the Lord of glory personally, and yet is "*made both Lord and Christ*" officially in exaltation (Acts 2. 36); therefore it can be said not only that He is *the First and the Last*, but "*with the Last*," He is also "the Same." Without Him priesthood Godward on the part of man could not cause its sweet savour offerings to ascend. Without Him the temple nearness could never be enjoyed! Without Him the majesty of the throne of God itself would be still waiting for the glories of redemption through the Lamb whose blood was shed! even though the counsels of eternal love designed all before the world's foundation.

Even the world-kingdom to be established on earth soon is designated as that "*of our Lord and of His Christ*" (Rev. 11. 15, N.T.), and it is significantly added, "HE (not *they*) shall reign to the ages of ages." As in other Scriptures the singular is used.

Following again what the Spirit tells us concerning Him through Isaiah, we read (44. 6) that the Lord is both Israel's King and Redeemer, Jehovah of hosts, the First and the Last, beside whom there is no God; excluding altogether any thought of there being another. Then, in that third mention of the First and the Last (Isa. 48. 12), we have His tender and forceful appeal to Jacob and Israel, His called, telling them who it is that has chosen them, and refined them; the One who had founded the earth and spread abroad the heavens, the One who so significantly says in verse 16, "THERE

AM I!"—the Sent One of the Lord God and His Spirit; yet, as it is written, "I am He (i.e., the Same), I, the First, and I, the Last." What a stay this is to the mind of the saint of God, as well as to his heart and soul! How reasonable it is to faith when we thus find all God's designs centring up in such an One! "Let us reason together" were His own words. Sobriety of thought, steadiness, stability and soundness of mind result, while the true knowledge of His wonderful love, manifested in the sufferings and death of Christ on the cross, moves the heart to overflowing praise and worship, and causes us to exclaim adoringly, "We love because *He first loved us!*"

And then the full shining forth of this truth is disclosed to us by the Spirit in the Book of Revelation. There we behold it full orb'd, for it beams brightly from its manifest centre, our Lord Jesus Christ. In chapter 1. 17 He says, "Fear not! I am the First and the Last, and *the living One.*" This leaves us in no doubt as to who "THE SAME" of the Old Testament is. We find Him so named in Deuteronomy 32. 39, first of all. "See now," He exclaims, "that I, even I am the Same, and there is no god with Me . . . I lift up My hand to heaven, and say, *I live for ever!*" Jesus says, I am "*the living One*"; and as once having "become dead," He adds, "behold *I am living to the ages of ages!*" This latter refers to the life which is His as having victoriously vanquished both death and the grave. Space forbids us following out the twelve verses in the Old Testament and the two in the New which mention Him as the Same, although they are full of instruction for saints who seek to grow by the true knowledge of God. The verses are: Deuteronomy 32. 39; 2 Samuel 7. 28; Nehemiah 9. 6, 7;

Psalms 44. 4; 102. 27; Isaiah 41. 4; 43. 10, 13; 46. 4; 48. 12; 52. 6; Hebrews 1. 12; 13. 8. "I am He" should read "I am the Same," meaning the self-existing One. See J. N. Darby's notes to Deuteronomy 32. 9, Isaiah 41. 2, and Hebrews 1. 12, in his New Translation; and if first of all Psalm 102. 27 be compared with Hebrews 1. 12, the opening key to the other Scriptures will be found.

Again, we are told, "These things say the First and the Last, who became dead and lived" (Rev. 2. 8). This is said to the assembly at Smyrna, which is exhorted to be faithful unto death, and He who had conquered death would bestow a crown of life. Finally, Revelation 22. 12, 13 identifies the One who is called Jehovah, the Same, Jesus, the living One, who became dead and lived, with the returning Lord, as it says, "Behold I come quickly . . . I am Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last." Both books which present the Lord as the First and the Last to us are prophetic, and this final mention is full of meaning. Revelation 19. 10 discloses to us "the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy." These remarkable words give guidance again to lovers of the truth, for the prophetic Word is only to be rightly apprehended in connection with Jesus our Saviour and Lord. He is the Alpha and Omega of the whole revelation of God, the complete expression of God's language, the embodiment as well as the expression of the mind of God. He is also the Beginning of all that has received being, which can know no ending apart from Him who is the End, the One who compasses all in Himself. This is the First and the Last; before Him there can be none, for who can precede the first? And after Him there can be no other, for who can come after the last? The Creator-Word,

who became flesh, who became dead, and lived, the crowned One, the enthroned One, yea, THE RETURNING ONE, who says, "BEHOLD I COME QUICKLY," fulfils in Himself all that is predicated in the inspired volume concerning "the glory of our great God and Saviour" (Titus 2. 13), for whose coming again and appearing we wait. Yes, yes, we have good reason to sing, and sing with gladness :

"This is our redeeming God !
Ransomed saints will shout aloud :
Praise, eternal praise, be given,
To the Lord of earth and heaven !"

Before He appears in great power and glory, however, before He takes up the distressed nation of Israel again, before He deals with the nations and the peoples of the earth and establishes the Kingdom of God and of Christ below, before He floods the world with Jehovah's glory, He shines for faith beyond the border of this world's atmosphere during the darkness of its moral night, cheering the waiting ones whom He loves so well, the assembly for whom He gave Himself; and His beauteous, welcome lustre beams for the watcher far over man's circum-

scribed horizon, as "the bright, Morning Star." Before the dawn of day He is its heavenly Harbinger! "And the Spirit and the Bride say, Come."

The final words of the Bible, the last two verses of the Book of Revelation, give us His own treasured tones, full of music to our hearts, and the response of His loved ones to Himself, also the Spirit's inspired desire in regard to all the redeemed: "He which testifies these things says, Yea, I come quickly. Amen; come, Lord Jesus. The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with all the saints." He loves all. He gave Himself for all. He intercedes for all, and He is coming for all His own. They are all His, and He comes to assert His claims of love and righteousness. *They shall dwell with Him eternally, "for ever WITH THE LORD."* He shall be abidingly "the Same" "with the Last," and *we shall be with Him, too.*

Meanwhile, may we be found increasing in the excellent knowledge of Himself, calling upon Him out of a pure heart, and watching as well as waiting for His return. Amen.

THE NEW COMMAND.

(HAMILTON SMITH.)

"A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another."—John 13. 34.

HIS hour has come; at last the Father's home,
Beyond dark death, as sunlight on the hill,
Shines o'er the valley of the Father's will.
The day has dawned, when He must leave His own
To tread a path that He must take alone;
And drawing nearer to that day of days,
Upon His soul a load of sorrow weighs:
Upon His heart of love divine, well known,
One rests his wearied head, with great delight;
One takes the sop, and passes into night:
And thus set free, the Master's voice is heard—
"If all men are to learn that ye are Mine,
Then take to heart My last—My parting word—
And let your love to one another shine."

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

"Love Made Perfect."

"I know a young Christian who was asked rather scornfully, if he believed in perfect love. His answer was, 'Yes.' Then he was asked if he knew anyone who had attained to it. He answered, 'I do not, but I know some who are seeking that condition of life.' His texts were: 'Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as he is, so are we in this world. There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love. We love Him because He first loved us' (1 John 4. 17, 18), and, 'Whoso keepeth His word, in him verily is the love of God perfected' (1 John 2. 5)."—NORTHANTS.

THE way that the first of the young Christian's texts is translated in our Authorized Version is rather misleading, and has led him to think that it is his love that should be perfected, and that this is a condition of life that can be attained to by seeking. If you have the *New Translation* (J. N. D.), you will find that the verse reads, "Herein has love been perfected with us, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment, that even as He is, so are we in this world." And in Scofield's Reference Bible the marginal reading is, "Herein has love been perfected with us." This throws much light on the passage. It is not our love to God that is perfected, but His love *with* us. And the meaning of this is so marvellous that we shall endeavour to unfold it as we have learnt it. Verses 9 and 10 show us how God's love has been manifested *towards* us. He sent His Son into the world that we might live through Him, and that He might be the propitiation for our sins. But God is not satisfied with only manifesting His love towards us, He must have us without fear in view of coming judgment, that instead of being tormented and tossed about in our souls by fear, we might be in perfect rest of heart before Him, to enjoy the love wherewith He loved us and loves us still. The way that this is brought about is declared in that most wonderful statement: "As He [Christ] is, so are we in this world." Beyond this His love could not go,

in this it has been perfected with us; we are as Christ risen from the dead is now, even while still in this world. This is not a matter of attainment, the position and portion of a favoured or saintly class, it is gospel truth, and the position and portion of every child of God as such. But how is it so? Well, He who will judge in righteousness is our righteousness now; we share His life and stand in His perfectness before God; to use Paul's expression, "He has made us accepted in the Beloved." The love of God has brought us to Himself in such suitability to all that He is in His nature and character, that we can now find our rest in Him and have no fear of its being disturbed by coming judgment. This of course could only be because of the absolute propitiation that God's Son has made for our sins, and that now we live through Him.

Let us recall the way the prodigal was treated by his father. He was welcomed and kissed, but if that had been all it could not have been said that his father's love was perfected with him. The father went further: he called for the best robe, the ring and the shoes, and these were put upon him, and he was made conscious, as he sat by his father's side, being thus apparelled, that he had been made fit to be there. He would not be striving to work up love within his heart to his father, but he would be filled with wonder at the way his

father's love had been shown to him, in that it had removed from him every cause of fear and unrest. The best robe for us is Christ. "As He is, so

are we in this world." This gives us full assurance, perfect peace, and great boldness in view of coming judgment, for it must be so, since God has said it.

Prayer and Sermon Building.

"I have been converted eighteen months and I am anxious to go deeper into things. I feel that I need some advice as to prayer and sermon building. I hear words used by some and things said that I could not have thought of. I try hard to think of words for prayer so as not to have one prayer always, and I don't want to say what others say. Can you advise about this, also as to how to build sermons?"—NOTTS.

THE disciples of the Lord Jesus asked their Master to teach them to pray. He is your Master just as truly as He was theirs, and you may go to Him with the same request, and it will be a very good prayer to begin with, and a very simple one, "Lord, teach me to pray!" Learn first to pray in private. Indeed, since you are converted you must already have begun this, "Behold, he prayeth" (Acts 9. 11) is one of the first marks of a man who is born again. And no public prayer is of any use apart from private prayer. "When thou prayest, enter into thy chamber, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly" (Matt. 6. 6). You will not be tempted to use long words or make eloquent prayers when alone with God, you would feel that it would be mockery. With God you will be simple and direct in your requests, for true prayer is not the making of wordy discourses, but is asking for what you know you need. "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you," are the Lord's own words in the lesson that He taught His disciples in Luke 11. 9. And He gave them a very striking example as to what He meant, in the parable of the man who demanded from his friend, "Friend, lend me three loaves," and kept on repeating it until his demand was granted.

The more you read the Word of God the more you will desire to pray to God, for as you read you will realize your own need more deeply, you will learn what His will concerning you is, and you will feel how far you have come short of it. You will learn also how great is His patience and grace, and how inexhaustible are "His riches in glory in Christ Jesus," and how ready and able He is to do for you "exceeding abundantly above all that you can ask or think," and all this will compel you to pray. As you discover what He can be to you and the fulness there is in Christ Jesus for you, and how blessed a thing it is to know Him, you will desire that others should enjoy what you have got and you will begin to pray for others, and the more you pray for others the more unselfish you will become, both in your prayers and in every other thing.

Be as simple and direct and earnest in public prayer as in private. Remember you are speaking to God as much in one place as the other, and that to endeavour to impress others with your knowledge or ability when praying is simply hypocrisy. But remember also that in public prayer you should pray so that the truly godly can say, Amen. (1 Cor. 14. 16.)

This fellowship in prayer, which is always desirable in the public prayer meeting, is expressed in the words, "Again I say unto you, 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" (Matt. 18. 19). With a world of need around you—needy Christians and needy sinners—you have no need to be confined to one prayer, nor to copy others. Study the Word of God, keep a good conscience before God and man, and you will pray aright and with sincerity.

As to building and preparing sermons, first build yourself up on your most holy faith, keep yourself in the love of God and pray in the Holy Ghost. Think much of Christ, meditate on His love, His work, His worthiness; what He has done for you and will do for others; then when you have the opportunity of bearing witness for Him, you will bring that which is good out of the good treasure of your heart (Matt. 12. 35). It is out of the fulness of the heart that the mouth speaketh, and the man whose heart is not full of Christ will be but a poor preacher, in

the true sense of the word, no matter how great an orator he may be. It is right that you should desire to put the truth clearly and in an orderly way before your hearers, but you must first have the truth for yourself, and the truth of the gospel is concerning Christ (Rom. 1.). Keeping this before you, pray that you may give it out in an acceptable way.

As a young Christian you would be helped in doing this by seeing how others who have been used of the Lord in the salvation of many have prepared and preached their sermons. I should suggest that you get as you are able the series of volumes of addresses by the late Dr W. T. P. Wolston. Begin with *Young Men of Scripture*, *Handfuls of Purpose*, and *Night Scenes of Scripture*. In these volumes you will find food for your soul and learn how to apply it to others. They may be got from the Publishers, J. K. Souter & Co., 2 Bristo Place, Edinburgh. Price 3s. 6d. each.

THE WITNESS.

(HAMILTON SMITH)

"If ye abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you. Herein is My Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be My disciples."—John 15. 7, 8.

WOULD'ST thou a witness for thy Saviour be,
 In word and life, to men on every hand,
 While passing through a dark and dreary land;
 Then hear the Master's word, "Abide in Me,
 And ever let My words abide in thee."
 Thus walking in the sunshine of His face,
 Show forth the beauty of His lowly grace;
 That others, in the daily round may see,
 In one who treads in peace the pilgrim way,
 Some heavenly fruit brought forth from day to day:
 That from the fulness of thy life may flow
 Love, kindness, meekness, humbleness of mind,
 That thou, in passing through this world may show
 The loveliness of Christ before mankind.

GOSPEL FACTS

A Sunday Evening Address.

Luke 24. 44-47.

THE time had come for us to start for our Sunday evening meeting, when the little son of my host said to me, "I hope that you will preach to-night so that I can understand." I have taken the words of that lad to heart and I am determined, by the help of the Lord, to preach the gospel so that the children of ten can understand. In doing so I shall not be insulting the intelligence of the older people, for God's gospel suits every age and class; it is simple enough for the children, yet so full and so blessed that the oldest saint on earth or in heaven cannot fathom the depths of it. It is God's spell, God's story, and he that hath an ear let him hear it. The time has come for you to listen and not to talk. "Say not in thine heart . . ." says the Word, for faith cometh not by talking or arguing, but by hearing: "faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."

The gospel consists of facts, and children can believe facts, and the facts are these: "It behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day," and the object in view was, "that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His Name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem." And of such impelling and divine importance are these facts that from the time of the fall of man in Eden, God had spoken of them in type and allegory and by definite prophecy. His communications as to them are to be found in Moses, the prophets and the Psalms: in every part of the Old Testament Scriptures. "It is written," said the risen Lord, and what is written must stand—it is as impregnable as the throne of God. Heaven and earth shall

pass away, but not one jot or tittle of it shall fail; it must all be fulfilled. What was written about the sufferings and resurrection of Christ has been fulfilled, and it is this that the gospel preacher must tell the people. Not the twelve apostles only, but Paul, the apostle to the Gentiles, who had not seen the Lord on earth but who had seen Him in glory, proclaimed these facts, for "he reasoned . . . out of the Scriptures, opening and alleging, that Christ must needs have suffered, and risen again from the dead; and that this Jesus, whom I preach unto you, is Christ" (Acts 17. 2, 3). And when allowed to explain his life's purpose before kings and rulers, he had nothing else to urge. "Having obtained help of God," he said, "I continue unto this day, witnessing both to small and great, saying none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come: that Christ should suffer, and that He . . . should rise from the dead, and should shew light unto the people, and to the Gentiles" (Acts 26. 22, 23). Yes, these great facts are needed by all and are preached for all: for rich and poor, for great and small, for the children who have not yet chosen the self-willed way, as well as for those who have grown hard and old in their sins.

"It behoved Christ to suffer." It was a necessity, for all have sinned, and the wages of sin is death, and after this the judgment. If sinners ever were to escape the judgment to come, and know the unspeakable blessing of sins forgiven, Christ must suffer, and this Jesus whom I preach unto you is Christ; He is both Lord and Christ, and there is no salvation in any name but His. If men could have cleansed

their own souls from their filth and atoned for their own sins and saved themselves from Satan's power and the just judgment of God, do you think that God would have sent His well-beloved Son to suffer? Nay, He is a just God, and while He will not give His glory to another, He will not rob others of any glory that is their due, and if men could have saved themselves He would have let them try, and when they had accomplished the work He would have said, "Well done!" and crowned them with the glory of a great achievement. Indeed, for 4000 years they had their opportunities, though God well knew the result from the beginning, and they only proved that they were without strength for good, that all their righteousnesses were but filthy rags, that all the world was guilty before God.

"It behoved Christ to suffer." For God would have all men to be saved; and the Saviour of sinners must suffer the judgment that their sins demanded. None could do that but Jesus, who came to give His life a ransom for all. He came from heaven's highest glory, for He is the Word, the Creator, and He became a man to undo the works of the devil and suffer for sins—He, the Just One for us the unjust, to bring us to God. I would warn you against those who deny the Deity of our Lord. There are those who teach that He began His existence in the manger at Bethlehem. If that were so the Scripture has no meaning which says, "Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though *He was rich*, for your sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty might be rich." If He began His existence in Bethlehem, John's Gospel is a lie from its first sentence to its last, and Micah was a foolish dreamer when he prophesied seven centuries before the event, "But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be

little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall He come forth unto Me, that is to be ruler in Israel, whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting." Our Saviour Jesus Christ is the great God, and only those who have no sense of what sin is, and how firm and unshakeable God's righteousness must for ever stand, would deny it. Without shedding of blood is no remission. Hence the Saviour must be a man or He would have no blood to shed, and He must be God or His blood could not have met the case, it would not have had atoning value.

It is written that Christ must suffer, and from the moment that His Name was called Jesus there could be no turning back, for that Name was given to Him because He should save His people from their sins. He had come to make good His title to that Name. He bore it upon the cross of Calvary encompassed by hosts of foes. He will bear it upon the throne of glory surrounded by countless friends, all ransomed from hell's deep judgment by His sufferings and precious blood. Beware of those who preach a gospel without the blood and a Christ without the cross. Their gospel is no gospel at all, but a deception of the devil. In it there is neither righteousness nor love, justice nor mercy. God is not revealed in it, nor Satan exposed, nor sin, nor the heart of man, which is deceitful above all things; and it cannot breathe into the sin-burdened soul those peace-giving words, "Thy sins are forgiven thee."

"It behoved Christ to suffer," and for such as we are He died. He passed through this world, so foul in its sin and pollution, holy, harmless and undefiled, but His path through it led only to the cross, and when we were yet without strength, in due time CHRIST DIED

FOR THE UNGODLY. How wonderful is that sentence! I read it with gratitude and rapture in my heart, and I said, "Christ died for the ungodly. Why, Lord Jesus, my Saviour, that means me, Christ died for me," and as I pondered the great fact, a light above the brightness of the sun broke into my soul. I learnt that God loved me in spite of my sins, and my darkness was dispelled, the scales fell from my eyes, I was delivered from the captivity in which the devil had held me, and I saw the truth, and the truth is that God is love but I never could have known it, nor could any other sinner, if Christ had not suffered, "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 remission of sins is a priceless blessing, for it cost an inconceivable price. It never could have been preached to sinners if Christ had not suffered, but now it is offered freely to all, and because it is free, some have scornfully called it cheap. It is not cheap, it is the most costly thing on earth or in heaven; the price that was paid for it was the blood of God's dear Son. If you would know its value you must penetrate the thick darkness that wrapt itself about the Saviour at Calvary; you must fathom the depths of woe into which He sank when He cried, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" You must know the greatness of your sin and the value of His blood.

These things neither man nor angel can measure; then neither man nor angel can tell the value of the forgiveness of sins—this first of all blessings that has come to us through the sufferings of Christ. Happy are those who can say, "In whom we have redemption, through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of God's grace."

If we who have believed can rejoice in this great salvation, it is because of the sufferings of our great Saviour, and we know that He suffered because of the great love wherewith He loved us. It is this that binds our hearts to Him with a true devotion. We love Him and follow Him, not because crowns of glory shine upon His sacred brow, but because He suffered for us, when He was made sin for us on the cross. We should not marvel that men and women have made great sacrifices for Christ's sake and have even gladly laid down their lives for Him, for it was the love of Christ that constrained them. They could say, "The Son of God loved me and gave Himself for me," and they could do no other than they did do. The marvel is that any who have heard the story should be indifferent to it and hold back from complete surrender to Him.

He had to rise again the third day, according to the Scriptures. This also was a necessity. Beware of those deceivers who deny the bodily resurrection of Christ, for "If Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins." Thus it is written and thus it must be. If Christ is not raised, there is no Saviour for men and no hope, and we who have trusted in Him are of all men most miserable; for if He is not risen, then have our sins proved too heavy a load for Him, and Satan's power too great and death too strong. If Christ be not raised, then has the grave triumphed and He has failed in His mission, He has failed both God and man, and His word can no more be relied upon, for He said that He would suffer and rise again the third day. But now is Christ risen from the dead, and His resurrection is one of the great facts of the gospel, and those who deny it are ministers of Satan. I preach a risen Saviour, and

none other will suit you. He died, but He lives; He suffered, but He has triumphed. Hear His own words: "I am He that liveth, and was dead; and behold, I am alive for evermore. Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death." His resurrection is the proof of a work accomplished, of a sacrifice accepted, of justice satisfied, of death defeated, the power of Satan annulled, and God glorified. His sufferings upon the cross proved His willingness to save, His resurrection from the dead has proved His power to save. I proclaim to you a victorious, almighty Saviour who is willing and able to save even you.

God has put His seal upon the work of Christ, by raising Him from the dead, and now, through His Name, repentance and the remission of sins are preached to you, and these two things go together. Repentance must come first: there could be no remission apart from repentance. But what does repentance mean? Not fear of the consequences of sin, nor even sorrow for the sin itself, though that will surely go with it. Repentance is a complete turn. When God commands all men everywhere to repent, it is as though He said, "Right about turn!" Unconverted sinner, you have turned your back upon God, and you must admit that that is a serious thing to do; it is, to say the least about it, a most discourteous thing to do. If you were admitted to the presence of His Majesty the King, you would not turn your back upon him, certainly not if he wished to speak to you. God is speaking to you, He is beseeching, entreating, commanding you, and you will not listen. You have turned your back upon Him. I call upon you at this time to "Right about turn," and hear what God is saying to you.

If you would only believe the preaching, you would turn to Him, as did a

soldier friend of mine who was killed in the war. He was an old soldier, the regimental sergeant-major of a famous regiment. He was converted in South Africa during the Boer War, and this is how it came about. He was canteen sergeant at the time, and had sunk as low down in debauchery as it was possible for a man to sink. Of course, he was miserable, for how can a sinner be happy?—so miserable that on one Saturday night outside the canteen he cursed and blasphemed God as though He were the cause of his misery. He returned to the canteen with his hatred of God surging up in his heart, when he saw lying on a table a gospel tract. He picked it up and read in it: "You may be a great sinner, but God loves you." The words went right home to his soul and conscience as God's answer to his cursing. They changed his view completely and altered his whole outlook, and that very night, as a broken-hearted sinner, he turned and found himself face to face with a pardoning God. Yes, that very night at the feet of Jesus his sins were forgiven. That utter change of mind which turned the canteen sergeant to God was repentance. Will you turn as he turned? This repentance is preached to you in the Name of the Lord Jesus, and if you obey the word and turn you will meet a pardoning God.

Who can describe the blessedness of forgiveness? It is quietness after the storm, relief from the great burden. It gives a deep, holy peace to the heart as the sense of it is realized. The Pharisee cannot know this blessedness, nor the man who excuses his sins or refuses to own to God and to himself that he is a sinner. But the man who has felt the smart and sting of sin, the man who has discovered that his sins are neither dead nor done with, that he cannot escape them, that with persistent feet

they are pursuing him, gathering round him and crying insistently, "Thou art the man"—that man will welcome it and value it. The man whose conscience has been awakened and who feels that he has sinned against God and has looked into the abyss into which his sins were forcing him, he will find no ease and no rest until he is assured of God's forgiveness; he cannot forgive himself, neither man nor angel can justify him, but God can, and with a broken and contrite heart he will turn to God and find that God will put upon him the kiss of forgiveness and clothe him in the best robe. Then he will

take up David's song and say, "Blessed is the man whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered."

Who will honour God by believing His gospel? Who will bow down and bless the Saviour for His sufferings and victory? Who will confess His glorious Name and follow Him, prepared for suffering in this life, if needs be, for His Name's sake, but assured of glory with Him hereafter? If you are convinced that this is the truth that I have preached to you, you will surely bow to it, and personally accept it and give God thanks.

FOR CHRISTIAN WOMEN.

(J. T. M.)

1 Peter 3.

THERE are three things spoken of in the New Testament that are of "great price," or very costly.

1. The alabaster box of ointment that Mary poured upon the person of the Lord in view of His burying; and the intelligence of love and adoration that lay behind that act was so exceedingly precious in the estimation of the Lord that He decreed then and there that "wheresoever this gospel shall be preached in the whole world, there shall also this, that this woman hath done, be told for a memorial of her."

2. The pearl of great price, which is the church, and for which, and to secure it for Himself, the Lord, the merchant-man, sold all that He had, such was its value and such it will be for ever in its unfading beauty in His eyes.

3. A meek and quiet spirit in a Christian woman—this we read "is in the sight of God of great price" (1 Peter 3. 4). Of no service that men can render is such a thing said, of no labour or toil have we such an eulogium; it is fragrant to God, as was Mary's ointment, it is beautiful in His

eyes as the church is in Christ's. What could Christian women desire more than this? Here is fragrance that the skill of the perfumer cannot produce, here is an ornament that no jeweller can devise, here is beauty that surpasses everything that art or nature can show, and it is enduring, for that which is of great price in the sight of God, He will preserve for ever. And this is within the reach of every Christian woman. Why should they seek great publicity in service or prominence in the eyes of men? Let them ponder over this word of God and go in for this, and as they develop and show this meek and quiet spirit they will be, by what they are rather than by what they do, of use to others, because precious to God.

We do not make little of service by making much of this. Women ministered to the Lord. Phebe was a servant of the church and a succourer of many, and women laboured with Paul in the gospel—all right and good in its place, but the meek and quiet spirit exceeds everything, it is of great price in the sight of God.

THE END OF THE AGE AND THE COMING GLORY.

(R. McCALLUM)

Address given at Glasgow, January 2nd, 1931.

Scriptures read : Daniel 2. 31-35, 44, 45 ; 2 Timothy 3. ; Revelation 5.

THERE is a false optimism abroad in the world, the spirit of which largely pervades the Church of God. It is supposed that the welter of evils is but a passing phase, a legacy of the late war, rather than the abiding characteristic of this age. While it is true that it ill becomes the children of God to be pessimists, in view of their eternal security and the stability of all God's purposes, it is most desirable that we should be intelligent concerning the ominous days in which we live and that we should recognize that our lot is cast in the time of the winding up of this age.

We shall all agree that the moment sin came into the world the work of redemption became a necessity. One only was fit to undertake that work, but with a view to its accomplishment God chose the nation Israel to serve a threefold purpose : (1) To be the repository of the Word of God ; (2) To be the channel through which Christ should be presented to the world ; and (3) To be a testimony in the midst of the idolatrous Gentile nations to the true character of God. The first two of these purposes have been fulfilled, for "unto them were the oracles of God committed," and of Israel we read, "of whom concerning the flesh Christ came." But by their constant unbelief, rebellion and idolatry they signally failed to fulfil the third mission, and on account of this failure God has punished them by allowing them to be led captive into Babylon, and, consequent upon their rejection of the Messiah, He has scattered them among the nations of the earth.

With Nebuchadnezzar there began the times of the Gentiles : then was

inaugurated the four Gentile world empires presented to us in the image which was the subject of that king's dream. God permitted Nebuchadnezzar to besiege Jerusalem and to take Judah captive, not because he was a man after His own heart, not because he was a seeker after God, for he was neither, but as a scourge to His people and to show how privilege and power are abused, whether committed to Jew or Gentile. It is not my purpose to dwell upon the details of the image. Suffice it to note the deterioration in the metal as we view the head of *gold*, setting forth the Babylonian Empire ; the breast and arms of *silver*, featuring the Medo-Persian Empire ; the belly and thighs of *brass*, depicting the Grecian Empire ; and the legs of *iron* with feet part iron and part clay, representing the Roman Empire. Needless to say, the deterioration in the quality of the metal cannot portray progressive inferiority in military prowess or extent of empire, for Cyrus extended his empire by absorbing that of Babylonia, and of course the armies of Rome were most renowned and its territory most expansive. As all students of prophecy know, however, the inferiority of metal exhibits the deterioration of the monarchical nature of rule manifested in these Empires. The Babylonian Empire was the most absolute monarchy that has yet existed on earth. "Thou, O king, art that head of gold." Cyrus was assisted in his rule by his Persian satraps and was subject to the laws of the Medes and Persians—his was a limited monarchy. The Empire of Alexander the Great was divided among his four chief generals, and in the Roman Empire we find the democratic

idea, symbolized by the clay, coming prominently into view. The Roman banners bore the inscription S. P. Q. R.—Senatus Populusque Romanus—the Senate and the Roman people—the iron and the clay. Certain it is that we live in a democratic age, and little less certain that we live in days just preceding the emergence of the ten toes, a league of ten nations, the revived Roman Empire.

Just under a century ago the franchise was extended in this country to include half a million voters of the middle classes, but now adult suffrage has been granted to both sexes, over seven million women voters being added at a stroke of the pen, and we now have men and women representatives in Parliament and in the Cabinet. God has, I believe, permitted government to pass through these varied phases and at last to be committed to the less cultured classes that it might be demonstrated conclusively that failure in government and human wrongs and ills are not essentially due to the form of government, but are due to the inherent sinfulness of human nature. Great is the confidence of the masses in democracy—the government of the people, for the people, by the people; but instead of democracy exercising ultimately a steadying, humane and benign influence, we find that it becomes anarchical. Anarchy demands Anti-Christ, the superman to guide and control; with the clay there is mixed the iron; full-blown democracy is accompanied by the worst form of dictatorship.

In Bolshevism we see whither democracy is tending. The recognized founders and teachers of modern Socialism were Lasalle and Karl Marx—apostate Jews—and the fact that the Bolshevik leaders are also apostate Jews is guarantee of the true nature of the

movement as not only irreligious and immoral but positively anti-God. Zinovieff has said, "We will grapple with the Lord God in due course; we will vanquish Him in His highest heaven and wherever He seeks refuge, and we will subdue Him for ever." We may feel disposed to smile at the fatuity and futility of the threat, but that threat reveals the heart of man in the last days and spells persecution and bloodshed for God's people in Russia. God's ideal of government for this earth is an absolute monarchy with all power committed to One who is holy and righteous, and portents in the political sky convince many that the day is fast approaching when God will vest His power in Him who is the Man of His counsel, even Christ our Lord.

But what shall we say of the religious world? Are not its characteristics faithfully depicted in the third chapter of Paul's second epistle to Timothy? "This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection"—all so descriptive of our age as to need no comment. "Truce-breakers"—an age in which political and commercial treaties are regarded as scraps of paper whenever their obligations are felt to be inconvenient. "Lovers of pleasures, more than lovers of God"—was there ever such a crazy age? The youngest here knows how the demand for more and more pleasure is breaking down the sanctities and the amenities of the Lord's Day. It was Voltaire, the inveterate infidel, who said, "If you would destroy Christianity you must first of all destroy the Sunday." In verse 6 we read, "For of this sort are they which creep into houses, and lead captive silly women laden with sins,

led away with divers lusts." A pronounced feature of these days is the prominent part played by neurotic women in false religious movements. Such women, aroused by conscience to a sense of guilt before God, but refusing His remedy for their condition, cast about for an anodyne and invariably find it in the lure of the occult.

There is emphasized in our verse the secretive, cowardly, seductive methods used by the teachers of such systems in the spread of their propaganda, and by such means Christian Science, New Thought, Theosophy, Buddhism, Spiritism, are inoculating and corrupting Western civilization. Christendom has become impregnated with the doctrine of a false science, that there is nothing in the world fixed or final. It believes that no teaching is absolutely authoritative, that progress demands a break with tradition, that intellectual worth is shown by drifting from old moorings in the spirit of adventure and quest; it pooh-poohs the idea of revelation, it is "rich, increased with goods and has need of nothing." It has become broad-minded enough to embrace within its pale every form of heresy; charitable and tolerant to the point of denying any standard by which to judge right or wrong, good or evil. Sin for it has become mere obliquity of vision and frailty of nature; redemption has become conformity to such ethical standards as will save from scandal. What, then, have we to do in the midst of it? "From such turn away"; but to what, then, shall we turn? "But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them; and that from a child thou hast known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus."

Was not Timothy saved then? He was, but he was commended to the holy Scriptures as that which would deliver him from the spirit of the age, if accompanied by faith in Christ Jesus—that which would save him from the snare of teachers who resist the truth—reprobate concerning the faith.

In Revelation, chapters 2. and 3., we have presented to us by Christ Himself the causes of the apostasy coming upon the earth. These causes are to be found in Christendom and originated in that which Christ alone could detect, defection from first love to Him, and the subsequent failure to hear His call to remember, repent, and repeat the first works. The succeeding chapters exhibit the consequences of that apostasy for the earth dwellers; believers in Christ who have in any measure kept His word and have not denied His Name, being kept according to His promise from the very hour of temptation's coming to test the world. Consequent upon the rapture of the church to heaven, Christendom and the world—bereft of all true believers, and the restraining influence of the Holy Spirit—will plunge along in its ungodly career, exalting itself against God, "the heathen raging and the people imagining vain things." Meantime there will be enacted in heaven an event of transcending importance for this world, as revealed in chapters 4. and 5. of Revelation. There we find the investiture of Christ with kingly authority to be exercised on earth. All there speaks of serenity and stability: a throne is set, encircled by a rainbow, for God will remember His promised blessing to the earth, despite His judgments. Yea, He will introduce it into perpetuity of blessing, albeit through suffering unprecedented.

John "saw in the right hand of Him that sat on the throne a book written

within and on the backside, sealed with seven seals," and throughout God's universe sounded the loud voice of a strong angel issuing the challenge, "Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof?" The title-deeds of earth filled full of God's proposed dealings with earth, so that history can never add a tittle thereto, are laid upon the open palm of Almighty God, inviting worthy acceptance, and John weeps because there is no claimant. The One to whom John's attention is invited, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, who has prevailed and who is worthy, is in no great hurry to prefer His claim. He who has tarried two thousand years can tarry yet a little, and would rather be accounted slack concerning His promises than be swift to judge. But He who was offered all the kingdoms of the earth in the secret places of the desert and refused them at the hands of the god of this world, now comes forth in the view of the assembled hosts of heaven to take from the hand of God Himself that which is His not merely as Creator but His on the basis of Redemption. When the foundation stone of earth was laid, then the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy, but now the living creatures and the four-and-twenty elders, all the saints in heaven, sing a new song, saying, "Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof. . . for Thou hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation." And although we do not read of the angels singing here, they say with a loud

voice, "Worthy is the Lamb to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing," while they behold the results of redeeming grace in the saints and contemplate the power that He is about to exercise. Anticipatively we join to-day in that new song and say from our redeemed hearts, "Thou art worthy . . . for Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God"; and we rejoice, do we not? in the approaching hour of His worldwide dominion, when He shall reign and introduce that golden age for which men throughout the ages have been sighing.

Then "shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed . . . it shall break in pieces all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever." In the interval we rejoice to hear Him who is the Lion of the tribe of Judah say to our souls, "I am the Root and the Offspring of David, and the bright and morning star." Soon will the sun of righteousness arise with healing on its wings for Israel and the earth; meantime we look for the harbinger of day—ininitely bright in its own heavenly sphere—the promised morning star. "And the Spirit and the bride say, Come, and let him that is athirst come, and whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely." As we view the ruin in Christendom and the defiance of ungodly men, let us not be overcome by the spirit of pessimism and despondency, but as those in the secret of the Lord, let us lift up our heads, knowing that the hour of our redemption draweth very nigh.

IS thy spirit drooping? Is the tempest near?
 Still in Jesus hoping, what hast thou to fear?
 Set the prize before thee, gird thine armour on,
 Heir of grace and glory, struggle for the crown.

THE GLORY OF GOD AND JESUS.

(A. J. ATKINS.)

"*THE God of glory, who appeared unto our father Abraham. . . .*"

So said Stephen in the opening of his great address in Acts. At the end of the chapter the sacred historian tells us that the dying martyr, looking up, saw "heaven opened and *the glory of God and Jesus.*" It is of great interest to compare these two statements. There is much in common between them, but also important differences, as we hope to trace.

God ever had been—and is—the God of glory. In Old Testament days, it is true, this fact could only be divinely discerned, for God's glory was but partially revealed in His creative handiwork (Ps. 19. 1); it was largely concealed in His providential ways, and was enshrined in darkness and mystery in the inner sanctuary of the tabernacle and the temple in the midst of His people. Even these partial glimpses called forth the reverential awe and devout praises of Israel's godly ones, as we see from a multitude of Old Testament passages. Many of them, however, must have felt the desire voiced by Moses when he said: "I beseech Thee, *show me Thy glory*" (Exod. 33. 18). The prayer could not then be fully answered. God was largely hidden, and the future life was largely shrouded in uncertainty and sometimes even in gloom. Life and immortality have been brought to light only by the gospel (2 Tim. 1. 10), and seers looked forward to a day of universal blessing, when the "glory of the Lord should be revealed," and should "cover the earth as the waters cover the seas." They looked for Messiah's kingdom on earth, and the rule of the heavens. Their faith and hopes generally looked for a place in that kingdom *on earth*. Yet, notwith-

standing that Enoch of old had disappeared from earth and Elijah had gone up in a whirlwind, it does not seem to have been considered that anyone should "go to heaven." Heaven was God's dwelling-place, the abode of His presence. The presence of God was awesome to them, as we may see from the chosen three on the holy mount, who feared as they entered into the glory cloud that descended to envelop the Lord Jesus. The point is, that the horizon of Old Testament believers did not extend beyond earthly blessing, and even then it was often covered in mist.

In the "glory of God *and Jesus*" we have a conception and reality entirely new, brought to pass consequent upon the death, resurrection, and exaltation of the Lord Jesus Christ. *The "glory of God" regarded as a place has been opened for man*; and the "glory of God"—the effulgence of His nature, and all that it includes—"shines now in the face of Jesus Christ," that is to say, is resident in His Person. This tremendous fact—together with its correlative, the descent of the Holy Spirit—governs the present era of Christianity.

This opening of the glory for man is no esoteric thing; a secret only made known to favoured initiates; something reserved for an "election within the election of grace." It is an integral part of the gospel that is "made known among all nations for the obedience of faith." Let us listen to Paul's words: "I endure all things for the elect's sakes, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus *with eternal glory*" (2 Tim. 2. 10). Let us weigh these chosen, inspired words—"with *eternal glory*": they imply not only a place in the kingdom on earth—the hope of patriarchs and prophets—but

a place in the "heavenly kingdom" of our Lord Jesus Christ (2 Tim. 4. 18); yes, a place in heaven with the Son of God. This precious fact, thus so clearly stated by Paul, is sweetly suggested to us in the Gospel of Luke, which follows in so many respects the great apostle's teaching. In the beginning of that Gospel we see that when the Son of God entered the world, man had no room for Him, even in one of his rude "inns"; at the close of the same Gospel, we find God opening the Paradise above, with Christ's company, for a poor wretch that men themselves could no longer tolerate on earth! Wonderful grace! The following words express the truth sweetly and concisely:

"Forth from that eternal glory,
Thoughts of love divine have come;
Brought from thence by One who loves
us,
Who would have us THERE AT HOME."

Again, and to the same point, we read: ". . . the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, whereof ye heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel" (Col. 1. 5). The gospel provides, then, a *salvation for glory*.

This wondrous blessing is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that *calleth*. "The God of all grace," we read, "who hath called us unto His eternal glory by Christ Jesus . . ." (1 Peter 5. 10). Again, "God hath called (us) to His kingdom and glory" (1 Thess. 2. 12). This "call" is not the gospel invitation merely: it is what the Puritan divines used to speak of as "effectual calling." It guarantees the result, for it is a matter entirely of "God's purpose and grace given us in Christ Jesus before the ages of time." As an old writer has said: "Effectual calling is the middle link in the undividable chain of salvation; he that hath it, is sure of both the ends, i.e., of his past predestination

to life and of his future glorification. Our calling is the manifestation of our secret election, and a sure forerunner of glory; being in effect the voice of God telling us beforehand that He will glorify us."

It is most establishing to the soul to see that from the foreknowledge of God in the ages past to the glorification that is yet future, it is one vast scheme of blessing. "Whom He did predestinate, them He also called: and whom He called, them He also justified: and whom He justified, them He also glorified" (Rom. 8. 30).

Those so "called"—believers—are also the "sons of God by faith in Christ Jesus." Theirs is the adoption; and they are being *led to glory*. "It became Him by whom are all things, and for whom are all things, in *leading many sons to glory* to make the Captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings" (Heb. 2. 10, N.T.). Into what capable hands have the sons been committed! How tenderly and skilfully are they being led home! What a glorious destiny is theirs!

We have this thought brought before us again in Romans 9., where the "sons" are spoken of as "vessels of mercy before *prepared for glory*" (verse 23). The truth, only barely alluded to in this verse, of our being fitted for our future, is developed in other places of the New Testament. We have, indeed, no other "*title to glory*" than the blood of Christ; in virtue of that blood we have been "made meet for the inheritance of saints in light." But God would also have us morally suitable and ready for the place He has prepared for us, and this work of preparation is proceeding now.

This thought of being "prepared" throws most blessed light on the difficult question of the ways of God

with His own. "All things work together for good to them that love God, to those who are called according to His purpose." How clearly this explains the need for God's *discipline*, His educative ways with His sons (Heb. 12.). It is, of course, true that discipline may be retrospective and retributive, that is, on account of evil allowed in our life and ways; but more often, perhaps, it is anticipative; it looks forward to our destiny, and is a part, a necessary part, of our training.

The truth we are considering helps us to understand not only discipline but also the *suffering* that is the portion of the faithful. Suffering is one of the clearest credentials of our sonship, and a true pledge of the glory to come. "If so be that we suffer with Him (Christ), that we may be also glorified together" (Rom 8 17). The close connection between suffering and glory, upon which Scripture is so emphatic, helps us immensely, and is intended to help us to maintain a sense of perspective which in times of pressure it is so easy to lose. Happy they who in this respect can reckon with Paul when he says: "I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us!" (Rom 8 18). And again: "Our light (lit., featherweight) affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal" (2 Cor. 4. 17, 18).

The "glory (that) shall be revealed" in us is thus a deep source of consolation and strength, enabling us to "rejoice, inasmuch as (we) are partakers of Christ's sufferings, that, when His glory shall be revealed, (we) may be glad also

with exceeding joy" (1 Peter 4. 13); and in the midst of such suffering "the Spirit of glory and of God" rests upon the suffering saint. Not only consolation, but strength, too, is ours. "Strengthened with all might, according to the power of His glory, unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness" (Col. 1. 11). The Christians of early days may not have understood much of this in theory and theology—few probably did—but they had it in experiences in Christ; and the way they could suffer in patience and even die in triumph confounded their enemies. Thank God, this is *not* a lost secret to-day, though it is difficult to learn.

It is outside the scope of this paper to consider the truth of the "mystery," but we would allude to it in passing as it bears upon our subject. God would, we read, "make known" to us "what is the riches of the glory of this mystery . . . which is *Christ in you, the hope of glory*" (Col. 1 27). Whatever else this means, it means surely that there is a most blessed experience of Christ open to us Christians, which is a very foretaste and pledge of the glory to come. Another has said, "If we have the experience of His dwelling in our hearts, we shall have in that very experience of His sweetness and of the intimacy of His love, a marvellous quickener of our hope that such sweetness and intimacy will continue for ever. The closer we keep to Him, the clearer will be our vision of future blessedness. . . . If Christ is in us . . . our experience will be such as to demand eternity to complete its incompleteness, and to bring forth its folded buds to flowers and fruit." As another has well said. "Our expectation of that indescribable future is not as if we only 'saw it afar off,' and 'embraced it' with wistful longings across an inter-

vening void. We are in vital contact with it already. . . . He is already in us as the bud of Himself the flower, the dawn of Himself the day." The glory has thus begun for us in "earnest." Meanwhile, "we rejoice in *hope* of the glory of God" (Rom. 5. 2) to be realized at the coming of the Lord.

"Glory" stands both for a place and a state. As to *place* we shall be in "the Father's house." As to state we shall be completely delivered from every vestige of the old creation, its bondage and limitations. We shall be invested with "the liberty of the glory of the children of God" (Rom. 8. 21, N.T.). "Our bodies, now bodies of humiliation, will be made like unto His *body of glory*" (Phil. 3. 21, N.T.). Our flesh and blood condition will have gone for ever. Mortality will have been swallowed up of life. We shall "see Him as He is" and be "like Him"; "conformed to the image of God's Son." We shall know as we are known. Nothing will hinder perfect vision, perfect love, supreme joy and unceasing praise. And all will be to the "praise of His glory" who planned and prepared it all for us and who "wrought us for this self-same thing." Of the

Kingdom glories we do not here speak, except to quote what really sums them all up while it transcends them: "When Christ our Life shall appear, then shall (we) also *appear with Him in glory*" (Col. 3. 4).

All this, let us take care to note, is not a matter of attainment, but rather of obtainment. It has been secured for us in Christ, by the grace of God, through Calvary. It is not dependent upon our faithfulness and practical "sanctification," though it should and does produce these. It is "all of grace, yes, grace surpassing." It is consequent upon heaven being opened, and the glory of God and Jesus being there. It is all bound up with "the gospel of the glory of the blessed God" (1 Tim. 1. 11, N.T.).

This precious theme is included in the doxology that concludes the epistles of the New Testament. Let us close with these words: "Now unto Him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the *presence of His glory* with exceeding joy, to the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen." (Jude 24, 25.)

WHO IS THIS?

THE concluding verses of Matthew's Gospel record the words that our Lord spoke on the Galilean mountain which He had appointed as the trysting-place for His disciples after His resurrection from the dead. And it is a strange enigma that any one who accepts the record as Holy Scripture can deny or doubt His Deity. He must have a mind that is not governed by reason. Who can this be who has "all power in heaven and on earth"? Who is this who commissions the disciples to teach *His* commandments? Who is this that dismisses them with the words, "Lo, I am with you all the days, even unto the end of the world"? And this is only the fringe, as it were. That the Father is God, and the Holy Spirit is God, Christian and Jew acknowledge. Who, then, is this who claims equality with both, placing His name with theirs, and taking precedence, as men would say, with the Holy Spirit?

THE WORD OF CHRIST.

(T. OIVFR)

Scripture References : Luke 10. 38-42 ; Colossians 3. 16.

THE "one thing needful" is the knowledge of Christ, and hence the appreciation of Himself. One can only know Christ by hearing His word. His word is His revelation. The consequence of hearing His word is gradual self-effacement. John the Baptist realized this as he gave utterance to the expression, "He must increase, but I must decrease" (John 3. 30). In consequence of the increased appreciation of Christ there must necessarily be self-displacement.

Mary made no attempt to justify her action under the accusation of her sister. She was content to leave the matter with her Master. There is no need to institute odious comparisons between Martha and Mary, as is the common practice with commentators. Martha's function was quite right in its proper setting. Service is necessary, but we cannot serve rightly apart from hearing His Word. Ahimaaz wished to be of service in running with tidings to the king in the matter of the death of Absalom, and although more efficient physically than Cushii his running was profitless because he had no message from Joab (2 Sam. 18. 14-32).

Martha's restlessness was out of place. Mary had spiritual sensibility. She could not have explained her action satisfactorily. Indeed, logically Martha's argument was unanswerable, as Mary seemed to be shirking work. But the Lord rebuked Martha, yet very tenderly, and at the same time He showed his appreciation of Mary's attitude. Sitting at the feet of Christ had the result of illuminating her soul. The bride in the Canticles gives expression to similar experience thus, "I sat down under His shadow with

great delight, and His fruit was sweet to my taste" (Song of Songs 2. 3).

The Lord speaks of Mary's portion as that good part which will not be taken from her. She was in the position of a disciple, and was therefore being instructed through hearing His word. It is our privilege to know Christ similarly. Our blessing depends upon our being led by the Holy Ghost into the knowledge of Christ. The Spirit as the "Spirit of Truth" has the special function of guiding us into all truth. He is the sole Agent in the opening up to us of the truth of God which is the revelation of God. Moreover, He shall glorify or magnify Christ, "for He shall receive of Mine, and shall show it unto you" (John 16. 14).

What are these things that are specifically described as "Mine"? All things that the Father hath are His, therefore the Spirit can say, "He shall take of Mine, and shall show unto you." Moreover, "All things are delivered to Me of My Father: and no man knoweth who the Son is, but the Father; and who the Father is, but the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal Him" (Luke 10. 22). We have an unction from the Holy One, and as a consequence know all things. But these things communicated and unfolded find their centre in Christ—they are things of His. It is inconceivable that such an unction would illuminate us with anything else than the knowledge of Christ, i.e., the essence of eternal life.

Multitudinous books have been written on the principles of teaching in the various spheres of mental apprehension, but the Spirit's sphere,

mode and principles of teaching defy all explanation. The mighty power of the Spirit brings the heart of the Christian under the influence of the love of God, and as we develop in His love, our spiritual apprehension is enlarged. We are found reaching forth unto those things which are before: things which relate to eternal life. Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father—it is the same power which is now dealing with us. The Son is the object of all the Father's thought, and He is the subject of all the Father's teaching and of the proclamation of the Gospel in the widest sense of the word—Christ is indeed the central subject of Scripture.

It is of prime importance to realize that God the Father has in view a cosmos of blessing which in its infinite variety of spiritual phenomena transcends all human expression or conception, whether considered in the microscopic or the megascopic aspect. That cosmos originated in the Father's purpose, and therein everything is as precisely adjusted as in the physical cosmos, and the medium through which the life peculiar to that sphere works is the love of God.

The apostle's prayer in the third chapter of Ephesians discloses the magnitude of the sphere of which Christ is the centre and theme, and the burden of the prayer is that we may know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge. Although this expression is paradoxical, it is simply explained when we come to see that there are

two kinds of knowledge, radically different in nature and in mode of communication. But as the spiritual cosmos is opened up to our ravished gaze by the power of the Holy Spirit of God, we see how the love of God moulds everything to accomplish His will, and also to promote the good of His people. This vision eclipses the physicist's conception of a miniature solar system of electrons revolving round a centre of protons in the ultimate atom of nature.

The expression "the word of Christ" in the third chapter of Colossians is a unique usage in the apostolic writings, and it is fraught with meaning. The word of God is likened to milk in other Scriptures, and on this analogy the word of Christ may well be described as the cream on the top of the milk. The cream proclaims the richness and the quality of milk, so the word of Christ proclaims the richness and quality of the word in its personal application, and it is not to partake of a transient character, but to dwell in us richly in all wisdom. If we are to be efficient in the two-sided work of "teaching and admonishing one another," we must have wisdom which is the product of metaphorically sitting at the feet of Christ and hearing His word as Mary did, and there will be the concomitant "singing with grace in our hearts to the Lord." The word of Christ is the solution of all the questions which continually arise, with the tendency of wrecking Christian unity in the visible sphere.

"*THE Lord stood by him and said, Be of good cheer, Paul: for as thou hast testified of Me in Jerusalem, so must thou bear witness also at Rome.*" We have no need to fear any change in this life if the Lord is our support and His glory our aim. Whether Jerusalem or Rome it is one and the same, for He, not we, is equal to both, and we may face this or that with good cheer. *Thou shalt testify of Me.* That was all that mattered to Paul; may that be our joy wherever we may be.

THE EPHESIAN EPISTLE.

(JAMES BOYD.)

Chapter 1. continued. Verses 15-23.

HAVING set before the saints that which God had before the foundation of the world purposed to bring to pass for His own glory and the glory of His beloved Son, and for the eternal blessing of those who were yet to be brought into being, but who were present to His eternal mind: creatures in the position of sons, and in the love of which His own Son was the alone all-worthy object; and also having made known to them the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He purposed in Himself; that is, in the administration of the fulness of times to head up all things in the Christ; and now sealing all who believed the gospel of their salvation with the Holy Spirit; the apostle then prays for them; and first of all, "That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him: the eyes of your heart being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of His calling, and what the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of His power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of His mighty power, which He wrought in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places."

Here Christ is viewed as Man, and hence we have God said to be "the God of our Lord Jesus Christ." In another place (chap. 3. 14) He is said to be the "Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." There He is viewed in the intimacy of divine relationships, the Son, the Creator and Upholder of all things, and the Centre of all the counsels of eternal love. But as Father of glory, it is God viewed as the author

of all the glory that shall light up the eternal universe.

He, by whose wisdom and power this glory shall fill the new heavens and the new earth, is the only One who can give us the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Himself, which is necessary for us to have, if we are to enter intelligently into these things that are brought before us, so that they may lay hold of the affections of our hearts, and form us morally according to His desire for us.

As to the desire of the heart of the apostle for us, he speaks of three things which he desires us to know. And first, "the hope of His calling." All our spiritual blessings are in the heavenlies in Christ. We have many mercies in our pilgrimage to our home on high, but our spiritual blessings, which are all eternal, are in heaven. He has also called us to sonship—"Holy and blameless before Him in love." The hope of such a calling can only be known in the measure in which we know Him who has called us. Our appreciation of His calling can only be in the degree in which we appreciate the revelation which He has made of Himself. Hence it is by the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him that we can enter into the intelligence of those infinite purposes of God. May our souls be saturated with the *radiance* of this glorious calling!

Next the Spirit of God would have us know the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints. It is in the saints that He shall take His inheritance. We shall understand this better if we understand the way in which God would have taken His inheritance that was given to Abraham and to

Abraham's heirs on the line of Isaac and Jacob. The Patriarch was called out of Ur of the Chaldees to a land that God would give to him and to his descendants. But when he came into it the Canaanite was there, and for four hundred years held it in possession. The time for taking it in possession had not yet come, "For the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full" (Gen. 15. 16). Therefore the heirs of the promised inheritance were compelled to be strangers in a land that was not theirs until the fourth generation. Then God brought them back to the promised land. But the end of that was that God had to scatter them because of their iniquities, and they lost the land; and their loss of it meant God's loss of it also. Had they remained faithful the land would have been theirs for ever, and therefore it would have been still under the hand of God. But in a coming day He will bring them back out of the countries into which for their sins they have been driven. They shall be purified by judgment and by grace; and the remnant that is left of them shall, under the reign of the Christ of God, inherit the land, and teach the nations the law of Jehovah.

But this shall not be apart from the saints of this present dispensation who are joint-heirs of Christ and inherit all things with Him. The heavenly Jerusalem shall be light to the Jews, and to the spared nations of the earth, and the leaves of the tree of life shall be for their healing. It shall be the metropolis, the light and the glory of the whole peaceful universe, as the earthly Jerusalem shall be the metropolis of the world. The riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints shall be seen in the new heavens and new earth. We are to understand the riches of the glory of this now.

The next thing is "the exceeding greatness of His power to us-ward," manifested first in the resurrection of Christ from among the dead, and setting Him at His own right hand in the heavenlies, above every principality and authority, and power, and dominion, and every name named, not only in this age, but also in that to come, and putting all things under His feet, and giving Him to be head over all things to the assembly, which is His body, the fulness of Him who fills all in all. This is the power that wrought in Christ, and which works now in us to give us part with Him in the glorious position that He now occupies, and which in eternal purpose was given us in Him before the ages of time.

The whole redeemed creation must eventually be ordered according to the counsel of the Godhead, counselled before He began His works of old. Nothing shall be altered, for when His works are all finished everything shall be as He intended it should be before He began.

In chapter 2. we find that same power moved and put into operation by His own sovereign love; not a love of pity or compassion, but free, sovereign, and eternal love; love that would not turn away from us in loathing on account of the loathsome condition in which we lay, but in spite of that abominable state, for "His great love wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead in sins, quickened us together with Christ, and raised us up together, and made us sit down together in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus, that in the coming ages He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness towards us in Christ Jesus."

Only think of that sight which met the eye of God when He looked down upon this world upon which He was

going to operate for the blessing of His creature, and for His own eternal glory. It is not only that His authority had been set at nought, His laws broken, His prophets slain, but the Son of His love, the last and greatest exhibition of His infinite love to men, dead through the violence of this world's princes, and ourselves morally dead and corrupt ! Yet this is just the quarry out of which He was minded to bring stones for the holy temple, the spiritual house, where sacrifices would be offered up acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.

What power could act in such a corrupt state of things? Not the highest creature in the universe. But God—ah ! What about Him? Few among men take account of Him. Are we to leave Him out? Are we to devour with fire a ruined world, and throw the Book of God's counsels into the burning? No, we shall bring Him in with shouts of joy. But God, who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead in sins, quickened us with the Christ, raised us up, and seated us in Him in the heavenlies, let us ascribe all glory and honour to Him.

Satan has been defeated. He is subtle and presumptuous. He effected the ruin of the first man, and in the career of the descendants of that man we see the extent of the ruin into which he fell. Man is dead—dead even while he lives in his sinful flesh—dead to God, though very much alive to sin and Satan—dead while taking a very active part in the affairs of this world—dead while ruled by the prince of the power of the air, doing that which the flesh and mind desire to do in this ruined condition. Men in this world are alive in their sins, in their self-will, corruption, and rebellion against God ; but dead to Him, not

a pulse of real life moving in their whole moral being.

But has He whose purpose is to bring many sons to glory been defeated? It is clear that God cannot maintain the creature in active rebellion against His beneficent sway, and give him licence to corrupt for ever His fair creation. Must He then destroy the human race, and confess Himself unable to give effect to His eternal purpose of blessing? Must He confess that He has been out-manœuvred by His implacable enemy? Far be the thought: He who makes the wrath of man to praise Him, and restrains the superabundance, can in His infinite wisdom make the puny efforts of every rebel creature serve to the fulfilment of His eternal decrees. No sane person could ever suppose the Creator overreached by the creature. All His creatures exist for His service. Elect angels have been upheld in their primal perfection, and others have been allowed to fall from their first estate, and for these we do not read of recovery. Man made in the image and likeness of God fell, and brought into existence a fallen race ; but to these mercy has been manifested, and a way of salvation devised. But if preserved in their first and perfect condition, or if allowed to fall, all is for the wise purpose of God, and all are made to serve to the fulfilment of the purpose of eternal love. He does not bring about the fall of any one of His creatures, but where a creature is placed on the ground of responsibility, obliged to fulfil whatever obligations are imposed upon him, he cannot complain if by the exercise of his own will he finds himself a ruined sinner.

By His activities God makes Himself known in His own creation. His love has come to light in the death of His Son, who by the grace of God gave

Himself for us, His judgment of sin in the cross of Christ—His wrath has yet to come fully to light. But whether it be wrath or judgment of sin, or condemnation of the sinner, nothing can manifest it more than can the cross, when He who knew no sin was made sin for us, and bore the judgment of it in the three hours of thick darkness; a judgment which brought from the heart and lips of the holy Victim that heartrending cry: "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?"

The power that by the eternal love of the heart of God was set in motion in the resurrection of Christ from the dead, and in placing Him in the highest place in the universe, does not rest until we who were dead in sins have

been quickened, raised up, and made to sit down together in Christ Jesus, that He might display in the coming ages the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. It is in this way He has recovered us for Himself. In His purpose we were in Christ before the foundation of the world, and in Him where He is glorified, at the centre of a universe designed by His unfathomable wisdom and perfected by His power. The spring of both His activities and wisdom is the unspeakable love of His heart. The day is coming in which we shall see all these purposes fulfilled, and we ourselves at the centre of that world of glory *with* the Son of His love, as we can now be said to be *in* Him. Then shall He have taken the inheritance in His saints.

EFFECTUAL PRAYER.

"*The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.*"—James 5. 6.

EFFECTUAL PRAYER is prayer that lays hold of God who is able.

FERVENT PRAYER is prayer that comes from a heart that is burning with desire that that shall be done which only God can do.

A RIGHTEOUS MAN is a man who is subject to the will of God Himself, and so can freely and intelligently pray that the same will may be done in regard to others. Such a man prevails over every devil-intruded obstacle; his prayer avails and it availeth much.

AVAILETH MUCH. It can turn to profit the efforts of the devil to thwart the will and worth of God; it turns the greatest difficulties into the most glorious opportunities, for it substitutes the power of God for the helplessness of man.

If there is one thing more than another that we need to be stirred and exercised about it is this matter of prayer. So many prayers are neither effectual nor fervent. They cannot be, because the will of God is not working in the heart of the one who prays. Subjection to the will of God, as expressed in His word, is essential to availing prayer.

FAITH, to justify itself at all, must take and keep the highest level—an omniscient, omnipresent, all-sufficient, ever-available God; and then how does the nothingness of man only give occasion to the display of the power and glory of God!

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

The Washing of Regeneration.

“Could you give me the meaning of the word in Titus 3. 5, ‘the washing of regeneration’? Does it refer to the soul’s salvation or to the laver in the Tabernacle or to feet-washing in John 13.?’ I Shall be thankful for some light on the passage”—PETERHEAD.

THIS beautiful passage of Scripture (verses 4-7) describes for us the way in which God our Saviour has saved us with a *present and practical salvation*. It is not the work of Christ for us that is in view, as in chapter 2. 14—though it is the result of His work, and it is all given to us through Him who is our Saviour—but it is a work of which we are the definite and personal subjects. Verse 3 describes what we were and where we were before this work was done; we were the slaves of sin and lust, living in a state of malice and of hatred. It is out of that position and state that God has saved us by giving us a new position and state.

The word “regeneration” occurs in one other place in the New Testament (Matt 19 28), and that passage will help us to understand this. *The Regeneration* there is the Millennial age, when the Son of Man shall sit on the throne of His glory. Then He shall be supreme in contrast to this age in which sin reigns unto death. What a change there will be then! The earth will be washed from its pollutions and will rejoice in righteousness and peace through being brought under the authority of the Son of Man, the Sun of Righteousness. But there will not only be a change of authority and so of position, but a change of state also, for God’s laws will be written in the minds and hearts of the people.

God has anticipated that great change in us who have believed the gospel. In His mercy He has delivered

us from the dominion of sin and set us under the authority of Christ—grace reigns for us through righteousness, and we have *the washing of regeneration* now. We *professed* this change of position and authority in our baptism, as Romans 6. teaches, but an inward state was necessary as well as the outward position, and this God has effected by the word; and though the word “regeneration” is not the same word as “born again,” we have no doubt that the new birth is involved in the washing of regeneration.

There is a power also that goes along with this salvation, and this we have in the Holy Spirit. When the Son of Man sits on the throne of His glory, He will maintain the blessedness of “the Regeneration” in the energy of the Spirit of God, His power will pervade the Kingdom, and this also is anticipated for us, for the Holy Spirit has been shed upon us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour. In the Spirit we have the never-failing and every-day resource to maintain us in this present, practical salvation so that instead of being what we were formerly, we may now show the completeness of our emancipation from our former bondage by giving diligent attention to good works.

The word “washing” may be translated “laver” or “bath,” but there is no connection between it and the feet-washing of John 13, or the laver of the Tabernacle. It would answer more to the Lord’s word, “He that is washed . . . is clean every whit.”

Luke 12.

"I am asked to pass these queries on to you to be answered, please, in 'Scripture Truth.' They all have reference to Luke 12

"1. WHEN will what we have spoken in the ear in closets be proclaimed upon the house-tops? (verse 3) Is the reference to the Judgment Seat of Christ?"

"2. What answers to the 'knocking' of verse 36? You referred to two knockings in the November issue. Here is a third, by the Lord. Does it mean there will be a preparatory impression that He is coming, on the hearts of His servants, just before He comes?"

"3. What is the real interpretation of verse 58? Who is represented by (a) 'the adversary', (b) 'the magistrate', (c) 'the judge', and (d) 'the officer.'"—LAVONIA, JAMAICA

1. WE suggest that verse 3 of this chapter will be fulfilled "in the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my (Paul's) gospel" (Rom. 2. 16). The judgment seat of Christ would appear to have specially in view those who have believed, but here it is the exposure of those who have deceived men but not God. The day of judgment will strip them of all hypocrisy and reveal the thoughts and intents of the heart; hence the Lord warns His disciples against being deceived and influenced by what was merely outward, the leaven of the Pharisees.

At the judgment seat of Christ the believer will appear in his spotless robe of righteousness, which is Christ, and the gift of God, yet it will be true also for him that then the Lord "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). The Lord's purpose in His warning was to set His disciples in the light of that day, and, if we heed His warning and live in the fear of God, we shall pray for sincerity and truth in the inward parts, we shall desire that God would search us by His Word (Heb. 4. 12; Psalm 139. 23). Then what we are before Him in secret will be of great account to us, while what men think will not affect us at all. What we are in secret before God we really are—that is our true measure, and only that will abide.

2. We do not think that the knocking in verse 36 means that the Lord will give preparatory impressions of His coming, for when a person knocks at the door, he is not coming but has arrived. The great point in His words is the attitude of His servants towards Himself: they are to be waiting and watching. Waiting indicates readiness, and watching, expectancy. There is to be on their part an instant response to His knock.

While the commands and warnings and encouragements of this chapter and other similar passages in the Synoptic Gospels have their bearing upon our hearts and consciences, and are as much for us as any other, we have to remember that the rapture of the saints to heaven according to 1 Thessalonians 4. has no place in them. It is the appearing of the Lord that is in view, and on this side of the truth the responsibility of His servants has its place.

3. In verse 58 the Lord is addressing the Jewish people. He chides them in verse 56 for not discerning the time. It was the time of their visitation, the acceptable year of the Lord for them, for He was among them. Yet they did not know it, they could not discern the time or perceive who He was. They were passing on to the time of judgment, to "the day of vengeance of our God." But at the time God was with them "in the way" in grace in Christ, not imputing their trespasses to them. But they were as deaf to the entreaties

of grace as they had been to the demands of the law, and by their blindness and rejection of Christ they were making God their adversary. They had provoked Him throughout their whole history and He had been patient with them, but now "wrath to the uttermost" was about to fall upon them. There was still hope, and so the Lord urges them and warns them to be reconciled to God. They turned God, who would have been their Saviour, into their Judge, by crucifying their Messiah and finally rejecting the testimony of the Holy Spirit as to His resurrection and exaltation, and they were delivered into the hands of the Gentiles, God's officers for the execution of His will (see Matthew 22 7).

From the time that the Romans destroyed Jerusalem they have been under God's governmental wrath (1 Thess 2. 16), a suffering and down-trodden people, and there will be no release for them until, having passed through the great tribulation, Jacob's trouble (Jer 30. 7), they confess their guilt (Zech 12 10-14) and recognize

their Lord at His coming in glory (Isa 25 9). Then they shall have received double for all their sins (Isa. 40 1), and "the last mite" of the demands of God's *governmental* dealings will have been paid. For the salvation of their souls and for the question of the eternal forgiveness of their sins individually, the blood of Christ will alone atone. It is here the nation as a nation that is in question. Many individuals were saved *out of the nation* (Acts 2 40)—three thousand, for instance, on the day of Pentecost. They found salvation in Christ (Acts 4. 12), for He was to them the city of refuge for the man-slayer, while the nation itself passed on blindly to its doom, refusing to be reconciled to God.

The adversary, the magistrate, and the judge would be God in His various administrations and governmental dealings with the Jews. We know that it has been thought that Moses was the adversary, and for this John 5. 45 is quoted, but we believe that the real interpretation is as we have given it.

Women Speaking in Public.

"As a young believer in Christ, I should like some light on the following Scriptures—1 Corinthians 14 34, 35, 1 Timothy 2 11, 12. These Scriptures are explicit enough as to the silence of women in the assembly. But we have a weekly Bible reading in the assembly with which I am connected, and our custom is for some brother to read the portion we have under consideration. Of late some brethren have asked sisters to take part in reading the Scriptures and asking questions. Ought they to do so in the light of these Scriptures?"—A BROTHER IN CHRIST.

FIRST let us be clear as to "the assembly." The assembly, or church, in the primary sense of it, embraces every person who is united to Christ, its Head in heaven, by the Holy Spirit, who has come down from Him to do this. The assembly locally, as in 1 Corinthians, includes all the Christians in that place, or when gathered together should represent all. It would be grave presumption for any company of Christians to call themselves the

assembly of God in any place where there are other Christians meeting together apart from them. We know that some do this, but it only shows how little they understand the truth of the assembly and how feeble is their sense of the ruin into which it has fallen.

Yet the truth of the assembly abides, and it is possible for the saints of God to gather together *according to the*

truth of it. "Two or three" may do this, but they will do it without pretension. But what does this involve? First, that the Lord Jesus is recognized as the Head of His assembly, and that His Lordship is acknowledged by those who gather together. While the Scriptures never speak of the Lord as Lord of His assembly, His body, yet they clearly show that when His saints gather together His Lordship in the assemblies must be practically and gladly owned, He must be supreme. That means that each one, brothers and sisters, teacher and taught, surrenders any rights that he may have thought he had, and own that He alone has rights. It is His will and word that must be carried out, hence we read in this very connection, "If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord" (1 Cor. 14.). One of these commandments is that the women keep silent in the assemblies, and this not because they are in any way inferior to the men, but because in the assemblies the truth of the assembly must be practised. And the truth is that Christ is Head and His assembly must be in subjection to Him. The women represent this subjection, so that they cover their heads "because of the angels" (1 Cor. 11.) and are silent (chapter 14.)

The question would arise as to what gatherings together of saints have

assembly character. Three are indicated in 1 Corinthians: (1) for the judgment of evil (chapter 5 4), (2) for the Lord's Supper (chapter 11 20), (3) for ministry and edification (chapter 14 23). We might add also for prayer (Matthew 18. 19, 20), for the name and presence of the Lord are definitely connected with gatherings together of that sort. In all these meetings women who are subject to the Lord will be silent. But what of the Bible readings that you describe? In them the Lord does not exactly direct by His Spirit, as in 1 Corinthians 14., but those who are intelligent in the Word contribute what they have learned for the instruction of all. It is really a Bible study, with question and answer and discussion, and where there is the grace of Christ and a true desire for the general good, and of course subjection to the Lord, such gatherings may be very profitable and are needed; but we should not say that they were meetings that have assembly character, nor would we lay down a strict rule as to who should take part in them; it would be more a question as to what is comely, and we do not think it comely for Christian women to speak in public meetings. If they have questions to ask, "let them ask their husbands at home" This would give them a double benefit. They would show true Christian modesty in public, and the conversation in the home would be of profitable things.

"Withdrawing From" and "Putting Away."

"I should feel greatly indebted to you if, through the pages of 'Scripture Truth,' you could give me help on the following passage of God's Word—(2 Thess 3 6-10) Does the passage teach 'putting away' as 1 Corinthians 5? Is the church given authority to exercise discretion as to the sins meriting 'putting away,' or have they to be specifically named, as in 1 Corinthians 5 8, 1 Timothy 1 19, 20, etc.?"

"When Paul says, 'have no company,' how far are we to apply this, as apparently one must have a certain kind of company, to obey verse 15, 'admonish him as a brother'?"

"If you could help me on this rather difficult passage to one young in the faith, I should be very thankful indeed."—WARRINGTON.

THE exhortation, "withdraw from every brother that walketh disorderly," does not contemplate the extreme measure, "put away from yourselves *that wicked person*" (1 Cor. 5), for in this case he had still to be recognized and admonished as a *brother*. The disorderly conduct in question was idleness, contrary to the example and teaching of the Apostle Paul, and, as "Satan findeth mischief still for idle hands to do," *the idler* soon became a *busybody*. The brethren had to show their disapproval of this kind of conduct by withdrawing from the company of such, and as the word of the apostle was, "If any will not work neither let him eat," these idlers were not to be invited even to a meal; they were not to be supported in any way in their evil course.

A busybody is one who is always ferreting out and talking about somebody else's business, and from this, evil speaking and back-biting are sure to grow, but if the brethren refused to listen to the busybody's evil talk, declined to harbour him in their houses, and said, We cannot idle our time with you, for we have our work to do in obedience to the will and in the Name of the Lord Jesus, he might be ashamed and repent. But what is done faithfully must not be done harshly; he must be admonished as a

brother. A false liberality would confirm him in his evil ways; true love to him would lead to this wholesome discipline for his own good and that of all, for "evil communications corrupt good manners."

In 1 Corinthians 5 we have instructions as to how to act when all discipline has failed to affect a man, and he has fallen into positive wickedness, and without repentance continues in it. To continue to recognize such a one as a brother would make it appear that the Christian fellowship was as debased and defiled as the pagan fellowships. He must be "put away from among yourselves," for the honour of the Lord's Name and the holiness of Christian fellowship. This extreme action is called for in regard to any who by their conduct bring public dishonour upon the Name of the Lord, or blaspheme, or deny *the faith* by holding and teaching false doctrines, specially in regard to the Person of the Lord (2 John). While discretion and the responsibilities as to such action must always lie with those who take it, this "putting away" is so serious a matter and yet so imperative that the Lord in His word has very clearly defined who should be the subjects of it, and any authority in the matter lies not in those who do it, but in the commandment of the Lord which they must obey.

THE BLESSING OF WEAKNESS.

THE experience of weakness is one with which God would have us thoroughly acquainted. It is the healthful condition of a creature, necessary to him as such, and no distress, but the opposite, in proportion as we know God as the One in whom "we live and move and have our being." Then we can be still and let Him show His might, and under the shadow of His wings find refuge. Sin has made such experience more than ever necessary for us, by the very fact that it has made distress of weakness, which could never be were the breach between us and God fully healed. Faith implies this healing; but we must know ourselves little indeed, if we know not how weak faith is. Every fresh need demonstrates it, and thus the manifold experiences are ordained to us, which, whatever shame they may cause us by the way, are to end in glorifying Him in all things, and thus in truest blessing for ourselves.

GOD'S MOVE AND THE DEVIL'S COUNTERMOVE.

(J T MAWSON)

"I will open My mouth in parables; I will utter things which have been kept secret from the foundation of the world."—Matthew 13.

A TARE-SOWN wheat field, a tree of monstrous growth and a bowl of leavened meal! What connection could there be between such diverse things as these? It would seem, until we possess the key, none at all, and that the Speaker was talking without point or purpose. But our Lord, who gave to us these similitudes of the kingdom of heaven, has also given us the key to them, and having got this, we realize how perfect, how divine was His pre-vision, for no figures could have been chosen that could have more accurately described the progress of the profession of His Name on earth. The key is the Lord's interpretation of the wheat and the tares. Having got this, the mustard tree and the leavened meal need no explanation, they are self-evident, at least to those whose eyes are opened and to whom understanding hearts have been given.

In declaring the parable of the wheat and the tares the Lord left nothing to the imagination of His disciples, or ours; every detail of it is explained.

The sower is the Son of man.

The field is the world.

The good seed are the children of the kingdom.

The tares are the children of the devil.

The enemy is the devil.

The harvest is the end of the age.

The reapers are the angels.

The tares are to be gathered into bundles to be burned.

The righteous shall shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father.

The sowing of the seed was God's

great move to secure a harvest for Himself from this world. The seed by which these children of the kingdom, which are the harvest, were produced, and are still being produced, was His own word—the revelation of what He is. This revelation could be made by His beloved Son alone, for "no man hath seen God at any time, the only begotten Son which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him," and when this declaration was completed it could be summed up in three words—"GOD IS LOVE." The children of the kingdom are born by the word of God, and just as it liveth and abideth for ever, so have they eternal life.

But who can tell what it cost the only-begotten Son to sow the seed? He had to become the Son of man to do it, and while universal glories gather round that great title, and He is worthy of every one of them, the first mention of it in the New Testament opens up the hardships that were His. It says, "The foxes have holes and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of man hath not where to lay His head." As to the actual sowing of the seed and what it meant to Him we read in an Old Testament Scripture—"He that goeth forth *and weepeth*, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing His sheaves with Him." In His mission, which He only could accomplish, He encountered the contradiction of sinners against Himself and the powers of darkness, and "the days of His flesh" were characterized by "prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears." If a tongue were given to the Mount of

Olives, what a story it could tell of those nights of prayer and tears that it witnessed, while guilty Jerusalem slept all heedless of the fact that God in infinite compassion and ready to forgive all its transgressions was moving in the midst of it!

The Son of man was the Man of Sorrows, and that not in His life only. His life was the road that led to His cross, for to this end was He born. **THE SON OF MAN MUST BE LIFTED UP**, even as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, and "God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." It was thus that the seed was sown, and thus was God fully declared. This was the price that was paid in order that God might have a harvest for His heavenly garner from this world, and that in the meanwhile the kingdom of heaven might be established on earth.

The devil is the enemy, and the sowing of the tares was his countermove. He had been unable to prevent the establishment of the kingdom of heaven in the world of which he was the prince, but he set about at once with consummate subtlety to oppose and spoil it. He opposed it by imitating it. He had tried this plan before in his conflict with God, when, in the court of Pharaoh, Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses by imitating his miracles, with the result that the hearts of Pharaoh and his Egyptians were hardened against the Lord. He showed his hand in this way first in the kingdom of heaven when he filled the heart of Ananias to lie to the Holy Ghost by pretending a self-sacrificing devotion to which the love of Christ had constrained others. I do not say that this man and his wife were actually children of the devil, but in their conduct we see the way in which the devil proposed to

neutralize God's work. At that time the servants of the Lord were wide awake, and they were able to meet the enemy's craft by the power of God, and he had to wait until "men slept" to carry out his design.

The tares amongst the wheat have completely changed the original and true character of the kingdom of heaven. Its beginning was as a grain of mustard seed, "which indeed is the least of all seeds." In its beginning it bore the character of its Founder, who "made Himself of no reputation," and who came not to be ministered unto but to minister, and who taught His disciples that the least among them, and the one who could become the servant of all, was the greatest. The apostles understood the teaching of their Lord and obeyed it; and in consequence they were "made as the filth of the world, the off-scouring of all things." The mind that was in Christ Jesus was in them, and while they were despised of men and persecuted, God blessed their doctrine and manner of life greatly, but not to the wise and mighty and noble, for not many such were called, but to the foolish things of the world and the weak things and the base things and the things which are despised and the things that are not (1 Cor. 1. 26-29). Such were the children of the kingdom, and such was the beginning of it. But the children of the devil sown amongst these, surreptitiously at first, could not bear this character, it was contrary to their very nature, for they are like the one whose children they are, and his great sin was pride, and his determination to be greater than God had made him was the cause of his fall. How could the children of the devil be content to be nothing? Can the Ethiopian change his skin? Not having become the children of the kingdom

of heaven by new birth, but having crept into it by some other way, they could not do other than vaunt themselves and "reign as kings," when and wherever it was possible. So the mustard seed grew, not into a lowly plant—for these children of the enemy, having the spirit of the world, knew that such a growth could only be despised by the world; it could have neither form nor beauty in its eyes—but it grew into a great tree, in the branches of which the fowls of the air lodged. It evolved into a tree of monstrous growth, and here we do see evolution, a thing growing into something altogether different from its origin, a thing contrary to nature.

The figure of a great tree is used in Scripture for men or nations in their greatness and political influence. It is used in this way in Daniel 4. to show the power to which Nebuchadnezzar had attained, and in Ezekiel 31. it is used to describe the Egyptian and Assyrian powers in their pride and political greatness. It is this figure that the Lord takes up to show whereunto the kingdom of heaven would grow in the world after the introduction of the tares amongst the wheat. How divinely accurate was His forecast! At Rome the Pope wears the triple crown, and claims sovereign authority over kings and princes throughout Christendom, and at one time actually exercised that authority, and will do so again; and the aim of the great Protestant bodies is to influence the world's politics, and to make a great show in the world, and every principle upon which they have acted to bring the kingdom of heaven into this place of prominence in the world is a negation of the principles of truth laid down by the Lord. The tares have carried the day, and have found in the kingdom of heaven a sphere in

which they can vaunt themselves, and in which their pride and ambition can have full scope. It is the devil's work. Nothing could have enraged him more than the lowly, dependent, obedient, self-sacrificing life of Jesus here, and nothing can have surprised him more than when that same life was reproduced in His disciples by the power of the Holy Spirit; it was the effect of this in the world that he endeavoured to neutralize by the introduction of the tares, and he has succeeded in his endeavour so far as the kingdom of heaven in its present form is concerned.

The birds of the air lodge in the branches of the tree, and what these are we learn from verse 19 of our chapter, for they cannot be other than those that catch away the good seed from the hearts of those who hear the word: they are Satan and his evil spirits. It is said of Babylon the great, which is another aspect of the kingdom of heaven having come to the consummation of its corruption: it "is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird" (Rev. 18. 2). And this brings us to the last of the three similitudes, the leavened meal.

God's order is, first the doctrine and then the manner of life, and the manner of life is formed and fashioned by the doctrine. The secret of godliness is the truth as to God manifested in flesh (1 Tim. 3. 15, 16). But this has all been reversed in the corrupted kingdom of heaven. In it the doctrine must be made to suit the ambitions and pride and conduct of those who have assumed power in it. This surely is what is meant in 2 Timothy 4. 3—*"The time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves*

teachers, having itching ears ; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables." This is the present state of things in the kingdom of heaven, but in order to make this possible there had to be a gradual corruption of the sound doctrine, and this is the meaning of the leaven which the women took and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened. A woman taking a lead in religion and presuming to teach is contrary to the revealed mind of God, and we read in the Lord's appeal to the church at Thyatira—"I have against thee that thou sufferest that woman, Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed to idols" (Rev. 2. 20). There is no doubt that Thyatira deals with the phase of the profession of Christ's Name on earth that has specially developed in popery, and it is true that it has been the greatest corrupter of the kingdom of heaven that has ever been in its history.

The leaven is unsound doctrine ; never in Scripture is it used to symbolize what is good, and the Scripture would lead us to think of it in connection with the fowls of the air that lodge in the branches of the mustard tree, for we read in 1 Timothy 4., "Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils ; speaking lies in hypocrisy," and this not in heathendom, they have nothing else

there, but in the kingdom of heaven, and in the very house of God.

We realize how completely the devil has lulled even true servants of Christ to sleep (Matt. 13. 25) as to his work and designs, when we see that for centuries the popular interpretation of the parable of the leaven was that it represented the gospel, which should be preached in the world until at last it would be converted and made ready to welcome the Lord when He came in His kingdom. There is not a line of Scripture to support such a delusion. The three parables stand together and teach us the beginning and the progress of evil in the kingdom of heaven.

Is God, then, to be defeated ? Surely not. The day is coming when He will act with discrimination and judgment. "The Son of man shall send forth His angels, and they shall gather out of His kingdom all things that offend, and them that do iniquity ; and shall cast them into a furnace of fire : there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. THEN SHALL THE RIGHTEOUS SHINE FORTH AS THE SUN IN THE KINGDOM OF THEIR FATHER. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear."

Meanwhile we specially commend the second Epistle of Paul to Timothy, and the Epistle of Jude, to the prayerful study of those who desire to be faithful to the Lord. In them they will find the condition of things that these parables bring to our notice described in detail, and the path of the faithful in the midst of it.

FAITH, to justify itself at all, must take and keep the highest level—an omniscient, omnipresent, all-sufficient, ever-available God ; and then how does the nothingness of man only give occasion to the display of the power and glory of God !

“AT THAT TIME.”

(ROBERT WHYTE.)

Matthew II. 25-30.

LET us specially notice the words, “At that time.” At that time the Lord of glory was passing on His way. The cities in which His mighty works had been done were all being closed against Him, and His enemies were already gathering themselves in battle array to crush Him, and humanly speaking all seemed to be lost, His life seemed to have been a failure, His ministry was apparently fruitless, for all the cities where He had laboured most said, “We have no place for Him.” And what was His answer? At that time He answered and said, “Father, I thank Thee.” He turned away from the closed ears of men, to find His Father’s ears opened to Him. He had no will in these matters but the Father’s will, and what seemed good to the Father contented Him. He had a rich resource in the Father’s love, and it more than compensated Him for all the closed doors down here. Everything had been delivered to Him of the Father and yet there seemed no evidence of this. Yet the Father’s way was the way of divine wisdom and so, said our Lord, “Even so, Father: for so it seemed good in Thy sight.” The grace that was there present in Jesus was revealed to some, but not the learned, not the Scribes and the Pharisees, but to those who were of no account, to the babes. These had been born into the family of God, it is to such the Father would speak, and to them He would reveal the grace of God the Son.

Then follow these words that have been the solace of countless weary hearts. Have we not often meditated upon them in our weakness and hours of darkness? You say, “What a gospel invitation!” I would not say, No, to that, for He stretches out His arms for all, but I think in these words there was a special invitation to His own disciples. “Come unto Me, all ye that labour”; it may be translated, “All ye that are weary”—weary with labour that seems to have no result, labour that has made life a burden, and the world a weary place. To all whose experience has been such He says, “Come . . . I will give you rest.” The arms that are extended to the weary are the arms spoken of by Moses, when he said, “Underneath are the everlasting arms.” Ah, we have a place upon which we may rest our heads and where the weary may find rest. It is encouraging to have such words. How encouraging to you who are tested and tried and disappointed, who have found that things you had hoped were trustworthy have failed you, it is to discover that there is One that standeth permanent. That same blessed One who walked the roads of Galilee, is the same yesterday, to-day and for ever. And He still says, “Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden . . . Take My yoke upon you . . . for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest to your souls.”

“*THE trial of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ.*” We may not always realize this whilst we lie in the crucible, but it is nevertheless true when the furnace is regulated by the great Refiner an eternal residue of precious ore is extracted—wealth for His treasury—and much of our carnal dross is purged away.

GREAT REJOICING AND MANIFOLD TRIALS.

(H. J. VINE.)

GREAT rejoicing amid many trials is the experience of many to-day, and these things have marked the elect of God from the earliest days of the Faith. Peter wrote to those who were "scattered," and he desired that "grace and peace" should be multiplied unto them. Writing of God's salvation, he said, "Wherein ye *greatly rejoice*, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through *manifold trials* (or temptations)" (1 Peter 1. 6).

But what was it caused them to "greatly rejoice" ? and why were these " manifold trials " allowed ?

The Holy Spirit gives us the answer to both questions, so that our hearts may be comforted, our spirits cheered, and our footsteps quickened as we pursue the onward path to the glorious day of Christ's coming.

Notice how Peter turns the heart in thanksgiving to our God and Father. He says, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to His abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively *hope* by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead" (3). Beginning with the same words, Paul, in Ephesians 1. 3, also turns to the same Source of all blessing, saying, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who *hath blessed us* with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ." This latter speaks of what is ours now in Christ, whereas the former speaks of what shines as a bright hope before us. From whichever standpoint we view what our God and Father has done, we may well bless Him. He *has blessed* the redeemed in Christ in the heavenlies now, and He has begotten them again to a living *hope*.

This hope centres in our Lord Jesus

Christ. "All the promises of God in Him are yea, and in Him Amen." The unfading inheritance, and the great salvation of God soon to be revealed, but known already to faith, are secured in Him who tasted death for us and who is now crowned on high with glory and honour. Because He is there, it can be said, the inheritance is "*reserved in the heavens*" for us; and we are "*kept guarded*" here by God's power through faith. The inheritance is kept where our Saviour now is, and we are kept here while He is on high—kept "UNTO SALVATION READY TO BE REVEALED IN THE LAST TIME" (5).

This answers our first question. It is this which causes the heart to *greatly rejoice*; so it is said, "*WHERE-IN YE GREATLY REJOICE.*" Those to whom Peter immediately wrote had believed on the One who had suffered in this world, who is now glorified on high. His sufferings and the glory to follow had long ago been foretold. The Old Testament Scriptures pointed forward to a time when Israel should be blessed through Him, when all nations should call Him blessed, when all the earth should be filled with the glory of the Lord, when all flesh should see His salvation, when men shall walk in the light of the Lord and learn war no more. The One who is to bring all this to pass is already exalted, and He is ready to re-appear at the appointed time. Then the glory and the salvation which centre in Him will be revealed, and the waiting time will give place to songs of praise and scenes of gladness, peace, and blessing. Therefore the apostle said, "Wherein ye *greatly rejoice.*" The One who had redeemed them by His blood was exalted in glory already, and all was safe and secure in Him.

This, known to faith in the Holy Spirit's power, might well cause those who believe it to greatly rejoice. More, however, has been disclosed concerning this hope of glory and salvation than is mentioned by Peter. The Spirit through Paul has shown in 1 Thessalonians 4. that the LORD HIMSELF will come *for us* before He shines forth in glory *with us*! And if the former causes the heart to greatly rejoice, surely this may well cause us to rejoice still more! Caught up to meet Him in the air before His public appearing, we shall be for ever with the Lord! Glorified together with Him before we appear with Him in glory, we shall see Him and be like Christ! We shall see Him as He is!

Along with the rejoicing, however, at the present time, there is something quite different: "Now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold trials (or temptations)." It was so in the earliest days, and it is so now as the Lord's return draws nigh. Great rejoicing and manifold trials are still the experience of numbers of those who are saved by grace, who are being "kept by the power of God through faith."

Thank God it does not say the *rejoicing* is only for awhile; but it does say "for a season, if need be, ye are *in heaviness*" through the trials. Seasons run their appointed time, and they are necessary. The autumn and the cold of winter pass. The spring and summer follow; and the results of deepened rooting and vitality appear. The season of heaviness or of being put to grief is necessary. "If needed," for "a little while," says the apostle, "ye are put to grief by various trials." They are not all the same, they are varied; and there is a reason for them all. That reason is given by the Spirit of God, and answers our second ques-

tion—Why allowed?—"That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, *might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ.*"

God sets such value upon faith, He allows its quality to be evidenced. Gold perishes, though valued by men so highly. The proving of our faith is much more precious. Gold is for *present* use, and fire purifies it. The trial of our faith yields for the *future* something that will not perish, that is abiding. In a coming day the full answer to one question—*Why these manifold trials?*—will be displayed in glorious splendour: "found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ." Not one pang will be regretted then. Not one sorrow will be repented of then. Not one tear or trial—passed for ever—will be considered useless then. Shall not the exceeding joy, peace and beauty of those longed-for scenes cheer us on through this season of trials, as we remember that the present proving of our faith shall yield such riches of praise, honour and glory for our Saviour's day?—for the day of the One who loves us above all else? for the day of Jesus Christ, our Lord, when He appears? With Himself and His worthiness before us, steadfastness will mark us, and goodness and mercy will follow us.

In the gladness and glory of beholding His face, knowing the greatness of His unchanging love—the love which proved itself to be divine and trustworthy at the cross—praise, worship and adoration shall fill those holy courts where the Son of God is pre-eminent. No wonder that the apostle said concerning Him to the saints who were passing through the season of heaviness and manifold trials, "Whom having not

seen, ye love ; in whom, though now ye see Him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory." Peter, though he himself had failed, had been maintained in faith, by the intercession of Jesus, when he was tempted. At his restoration Jesus questioned him as to this, he insisted that the Lord knew that he loved Him. And now he speaks with confidence of those who believed, but had not seen the Saviour. Peter knew they loved Him amidst all their trials and temptations. It is because He first loved us that we love Him. The law demanded it, but did not produce it. God's love in Christ has triumphed in this. Said John, "We have known and believed the love that God hath to us." And again, "We love because He has first loved us" (1 John 4. 19, N.T.). Also, "Hereby we have known love, because He has laid down His life for us." What more could He do? Well, He intercedes for us on high, for He loves us unchangeably and eternally. More-

over, as we have said, He is coming again to receive us unto Himself. God's purpose shall be fully accomplished. Surrounded by the redeemed—all like Him—He shall be seen in His glory, "the Firstborn among many brethren." And "though now ye see Him not, yet believing," says the apostle, "ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory." Blessed be His holy Name.

Yes, the rejoicing may be great with good reason. The trials may be manifold for a season. The glory of which our precious Saviour and Lord is the rightful Head and Centre shall soon shine forth. Already He is glorified with the Father. Soon He will take us up to His Father's house. There we shall behold Him as He is. He Himself shall be the crown of our brightest hope. Blessed be our God and Father whose counsels of love designed it all, who purposed the glorious pre-eminence of Jesus Christ, His well-beloved Son, our Lord.

A NEW EDEN.

(J. T. M.)

Read Philipians 4. 8, 9.

I HAVE heard this passage described as "a new Eden," a veritable paradise of God, and so it is. The old Eden was beautiful with all manner of fruits which were good for food and God was there ; but our first parents forfeited their right to be there by their disobedience, and they were driven out of it, and the sword of the Cherubims flamed every way to guard the entrance and prevent any attempt on the part of the sinners to return.

But here is a new Eden opened up for us, and the ENTRANCE TO IT IS THE CROSS OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST ; by that cross the way has been opened wide unto this paradise where everything is good, and we may roam amid its beauties

and feast upon its glorious fruit—things true and honest and just and pure and lovely and of good report, things of virtue and worthy to be praised. What fruit, what blessing awaits us in this Eden ! It is all Christ, and as we rejoice in His loveliness and He is our food and our souls live and roam amid the glories of His person, the God of peace will be there and we shall walk with Him and He with us.

And the great Apostle, who knew and loved this paradise of God so well, had nothing to say to the saints beyond urging them to enter it ; it is his final "finally." And what need we beyond it? FINALLY, BRETHREN, THINK ON THESE THINGS."

A TESTIMONY.

(AN OLD BELIEVER.)

FROM my earliest days I was of a sceptical turn of mind. I wanted everything brought to the bar of human reason, not realizing how utterly deceptive the reasoning of a mind away from God must be. Had I been able to face the fact of my natural aversion to all that was of God I would not have trusted my mind in the things that concerned my relations with Him. I might have seen that any natural antipathy to a report must always exercise a hindrance to faith in it. Though brought up in a godly atmosphere I absolutely turned away from all so-called places of worship when I left home, and I left home very early in life. To argue the question I was more than willing, but to sit quietly and hear the unfolding of the grace of God was more than my pride of heart would endure.

At length, through the solicitation of a servant of God, I was led to take up the Scriptures and read them, though as far as the letter goes I was by no means ignorant of them. But there came right home to my soul the feeling, that if the Book was of God it could be like no other book that ever was written, and that I could not read it without knowing that it was His Word, that is, if it was. As I read, I said to myself, No one on earth knows me as I know myself, but the Author of this Book knows me a great deal better than I know myself. I felt that God was speaking. I found myself under His omniscient eye, and I fell at His feet. The hammer of His Word had broken the hard rock to pieces. Forgiveness was sought and, blessed be His holy Name, it was found with delight and thankfulness.

Before this I knew that my conduct

was not what it ought to be, but this was as measured by a human standard, now I saw that what would do for men would not pass with a holy and righteous God. It was no longer a question of human frailty, or of mere mistakes, but of absolute rebellion against God and His Christ. But He who had loved me and had given Himself for me was now my righteousness in the presence of God, so that it was no longer the query as to what I was for God, but rather what Christ was for Him. This gave solid and lasting peace. By His work on the cross He made an end of my sins, and, as after the flesh, the man that had committed the sins, and into a new and eternal relationship was I brought, and made conscious of that relationship by the power of the Holy Spirit who shed the love of God abroad in my heart.

Has this all been a dream, an illusion, an ignis-fatuus and baseless phantasm of a sick brain? If it is, I am to be pitied, for I have been under it for over half a century, and the sweetness, joy and delight of it have steadily increased from the first day until now. Are sight, hearing, feeling, life, love, existence, delusions? Are people conscious that they are alive in flesh and blood? Have they any fears that after all they may not be alive but dead? Would anyone thank you for stopping him on the street and assuring him that he was alive? You say, That would be absurd. So it would, but believers in the Lord Jesus are by the quickening power of God in the life of Christ, and have the Holy Spirit dwelling in them. Is this life, then, which they have in the power of the indwelling Spirit, not as real as is the life of flesh and blood?

“THOU sayest,” said Bunyan, “that thou has come to Christ. Tell me, what hast thou come from?”

THE EIGHT SIGNS OF JOHN'S GOSPEL. (JAMES GREEN.)

Sign V.—The Man Born Blind.

Read Chapters 9. and 10.

THE four signs that have been the subject of our previous study have shown us how the grace of our Lord removes things that hinder the entrance of the soul into the joy and true appreciation of eternal life in its practical reality. Much of the teaching of the New Testament is concerned with the present power and enjoyment of life and its relationships. In the practice of referring every Scripture concerning eternal life to its initial reception, there is a danger fraught with much present loss. At the same time the importance of how life is received by faith, John 3. 16, must not be overlooked, for without the conscious knowledge that life has been imparted to the soul which before was spiritually dead, there could be no living to God, nor progress in the knowledge of Himself. "I am come that they might have life," said our Lord of His sheep, but He added, "And that they might have it more abundantly." It is into this latter experience that the teaching of the following signs will lead us by His Spirit.

The words uttered by the Lord, recorded in chapters 7. and 8., were such as never man spake before, but the answer of man's hatred was, "They took up stones to cast at Him" (chap. 8. 59). And a little later, in reply to the work of power that evidenced His Deity, they again "took up stones to stone Him" (chap. 10. 31). The light was shining in the darkness but the darkness remained unchanged. Man is spiritually blind by nature, blind from his birth, and so hopeless is his case that not even the moral radiance of the excellent glory can open the eyes of one born blind.

Such is the setting of the sign, "A man that was blind from his birth." He had not, and never had had, any capacity to discern the least ray of light. Such is man's spiritual condition, a truly painful lesson to learn and accept until we find a new vision in the bestowal of a new receptive faculty, by which the glory of the Person of the Son of God enters the soul and He becomes personally real, an abiding Presence, leading into the holy liberties of the pastures of God. How is this achieved?

First, the inquiry of the disciples brings forth the Lord's reply, that it is not the question of sin either in the man or his parents that He is dealing with, but of the man's incapacity to receive light, his condition providing the occasion for the power of God to manifest itself. Secondly, the process of the sign is deeply significant. "He made clay." Out of the dust man was made, and this was the condition in which Christ was found, but the addition of the spittle, so often a sign of reproach, connected this thought with the humanity He had taken. To the natural man an humbled Christ only increases, if possible, his blindness; but it becomes the means in presence of the pool which bears the significant name of 'Siloam,' 'Sent,' of opening the eyes to the exceeding grace of God, who sent His Son. It is when the fact that such a Christ is the Sent One of the Father takes possession of the soul, when as it were the whole man is bathed in the revelation of the Father in the Son, then we believe the love that God has to us, and in His light see Himself, for "God is love."

Like the dawning of a new day the

light increases in the man's soul, as to the glory of the Person who has given him sight grows upon him. "A man called Jesus," further still, "A prophet," yet higher, a man "of God" until at last the full-orbed splendour of the Eternal Son, displaying the Eternal resources of Divine love, fills his soul. "Dost thou believe on the Son of God?" "I that speak unto thee am He," and "He worshipped Him." It is to this climax that the action of the sign leads. The teaching of chapter 10. emphasizes the lesson, and shows in addition that which follows the inshining of the light. The first consequence was that the man was cast out of the Jewish fold, in which the sheep remained in darkness, and where, Christ being rejected, the light of the glory of God in His face could not be seen. And this must be so from another point of view, for the law is not of faith, and this latter is the only true principle by which fruit is produced that glorifies God.

The fold was a system of legal ordinances and prohibitions, which acted upon men by the twin principles of self-interest and fear. And not only in Judaism, but under the profession of Christianity, men may, even with the object of safeguarding the truth, make a sheepfold, fenced round with rules and regulations, which in result displaces the Spirit of God, and leaves the sheep in uncertainty, darkness and bondage. Such a thing presently assumes the authority of God over the soul, so that the fear of being put out of such a circle becomes a constant dread, or if not this, there is a lulling to sleep in a self-righteous complacency. Out of this bondage, whether then or now, the Lord putteth forth His own sheep. So serious is the power of a legal system, that even, as in the case of the man's parents, natural affection

is forgone, and definite action on the part of the Shepherd is needed to break down the resistance to His leading.

Little did the man in the sign know that the hand of the Shepherd was over his excommunication from the Jewish fold, and still less did he know of the freedom which awaited him, where the new affections formed within him would be controlled by a living guidance, in which perfect wisdom would be united to perfect love. Outside the camp lies the true fellowship of the Son of God, and into this the Son welcomes His own sheep. He Himself the door out, and the way in for them, into a liberty where pasture is found in the fresh fields of the new revelation of the Light and the Life. "The Life has been manifested and we have seen it," said the beloved apostle. Divine life in itself is so essential, and the portion of all in whom God has wrought, but in this sign it is not so much a question of the possession of life, which new birth involved for the saints of all times, but of the condition of life which has been revealed by the manifestation of the Son of God, the life more abundant. A babe has the same life and nature as a full-grown man, but how very different in development, condition and knowledge. Under the Old Testament a condition of childhood and tutelage prevailed, but under the New Testament, sonship and full growth are brought to light. The Son has revealed life in its relationship and communion with the Father as He so perfectly knew it. That this life might be the portion of the sheep involved the cross, and it is theirs, eternal and unchangeable. No power on earth or in hell is able to pluck one of these from the hands of the Father and the Son, or break the relationship, or sever from the love whose supreme

excellence is that it is the love where-with the Father loves His Son.

He that said to the man with opened eyes, "I that speak unto thee am He," added later, "I and My Father are one." This is the shining forth of the glory enwrapped in the cloud of His humanity. Eyes that once were blind from birth now behold the unveiled shining forth of the light. In Him the Divine essence is expressed in purpose, power and love, in the unity of the Persons of the Godhead. "I and My Father are one." The Jews saw instantly that such an assertion was nothing less than a claim to the Godhead of the Son, and they took up stones to stone Him, for that which to their unopened eyes was nothing short of blasphemy. They saw only a man, the clay was upon their eyes, and they discerned Him not as the Sent One of God.

The teaching following upon the sign shows, not only a quickening power, such as imparted life to the saints of Old Testament times, but that the Son having come, and having laid down His life and taken it again, He Himself becomes our life. It is this fact which gives its character and fulness to the life more abundantly. The Shepherd must lay down His life, but in its wonder and meaning His death goes far beyond that which it brings to the sheep, it furnishes also a motive for the

Father's love. By it the Father's glory was re-established; the Father's counsels set free to act; and the Father's heart provided with such an object of willing devotion and obedience, that He can bestow no honour too great, or exaltation too high, upon the Son of His love. This at the same time gives its special character to the acceptance in the Beloved, which is the portion of the sheep for whom He gave Himself.

The true light is shining in which there is no darkness at all, and eyes are being opened by the Sent One, to behold the glory of it shining forth in His Person. Can the reader of these lines say, "It is so with me"? I no longer walk in the darkness of my nature and sin; God is no longer at a distance as once He was, but I have looked upon His glory in the face of Jesus Christ, and, drawn by that light, and impelled by the love it reveals, I follow Him? The hand once pierced for me leads ever forward and onwards, away from earthly forms and ritual, out from fences and folds, into the abundance of joy that is eternal. I have seen with opened eyes the "Light of Life," and "Know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know Him that is true, and we are in Him that is true, even in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life" (1 John 5. 20).

FELLOWSHIP IN HIS SUFFERINGS.

THOUGH Christ is gone from the earth, there is still possible, still necessary, a fellowship with Him in His sufferings—a fellowship of those whose hearts have been won by Him in such sort as to make them practically associates with Him in a life not of the world, and with which the world therefore has no sympathy. It may be true that only exceptionally they are found now "in dens and caves of the earth," and that the time is past when "witness" and "martyr" were but the same word, as implying the same thing. Satan changes his tactics without ceasing to be Satan; and the world may adopt the Christian dress without ceasing to be the world. Still, under whatever exterior, the essential opposition remains.

HIDDEN—MANIFESTED—ACCLAIMED.

(W BRAMWELL DICK)

Notes of an Address.

Please read 2 Kings II. 1-21 and Colossians 3. 1-4.

WE may be quite sure that 2 Kings II. was not written simply as a matter of history, it would not be of any special interest to us to know that in the year 856 B.C. a certain queen was slain, and that a boy of seven was put upon the throne in her place, but "whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning" (Rom 15. 4). We turn to the New Testament and find there the key to all that was written, and in that way learn what the Holy Spirit would teach us therefrom.

There was an attempt on the part of the enemy to destroy the seed royal. If for a moment we suppose the impossible, and imagine that Queen Athaliah had been successful in her diabolical work, that would have affected the coming into this world of the Lord Jesus Christ, and so we can see how in this incident in history God's hand was behind things. If God preserved that infant He did so not merely for the sake of preserving the infant, but because He had Christ before Him. When Jehosheba rescued that royal babe from death, she was actuated probably by the feelings of a good woman and no more; her idea was to do her best for that child that had been committed to her care, and as to what the future might be for it she probably gave no thought. But behind that incident was the hand of God, and behind the hand of God there was the purpose of God.

If I may digress, I think from that we may learn a very useful lesson in our everyday life. There are those things that come into our history that we are unable to explain, which if we had the choice we certainly should not choose,

yet of one thing we may be assured, God is behind them, and there is nothing behind God. If only we could get that into our minds, and see that in our individual life God is working out His plan—and His plan is for His glory, the exaltation of Christ and our greatest good—what a wonderful difference it would make in our lives. If instead of murmuring about things that happen, we traced everything right back to God, we would say: "It is all in His plan and all is well." What that plan is, at the moment we do not know, but we are waiting that day when God will unfold His plan, and when we shall see that which has been so bitter in our lives, and which seemed to crush and overwhelm us, was part of the wonderful plan of God; then will we "bless the hand that guided," and we will "bless the heart that planned"

This woman, Athaliah, was a wicked usurper, and for the six years that she reigned things seemed to be going on as if God were indifferent. It seemed as if God had stepped outside of everything and was just letting things go, and go they did from bad to worse. I think we can see the analogy between that and things as they are to-day. To all outward appearances it seems as if God were indifferent, so much so that the sceptic says, "If God is Governor of this world what is He doing?" So far as man can see, it appears as if God were doing nothing. We find here that God *was* doing something. In the first place God was behind Jehosheba when she rescued that infant from among the sons of the king; when the queen supposed that she had killed every one of them,

God saw that that infant was safely hidden in the house of the Lord. We read in verse three that he was "hid with her [Jehosheba] in the house of the Lord six years, and Athaliah did reign over the land."

Just let us try to put these things together. Athaliah reigned over the land, and everything in the land was going from bad to worse. That is one side of the story. What is the other? That the king's son was hidden in the house of the Lord; unknown altogether to queen Athaliah; unknown to the people who were just about as wicked as the queen herself; and he was God's man, God's king, God's elect. In the fourth verse we read, "And the seventh year Jehoiada sent and fetched the rulers over hundreds." Here was one man at any rate who was in the secret of the Lord. We learn from that a cheering lesson, and that is, there never has been a time in the history of God's dealings with this world, when God has not had His faithful men, He has taken care of that. He has always had those to whom He could make known His secrets; and to whom He could disclose what He was going to do. He does not tell these things to the world, and there has to be moral condition on the part of those to whom He does tell them. He communicated His mind to Abraham, not to Lot. Abraham was the friend of God, and was in communion with God, he was in that condition that He could tell him what He was going to do. What a gainer was Abraham! What a loser was Lot! God is wanting faithful men to-day. If there is one thing we may covet it is to be such in these days. Said the aged Paul to young Timothy, "And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall

be able to teach others also." That is to men who can be trusted to practise the truth themselves and hand it on to others.

Jehoiada knew where to find those who could be entrusted with the great secret, and we are told in the fourth verse that he "brought them to him into the house of the Lord, and made a covenant with them, and took an oath of them in the house of the Lord, and shewed them the king's son." There is something about all this that is exceedingly beautiful. He brought them into the house of the Lord. There were two houses at that time, we have them both in this chapter, the one was the house of the Lord, and the other the house of Baal, and it had to be either the one or the other. He took them into the place where they could learn the mind of the Lord. That was true in that day, and it is no less true in this day. I know there are some people who say, "It is all right talking about going to meetings, but, so far as I am concerned, I find that I can get just as much good at my own fireside." No, you do not get as much, there is no man or woman who ever got as much at the fireside. I quite admit there may be those who on account of sickness, or other causes, are debarred from the privilege of being gathered with the Lord's people, but those who are able to be there and who miss that privilege miss communications that the Lord is always ready to make to His own when they are gathered together.

Jehoiada took these men into the house of the Lord; for the moment they were transferred from the world into the presence of the Lord, where, away from all the distracting influences of Athaliah's reign, they might hear the word and learn the mind of God. But there is something more than that.

The last clause of our verse tells us that in the house of the Lord he showed them the king's son. What is our privilege when we are gathered together in the presence of our beloved Lord? It is to behold the King's Son; to contemplate the glories and the beauties of our Lord and Saviour. We behold the glory of the Lord, and we contemplate His beauty.

In the corresponding chapter to this chapter in the second book of Chronicles we get a beautiful touch. Will you turn to it, because it is worth noticing? Chapter 23, verse 2, really just follows verse 4 of 2 Kings 11. We read that they, (that is those whom Jehoiada had called and taken into the house of the Lord, and who had heard the voice of the Lord, and who had seen the king's son) were set in motion. They could not keep the good news to themselves, and we are told that they went about Judah to tell the Levites that they had seen the king's son; the man of God's choice; the rightful heir to the throne of Judah, and that the crowning day was coming. The result of that was that the Levites were gathered out of all the cities of Judah, and the chief of the fathers of Israel, and they came to Jerusalem. We can see the application of that as we go on. What is our great privilege to-day? If we have learned the secret of God, that Christ, though hidden for a while from the eyes of men, is God's Anointed, and that He must reign till He hath put all enemies under His feet, and if we know Him and have beheld His glory in the Holiest, the house of God, into which we have boldness to enter through His blood, we shall want to spread the news abroad, we shall want all our fellow-believers to know and to share with us these joys. We will not only communicate it to our fellow Christians, but we will go out to the

world and we will tell them that God's Christ is coming, that the throne of this universe is going to be filled by Him, and we will go everywhere preaching the Lord Jesus.

Then they are told what they are to do (verse 8). "Be ye with the king when he goeth out and when he cometh in." Here was this little band who had seen the king's son, and the word to them was: "Wheresoever the king is, let that be where you are found." We want ever and always to seek and to cultivate the company of our Lord. What next? They had sworn allegiance to the king, and they were there prepared to defend the king against all enemies. Unknown to Queen Athaliah, and to her servants, all this was going on in the house of the Lord, under the guidance of God, but not calling for the notice of the world. I think you can see the application of that. In the twelfth verse, the day of manifestation has come, Jehoiada and his friends had watched for this day for six years and it came; they may have thought it a long time, but it came. God is never in a hurry with His work; but He will fulfil His Word, and this is His decree.

"I will declare the decree: the Lord hath said unto Me, Thou art My Son; this day have I begotten Thee.

"Ask of Me, and I shall give Thee the heathen for Thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for Thy possession.

"Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; Thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel."

Now read the seventeenth verse. The claims of the Lord are owned. In the house of the Lord a covenant is made that they should be the Lord's people. The immediate result of that is—verse 18—they say, "If we are

going to be in the house^f of the Lord and numbered amongst the people of the Lord, then we are done with the house of Baal." There is a clean break and there is uncompromising separation. The path of loyalty to the Lord is a path of no compromise, it must either be the house of the Lord or the house of Baal. These who had confessed themselves to be God's people could not have both, and therefore we find that they slew Mattan the priest of Baal, and they showed that there was a clean cut with all that with which they had been going on. In the house of the Lord and with the man of God's choice they were going to be. And there was joy and peace, because the usurper was slain and the rightful king was upon the throne.

Thus shall it be with this poor joyless world, there is going to be joy and peace. For the usurper, the god and prince of this world, will be cast out, Christ "the Prince of Peace" will take the throne, and everything under His beneficent sway will be joy and peace.

Now turn over to Colossians. We begin in the third chapter with the words, "If ye then be risen with Christ," that follow what we have in the second chapter. There the saints were reminded of their baptism. We are in danger of forgetting our baptism. Every day we should remind ourselves of it. Our baptism meant, and means, that we have professed to have died with Christ, to what? To sin (Rom. 6.) and to this world (Col. 2.), He has died to sin and to the world. His life was taken from the earth, and in our baptism we were committed to His death. "Buried with Him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with Him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised Him from the dead." You are not only committed

to His death but joined to Him in life, you have Himself in another world. We are associated with Him where He is; and His death separates us from the world and the world from us. Now we read, "If ye be risen with Christ"—it is not an "if" of doubt, but of argument—"seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God." We are introduced into a new world, into a new order of things of which Christ is the Centre, and so we no longer want the things of the world, we want the things of Christ because Christ is the one commanding Object of our affections and of our life. "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth." But for what reason? "Ye have died," as the third verse ought to read, died to the things of this world, died to the world in the death of Christ which you have professed in baptism, "and your life is hid with Christ in God." Christ is hid with God, from the world, from the eyes of men. The world to-day does not take any cognizance of Christ's existence, I do not say they actually deny His existence, but they live as if He did not exist at all, they have no use whatever for Him in their plans. But what of us? Christ is our life, our hope, our all. So far as the world is concerned they take no notice of Him; but there He is, hidden from the eyes of men, but seen by faith. And the world is going on its way and going on at such a pace that the sceptics say, "If God governs this Universe He is governing it in a very strange way." But we who have believed know the secret and have got an unspeakable honour, a priceless privilege. Do we appreciate it, that we are in the secret of God? Although God may seem

to be taking a long time to fulfil His word, yet we know that He is working out His own plan and He has got His Man—may I use that word with the greatest reverence?—He has got His Man in reserve, hidden in the house of the Lord, in the presence of God. What is our privilege? To be introduced into that house, and not only to hear His voice but to see Himself, and to know that the day is coming of which we read in the fourth verse, “when Christ who is our life shall appear” or “shall be manifested.” Men to-day are looking for someone to come into the dreadful tangled state of affairs and bring order out of chaos, a kind of super-man. They will get antichrist; he will have the world at his feet; and they will consider him a very wonderful man, but things will still go from bad to worse “till He comes whose right it is to reign.” When HE comes He will bring order

out of chaos; He will banish the curse, eradicate evil, establish righteousness, and what then? “When Christ who is our life shall be manifested, then shall we also be manifested with Him in glory.” The gospel has given us this hope, a hope at which the world scoffs, because it does not know Him and He is not its Treasure. The world cares nothing for Him, but we are not of the world and because He is our Treasure we care everything for Him, and if He is hidden to-day, we may be well content to be hidden also, and unknown, and look on to that day when in the first place He will come to take us to be for ever with Him; then forward to that day when He shall be manifested in His glory, and we shall be manifested with Him.

May the Lord encourage our hearts and enable us to be true to Him, while we await His return. For His name's sake.

1 Peter 3.

Not gold nor pearls nor costly dress,
Nor manners that the world thinks right;
But meekness, love and gentleness
Are pleasing in God's holy sight.

And she who with these graces rare
Adorns her heart and life and ways,
Will bear their fragrance everywhere
And be a blessing all her days.

(J. T. M.)

“AND with Absalom went two hundred men out of Jerusalem, that were called; and they went in their simplicity, and they knew not anything.”—2 Samuel 15. 11.

The two hundred men that went with Absalom in ignorant simplicity are but a type of the many who can be swept into the track of a revolution in the train of some leader in whom they have confidence. How many, even among Christians to-day, follow *men* rather than truth! There is little individuality of faith anywhere, and thus sects are formed and maintained. It is startling to think how many follow the truth itself, at bottom because someone else is following it! And this has therefore again and again to be tested; and necessitates again and again a fresh putting forth of truth which has nothing but the authority of truth to commend it. This sifts and breaks up these mere human followings.

THE EPHESIAN EPISTLE.

(JAMES BOYD.)

Chapter 2. Continued.

WHO could have supposed that the ruined state in which we were, as in the old and fallen race of Adam, would have furnished the very occasion of our transfer from Adam to Christ? The first Adam was out of the earth, made of dust; the last Adam is out of heaven, a quickening Spirit. The Second Man gave Himself for us, and in His death the old man is ended for us, for it was for us Christ died. And risen from the dead He, that quickening Spirit, communicated His own life to us, and in Him we live. Thus was the transfer made. And as is the Heavenly (Christ, the Man out of heaven) such are they also that are heavenly. We are of His order, just as we were of the order of the man made of dust. The two races are according to their respective heads.

The works of the fallen do not come in here. The Worker here is God. As we have already seen, it is God, rich in mercy and great in love, who has quickened us with the Christ. It was infinite mercy, but the spring of that mercy lay in the love of His heart. It was not like the love bestowed upon His people Israel, which went not beyond His ways with regard to His government of this world. Nor was it just the same as His love manifested in His only begotten Son who died for all, for God desired the salvation of all, and therefore did He by the cross of His Son open up a way of salvation for all. This was love more in the sense of pity. No, this is a love that goes back before His works of old, before the line of time began to be traced, the line upon which all mysteries of eternal counsels are being fulfilled and perfected. He chose us in Christ before the world's foundation. We were

the objects of His love then. We cannot suppose that God did not know that Adam would fall, and that we should be fallen with him. Perhaps you say, Why, then, did He make him? That is His business, not yours. You say, I am involved in the resultant ruin. You are, but He has made a way of escape from the judgment to which you have made yourself liable on account of your sins. But why did He not make man incapable of failure? His infinite wisdom was concerned in all that He did, and He made man as He pleased, perfect and sinless. Yes, you say, but he fell, and therefore I find myself a sinner, and about to be judged for the deeds done in the body, deeds of which you affirm He disapproves. Where is the justice of that? How can you, who are not yourself just, call God to account because you think you have found injustice with Him? Do not forget that you are nothing but a poor weak creature who has no rights at all. You make whatever kind of instrument you think will serve your purpose, and if you find it useless you throw it on the scrap-heap; and if you are found fault with you say, Have I no right to do what I will with my own? Oh, you say, the question of right or wrong, justice or injustice, does not enter into my relations with that which is the work of my hands. True, but if you could make a rational being, endowed with faculties such as are common to men, and if you could place this being on the principle of responsibility, with penalties attached for disobedience, would you consider yourself unjust should you attempt to enforce those penalties, if he hearkened to your enemy, and so sought by acts of disobedience to raise himself to your level,

denying your lawful authority over him; especially if at infinite cost you had showed great mercy to him, and opened a way of salvation for him, which he scorned to avail himself of, would you not consider yourself justified in leaving him to the consequences of his own wicked folly?

But apart from all this, the Creator cannot be brought to stand before the judgment-seat of the creature. "Shall the thing formed say to Him who formed it, Why hast Thou made me thus? Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour?" (Rom. 9. 20, 21). The Creator surely has right to do that which He pleases in His own creation, and woe betide that man who disputes such a right. Should any creature, instead of thankfully accepting God's offer of salvation, continue to stand discussing the wrongness of the ways of God with Him, His judgment cannot be other than just.

God was in no sense bound to make provision for the safety and happiness of His fallen creature, but He has done this, and we should give Him the unfeigned thanks of glad and grateful hearts. Many may murmur against Him regarding His dealings with evil men, but what man under heaven would we desire to see established in the place which He occupies of authority and might? Let the best son of Adam that ever lived be endowed with the despotism of the Christ of God, accountable to no other being for the way he uses that power, and the result of his reign would only be seen in the destruction of the world, and the endless misery of all who might be subjected to his rule.

What a joy it is to know the living God in His true character, as set before us in Jesus! How completely does

the revelation made to us in the Mediator drive all the natural terror from our hearts! How good it is to have to do with such a beneficent and merciful Creator! and how terrible it would have been if we had found Him such a one as ourselves—change-ful, cruel, merciless, ruthless! But to find Him what He is—gracious, merciful, righteous, holy, compassionate, kind, and all this even to the unthankful and the unholy, and the same to-day as when He gave His only begotten Son to die on our behalf! Oh, the joy and delight of such a contemplation as this! The better we know Him the more we love Him, nor do we desire Him ever to be other than He really is, as set before us in the Son of His love. For ever blessed be His holy name! May both reader and writer become daily better acquainted with Him! He is worthy of the whole confidence of our hearts.

Well indeed may the writer of this epistle now say, "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God." No greater exhibition of this grace in its activities toward the sinner is found anywhere in the Scriptures than is seen in the conversion of the Apostle Paul. Writing to Timothy, he says, "The grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant, with faith and love which are in Christ Jesus" (1 Tim. 1. 14). It has been truly said that for his wicked persecution of those who called on the name of Christ he never forgave himself. God forgave him: Oh, how frankly and fully! Not a harsh word grates upon his ear as he lies prone upon the dust of the road. It is, "Rise, and stand upon thy feet; for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in

the which I will appear unto thee ; delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee, to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me" (Acts 26. 16-18). What marvellous grace ! Grace surpassingly abundant with faith and love which are in Christ Jesus. The grace that laid hold of this chief of sinners produced in him the faith and love necessary to his salvation. It was so with regard to these Ephesians, and it is so with all who are taken up out of the ignorance in which we all are by nature.

The way in which God works for the salvation of men precludes boasting. God is the Worker to-day. Man never merited anything by his own works except condemnation ; for the flesh can produce nothing acceptable to God. " We are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." In our natural state we are our own workmanship, helped on by Satan who works in the children of disobedience. But as in Christ Jesus we are God's workmanship, new creation in Christ, and are to walk as He walked, and exhibit in our practical lives the beauties and perfections of that heavenly life that was His, and that is now ours by His quickening power. What a privilege ! May we see to it that it is a privilege which we heartily embrace !

Consequent upon his setting before them the calling of God, and the place given to them in that calling, along with making known to them the mystery of His will, their inheritance, and His inheritance in the saints, also the power at work to place them in the

position that was theirs before the world was in the purpose of God, he calls upon them to call to mind what they were as Gentiles in the flesh ; that at that time they were without Christ, aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world.

We see everything by contrast, and therefore are we reminded of what we were in the flesh. " But now in Christ Jesus, ye who sometime were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ " *In Christ Jesus*, no longer in the flesh. Set up in Him, on the platform of resurrection ; risen together with Him, in His life ; all that belonged to the old order as in the first Adam gone in the judgment of the cross, we are privileged to take account of ourselves as new created in Him, and in Him brought nigh to God. If our distance from God in the flesh was immeasurable, as it surely was, for we were dead in our sins, our nearness to Him, as in Christ, is also immeasurable. Being in Christ, our relationship, love, intimacy, can only be measured by His, and our enjoyment of all this is in the power of the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us for this very purpose.

What marvellous designs on the part of God are unfolded to us in the holy Scriptures ! What a God is brought into view in the small compass of this sacred volume ! What miserable man-made religions and demon-invented gods are all else that would dominate the heart and mind of the creature ! Above the level of the fallen fleshly mind they cannot rise, neither have they ever been able to invent one solitary pleasure that lies outside the carnal appetite. Their Elysium is but the glut of fleshly lust, without the penalties and pains that a good conscience, not to say the Word of God,

attaches to such a bestial career. Of the great principles of righteousness, truth, holiness, and love, men of the world know nothing practically. Righteousness, which has no other meaning in their minds than honesty in their dealings with their fellows, they may seem to appreciate, but their appreciation of it arises mainly from the notion that it is always safest to have their relations with honest people.

Even those who make the laws, which are sometimes very good, make them for the obedience of other people, not for their own observance. As to their duty to God, this is altogether ignored. If they have any thought of a future existence and of a God to meet, they seem quite content to meet Him on the assumption that they have done no one any harm. Their responsibility to God is utterly ignored.

A PRAYER FROM THE HEART.

○ LORD, O Lord, my ever living, present and gracious One, my One in Three and Three in One. As Thou art always showing me, as Thou hast Thyself promised me, that Thy love is unailing, unchangeable and unmeasurable for this poor, poor nothing, I am encouraged and emboldened to seek Thee and cry unto Thee more and more, that Thou put my poor, poor vessel into Thine own fulness, for it is only when set in the ocean of Thine own fulness that it can overflow for Thine own praise and with Thine own joy.

O Lord, Thou has shown in Thine own Word, given by Thine own Spirit, that the call for us is to praise Thee according to the Spirit's abundant greatness in the firmament of Thine own power (Ps. 150).

O Lord, O Lord, there is no restraint or limitation to Thine own Spirit in this great day and hour in which Thou hast been pleased to set Thy poor saints in love before Thee, holy and without blame, according to the calling and revelation and declaration given. Thou art, O Lord, we are convinced, with Thine assembly and members, as Thou hast said. The key of David is in Thine hand, and Thou art ready to give the fulness of Thy treasure to those who will have it.

O Lord, O Lord, in Thine own abounding mercy deliver us from every vanity of our own heart and every false glamour of our association that so we may return unto Thee of Thine own fulness. Honour be to our God for ever and ever. Amen, Amen, Amen.

O Lord, my God and Father, let me bless Thee and thank Thee more and more according to the full measure which Thy Spirit gives in this great day and hour in which we are set. We cherish the confidence and certainty, and would do so continually in all our moments and hours according to Thy Word given us, that nothing is impossible with Thee. Oh, then, our God and Father, fix our spirit's eye on our Lord Jesus Christ by Thine own Spirit given to us, that so Thine own light, love, and fulness may possess our vessels that we may render back to Thee the river of blessing, worship, thanksgiving, and praise which Thy Spirit has put into our portion, according to the unailing Scriptures given in this hour.

O Lord, O Lord, in our nothingness and foolishness we just cast ourselves before Thee and would wait upon Thee. Thy name be blessed, O God our Father, for ever and ever. In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, Thine own Son who died for us and rose again. Amen, Amen, Amen. (John McLean.)

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

The Life of Flesh.

“In the 1919 volume of ‘Scripture Truth,’ p. 47, there is a statement by Mr. J. Boyd, as follows: ‘Having been rejected as the Christ the Son of God, He takes the place of the victim, in order that God might give expression to His holy abhorrence and unsparing judgment of sin. Sinless Himself, but in the likeness of sinful flesh, He gives Himself up to be dealt with as sin deserves to be dealt with, and in the awful judgment of the cross of woe He parts with the life of flesh for ever, and risen from the dead He becomes the fountain of life, divine life, eternal life, for all who receive Him by faith.’ Will you please explain the meaning of Mr. Boyd’s statement, that ‘He parts with the life of flesh for ever’? Does it mean that He arose again, entirely apart from what He was made, when He was made sin? Or am I to understand that we shall never see Him in the body as when He appeared to His disciples in the upper room, and said, ‘A spirit hath not flesh and bone as ye see Me have’? Did the Lord ascend to heaven in a body of that kind or only in a glorified body without flesh, and shall we see Him there different from what He was when His disciples saw Him after His resurrection?’ —ILFORD.

WHATEVER else Mr. Boyd meant his readers to understand, it was not that the Lord either rose from the dead or ascended to heaven without His body, that would not have been resurrection at all; nor would He, being Man, have been complete without His body. The eyes of the disciples looked upon and their hands handled the Word of Life, and this when He appeared to them in resurrection, as well as before His death. He ascended into heaven in the same incorruptible body that went into and came out of the tomb, and *now* all the fulness of the Godhead dwells in Him *bodily* in heaven, even as it pleased the same Fulness to dwell in Him when in what Scripture speaks of as “the days of His flesh.” At His coming again, the Jews will ask, What are these wounds in Thy hands? (Zech. 12. 13). They will see His wounded hands, as the disciples did, and as Thomas did (John 20.). A glorified body does not mean another body, but the same body in another condition, made suitable by the glory to the glory.

The term, “the flesh,” does not always mean the body, when it occurs in Scripture. It does sometimes, as when Paul says, “The life that I now live in the flesh” (Gal. 2. 20), but when he says, “They that are in the flesh cannot please God” (Rom. 8. 8), he

evidently means something more. It is there the life that is lived in the body in alienation from God, the natural, sinful life of man. The subject touched upon in this paper of Mr. Boyd’s, from which our correspondent quotes, is of such importance that we shall endeavour to open it out as it appears to us.

“The blood is the life” of the flesh (Deut. 12. 33), and when the Lord poured forth His blood upon the cross He passed out of the condition of life known as “flesh and blood.” He did not resume *that* condition of life when He arose from the dead, for as our correspondent points out, He said to His disciples, “A spirit hath not flesh and bone as ye see Me have.” He did not say, “flesh and blood.” He had parted with that life for ever. It had been given up as a sacrifice for sin, and in that sacrifice, sin in the flesh was condemned by God (Rom. 8. 3). The reason for and the meaning of this condemnation was, that through the centuries since the fall, God had been testing and proving man in the flesh, i.e., Adam’s race, and nothing but sin was the result, until at last the greatest and the last test came, God sent forth *His own Son*. He became flesh and dwelt among men, going about doing good, and their answer to this test was the cross of Calvary, “The princes of this

world . . . crucified the Lord of glory " (1 Cor. 2. 7). The greatest favour and grace on God's part only aggravated the sin of man against Him. No other test was needed; there was no other; the cross which man awarded to the Son of God proved that in that condition of alienation from God which is called the flesh, he would not, he could not, please God, nor appreciate the best that God could do for him; consequently there could be no blessing on the basis of what he was in that condition, and yet God's great desire was his blessing. Since the very nature of man as well as his practice was enmity against God, it is clear that he must be driven from the stage to make way for another Man; and, further, God's judgment must fall upon that which could only be obnoxious to Him. Man after the flesh must be set aside in judgment. And here comes in the marvel of divine grace, *God's own Son*, whom men condemned to the cross, had become the *Son of Man*, and as the serpent was lifted up in the wilderness, so He, made in the likeness of sinful flesh, was lifted up upon the cross, where He endured the judgment and came under the condemnation of God as our Representative and Substitute. And so He died, and death is the end of the flesh and blood condition that cannot inherit the Kingdom of God (1 Cor. 15. 50). This was that

we might share in His life, who, as risen from the dead, has become the Head of a new race, "That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but the Spirit" (Rom. 8. 4).

This is a new life, it is not the life of Adam improved or reformed, it is the life of Christ, and is God's gift to us, and in the power of it we may reckon ourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, sin that dominates the life of the flesh, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord (Rom. 6.).

We quote from the late J. N. Darby: "Christ took human life in grace and sinless; and as alive in this (human) life He took sin upon Him. Sin belongs, so to speak, to this life in which Christ knew no sin, but was made sin for us. But He died—He quitted this life. He is dead to sin: He has done with sin in having done with the life to which sin belonged, not in Him indeed, but in us. Raised up again by the power of God, He lives in a new condition, into which sin cannot enter, being left behind with the life that He left. Faith brings us into it (this new life) by grace. Christ is 'raised from the dead by the glory of the Father' . . . and this new position is the model—the character—of that life in which we live before God."

The Highest Form of Religion.

"The highest form of religion is to worship our Creator by striving to serve all that He has created.' It would be interesting to know how many ministers and laymen agree with the above quotation, which cuts right across orthodox Christian theological doctrines and completely nullifies them; taken from Hutchinson's 'Past and Future Developments of Electricity and its Bearing on World Peace.' Is there any justification for this statement?"

—LAYMAN.

[F by religion is meant true godliness, which covers both our relations with God and His creatures, we should say that this statement puts the cart before the horse. God must be first,

and we serve others, in the true sense of the word, as we are right with God and worship Him. It is not by serving His creatures that we become right with Him. The Scriptures, our only

guide, say, "By Him [Christ] therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to His name [this is worship to God]. But to do good and to communicate forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased" (here follows service to His creatures, and it is put on very high ground) (Heb. 13. 15, 16). If the latter is lacking, we may justly question whether the former exists; but there cannot be the latter, according to God, without the former.

We cannot praise and worship God unless we know Him. The secret of all godliness, whether towards God or our fellow-men, is the knowledge of God, and we cannot learn what He is by studying His creation or His creatures. The secret of godliness is that "God was manifest in the flesh." This great fact changes our view of things. Herein is God known, 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" (1 John 4. 10). It follows that if God so loved us we ought to love one another, and "He that loveth Him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of Him," and "He that loveth not

knoweth not God; for God is love." These passages have the children of God in view; our love to God is evinced by our love to them and love shows itself in service, for "Whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?" (1 John 3 17). But this service has not to be confined to the children of God, for "As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith" (Gal. 6. 10).

Surely the first great principle in the universe is that the Creator should be first in the thoughts of every one of His intelligent creatures, and as He is so, service will be rightly rendered to their fellow-creatures. Nothing can nullify this. "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for Thou hast created all things, and for Thy pleasure they are and were created" (Rev. 4. 11). Let us beware that we are not drawn aside by the teaching of those "who change the truth of God into a lie, and worship and serve the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen" (Rom. 1. 25).

THE confusion of these "2 Timothy" days is great, we are surely in the "perilous times," but we must avoid everything that will add to the confusion—we must not heap coals on the fire. The revealed truth remains, Scripture truth, and an effective way of robbing saints of this is to keep them contending on ecclesiastical points, apart from *growing up into Christ in all things* "The more zealously such points are cleverly urged, the greater the fire of disaster burns and the increase of the self-building up in love is hindered."—(From a letter)

"*GO depart to be with Christ.*" There is no terror here. The believer may place his hand, with the confidence of a child and the calmness of an old disciple, in the strong hand of Him who became dead and is alive again. And out of *that* hand, that made him and re-made him at a cost too vast to compute, who shall pluck the feeblest of His blood-bought lambs! To be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord. "Whether we live or die we are the Lord's."

THE RENT VEIL.

(J. T. MAWSON.)

IT has often been said that when the veil of the Temple was rent in the midst from the top to the bottom, at the death of the Lord Jesus, that it indicated that the way was opened for God to come out to men and for men to go in to God through that rent veil. We see no such meaning in that event. God was not within that veil. How could He be when there was no Ark of the Covenant there, and no golden mercy-seat sprinkled with blood? And why should we wish to go into an empty chamber, which even when filled was only the shadow of good things to come? Then what was the meaning of it? That that whole system of material religion that had found its centre in the Holiest in the Tabernacle and Temple was done with. As one would rend a worn-out and useless garment, so God rent that veil. If we would see God coming out we must turn from the Temple with its great stones and costly, for it had already been left desolate to an unbelieving people, and we must look upon Calvary, and upon the Son of God there, delivered to utmost shame and death. It was when the flesh of Jesus was rent in death, for the true veil was His flesh, that God came out in the fulness of His love, then He was fully manifest. No longer did He dwell in the thick darkness, hidden from the eyes of men by a material veil. We can now say, God is light, and in the full shining of that light we can add with rapture, God is love. But it was in Christ, and Christ in death, that this was seen. There and there alone we see the full manifestation of what God is. "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins."

And we can enter now into His

most holy presence without fear, we have a title to do so, which the blood of Jesus has given us, but the way we enter is the same way in which God has come out in blessing to us. It is through the veil—not the rent veil of the Temple—as the Holy Spirit has carefully and definitely explained to us—but *through the veil, that is to say, His flesh*. The death of our Substitute has become the way of life and blessing to us, the way to God. It has removed our sins, it has met the question of our sinful nature; it excludes the rebellious and self-sufficient flesh, but it has become most attractive to those whose life is hid with Christ in God. Our Forerunner is Jesus; He has entered within the veil for us, into the true Tabernacle, which the Lord pitched and not man, and seeing that we have such a High Priest who is made higher than the heavens, we can draw near with a true heart and full assurance of faith, by a new and living way, which He has dedicated for us—and what a word is that! Shall we be indifferent to and despise a way that He has dedicated for us at such a cost, through the veil, that is to say His flesh?

David tells of the delight that he found in the house of the Lord in more than one of his psalms. It seems to have been more attractive to him than his own house, and the privilege of visiting it more to be prized than his kingdom and crown, and yet he could not pass within the veil, nor was God revealed then as now in the fulness of His love, nor did David know, what we now know, that God's delight in having us near to Him is greater than ours could ever be to be there, nor had he, as we have, a Forerunner, who has entered in for us, and whose reception there assures us of ours. We have

better cause to enter than he, we have a better title than he ever had. Then let us not be behind him in our affection for the presence of the Lord and in appreciation of our great privilege,

but let us draw near, and if we have not yet learnt the meaning of Hebrews 10. 19-22, let us pray earnestly that the Lord will teach us by His Holy Spirit what it means.

INDIA.

(J. T. M.)

"And the sixth angel sounded, and I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar which is before God, saying to the sixth angel which had the trumpet, Loose the four angels which are bound in the great river Euphrates. And the four angels were loosed, which were prepared for an hour, and a day, and a month, and a year, for to slay the third part of men. And the number of the army of the horsemen were two hundred thousand thousand : and I heard the number of them."—Revelation 9. 13-16.

"And the sixth angel poured out his vial upon the great river Euphrates ; and the water thereof was dried up, that the way of the kings of the east might be prepared."—Revelation 16. 12.

THESE two striking passages we believe cast some light upon the problem of Indian self-government that is perplexing British statesmen at this time. The four angels bound at the Euphrates seem to represent four great nations that have hitherto remained east of that river, which has so prominent a place in the Scripture. We think that our readers will not disagree with that interpretation of the passage. Coinciding with the loosing of these angels, that river is to be dried up "that the way of the kings of the East may be prepared," and an army of 200,000,000 horsemen will then pour into Palestine, probably with the intention of invading and conquering Europe. We question whether the number given of this amazing army is merely symbolical, for John says, "and I heard the number of them."

There are four nations on the east of the Euphrates which in spite of their vast numbers have never moved westward—they "are bound at the great river Euphrates"—that could muster such an army if they became allied, and India is one of these. But in order to become allied, say, with China, Japan and Thibet, and to join with them in

this great invasion, it would be necessary for India to be independent of British domination and to be able to raise its own army. It would appear as though events were moving in this direction, however much all patriotic British people may deplore it. In the ways of God with the nations, and it may be that the gospel of His grace might be preached in that land, it has come under British rule, and as long as this exists the dominant power is responsible to God for the right government of it, but we judge from these Scriptures in the Revelation that this rule must cease eventually. These vast armies from the East will be gathered at Armageddon (Rev. 16. 16), there to be confronted by the armies of Europe under the Beast and the false Prophet, for the armies of the whole world are to be gathered there, but instead of fighting each other they will make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for He is Lord of lords, and King of kings. That will be the battle of that great day of God Almighty, when He will assert His authority over all that rule and pour out His judgment upon all who oppose His Christ. (Rev. 17. 14.)

THE LOVE OF CHRIST.

(L. R.)

"To know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge."—Ephesians 3. 19

IT is evident from what precedes these words, and from what follows them, that they are words of great moment to the people of God. In nearly all his Epistles St. Paul prays and gives thanks for the saints, he does so earlier in this Epistle but what he is about to say here is prefaced by the significant expression (Eph. 3. 14-19), "*For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.*" He gives himself very specially and explicitly to prayer that those to whom he writes at Ephesus may be strengthened with might by the Spirit in the inner man; that Christ may dwell in their hearts by faith; and that being rooted and grounded in love, they may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height and *to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge*, that they might be filled unto all the fulness of God—the goal and crown of the Christian life.

What a theme for our meditation is this! Let us earnestly entreat the Lord's gracious help that it may be pleasing in His sight, and fruitful in us.

There are heights and depths here that must ever be beyond us, for the heights are as high as the place to which He is ascended, up far above all heavens that He may fill all things, and the depths are as deep as the place to which He "also descended first, into the lower parts of the earth" (Eph 4 9, 10).

Many Scriptures speak of this great love. In His holy and beautiful life on earth the Lord loved His people—His own which were in the world, according to His own words, "As the Father loved Me, so have I loved you"

(John 15 9). In His death He loved them and gave Himself for them; now on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens He loves them still with a love that is unchanged and unwearied.

The apostles found their joy in sorrow and persecution, in His love. St. Paul said, "The Son of God loved me" (Gal. 2. 20), and St John delighted to be known as the disciple whom Jesus loved.

The writers of the sweet hymns, which are our help and solace, magnify this love Charles Wesley sang—

"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!"

T Kelly, so well known for his hymns, wrote:—

"Love that no tongue can teach,
Love that no thought can reach,
No love like His"

Many others have also added their tribute of sweet songs, in praise of "the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge"

It nerved the martyrs to face shame and death gladly "Be of good cheer," said one to his fellow-sufferer, "we shall sup with Christ to-night"

Countless saints now gone home to be with the Lord have recorded what the love of Christ was to them. One, who stood by the dying bed of him who was dearer to her than life, told how this love so enfolded and comforted her that she was able to finish her course with joy. She sleeps in Hurstmonceaux Churchyard, and the white marble which marks her grave bears her name and the words "Until the day-break."

And we who live to-day beloved, what is this love to us? The readers of this magazine have learned that two words are used in the Scripture for "know," the one signifying the knowledge that comes from testimony received, the other the knowledge of experience, or as it is sometimes called, "conscious knowledge." We all know the love of Christ with the first knowledge, because it is so plainly set forth in the Scripture; but as we ponder those words, "the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge," we may well ask ourselves: Do we know this love consciously in our own hearts, is it indeed true, in our experience, that we are "loved with all the love that fills the heavens with eternal song"? Faith ever accepts and rests in the testimony of the Word, but the experience here spoken of is rather the fruit of the ministry of the Holy Spirit, as the Lord promised, "He shall take of Mine and show it unto you" (John 16:15).

It is so very wonderful that He should love us thus, it is almost more wonderful that He should value the response of our hearts. All created intelligences gladly own their allegiance to Him, but He has come down in grace to those who were less than nothing to set them beside Him in His own place, loved with the love that passeth knowledge.

If we turn to the Song of Solomon we shall find the way traced which love took to make itself known to the loved one. It is helpful to notice that where "Beloved" occurs it is the Lord who is pictured as the Eternal Lover of His saints, and where "My love" is said, the word represents the saints collectively, or the individual soul. The Canticle begins with love, it is the first note in the heavenly music, love that is greater than all earthly joy, love

that is to be ever remembered, so great, so dear, that the soul goes in quest of the Beloved, little knowing that her desire is but the drawing of His love. The way is easy at first, the shining noon, the flocks at rest, and the shepherds' tents, an idyll of peace and tranquillity. But love is more than these. There is a little sentence three times repeated, which seems to mark love's pathway through the Song. "I charge you, O ye daughters of Jerusalem, by the roes and by the hinds of the field, that ye stir not up nor awake my love till she please" (Song of Sol 2:7, R V), and again in chapter 3:5 and in chapter 8:4, "I charge you, O daughters of Jerusalem, that ye stir not up nor awake my love until she please."

We seem to see a picture of a loved one, whose heart has been touched, who cherishes the memory of the myrrh and cypress—type of the great price that love has paid—who values the blessings love brings—the shadow of the apple-tree, the fruit, the banqueting house the banner—but who is not willing to leave the place she is in, at the invitation of the Beloved. Rejoicing in His gifts, she yet knows Him not. She pleads for ease, for the old home, for the old familiar things, she does not say with Rebecca of long ago, "I will go," nay, she would like to stay "a few days, at the least ten," and we find her in the places where He is not, in the city, in the streets, in the broad ways, she sleeps when He is speaking, and He withdraws, and her fingers drop sweet-smelling myrrh on the handles of the lock, where His hand had been. The watchmen find her, they take her veil, and we look and wonder if she who will not listen to the wooings of Almighty love will perhaps be driven by fear and discipline.

Then the Beloved speaks, and we see Him standing, waiting, telling her again and again how precious she is to Him. "Thou art all fair, My love, there is no spot in thee, thou hast taken away My heart." Every endearing word is whispered in her ear, and He pleads, "Come with Me, arise, My love, My fair one, and come away." The time of the singing birds had come, winter was past, but still He says, "Do not disturb her until she please." He would have her know His love and arise and come to Him gladly, not of constraint, not until she is ready, not until her heart must have Him and Him only. The last chapter of the Song shows her in His company, coming up out of the wilderness, leaning on her Beloved Love has had its way at last, and henceforth she will say, "I am my Beloved's and His desire is toward me."

Is not this little picture a mirror in which we may see ourselves? We, too, have been attracted by love—dying love, yet love that lives for evermore—we, too, have needed the rough watchmen, sickness perhaps,

pain, poverty, to make us, in some measure, know ourselves in our weakness and waywardness that we may be drawn to Him who is greater than all His gifts, and being thus drawn after Him we have tasted the joy of being with Him in spirit, where He is, and have learned to tread the wilderness now, leaning on our Beloved, proving evermore the depths of the love that passeth knowledge

We are perhaps cast down because our answer to His love is so poor, and we may well feel this; but then in love, as in all beside, He must have the pre-eminence. A mother asked her little son, "Darling, do you love me most, or do I love you most?" and he just said, "Mother, you *can* love most" So must it ever be with us, for it is He who can love most, His alone is the love that passeth knowledge, but He still makes Himself known to humble hearts, as He did to the beloved disciple, saying, "FEAR NOT; I am the first and the last I am He that liveth and was dead, and behold I am alive for evermore, Amen." (Rev. I 17, 18).

HOW wonderful to be those upon whom the ends of the ages are come, and to whom the stores that have been accumulated all along the line of revelation become the treasury of faith! This is God's Word, to which Paul was devoted—not simply His gospel, though the gospel must be the beginning everywhere, necessarily and at once introduces the soul that has received it into the very heart of divine revelation. But the Word itself goes far beyond what we commonly call this, and is nothing less than that which is not merely to bring us out of sin into holiness, but to qualify us for that place with Christ to which infinite grace has destined us. How little we realize what the body of Christ means in this way, that body in which the Spirit dwells, in order to give us capacity for the reception of these communications! When will we awake to realize and answer to this grace of God?

"SWEET thought, we have a Friend above,
Our weary, faltering steps to guide,
Who follows, with the eye of love
The little flock for whom He died."

BEHOLDING CHRIST'S GLORY.

(W. BRAMWELL DICK)

"*Esaias . . . saw His glory, and spake of Him*"—John 12 41.

"*We beheld His glory*"—John 1 14

"*That they may behold My glory.*"—John 17. 24.

[IT is quite apparent that in each of these Scriptures it is the same person that is brought before us. In each case we find Him in different circumstances, but, we repeat, the same person; and in each portion we are permitted, or in the last will be permitted, to contemplate His glory. What a delightful, holy occupation is this! How the Holy Spirit delights ever to engage our hearts with the glory of Christ! Then indeed "this world's glory waxeth dim," as we feast our eyes upon His glory, we find ourselves in what another has called "the region of satisfied desire" where prostrate in His presence we worship and adore. John 12. 41 refers to Isaiah's vision as recorded in the sixth chapter of his prophecy. The death of King Uzziah served to teach the wholesome lesson that man according to the flesh, no matter how great or how accomplished, or how famous, could not enter the divine presence. The flesh can have no place before God. Impressed, doubtless, by this object lesson (*see 2 Chronicles 26*) the Lord graciously gave him this remarkable vision. He was conducted to a scene of dazzling brightness filled with the presence of the Lord. Before Him heavenly beings covered their faces as they cried, "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts the whole earth is full of His glory." It is not surprising, is it, that in presence of this all that Isaiah might have boasted in, as a man or as a prophet, was burned up, and that he saw himself to be only a mass of corruption as he exclaimed, "Woe is me"? Then there was the touch of divine power and mercy, the assurance of the heaven-sent messenger, and no

longer did he speak of himself, but, centuries after we are told by the Lord, through the inspired pen of John, he "spake of Him"

Here, then, is our first lesson. As we behold His glory, we will speak not of ourselves; nor of our service, nor of our fellow-believers, and certainly not of the world, but "of Him." What is so interesting to observe is that it was at the close of our Lord's life as a Man in this world, when He was in very truth "despised and rejected"; when He was wanted by none save a few whom He had attracted to Himself; and when He was about to be crucified, that the Holy Spirit tells us that He and Jehovah of Hosts, whose glory Isaiah saw, were one and the same person.

This leads us *not to the investigation* but to the reverent contemplation of the sacred mystery of His person as brought before us in chapter 1. of John's Gospel. Here, without any preliminary, we have at once brought before our notice One who was "in the beginning"—"The Word"—who was "with God"—who "was God." By whom "all things were made" and "without whom nothing was made that was made." As to the deity of that person there can be no question to any Spirit-taught mind. We can have no difficulty in recognizing in Him the One whom Isaiah saw. Now let us look at verse 14, and this we venture to transcribe from the excellent new translation by J. N. Darby.

"And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us . . . full of grace and truth."

We shall deal with the parenthesis presently. Meanwhile let us consider this. He who was "in the beginning" was "The Word," "was with God"; "was God"; by whom "all things were made," and "without whom nothing was made that was made"; "became flesh and dwelt among us full of grace and truth." The same Person that Isaiah saw, not now "high and lifted up," but "in flesh." No longer hidden from the view of heavenly creatures, but "seen of angels" (1 Tim. 3. 16). Not now causing the posts of the door to move, and striking terror to the heart, but accessible to all. Oh, the grandeur of these words! Who can scale the height, or fathom the depth, or comprehend the vastness of their meaning? Let us repeat them and delight in them in the presence of God:—

"The Word became flesh, and dwelt among us . . . full of grace and truth."

But what of the comment that the Holy Spirit permitted—yea, inspired—the apostle to make?

"And we have contemplated His glory, a glory as of an only-begotten with a father."

Could we have language more choice, more expressive? But then it is divine. "An only-begotten with a father" is one who is the object of the father's affection; in whom all the father's hopes are centred; and round whom circles all the father's purposes. We can thus understand the unique place that belongs to "an only-begotten with a father." Carry this thought into John 3. 16 and we shall get a still deeper impression of the greatness of that love wherewith "God so loved the world." So far as the inspired penman and those who were associated with him were concerned,

His glory could not be hid. He whom they saw and knew "in flesh" was God the Son. This is clearly shown in verse 18, which we cite from the same translation:—

"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 ever was, He is, and He will never cease to be "the only-begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father." Here we have the unknown and unknowable glories of Him who Himself said, "No man knoweth the Son but the Father" (Matt. 11. 27). He "became flesh, and dwelt among us . . . full of grace and truth," that He might reveal the Father; for "Neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal Him" (Matt. 11. 27).

We contemplate it; we wonder and we worship. He is in the Father's bosom, delighting in the love of the Father's heart, yet in flesh. He is making the love of that heart known to us. For He

"Dwells in His bosom—knoweth all
That in that bosom lies,
And came to earth to make it known,
That we might share His joys."

If the lesson of Isaiah's seeing His glory was that he "spake of Him," surely the lesson of contemplating His glory as John 1. brings it before us is that we bow at His feet in worship; and attracted to Him where He is and separated from everything where He is not, we lose ourselves in the contemplation of His glory and His greatness. We listen as He declares to us the Father's heart; conducts us into the Father's presence; gives us to feel the warmth of His love, and then through Him we worship the Father. His last word to the Father at the close of the prayer recorded in John 17. indicates

that this is His present service for "His Own"

"I have declared unto them Thy Name, *and will declare it*: that the love wherewith Thou hast loved Me may be in them, and I in them" (verse 26).

Nothing is too great for those whom He loves so dearly. We could not have his place "in the bosom of the Father," for that belongs to the Son and to Him alone, but He could and would communicate to us that which He as dwelling "in the bosom of the Father" knows and enjoys: the Father's name, and the Father's heart, so that we might find our home in divine love. This brings us to verse 24 of this chapter, and what can we say about it? In a prayer that breathes with love inconceivably great, our blessed Lord pours forth His heart to One who loves us not less than He does. He asks more and more, and still more till we stand amazed in presence of such love, but His last desire eclipses all that have gone before

"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"

Oh, height of bliss to be with Him where He is! But what will it be to behold His glory—a glory which we cannot share, but which we shall be permitted to behold? To be in heaven will be great; to be with Him where He is will be greater; to behold His

glory will be the greatest of all. The same One whose glory Isaiah saw and spake of Him; the same One whom John and his fellow-apostles saw "in flesh," dwelling among men—and through that veil of flesh they saw His glory—He who is God, who became Man, and who when He became Man did not cease to be God; He who became Man that He might reveal God; who suffered that He might bring us to God, who having accomplished redemption has, as Man, "set Himself down on the right hand of the Greatness on high" (Heb. 1:3, New Trans.), He, our Lord, has now taken us into the closest possible intimacy with Himself, and has brought us into the relationship of sons with the Father's face. And He will share with us the glory which as Man He has acquired on the ground of redemption. He will have us with Him where He is, with wondering, admiring gaze we shall contemplate that glory that is peculiarly His own. For ever we shall feast our eyes upon Him and upon His glory, and praise and bless His holy Name. How great will be the joy of the Father's heart! How blessed will be the joy of our beloved Lord! How complete will be the joy of the Godhead! How unspeakable will be our joy when we find ourselves with Him where He is, when His glory fills our vision; His preciousness fills our hearts, and His love calls forth unceasing praise from our lips.

"There with unwearied gaze
Our eyes on Him we'll rest,
And satisfy with endless praise
Our hearts supremely blest"

TH**E**R**E** are two ways of lightening a burden—one is to diminish the load, the other is to strengthen the shoulders that carry it. The latter is often the more blessed, and often the shape in which God answers our prayers. "For this I besought the Lord thrice that it might depart from me. And He said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee, My strength is made perfect in thy weakness"

NOTES ON THE BOOK OF DANIEL.

(J B)

GOD AND FAITH can turn aside or roll back the tide of iniquity when it threatens to carry all before it. The writer of these Notes has been much helped and encouraged by tracing this peace-giving fact through the Book of Daniel and connecting it with the word "but" which occurs at the crisis in each chapter. The Notes are published to encourage our readers to prove that the God of Daniel is the living God and faithful and steadfast for ever.

"*BUT DANIEL PURPOSED IN HIS HEART*" (chapter 1. 8)

The King of Babylon carried away three different companies of captives and three different lots of the vessels belonging to the temple of God at Jerusalem. Daniel was among the first, being taken in the reign of Jehoiakim. The vessels which were taken then appear to have been the largest and most valuable. These Nebuchadnezzar cut in pieces, probably for easier transit; and it seems justifiable to conclude that the Ark was among them, as it was not only covered with gold, but the mercy-seat which formed the lid was of pure gold. If so, this throws light on the oft-repeated question, What became of the Ark? Jeremiah 3. 16, 17 will explain the solemn reason for all this: "Neither shall it be magnified any more" (see marginal reading). This symbol had become an idol to this godless nation, and the possession of it a ground for religious pride and fleshly self-confidence, so they lost again the outward appearance of the presence of the Lord (see 2 Kings 24. 13).

In these circumstances Daniel found himself a captive in Babylon, and his position was the more painful because it was a distinct fulfilment of the judgment pronounced upon his ancestor, Hezekiah; and even the fact of his

being required to eat defiled meat was a part of the judgment foretold for the rebellious nation (Isa. 39. 6, 7; Ezek. 4. 13; Hosea 9. 3). He was young: the sins of his fathers had come upon him; he had no hope of return to the beloved but ruined city, or restoration to those blessings that went with his nation's obedience to God, and he was condemned to eat things offered to idols. What could he do? Go with the stream? No! *The God of his fathers remained*, holy and almighty; and *faith*, which appeared like a child's hand lifted against an army, would not yield.

"*BUT DANIEL PURPOSED IN HIS HEART THAT HE WOULD NOT DEFILE HIMSELF.*"

Daniel's purpose appeared to be ridiculous and fanatical; but it was the purpose of faith in a God who can neither change nor fail. He knew that this very thing was the real cause of the downfall of his people (Ps. 106. 35-46), and he determined that he would not identify himself with demons by partaking of the sacrifices offered to idols (see 1 Cor. 10. 20). He would hold himself in separation to his God even in Babylon. "God is faithful," and He had been before Daniel and prepared the way for the triumph of his faith. He had brought him "into tender love," so that he should be "able to bear" the temptation.

The young eunuch, in the palace of the world's monarch, lifting alone the banner of faith, had "the God of heaven" on his side. He was the pioneer of faith in Babylon before Ezekiel and Jehoiakim arrived, and this would account for the reference to him in Ezekiel 14. God not only supported his purpose, but gave him a health of countenance and a wisdom of which the world knows nothing.

THE EIGHT SIGNS OF JOHN'S GOSPEL. (JAMES GREEN.)

Sign VI.—The Raising of Lazarus. Read Chapters 11. to 17.

ANOTHER scene now opens, containing even a deeper lesson than the preceding sign, but one that must be learnt if the true joy of life eternal is to be known. Readers of Scripture are so well acquainted with the incidents of chapter 11. that it is needless to touch upon more than the salient points of the narrative. Apart from its significance in relation to eternal life, there is in it the precious unfolding of the love, deep compassion, and tender sympathy of the Saviour, for sorrowing hearts, in a world that lies under death. So fully did He feel the weight and burden of this sorrow, that His head became a fountain of tears. Surely this unfolding of divine compassion is above all price, and we may well linger over it, and rest our sorrowing, bereaved hearts upon His bosom. But deeper still was the sorrow of the Son of God for the condition of man lying in death and corruption, the entail of sin; a helpless, hopeless state, fit only to be buried from sight. "By this time he stinketh: for he hath been dead four days."

This is the moral condition of man in flesh under the eye of God. There is nothing so terrible as corruption, and men bury it from their sight in self-preservation. By ornate ceremony, by outward display and funereal pomp, by monument and sculptured stone, they may seek to adorn the article of death, in forgetfulness of the fact that death and corruption are the witnesses and consequence of sin having once entered into the world. Picture the scene, it is so descriptive of the havoc that sin and death have wrought.

The sorrowing sisters, the perplexed disciples, the people around, who

cannot understand how if this man had opened the eyes of the blind, why He did not cause that Lazarus should not have died. His power had been evidenced before, why not now? He had raised a maiden whose soul had just departed; He had stayed a burial at Nain; He had been sent for in this case; but why should He have tarried so long that now the matter was hopeless. Dead four days! What could be done now? They saw His tears, they heard His groans, but what could these avail? Even His words, "Said I not unto thee, that, if thou wouldest believe thou shouldest see the glory of God," did not suffice to comfort, and only added mystery to sorrow. And now He is about to vindicate His words, as He stands beside the stone-sealed grave. "The Resurrection and the Life" is face to face with the worst that death can do, exposed to view as His behest is obeyed, "Take ye away the stone." Then the upward look, the thanksgiving, so brief, so full of confidence in the Father whose Son He was, receiving from His hand the right and authority to raise the dead, the Father's witness to the glory of His Person. Then calm with the majestic power that spake the creation into being, and commanded the light to be, "He cried with a loud voice, 'Lazarus come forth.'" That voice penetrated the deep recesses of the unseen world; death heard the voice of its Master and loosed its hold; corruption released its fell grip; the grave gave up its dead; and a risen man looks into the eyes of the Son of God. Bonds cannot hold him in such a Presence. "Loose him and let him go." Go where?

The following chapters will reveal

the Father's heart, the Father's home, for we are now to listen to the words of eternal life. But, reader, pause at this point and say, has the voice of the Son of God reached the depths of sin and corruption in which you have discovered yourself to be, and said, "Come forth," to find in His presence the power of a life beyond death? This surely is a further step than the capacity He bestows to behold the light in which His person is revealed. The commandment of life is true now in Him and in you. In the sign of His own resurrection we shall read what it cost Him to speak this word of power, even as it is indicated here, in His groans and tears. Two points must claim our attention before we enter the upper chamber and listen to the communications which are based upon this sixth sign.

In the beginning of chapter 12, verses 1-8, a scene of intimacy is shown us, and in connection with this in verses 24-26, the path that leads to another world. Precious are the occasions, when it is the privilege of His own to make Him a supper, where surrounded by those He loves, and whom His risen power has touched, He receives the homage of worship whose fragrance fills the house, where that which typifies the fairest human glory is laid at His feet, and He reads the response of love which His own love has produced. Where this is so to follow Him by the way He has gone is not difficult, to leave in heart a world that gave Him but a cross, a grave; and to find association with Him beyond death in the eternal sphere of life. There the Father's honours abide on Him and on those who are the fruit of the travail of His soul.

But the shadows are deepening around Him, and as we listen to His

words, "Father, save Me from this hour," we learn something of the depths of sorrow which were opening before Him. Unflinching was His purpose, and without hesitation He accepted the cross, the shame, that thereby He might glorify the Father's Name and lift out of death and corruption the trophies of His grace. Heaven could not be silent in presence of such devotion, and the Father's voice once more is heard, as before upon the holy mount, bearing witness to the glorious results that should follow upon the lifting up of the Son of Man.

In chapters 13. to 18. the incidents of the night of His betrayal open before us, revealing the unceasing love that will without fail carry through His own to the end. Until that end shall be reached, how gracious is the service indicated by His action with the water, the bason, the towel. How precious His words, "Part with Me"—partnership, fellowship in the Father's things, the Father's love, known and abiding. For this He laid aside His garments, all that would give Him distinction and place; for this, girded as a bondman, He stoops to cleanse the feet that so easily take the soil and dust of earth. So does He to-day with the water of His Word that reminds of His death, that then with the towel of His present service by the Spirit, He may restore His way-worn disciples to the comfort and communion of His love. He has taken His garments again, but He continues this same service by means of those who do as He has done to them, as each shall recognize the lordship of His love, and learn of Him, the meek and lowly in heart. By the ministry of the Word, by loving care and genuine concern for the spiritual welfare of each other, by comfort of

love, by bowels of compassion, He carries on this gracious service.

Through His death and consequent glorifying in God, a new fellowship of life with a new commandment of love has been formed, a unity of the Spirit, in which those who compose it receive one another as Christ has received them. "That ye love one another as I have loved you." What could remind more of His love than the symbols of His death which were at that moment upon the table, the bread and wine which He had given them, speaking of His body given, and blood shed? That remembrance of His searchless love, which abides until we see His face, should surely be the occasion when we express, if ever, love one to another in the fellowship of His death, as He has loved us. Outside is the world of hate; inside is the love of Christ to His own, which passeth knowledge. All this is preparatory to what follows. In chapter 12., affection for Christ; in chapter 13., love to all saints; in chapters 14. to 17., the unfolding of eternal life, known in the revelation of the Father and the Son.

Space forbids us dwelling on the riches of grace displayed in these four chapters. The precious filling of the interval of His absence in the presence of the Comforter, and the consequent intimacy with Christ in abiding love. If indeed we are dwelling in these rich pastures of grace and love, from which obedience to His word cannot be separated, then shall fruit, much fruit, abound for the Father, fruit having the same character of moral excellence that the Son afforded for His delight. It is in the circle of His friends that Christ makes known the secrets of the Father's counsels, and it is this fellowship of His Son that we may enter within the veil, join in the chorus that

shall fill the heavens with praise, and find our home in the sphere of life eternal.

Chapter 16. shows the surrounding circumstances of a persecuting world, its character exposed by the presence of the Holy Ghost, a world so blinded by a lifeless profession that it counts it service to God to slay the saints of God. But against that which God upholds no power can avail, nor can any sheep of Christ be snatched from His hand.

There is yet one more thing that completes this provision for the present joy of life eternal, for those who journey across the barren waste that this world affords. It is the knowledge that Christ on high ever lives to make intercession for us. He was about to tread the path of death where none could follow Him then, but He will not go until, having lifted up His eyes to heaven, He prays His great high-priestly prayer. In resurrection He has taken this high office, continuing still these same requests until His final heart's desire shall be accomplished, and with Him where He is, His own shall behold the glory that was His before the foundation of the world.

How far removed from the charnel house of death is all this for the soul, when, risen already with Christ, it is let go into the full sunshine of the light, as God is in the light, living in the realm of life eternal, and yielding response in adoring worship that shall never cease.

In order that this worship may have its true character, the full blessedness of sonship must be known, and it is into the power and calling of this sonship that the sign of Our Lord's own resurrection will lead us in our next study.

THE DIFFERENCE OF BEING A GUEST WITH CHRIST AND BEING UNITED TO HIM.

(J. B. S.)

WHAT is the difference between one in the company of Christ and one who is united to Him? It is evident that the latter includes the former; but the former, as we see even in the case of John leaning on the bosom of Jesus, does not include the latter. If I sit under His shadow I have great delight, and His fruit is sweet to my taste *while I am there*; but if this scene changes I have no certain link with the happy scene which I have left. The sense of past enjoyment is not a link; it may be assured to me by the Word, but I require to be there again in order to be conscious of my right to be there. Now if I am united to Christ I am secured in everything that I have enjoyed, whether I am in the scene of enjoyment or not. "He that is joined to the Lord is one spirit." The sense of being united to Him by the Spirit comforts and sustains my heart in a much greater way than the double portion of Elijah's spirit and his mantle cheered and helped Elisha when a lonely one in the wilderness.

No nearness of company could acquaint me with the wondrous unfoldings of the Spirit to me when I am in conscious union with Christ. How could any mere guest comprehend that word, "In that day ye shall know (be conscious) that I am in My Father, and ye in Me and I in you"? No experience could surpass this; and it can, through the Spirit by whom it is made known, exist in any scene. No one without a divine nature could appreciate the perfectness of Christ or enjoy His company, but it is evident that the enjoyment cannot be but where He is who affords it; and hence, however capable I may be of enjoying it, if I am not in the scene where He is, there can be no enjoyment; whereas, if I am

united to Him by the Spirit, I am conscious of being in Him and He in me; and therefore, though not in the scene of enjoyment actually, yet I possess the One who makes the scene so enjoyable. I am not only a guest, but I am *owner* in Christ. A guest necessarily only enjoys while he is a guest. The owner is owner wherever he is.

The order, as it appears to me, is, first, a guest, and this we see (Rev. 3.) is of a twofold character. Christ sups with me, enters into my circumstances, as He says to Zacchæus, "Make haste and come down, for to-day I must abide at *thine house*." He first meets us in every variety of circumstance on our own side, and next we sup with Him. We pass into the circle of His things. We are emphatically His guests. We are conscious of untold benefits in His company. But the next thing is, and it is an immense advance, that we are united to Him; and the more we have gained by and appreciated His company, the more do we comprehend the vastness of the favour of union with Him; and it is consequent on union, abiding in Him, that we are disciples, and bring forth much fruit. The power of the absent Elijah is with Elisha, though he be lonely down here. It is not that Elisha has been only a favoured guest, he has *received* of his spirit and the mantle that fell upon him, and he returns to the scene where Elijah is not, in all his power; fruitful and vigorous, though the one who connects him with all the glory of God is no longer here. Thus the heir and owner possesses all that the guest enjoys, and he loses not the sense of possession, though he is not in the place of possession; but, because he is in the spirit of the owner, he acts in the power and character of the owner, where his title is either unacknowledged or refused.

AN UNPARDONABLE INIQUITY.

“Ye have numbered the houses of Jerusalem, and **THE HOUSES HAVE YE BROKEN DOWN TO FORTIFY** the wall Ye made also a ditch between the two walls for the water of the old pool ; but ye have not looked unto the Maker thereof, neither had respect unto Him that fashioned it long ago. . . . Surely this iniquity shall not be purged from you till ye die, saith the God of hosts.”—Isaiah 22.

THIS chapter contains moral instruction of the deepest importance. In the first place, all the wisdom of man is insufficient to ward off evil, if not accompanied by the power of God. When the city of God is in question, this wisdom, exercised in forgetfulness of God who built and founded the city of His holiness, is an unpardonable sin. Again, that which is related here was, historically speaking, done by Hezekiah, of whom it is said he prospered in all his works. Outward blessing attended his labours, but at the same time, the condition of the people, even with respect to these labours, was such that God could not pardon it This is often the case. outward faith in doing the work of God, blessed by Him, corruption as to the state of the heart is the thing which God will assuredly judge, and forgetfulness of God Himself and of their belonging to Him. This is when the people of God lean upon human means.”—(*J. N. D. Synopsis*, vol. 2, 298.)

“All that the wisdom of man can suggest to him is to fortify the wall God broke down. They take wise measures. They make a ditch for the water of the old pool It was very prudent to hinder the water flowing outside to refresh their enemies. But with all this wisdom they forgot to look to the Maker and Fashioner of it long ago. . . . The prophetic Spirit cannot but weep for the ruin of the daughter of His people. . . . In comparing this with the history, there is not a passage that bears more on the heart than the judgment God here

pronounces on the efforts of man to re-establish what God would break down.”—(*Col Writings*, vol. 30, 312.)

* * * *

To break down the houses in order to build up the wall was supreme folly, for the houses were the very life of the people. But to these leaders the outward order was everything, and they thought that they could keep the enemy out by keeping the wall intact. This they would do regardless of the means. They forgot that God Himself would have been a wall about them if they had looked to Him and cared for His people, His flock. His will was that His people should be vigorous and happy in His fear and the knowledge of Himself, but these leaders, having forgotten God, had no care for His people or His vital interests; they thought only of their own position and importance. So down came the houses to keep up the wall. This God would neither forgive nor forget.

This is a snare of the enemy, and let us beware lest we fall into it. We may spend much time in defending a position of our own; we may develop hard spirits and become self-occupied and self-important in wall building, in the hope of keeping evil out, and all the time God may not be in it, and we may be limiting and even destroying the life of the saints of God. The business of the servants of God is to build up the saints of God, to minister grace to them, to develop their true life This is the one and only way of fortifying them against evil. It is this that God values and will reward.—(*J. T. M.*)

THE "WHYS?" AND "WHEREFORES?"

THE "THEES" AND "THEREFORES."

(SAMUEL LEVERMORE.)

TOSSED on a raging sea of thought
My little bark is sadly pressed ;
I cannot trust God as I ought,
I cannot enter into rest.

Why did not God prevent the sin
That cursed the whole of Adam's
race ?

Or, having sinned, bring all within
The covenant of saving grace ?

Wherefore doth He allow the pain
That tears and wears the innocent ?
Why all this agony and shame
If God is all beneficent ?

Why not prevent calamity ?
Forbid the awful scourge of war ?
Promote a pure humanity ?
Make peace a universal law ?

Thoughts such as these, and others still
Plunge all my being in despair—
Oh, bend me to Thy perfect will,
And let me find sweet comfort there.

O UNPROVOKED love that stills
All murmurings of unbelief !
O sweet beneficence that wills
To turn to rapture all my grief !
Oh, just to lie within Thine arms
In the sweet happiness of peace,
Secure from Nature's dread alarms—
Here rest begins and terrors cease.
To leave the "Whys" and "Where-
fores" there
With Him who all perfection is ;
To place the "Thees" and "There-
fores" where
Naught but a cold abstraction is.
Perfection must act perfectly—
Almighty love makes no mistakes ;
God is the end of mystery—
He, out of chaos, order makes.
Leave in His hands the threads of life
To weave into a perfect whole ;
He ends all speculative strife
When fully worshipped in the soul.

"HERE AM I."

(H. J. VINE.)

GOD'S greatness and majesty produced a striking response when He spake in grace to saints of old. When He called, "Abraham, Abraham," at once the answer came, "*Here am I.*" When He said, "Jacob, Jacob," the reply immediately was, "*Here am I.*" To Moses He spake, "Moses, Moses!" and He was answered instantly, "*Here am I.*" When, however, the Lord Himself should come, it is written in Isaiah 52. 6, "Therefore My people shall know My Name: therefore they shall know in that day that *I am He* that doth speak: behold, *It is I,*" or, more correctly, "I am THE SAME, that saith, HERE AM I." Yes, indeed, He is "the same"; this is the last and the twelfth time He is so named in the Old Testament; but now, when

His gracious and holy Name is said to be declared, it is He who says, "*Here am I!*" What surpassing grace! Did He not often say, when here in flesh, "*I am He*" and "*It is I*"? The same One is heard speaking as before, in the same manner, but as come down in lowly grace, "Martha, Martha!" and "Simon, Simon!" Once again, after His ascension, "Saul, Saul!" And Saul, the Benjaminite, inquired, "Who art Thou, Lord?" What astonishing words brought this answer to the persecutor, "I AM JESUS!" Yes, and in Him alone are we given to know the One who is abidingly "THE SAME" (Heb. 1. 12), the One who never changes, the One who is "the First and the Last" (Rev. 1. 17).

THE TESTIMONY—WHAT IS IT ?

(A. J. ATKINS)

IF we are to be intelligent in the will of God and effective in the work of God, we need to understand the character of the *present testimony*. It seems always to be God's way to manifest in testimony what He will afterwards display in power. The testimony is rendered in connection with His people, and it embraces not only their verbal witness but their vital witness; that is, not only what they announce, but what they *are*. It is a *living* testimony. There are a number of indications in Scripture that it is rendered not only in the view of the world but of heavenly beings also (1 Cor. 4. 9; 11. 10; Eph. 3. 10). With what importance this consideration invests the subject!

There are certain essential features of this testimony, that have been true throughout the ages from Abel onwards, for we may say, that with him as the pioneer of faith, the testimony began. For example, every witness for God has testified to the world of its evil works, of God's rights, and the necessity for repentance. But the testimony assumes added and different features in different periods of God's ways; and we may say that, at any given time there is always the testimony peculiarly appropriate to that time. The testimony derives its character from *the truth* revealed at and up to the moment. The truth is what may be known of God—what is revealed of Him; and this revelation was progressive up to Christ; the testimony is the manifestation of and witness to the truth, and the whole truth in and amongst God's people.

The testimony has necessarily had reference to Christ, for He is the truth (John 14. 6). In days of old it was to a Christ who was to come; in the present day it is to a Christ who has

come. True divine testimony always ranges around the Lord Jesus Christ. This is a grand principle, and is, indeed, the key to the subject.

Christ, however, is not only the *subject* of testimony. He has been found in fashion as Man, and as Man here below, He was *the testimony*. In His Blessed Person, in His ways and words, in His death, resurrection and ascension, God has spoken fully and finally (Heb. 1. 1); every divine thought has found expression in Christ. God and man, light and darkness, life and death, heaven and hell, love and sin, grace and law, suffering and glory, weakness and power, need and blessing—to mention only a few moral realities—have been revealed and exposed clearly and fully in their true nature and relation in and by Jesus Christ, God's Son.

This blessed One, having finished the work the Father gave Him to do, as the faithful Witness, returned to the scene from whence He came. The heavens have received Him. In the world He is no more until He comes again in glory. During the present interval God would have a testimony maintained here in the world to the Christ who is not here; and the Holy Ghost is present on earth for this very purpose.

There appear to be at least four aspects in which this testimony is viewed in the New Testament. Firstly, it is said to be "*The testimony of God.*" "I came to you," wrote Paul to the Corinthians, "declaring unto you the testimony of God" (1 Cor. 2. 1). This is indeed an august expression. It is God's testimony, for He is its Author; it is His, too, because in it is set forth what God is for men. It is the gospel. And it is God's purpose that this testimony—the message of

the gospel—should reach every soul of man. "All the world" and "every creature," "all men" are its objective. What an immense privilege, what a responsibility also, does this confer upon us, for it is to us, as God's people, that this testimony is committed. We are responsible to see that those around us hear the message of grace, and see it exemplified in us. This last is an essential part of the testimony. It is a matter of common Christian knowledge that in this great work our lives tell more than our speech, though both be necessary. "There is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself a ransom for all, the *testimony* to be rendered in its own time" (1 Tim. 2. 5, N.T.).

The testimony is also referred to as "*the testimony of the Christ*" (1 Cor. 1. 6, N.T.). This doubtless embraces the gospel, but we gather goes beyond it, and includes, we suggest, the truth unfolded in Corinthians, and especially in Colossians and Ephesians, as to the *Headship* of Christ, involving the truth of the union of Christ and His own, the mystery of Christ and the church, and the manifestation now here below of the spirit and life of that blessed One, who walked here for the Father's full delight. This aspect of the testimony emphasizes that Christ is its *subject*.

Then in the third place we read of "*the testimony of the Lord*." "Be not therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord" (2 Tim. 1. 8). From the Epistle in which this expression is found, we gather that this aspect of the testimony, while surely embracing all that has gone before, contemplates a day of decline and departure, and the breaking up of the "outward structure of the church"; a day when the testimony, and the truth on which it is based, is maintained largely by

individual faithfulness, and when the authority of Christ as Lord is a matter of supreme moment. The name of *the Lord* in its preciousness and power, its claims and its comfort, becomes the rallying point and the standard of the pure in heart. It was always true that the acknowledgment of *the Lord* was the only way into blessing, but in a day of departure, when lawlessness obtains within the Christian profession, this fact assumes particular importance. "In Christ Jesus," the key-word of Paul's highest ministry relating to the purpose of God, appears seven times in this Epistle, and we learn from this that nothing *vital* has been lost by the break-up; all is secured and is available in Christ. But the blessings of God's purpose can only be enjoyed on condition of obedience to the Lord. This obedience thus becomes a test of profession and privilege. The testimony of *the Lord* implies, too, our responsibility as servants, while it guarantees His power and protection to all who seek to be faithful to it. In the darkest day when difficulties abound, it is still true that "*He is Lord of all*"; and we have therefore no need to be ashamed or depressed.

Then, lastly, we have that precious word, "*the testimony of Jesus*" (Rev. 1. 9). John's banishment was on this account. We read, too, that "the testimony of *Jesus* is the spirit of prophecy" (Rev. 19. 10). How sweet are the rare instances of the personal name in the Epistles and Revelation! All Scripture has really the character of prophecy, and all is filled with that name so fragrant and sweet to the Father and to those who have been called to share His delight in His beloved Son. However great our blessing, whatever stage of advance we may reach, however absorbing the

demands of service may be, however difficult the moment, the heart always needs to keep close to Jesus Himself. Only there are we safe; only there can we be truly satisfied. The testimony of Jesus is the spirit and essence of all. At the back of all testimony is devotion of heart for the Person of the Lord Jesus.

These, then, are among the features of the testimony. Another has well said in words which should be weighed carefully: "The whole true testimony relates to the unseen Person (of the Lord Jesus) and to that order of things which is connected with Him at God's right hand."

The *Agent* of this testimony is none other than the Holy Ghost. "He shall testify of Me." "He shall convict the world of sin, and righteousness and judgment to come." He is here to render effective testimony to Christ. He does it normally in and through the saints in whom He dwells. The assembly, comprised of all the members of Christ, is the vessel of testimony collectively, and individual saints are vessels. The purpose of God is that every one of His people should be so intelligent in and adjusted to His will as to be able livingly and effectively to participate in this high privilege. It needs the whole assembly—we speak of the true church, not the professing body—to set forth the fulness and greatness of Christ.

If what we have shown is appreciated, it will be readily understood that, while many saints may fail of their privilege in this respect, and how many do, the testimony cannot be identified with a particular community of saints or circle of assemblies (so called), still less to some small coterie or with a certain individual. It is moral and spiritual, and has no ecclesiastical or geographical bounds. We cannot say

of it, "Lo here," or "Lo there." It cannot be the prerogative of a section, for the simple and obvious reason that the Holy Ghost dwells in the whole assembly. If any think or speak of the testimony as being "with us" in any exclusive sense, they only reveal that they have not understood its meaning. *The fact is not that we possess the testimony, but the testimony, like the truth, possesses us*—if indeed it does—and so far from accrediting us and enabling us to congratulate ourselves thereby, as the manner of some is, we would recognize its holy claims and immense obligations, and bow ourselves in the dust at our failure and faithlessness, and seek grace to be consistent with its true character.

We venture to stress this point, for misconception thereon has, we feel, had no small influence in perpetuating, if not in causing, divisions among God's people. We do not suggest that these can be healed except in God's way and subject to His will; but we would urge that a false idea of the testimony, and of our relation to it, seriously hinders the work of the Spirit of God in healing, gathering and blessing. It is a point of grand moment in this connection to see that the testimony embraces of necessity all the saints and all the interests of Christ. All are not equally intelligent in it, nor equally faithful to it; but this is its scope and bearing. We need, especially for our contribution to it in the way of prayer, to view it thus *extensively* in relation to all men, and all saints. We need also to view it *intensively*, especially for our practical contribution. We can only be in one place at a time, and most of us have a settled residence in one locality. *Our responsibility is, surely, to walk in the truth, and to bear our part in the testimony of the Lord in the locality*

where God has placed us while maintaining prayerful and sympathetic interest in it everywhere. We feel increasingly convinced that God would bless exercise and endeavour in this direction. That is to say, we would do well to cultivate a more simple and practical concern for the interests of God's testimony in our respective localities; for, primarily, it is there that we are responsible for its maintenance. It may be that the Lord is using the general pressure and break-up to help us in this direction.

May the Lord enable us to maintain a clear vision of the greatness and extent of the *testimony*. Its substance is found in the divine and unerring Word of God. It embraces the gospel, the kingdom, and the church, that is, *every interest of Christ*. It maintains continuity with the past, for God has always had a living testimony on earth.

It anticipates the future, when all its realities discovered and known now by faith will be displayed in holy splendour. It is of critical import in the present. We need to make it our great concern! May the Lord preserve us from false and narrow conceptions of it and also from compromise with what is contrary to its character and claims. May the Lord give us the necessary exercise and energy to maintain it in individual faith first of all, and then in fellowship and united endeavour with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart. Another has said, "If there is not energy of positive testimony which acts on others, there is decline. God in grace cannot be inert in testimony in a world of sin" (J. N. D.). The principle is always true that "they overcame by the blood of the Lamb and the word of their testimony" (Rev 12 11).

PERSEVERING LOVE

(J N D)

"He must needs go through Samaria." John 4.

[N going from Judea into Galilee, the Lord, unless He made a circuitous journey, must pass through Samaria. Now Samaria, whilst seeking to appropriate the promises, was outside the circle of them—they belonged to the Jews. But the pretensions of the Samaritans to have part in them excessively irritated the Jews. The population of Samaria was mixed, though in great part of heathen origin. "Thou art a Samaritan, and hast a devil," said the Jews to Jesus. The Samaritans were in fact outside the promises and people of God. The Lord recognized these promises and that people, but He introduced that which was above both, and set them aside. (Verses 21-24, and already, 5, 6.) If Jacob's well was there, the Son of man was there too, the Son of man, weary with His journey, thirsty,

and without water, in the heat of the day, with no resting-place but the side of the well where He might sit, and dependent for a little water to quench His thirst upon anyone who might come—upon a poor Samaritan woman, abandoned and the off-scouring of the city. This woman, tired of life, comes to draw water. Isolated in fact, isolated in her heart, she did not come at the time when women draw water. She had followed after pleasure in doing her own will; she had had five husbands, and the one she had was not her husband. She was weary of life, her will and her sin left her heart void, she was isolated and abandoned by the world: her sin had isolated her; respectable people did not want her; nor was this astonishing. But the One who met her there was more isolated than she. He was alone in this

world, no one understood Him, not even His disciples! There was a point of contact between these two, love on the one hand, and need on the other; but grace was necessary to produce the consciousness of the need.

The manner of Jesus had attracted the woman's attention · a Jew speaking kindly to a Samaritan woman, content to be beholden to her! The Lord begins from on high, by divine grace, joined to the perfect humiliation and lowliness which set the goodness of God within the reach of man, grace which shows itself, which is measured, in going down so far as to meet with sin, and the misery to which sin has reduced us. The Lord indicates the two things "If thou knewest the gift of God." In Jesus, God does not demand anything. He produced every kind of good, but He makes no demand. There was here no right to anything, no promise; there was no morality, no link with God existed; but grace existed in God for those who were in this state. The woman's attention was arrested; she saw something extraordinary, without rising above the circumstances in which her spirit moved. But the Lord goes to the source of all, or rather He came from it in His spirit. Two things are seen here, as I have just said. God giving in grace, and the perfect humiliation of Him who was speaking. Next, what this gift of God was is revealed, that is, the present enjoyment, by the power of the Holy Ghost, of eternal life.

How many new things these few words contained! God was giving, in grace and in goodness. He was making no demands, He was not turning back to man's responsibility, which is the basis of eternal judgment, but was acting in the freedom and power of His holy grace. Then, He who had created the water was there, weary and

dependent, in order to be able to drink of it from such a woman, who did not know what she was. He does not say, "If thou knewest me," but, "If thou knewest who it is that saith unto thee, Give me to drink," who He is who has come down so low, surmounting all the barriers which kept Him from thee, "thou wouldst have asked of Him." Confidence would have been established: as to goodness and as to power, He could, and would, give that which brought into relationship with God. There was the answer "He would have given thee living water"—words clear enough, it would seem, but the poor woman cannot get further than the circumstances of her daily labour. It is not now with her astonishment in seeing Him who spoke with her, passing over religious barriers, but the impossibility, as He was, of having water; for she goes no further than her daily toil, though seeing plainly that she has to do with an extraordinary Person; the Lord was leading her on, she knew not yet where. Was He, then, who spoke to her greater than Jacob, the stock of Israel, who had given them the well? The Lord now expresses more clearly what was in question: "Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again, but whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him, shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water, springing up into everlasting life."

But to arrest the attention of a soul, however useful this may be, is not to convert it: the moral communication between the soul and God is not yet established by the knowledge of oneself and of Him; the eyes are not yet opened. Thus the heart remains in its natural surroundings, absorbed, or at least governed, by the circle in which it lives. The poor woman, attracted by the Lord's manner, which gained

ascendency over her, asks Him to give her of this water, so that she need no longer come there to draw laboriously. All true intelligence was wanting to her; she was absorbed by her weariness and labour, and the circle of her thoughts went no further than her waterpot, that is to say, than herself, but herself possessed by her circumstances. Sometimes we find moral truth, as here; sometimes open unbelief. How can an entrance be found into the heart of man? This is easy for God, and for man this entrance is found when God is there, and reveals Himself, and man's conscience is touched. "Adam, where art thou?" He hid himself, because he was naked. All was out. The fig-leaves that could set him at ease in hiding him from himself were simply nothing when God was there. The first manifestation of this new faculty in man, conscience, this sad but useful companion that always goes with him now through his career, as a part of his being, is, for God, the only door of entrance to the heart. Only here it is love, never weary, that acts. God and the sinner are found in their true place; the sinner, responsible, entirely known of God, but feeling that all is known and that He who knows her is there.

I dwell a little on this point, it is not paradise regained, or even that which is much better, but the soul receiving subjectively truth and grace in the Person of Jesus, who gives it the capacity for this. In both cases the state of sin is revealed to the soul; but in paradise God was there to judge, and there began a world where God was not, but where Satan reigned. At Sychar's well sin also is manifested, but God is also manifested, in love; *then*, light and judgment; *now*, light and grace. All understanding as to the gift of God, of the Person of Christ, of eternal life, was wanting, and had

no place in the woman's heart. "There is none that hath understanding."

But whilst formerly God had driven out man, here love remains perseveringly near the sinner; God's love is persevering and patient. Only all must be real: "Go, call thy husband, and come hither." "I have no husband," replies the woman. It is shame, which, though speaking the truth, hides the evil; not an upright conscience before God. But patient love still carries on its work; it pursues it there, where entrance is found into the understanding—or rather into the soul of man, which is thoroughly wanting in understanding as to divine things—conscience. Then, upon her answer, the Lord tells the woman enough of her history to make her know that she has to do with Him before whom all is naked and laid bare.

The work was going on in this soul; her attention, we have said, had been arrested. The effect deserves to be well considered; the woman neither excuses herself, nor is astonished, nor asks, "How dost thou know this?" The word of God is for her the word of God. "Sir, I perceive that thou art a prophet." She does not only say, "That which thou sayest is true"; no, the authority and source of the word of Jesus were for her divine. All He says comes from God, who reveals Himself by this means among men. This is a deep change in the soul's condition. God has spoken to her, and she has recognized that it is He; but more, that His word, as a whole, as a source is of Him. What she thought was, not only that Jesus, in this particular case, spoke the truth, although that was the means by which her conscience was reached, but God was speaking to her conscience, and that always produces the effect we see here: He who was speaking was a

true and sure source of divine communications. It was faith in the word of God, the soul brought into communication with Him: all that He said had for her a divine authority. Divine intelligence was there with regard to the things in which God was drawing near to man.

Nevertheless, the woman was still pre-occupied with that that filled her mind. Ought we to worship at Jerusalem, or on Mount Gerizim? It was the external aspect of what existed, and her mind had been exercised about these things. Where was God to be found?—but in a way which did not go beyond what was in man. God takes the opportunity of revealing the true, the new worship, the worship of the Father, of God, in spirit and in truth. This change characterizes the whole of the chapter, that is, the introduction of heavenly relationships in the stead of the earthly Jewish system, a change which depended upon the revelation of the Father in the Son, a change but little known as yet, but which was necessarily connected with His Person, and of which, consequently, He could say, “the hour now is.” (Verse 23)

Two things, based upon the revelation which was being made, characterized this worship, the nature of God, and the Father’s grace. The worship of the true God must be a worship “in spirit and in truth.” God’s nature required this; God is a Spirit, and the worship would not be according to what God is if it were not “in truth,” for what is false is not according to what He is, and the revelation of that which He is has come in Christ, who is Himself the truth, for “grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.” The law given by Moses told what man ought not to do, and the Lord knew well how to find in this law that which man ought

to feel; to love God and his neighbour.

But the law does not reveal what God is, it reveals what man ought to be. Now here was God fully revealed in the world, who, rejected as Messiah, object of promise, leaves His special connection with the Jewish people, although it had been established by Himself, and comes to reveal Himself in the Person of the Son, substituting God amongst men, in grace, for all the forms in the midst of which, hidden behind the veil, He forbade all men to come near Him.

The Father was seeking worshippers in spirit and in truth, according to His own nature fully revealed, for “God is a Spirit, and they that worship Him, *must* worship Him in spirit and in truth.” But grace precedes; the initiative is with God, He comes Himself to seek such worshippers. We have seen that it was the gift of God, but God is Light, and He reveals Himself. It is, we have also seen, God revealed in goodness, but the conscience reached by light, and God giving that which springs up unto everlasting life.

Thus it is the grace of the Father which seeks, the light of God that acts on the conscience, grace which gives divine life, according to the presence in power of the Holy Ghost, and all the truth which unfolds itself in this. This is what produces true worship in spirit and in truth. All that belongs to Jerusalem and Samaria is necessarily left behind by the presence of God Himself, the Son revealing the Father, and communicating eternal life in connection with heavenly things, the Messiah being rejected, and the Father’s heart being the source of all, which places us necessarily in connection with heaven by Him who can reveal these things, Himself the Son of the Father.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Godly Sorrow.

“Would you kindly explain 2 Corinthians 7. 10, specially what is the meaning of ‘repentance to salvation not to be repented of’?”—EBBW VALE.

THE Christians at Corinth had been deeply affected by the first Epistle that Paul had written to them. It had produced in them godly sorrow because of their carnal condition and indifference to the gross evil that was in their midst, and this had resulted in their repentance and their deliverance from it, and consequently, in a truer sense of what became them as saints and what was due to the Name of the Lord. This was a very great gain, and they would never regret the sorrow that led to it.

The apostle in this connection contrasts godly sorrow and the sorrow of the world. Godly sorrow for sin is sorrow before God; the heart and conscience are searched in His holy presence, and this results in truth in the inward parts and honesty before

God. The sin itself is repented of, and this means salvation from its power. This is true for the sinner when he first comes to God, it is true for the Christian if ever he falls into indifference and sin.

The sorrow of the world is never sorrow because of the sin itself, but because of the feared consequences of it. There is the desire to escape these, hence all sorts of evasions are attempted and excuses made for it, there is not sincerity of heart before God and the sin is not confessed and forsaken. That sorrow does not work repentance unto salvation never to be regretted. The attempt to minimize the sin and to make excuses for it only involves the one who does it more completely in it; in this way it worketh death.

Crucified with Christ. Galatians 2. 20.

A. Is this verse true of every believer, or does it mark a definite stage in the history of the soul?

B. If the latter, how do we reach it?

C. When the Apostle said, “Christ liveth in me,” what did he mean?

D. What is the force of “by faith of the Son of God”?—YORKS.

A. It is true that every believer is crucified with Christ *in God's account*, for when Christ was crucified there was the end for God of the law with its demands and penalties, and the end also of the man in the flesh to which it applied. And this great truth is part of the gospel, even though very few seem so to understand it. But if it is to be practically true to us and in us we must realize it each for himself. When it is realized it is indeed a stage in the history of the soul.

B. It is reached when a soul realizes that the law has slain him (verse 19), for this is the penalty that it inflicts upon all who fail to keep it completely, and that life henceforward is not by law-keeping but in Christ. If the law has slain him, he is dead to it. Then what is the use of pretending still to be alive to it, and subject to its prohibitions and distinctions, as Peter attempted to be in verses 11-14? and as these Galatians were pretending to be, by being circumcised? The

man who sees the truth accepts the fact that he is dead to the law, *that he might live unto God*. He sees in the cross of Christ the way of deliverance and life. His faith lays hold of the fact that Christ was for him a holy and spotless Substitute, and that the holy law laid hold of Him when He was crucified, and upon Him executed its full penalty; that there it was glorified and vindicated when He suffered its curse for all who believe.

C If the law is death-dealing, Christ gives life, for He is risen, and is the Lifegiver. It is a new life that He gives to all that believe, it is His own life which is worked out in the believer in the power of the Spirit. This life does not need the law, which applies with all its restraints to the evil flesh (see 1 Tim. I. 9), for it delights in the

will of God. It is Christ in the believer, where once there was nothing but the disobedient Adam life.

D. This new life needs maintenance and nourishment, and these are not secured by its turning in upon itself, but in looking out to Christ. It is the outward and upward look of faith that yields peace and satisfaction. Divine life in the creature must have an object outside of itself, and what Object could it have more attractive and all-commanding than "the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me" ? In the Son of God we have the whole revelation of God in His grace and love, and in the light and power of this revelation—the faith of the Son of God—the saved and delivered soul finds alike the spring and sphere of his life.

THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD.

[I]T is strange that we, who have such continual use of God and His bounties and mercies and are so perpetually beholden to Him, should, after all, be so little acquainted with Him. And hence it comes that we are often loath to think of our going to God, of departing to be with Christ. For naturally, where we are not acquainted, we like not to hazard our welcome. We would rather spend our money at an inn, than turn in for a free lodging to an unknown host; whereas to an entire friend whom we elsewhere have familiarly conversed with, we go as boldly and willingly as to our home, knowing that no hour can be unseasonable to such an one. I must not live upon God and His daily bounties without His acquaintance. By His grace I will not let one day pass without renewing my acquaintance with Him, of giving Him some testimony of my love to Him in response to His great love to me, and of receiving some sweet pledge of His constant favour towards me. Then it will be true, indeed, when my call comes,

“There no stranger God shall meet me

* * * * *

He who to His rest shall greet me

Shall greet me with a well-known love”

WHEN a child awakes in the night, and in fear cries out “Mother!” does not the cry command all that the mother is, and how quickly does she move to soothe the fear and meet the need of her child. And if we call on the Lord in the day of trouble will He not answer—He who is our Father? Yes, we may cry, Abba, Father, and just as the mother’s presence is far greater than the darkness and fear to the child, so shall the Father’s presence mean peace to us.

HIS DECEASE.

(J. T. MAWSON.)

"And, behold, there talked with Him two men, which were Moses and Elias : who appeared in glory, and spake of His decease which He should accomplish at Jerusalem."
—Luke 9. 30.

WHAT a theme ! His decease ! The exodus from this life of the Son of God ! It occupied heaven, and was a worthy subject for that high and holy place, for He who was about to accomplish His decease was the Lord of heaven. The hosts of angels had worshipped Him at His entrance into the world, for when God brought in the First-begotten into the world, He said, "Let all the angels of God worship Him." They had followed His lowly way through it, for He, who was God manifest in flesh, was "seen of angels," and now that He was to make His exit from the world they must have been absorbed with the fact. He was about to return to heaven, to His Father, not as He was before the foundations of the earth were laid, though as to His Person He never ceased to be what He ever was, the Son in the Godhead, but as having become a man for the fulfilment of all the will of God. What anticipation there must have been among the angels of God in view of His return, and yet the manner of His exodus from earth must have been a deep mystery and wonder to them, that they must have "desired to look into" (1 Pet. i. 12). Could they understand it ? I question it, for angels do not die, and His exodus from the earth was to be by death. Not angels then appeared in glory to talk with Him at that great crisis in His earthly life, but men—two men who had reached the other side of death, Moses and Elias.

Each of them had had his exodus, both unique and wonderful, when the time for them to go out was reached. Never before nor since had man died as Moses died. He was one hundred and

twenty years old, but his eye was not dimmed nor his natural force abated. And when the time for his departure came, God would not allow those people whom he had led with such patience and faithfulness to see any diminution of strength in him. In ringing tones he pronounced that great benediction upon the people, "The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms. Happy art thou, O Israel ! Who is like unto thee, a people saved by the Lord, the shield of thy help, and the sword of thine excellency ? Thine enemies shall come cringing to thee ; and thou shalt tread on their high places." Then the Lord led him to the top of Pisgah to view the land of promise as He saw it, and there with His own hand closed his eyes in death. Satan desired to have his body when the life had passed out of it, for what purpose we cannot tell, but Michael, the great prince that stands for Israel, triumphantly withstood him, and there in the land of Moab, far from the habitations of men, he was buried by God, and no man knoweth his sepulchre unto this day. That was a noble decease, the crown of a noble life—God's "Well done !" to a good and faithful servant, for God remembered in that hour all his labours, and precious in the sight of the Lord was the death of Moses, the saint of God.

And Elias also, what an exodus was his ! On the other side of Jordan, with one faithful companion near him, Elisha, who was to succeed him as God's prophet to the people, and fifty sons of the prophets standing afar off as eye-witnesses of the event, he was

caught up to heaven in a whirlwind, with a chariot and horses of fire attendant. In this way did God put His seal upon the service of His servant, so that even though the people were unchanged by all his words and acts of power, they might yet believe that a prophet of God had been in their midst. Never before or since had man had such an exodus.

But not of their own exodus did these two men talk, as they stood upon the holy mount with their Lord—they had a greater and more wonderful theme. Of neither could it be said that he accomplished his exodus, nor could it be said of any other man. Every man is compelled by reason of death to terminate his stewardship on earth, for none are free from failure and sin, even though, as in the case of Elias, his faithfulness was signalized by a unique out-going, but Jesus could have lived on, for there had been no failure in Him.

These two great men had been sorely tried, and had sorely failed, and that in their strongest points of character. Moses, the meekest man in all the earth, lost his temper at last, and did not honour God before the people. Elias, the most courageous man of faith that ever stood for God, fled from his post at the threat of an idolatrous woman. It might be said that their lives were broken off; they did not accomplish their life's mission, to say nothing of their exodus, for Moses did not lead the people into the land, nor did Elias succeed in turning them back to God. They made way for others to take up the work that they laid down unfinished. Yet there would be *no sting in death* for Moses, as God, in great compassion, closed the eyes of His servant and friend, and gathered his spirit to Himself; and *the grave had no victory* over Elias as he was raptured

to heaven by angelic power. But if the powers of darkness failed to triumph over these men of God in their exodus, it was because of the decease that the Lord afterwards accomplished, and well they would know it as they talked with Him of it. Yes, Moses failed and Elias was discouraged, but of Jesus it was written, "He shall not fail nor be discouraged." God had to rebuke both these eminent servants of His, but of Jesus He said, "Behold, My Servant, whom I have chosen; My Beloved, in whom My soul is well pleased!"

How well chosen are the words with which the Holy Spirit describes the death of Jesus *here*: "His decease which He should accomplish at Jerusalem." He *accomplished* His decease: it was a great achievement, the crowning act of His life. It was the fulfilment of the "one obedience," the completion of His mission to earth. His own words to His Father describe it. "I have glorified Thee on the earth, I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do." As He stood on the Holy Mount the whole way lay before Him. While His disciples dreamed of a throne, He beheld the cross, and saw the way to it beset and barricaded by hostile forces. The hatred of men against God was there—hatred that would congregate and heap upon Him all the shame that it was possible for them to devise; and the powers of darkness were there, marshalled in one desperate attempt to crush Him. There was more there than these, much more, for if men were to be redeemed, a price had to be paid, a price beyond all human computation: His soul made an offering for sin. As He looked upon it all, the glory was so near: one step and He would have been there, and worthy to be there, but not for that at that time had He come. He had come to accomplish His

decease at Jerusalem, and He turned His back upon the glory and set His face toward Jerusalem, and talked of His decease which He should accomplish there.

No wonder that the Father's voice was heard from the excellent glory, saying, "This is My beloved Son : HEAR HIM." That is what we desire to do, and so we follow Him to the accomplishment of His decease, for He has spoken by His death as He could not speak by His life ; it is by His cross that He has told out to us all the love of God. For "God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."

But how different was His exodus from that of Moses and Elias. They went suddenly, out of lives of trial and labour, to rest in God ; they trusted in God, and in the hour of their exodus they were not confounded ; but how different it was with Him when His hour came and He bore His cross to Calvary :

We see Him there by men despised,
No crown but thorns awarded Him,
With malefactors crucified,
His cup of shame filled to the brim.
Lover and friend stand off afar,
Nor to the Cross dare they approach ;
While foes press round and eager are
Upon His head to heap reproach.

We hear His broken cries ascend,
But to His need the heavens are dumb,
No angel to His aid can bend,
No succour from on high can come.

To Him were meted pain and grief,
To Him the bitter cup of woe,
The gloom of death without relief
No light above, no help below.

But we know why it was. He loved us and had come to save us, and no man took His life from Him. He laid it down of Himself. He submitted Himself, as a lamb led to the slaughter, to His foes, that from the cross He might proclaim the love of God, and by the cross redeem our souls.

We see Him there the Substitute
For our offences to atone ;
To Him our guilt did God impute,
And there He bore God's wrath alone ;
That we, forgiven and set free—
Redeemed by His most precious blood
From sin and all iniquity—
Might find our peace and joy in God.

For the joy that was set before Him He endured the cross, despising the shame, and He has entered His glory. He has accomplished His exodus, and in such a way that God is glorified, the enemy is defeated, and our souls are saved. And now by the preaching of the gospel He is gathering out of this world a people for His Name, and a bride for His everlasting joy. And we have been arrested and saved by the gospel ; well might we talk of His decease that He accomplished at Jerusalem and sing about it and praise His Name for it now, as we shall certainly do when we see Him in His glory.

The Triumph of Redemption.

THE triumph of redemption will not be in restoring us to the place which Adam lost by sin, but in raising us to the perfectness of the new creation, of which the Lord from heaven is the Head. The eyes of our faith are not fixed upon the blessedness of Eden, but upon the glory of "the Holy Mount" ; for "we know that when He shall appear we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is."

Every man that hath this hope in Him purifieth himself, even as He is pure.

THE SURE REMEDY.

(H. J. VINE.)

BRIGHT with the love of God is the cross of Jesus our Saviour, for there for us He suffered and went down into the deepest depths of death. Right up to the highest heights He has gone, "far above all heavens," and is there crowned with glory and honour. Such an One as He is, is well able to remove all clouds of ill and every heart with blessing fill

Can a man be found who has sunk too low for Him to save? He has already saved the chief of sinners! (1 Tim 1. 15) Is there a creature too exalted to receive good from Him? He shall "fill all things" (Eph 4 10). "In Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily!"

Find that weary, sin-stricken sinner who deeply feels his need of God's salvation. There is no need to occupy him with his mightily-felt sinfulness now. A sure and effectual remedy is waiting for him—"CHRIST JESUS came into the world to SAVE sinners"

Bring that one who fears that he is not one of those who shall never perish, and that life eternal will never be his portion. True and reliable is the word—"Whosoever believeth in HIM should not perish, but have everlasting life!" To him who is most wretched because of sin's presence in his members, who longs for deliverance, and cries, "Who shall deliver me?" how good is the answer—"I thank God through JESUS CHRIST OUR LORD!" (Rom. 7. 25), and "the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death!" (8 2)

Do you know one who is greatly distressed by innumerable difficulties and trials, who is wearied with cares and burdens too heavy to be borne: Christ is the sure resource! "Casting ALL your care upon HIM, for He careth for you" (1 Pet. 5. 7). He takes

advantage of all we pass through to endear Himself to us, to draw us near to Himself, and to make His own love and power indispensable to us. He has proved His love to us in the depths of the cross, and He uses His power on our behalf from the heights of the glory, where He now is

Should sorrows and sufferings abound, should still greater ills sweep over the world and the churches, should unexpected trials arise in the pathway—nothing can take CHRIST JESUS unawares! When Paul was cast into prison and bound with a chain and brought up to answer before King Agrippa, he, the prisoner of the Lord, because of the portion he had in Christ, could exclaim before the Christless monarch, "I would to God, that not only thou, but all that hear me this day, were . . . altogether such as I am, except these bonds" (Acts 26 29). Paul knew well and had proved in many trials and much suffering the all-sufficiency of His almighty Saviour and Lord. His experience of the grace of Christ had corroborated every word of Holy Scripture, and he was a witness of the things he preached. He was rich in having Christ, though suffering as a prisoner. The king was poor without Christ, though adorned with royal robes. Paul himself knew well what he wrote to others—"Ye know the grace of OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST, that, though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty might be rich" (2 Cor 8. 9)

A brother whose heart was filled with the love and grace and glory of Christ called up another who was suffering and bedridden. He felt deeply for his afflicted brother, but he did not talk of his affliction but of Christ, and, as he talked, the joy that was in his heart

filled the heart of the sufferer, and that so effectually that they were able to join together in glad praise and thanksgiving. The descent of the Lord Jesus Christ into the deepest depths of death and His ascent into the highest heights of glory, and His ability to fill all things—these were the things of which the visitor talked and that lifted the heart of the sufferer above his sufferings, for the Holy Spirit who is the Comforter brought it home to him, that

Christ could fill his heart now and be to him all he needed, as He will surely fill the universe and sustain it in fulness of blessing. The sweet savour of the visit lingered long after the visitor had gone.

Yes, our God and Father in His love and wisdom has provided all for us in Christ, His beloved Son; from the deepest depths to the highest heights Christ is enough.

A WORD FROM AFRICA.

(H. T. WILSON.)

THE Inkongo people (Central Africa) were making a new town, and the chief decided to plant rows of bananas along the main street. As he could not trust any of his people to make a perfectly straight line, he asked our help. Taking pieces of cord, we pegged them tightly to stakes, and told the people that all they had to do was to dig the holes alongside the string and plant the bananas there. It seemed as though they could not possibly go wrong, so our surprise was great when, on going to see how they were getting on, we found the line of bananas turning here and there like a great snake. The planters had ignored the line, and planted the bananas just where they thought best. One man, who evidently knew they had done wrong, deliberately removed the cord from its place and pegged it down to the bananas, so that not only was the row of plants crooked, but the straight line, which should have served as a guide, was distorted also.

How like to those African natives are many who profess to have the Word of God for their guide, how like it are we very often. There is the Word, plainly enough, but we have our own thoughts and our own way, and we take it often, and that in spite of the Word. Then often we begin to stretch and twist the Word in the endeavour to quiet our consciences and make our way appear right and straight. This is a sore evil and may we be delivered from it.

What peace of heart, what confidence it gives when we know the Word and keep it and do it! Then is our way sure and our work will abide. By the Holy Scriptures is the way of salvation known, and they are "profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works" (2 Tim. 3. 16, 17).

The larger our thoughts of Christ are the larger will be our communion with God.

Whenever we speak to one another of Christ, He will always be one of the company, hearkening to and hearing our conversation (Mal. 3. 16). Do our hearts long for His presence? Then let us speak together of Him more.

THE SUPER-EMINENCE OF CHRIST.

(ARTHUR CUTTING.)

A Greater than the Temple.

"But I say unto you, That in this place is One greater than the temple."

Matthew 12. 6.

IN Matthew 12. 6 the Lord speaks of His super-eminence over the temple.

The temple was the place in which God *dwelt*.

The temple was the place from which God *spoke*.

The temple was the place at which God was *approached*.

But the temple failed because the people who had charge of it failed, it was desecrated and destroyed, it was merely temporary and typical. In Christ we have the antitype and that which abides. It was the shadow, Christ is the substance.

In the temple God *dwelt*: "The Word was made flesh, and *dwelt among us*" (John 1. 14).

In the temple God *spoke*: "God hath . . . spoken to us by (in) His Son" (Heb. 1. 2).

In the temple God is *approached*: "Whom God hath set forth . . . a propitiation (or, meeting place) through faith in His blood" (Rom. 3. 25).

GOD DWELLING. In that remarkable, prophetic and pathetic prayer made by King Solomon at the dedication of the temple, in 2 Chronicles 6. 18, 1 Kings 7. 27, he exclaimed, "Will God in very deed dwell with men on earth? Behold, the heaven of heavens cannot contain Thee, how much less the house which I have built!" He could evidently conceive the thought of the Name of Jehovah being connected with the temple (1 Kings 8. 29), and also that His eyes and His heart should be there or toward that house, but it passed his highest thought that Jehovah should deign to dwell with men on

earth. The temple nevertheless became His dwelling-place, for we hear the Psalmist speaking of Him thus: "O Thou who dwellest between the cherubims" (Ps. 80. 1). Even in the tabernacle in the wilderness He said to Moses: "I will appear in the cloud upon the mercy seat" (Lev. 16. 1).

In Christ we have realized that unique mystery that Solomon, the wisest of men, could not conceive of. Over seven hundred years before Christ was born Isaiah had prophesied of the coming of Christ. "Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call His name Immanuel (God with us)" (Isa. 7. 14). Paul wrote to Timothy, sixty-five years after Christ came, "Great is the mystery of piety, *God manifest in flesh*," etc. (1 Tim. 3. 16). John wrote at a later date (for the Gospel is said to be the last book written), "The Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld His glory, the glory of an only begotten with the Father,) full of grace and truth" (John 1. 14). Thus we have in these great Scriptures God in manhood, in the person of our Lord Jesus Christ. Hanging on this stupendous fact is the glory of God and our great salvation. Hence we have discovered to us the dark design of the enemy, who seeks to deny this truth, an attempt to rob God of His glory and us of our highest blessing.

How verily greater than the temple is Christ, when He speaks of doing for His own body what the Jews could not do for the temple. Speaking of the material temple, He could say, "Not one stone of it should rest upon another that would not be thrown down," but

speaking of the temple of His body He challenged them, saying, "Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it again." Let the Unitarian and Modernist tell us if they can, who this wonderful "I" is who was going to raise His own dead body. "I lay down My life that I might take it again; this commandment have I received of My Father. I have power to lay it down and I have power to take it again." Who is He?

Every whit of the old temple uttered His glory, says Psalm 29. 9 (margin). The temple might set forth the *attributes* or character of God in picture, but it required a greater than the temple to express His *nature*: that was reserved to the Only-begotten which is in the bosom of the Father, and He hath declared Him. At no time had God ever been fully revealed until He came who

"Dwells in His bosom, knoweth all
That in that bosom lies,
And came to earth to make it known
That we might share His joys."

The temple might utter His glory, but it was only a glory that was to pass away, and in that sense had really no glory by reason of the glory that excelled, the glory of His person.

GOD SPEAKING. The temple was the place of divine communications. It was the place of the oracle, where God spoke (see Exod. 29. 42). "The tabernacle where I will meet you and *speak there to thee.*" Now He speaks to us by or in the Son. He had spoken in times past unto the fathers by the prophets, but only in a temporary, fragmentary and preparatory way. Now He speaks in His Son, and that completely, permanently and finally, for who could speak after the Son?

God has spoken! Revelation is the opposite to discovery, and it is God who has revealed Himself, and not man that has discovered God. Everyone

who believes in God, believes that God can reveal Himself; and when it is remembered that "God is love," the fact of revelation is assured, since love must of necessity manifest itself. God's revelation is the outcome of His love. True love could not keep itself to itself, it must reveal itself by look or gesture or words. God loved not in *word* only, but in deed and in truth.

It is usual for us to judge of God by what we find in ourselves. The danger is present with us of trying to measure God's love to us by what we find in our own hearts of love to Him. I could no more find the wealth of the love in God's heart by examining my own, than I could tell how much money there is in the Bank of England by examining the contents of my purse. If someone came from the Bank of England and could tell me exactly how much money there was there, then I could tell you.

When God makes His will known to us we must remember that it is not the will of a despot—that is, one that does what he wishes simply because he has power to do it. God's will is moved by His heart of love. It is the will of love, and His purpose is the purpose of love; so that to understand the will and purpose of God we must understand His love. Who can make that known? The only-begotten Son which is in the bosom of the Father, *He hath declared Him.*

It is in John's Gospel we have it made clear to us who it is through whom God speaks, and his testimony leaves us without doubt as to the greatness of the Person of Christ in whom He speaks. In the first chapter of John we have it shown to us that Christ is the Word that makes Him known. There we learn that He had—

1. Eternal existence—"In the beginning was *The Word*" (verse 1).

2. Distinct personality—" *The Word was with God* " (verse 1).

3. Essential Deity—" *The Word was God* " (verse 1).

4. Eternal personality—" *In the beginning with God* " (verse 2).

5. Creatorial originality—" *All . . . made by Him* " (verse 3).

6. Essential vitality—" *In Him was life* " (verse 4). And *relatively* He assumes—

7. Perfect Manhood.

Where can we find anything in the temple or communication from the temple that could give that revelation of God, or that could speak with that authority? How infinitely greater He was than the temple!

APPROACH. It was only at the temple that man could approach God and God could approach man, but this latter was only for one man on one day in the year, for the "way into the holiest was not yet made manifest." Only a special class could approach to God, and not without blood.

Holiness barred the way into the presence of God, but approach was made possible by the blood of the sacrifice. Those sacrifices could not put the sin away, but they pointed to

a sacrifice that could put sin away; and Christ has once suffered for sins, the Just for the unjust, *to bring us to God*. In those times of twilight and shadows God was behind the veil, but now we read in Romans that God has set forth Christ—a propitiation, a mercy seat, through faith in His blood. Now God can come forth to man, not as Judge, but as a pardoning God, so that not only can man approach God, but God can approach man in blessing and not in judgment. Here again, then, we have the Lord Jesus shining in transcendent pre-eminence over the temple. The temple of old had a veil in it that shut man out from His presence. Now in Christ and by virtue of the finished work of Calvary God has come out in the character of a Saviour. Thus a greater than the temple has given us what the temple of old could never give us—liberty of approach to God. All this lays a divine emphasis on the atoning work of Christ. Ignore that and attempt to stand before God in your own merit, and inevitable judgment must overwhelm you. By virtue of that precious blood and a new-made way into the presence of God by the blood of Christ, we are now bidden to draw near to God, and even into the very holiest of all. How infinitely greater than the temple is He!

FOR THOSE WHO SERVE.

REMEMBER that that which God is most set for Satan will most oppose.

No servant can lead another beyond the measure of his own grace. The Spirit honours the word spoken where it has been effectual on the speaker.

If you are near the heart of Christ and in communion with Him you could not get alongside a sinner without telling him of a Saviour, or a saint without telling him of Christ, his life in heaven.

Do not be afraid of God's discipline. You will need it if you are to be used by Him.

You can only plead with God as you know Christ. He alone is the channel by which God can bless. The power of intercession is a great thing to the true servant of God.

THE EIGHT SIGNS OF JOHN'S GOSPEL. (JAMES GREEN.)

Sign VII.—The Resurrection. Read Chapter 20.

IT is hardly possible to apprehend the significance of the sign miracle of our Lord's resurrection without considering the special aspect of the cross presented in John's Gospel. Again and again it is recorded therein that the resurrection on the third day would be accomplished by our Lord's own act and power. To Him the Father had given authority to lay down His life and to take it again. He had told the Jews that if they destroyed the temple of His body, in three days He would raise it up, and Mary of Bethany, discerning the divine glory of the "I am" who was the resurrection and the life, knew that death could not hold Him.

Truly all the Persons of the Godhead were concerned in this mighty operation, which in result shook to their utter discomfiture the powers of darkness, overthrew the kingdom of the prince of this world, and opened the eternal day of the purposes of God. On the fact of the resurrection of Christ, the truth of the revelation of God in the Person of His Son is established. Apart from this our faith would be but a vain imagination, and the Bible but a work of human composition. Borne witness to, however, by a sevenfold testimony (1 Cor. 15.), the triumph shout has filled the heavens, and re-echoed in many a believing heart, "Now is Christ risen from the dead and become the firstfruits of them that slept."

In the fourth Gospel we have no record of the agony in the garden, no cloud upon the cross, no midnight darkness nor forsaken cry, but the fullest testimony is borne to the finishing of the work, and the final divine act by which the Son of God dismissed His spirit. Added to this is the corroborated

fact of the blood and water flowing from His pierced side. It is the burnt-offering aspect of that death of deaths that is shown so plainly in this Gospel. It is Christ offering Himself without spot to God, a willing offering in perfect love and obedience, and hence providing an acceptance in the fragrance of which we draw nigh to God, with liberty of access through this door of welcome into eternal life with all its joys and relationships. His surrender was perfect, and though the path through which the will of God lay for Him involved the utmost suffering, His obedience never faltered in its unchanging purpose, until the death of the cross was fulfilled. What a sight for heaven, what a joy to the heart of the Father! "Therefore doth my Father love Me, because I lay down My life, that I might take it again." None but the Father could rightly understand the depths of such devotion, none but He could fully appreciate the perfection of such love as this.

Most blessedly true it is that He died for us as the sin offering, but in His death of deaths He was at the same time telling out the depths of His love to the Father, establishing His glory, and bringing every attribute of God into harmonious working. Through the cross of Calvary righteousness and love are now hand in hand, justice and mercy uphold each other. All this is most important for us, if we are to understand the power of His resurrection.

In the first place, it demonstrated the greatness of a mighty energy far exceeding aught that the first creation had borne witness to. It was a new beginning, far transcending the old order that only ended in death, for in

this there was the display of a life that lay beyond it in another realm, over which death had no authority. It was not a return to a condition where sin reigned, and to the sphere of men amongst whom in His earthly sojourn the Son of God had moved and sorrowed and wept, and in this it differed from all other instances when the dead had been raised. A new world had been opened, a new creation begun, and, to use our Lord's own simile in chapter 16. 21, a man had been born into it. A world upon whose fadeless joy no fleck of sorrow shall ever come; upon whose spotless purity no taint of sin shall ever rest; whose peaceful calm no storm shall ruffle; a world where love supreme reigns; and where life, eternal life, shall develop and expand in the pure, unsullied rays of the light of the knowledge of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

In the second place, the power of His resurrection not only revealed the ability of God to form such a sphere, but it brought those for whom the Son of God had given Himself into an acceptance so perfect, and formed a relationship of such supreme blessedness, that it could only be expressed by words which never before had been uttered, nor could be. "I ascend" (for all now belonged to heaven) "unto My Father and your Father; and to My God and your God." He had identified Himself with our sins, our guilt, and all the consequences thereof upon the cross; now He brings us to His own side, into His own acceptance and relationship, according to the eternal counsels He had come to fulfil.

The circumstances of the resurrection related by John bear witness to the completeness of the severance with earth, and the links that bind us here: the grave clothes left intact, as loving hands had folded them around His

holy body; the empty sepulchre emphasized; the angels sitting in peaceful contemplation of the spot where no longer His sacred form lay; a longing heart weeping for sorrow that her all is gone if she cannot even have the consolation of ministering to her dead. And now through her tears Mary beholds One standing near, but knows Him not, nor does His voice of inquiry come with familiar tones to her ear; she recognizes not that He whom she seeks is so near. All, all is closed in gloom, and no glimmer of the light which will in a moment flood her soul with joy unspeakable has dawned upon her.

It is not with man in flesh that God can connect the life that is eternal, nor with the best of affections the human heart can afford; not with earth's fairest scenes, nor loving homes and relationships on which the shadow of death ever rests; but beyond all these things that death can break up, the revelation of the Father shines forth in the eternal Son He has sent. Unchanging and imperishable, it now abides for His own in Him who is the true God and eternal life. But let us follow the accents of the voice that is speaking to Mary, for thus we shall learn how the point of contact is established which can never be broken. She hears a voice—perchance the gardener from whom she can glean some information of Him whom her soul loveth. But no, not as the gardener will He reveal Himself to her. Not yet is the time when He will bid the desert rejoice and blossom as the rose; not yet the time when He will lay the foundations of the earthly Jerusalem with fair colours and her borders with sapphires. His desires for His own reach far beyond all this that yet shall be in a future day. Yet how He appreciates such affection as is here disclosed in Mary. When the longing

of the soul is, "Oh, that I knew where I might find Him!" when all else is as nothing compared with the one object of desire, then surely the door is opened by which He can enter and manifest Himself. And now, as it were, He knocks: it is the call of the Shepherd to one of His sheep, to one whom the Father has given Him, and to her He is about to give His own joy of the life eternal. A word, a name, "Mary," and at the sound her soul thrills with a new-found spiritual contact, and every fibre of her being responds, "Rabboni," my Master.

She would fain have embraced His feet, but again His words must emphasize the point that He has not returned to earth and its scenes: "Touch Me not." Far greater joy is for her, and for those whom now for the first time He calls His brethren. "Go to My brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto My Father, and your Father; and to My God, and your God." He maintains the place which of necessity is His own, whilst sharing with them the blessedness of it. When on earth He had taught His disciples to pray, "Our Father, which art in heaven." He had bidden them to count upon God as their heavenly Father for all their needs, assuring them that His grace and goodness would supply all. But precious as this Name was, it left them with their thoughts still connected with the earth, and did not introduce them to the far greater blessedness and nearness of knowing the Father in the same relationship in which the Son ever abides. Nor could this be until He was risen and His death accomplished, as Psalm 22. 22 foretold. The prayer of one whose heart had drunk deeply of the joy of this revelation is recorded

for us in Ephesians 3. 14-21, and to this inspired communication we may turn to learn something of the wonder and blessedness which is involved in the Name of "The Father of our Lord Jesus Christ."

We may also learn from the prayer of Ephesians 1. 17-23 the exceeding greatness of power and might concerned in the establishment of the counsels of grace, purposed by "The God of our Lord Jesus Christ" who is the source of glory. By these combined resources of love and power God will accomplish the good pleasure of His will, and bring into display an eternity of bliss, in which a new creation, untainted by sin, and ever preserved from it, shall be filled with the glory of the firstborn Son, expressing in companionship with the sons of God, the grace and fulness of blessing flowing from the Father who sent the Son (John 17. 22, 23). And until that day shall dawn when He shall come again and receive us to Himself, that where He is we may be also, He will manifest Himself in the midst of His own, the doors being shut upon all else, that the eternal life in all its blessed character may be known in His own presence, and that He may lead the same worship to the Father that formed so blessed a response of love in Himself (John 17. 26).

Could divine love conceive a greater wonder of grace than this present knowledge of the Father and the Son? And shall not these seven signs speak to our hearts and draw us closer to Him who has caused them to be written in order "that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through His Name?"

Here is a sure test of anything we hear or read: whatever makes Christ more precious to us is of God, whatever obscures Him from our vision is of the devil.

THE EPHESIAN EPISTLE.

(JAMES BOYD)

Chapter 2 continued, from verse 13.

CHRIST as peace is viewed with relation both to believers and to God. He has made both Jew and Gentile one in the body of Christ, so that the Jew is a Jew no longer, but both Jew and Gentile as in Christ are viewed as one new man. Peace therefore has been made with God, and also with all in the body of Christ. The Jew was early placed in the place of privilege by God, and "The law of commandments contained in ordinances" were for himself. The Gentile had no right to them at all. This lifted the Jew above the Gentile, and as he was most unfaithful to the privileges bestowed upon him by God, he was all the more guilty as a transgressor. But in Christ we are not in the flesh; for He has made in Himself of the twain *one new man*, so making peace. The enmity is gone in our relations with God, and with one another. But all this must be viewed in the light of the cross, for by it all that we were in the flesh is gone in the judgment of God, and we are in new relationship with God in Christ, risen and glorified, and we have also received the Holy Spirit who brings us intelligently into the benefit of all this. Therefore reconciliation has also a double aspect, for both are reconciled unto God and to one another by the cross and in one body.

The cross has been the removal from before God of the man after the flesh, and in the risen Christ we have the introduction of a Man of another order, and with this Man all who are of God are linked up by the Holy Spirit. The old order remains as it was, with this difference, that man as a child of Adam can no longer be in any vital relationship with God. Only in Christ can anyone be recovered from the ruin in which the man after the flesh is found.

But light having come into the world in the Person of Christ, who gave Himself a ransom for all, and thus opened a way of salvation for all, the responsibility of the sinner has been greatly increased. He is responsible to believe the glad tidings, which are preached world wide to both Jew and Gentile alike, and all who believe, of whatever nation or people they may be, are made one in Christ, all having access by one Spirit to the Father; so that Gentile believers are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens of the saints, and of the household of God, built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the corner-stone, in whom all the building fitted together increases to a holy temple in the Lord.

Great indeed is now the blessing of him who believes. His centre and glory is not in a gorgeous temple, to which he brings his offerings that the sons of Aaron may receive at his hand, and with which they may load the altar, a sacrifice which can only serve as a purification for the flesh, and which cannot take away sins, but he is now part of the temple itself, a living stone in that spiritual house, and also a holy priest to draw near to God, and to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus Christ (1 Pet. 2. 4, 5). When Peter confessed Jesus as the Son of the living God, Jesus said to him. "Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but My Father which is in heaven. And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (Matt. 16. 17, 18) The living stones that enter into the construction of this spiritual edifice are taken out from both Jews and

Gentiles, quickened into divine life by the Son of the living God, and by Him built into this holy temple, against which the powers of darkness spend their energies in vain.

In the construction of this spiritual house no human hand is employed. The builder is Christ, and the whole work is His; He says, "I will build My Assembly." It is not yet completed, neither is it yet in manifestation. It is now growing and will appear in the day in which the Builder shall take to Himself His great power, and shall reign. In that day it shall appear as the heavenly Jerusalem. But there is still another, and in this case a manifest circle of blessing to be considered. "In whom ye also are builded together for a habitation of God through the Spirit." It is God's habitation in the Spirit on earth. It is also the pillar and base of the truth. It is the witness of Christ during His absence on high, and it is that which maintains the truth while He is hid in the heavens. It has been proved to be a sad failure. Unlike the holy temple, though set up at its beginning in the power of the Holy Spirit, it was committed into the hands of men, and because of this failure results, as it does regarding everything that man has to do with. Paul tells the Corinthians that they were God's building. As a wise architect he had laid the foundation, as far as the Corinthians could be called "God's Building." But upon that foundation others were building, and everyone was not careful to use good material. He says, "Let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon." The work of each has to be made manifest, by the day which is to be revealed in fire, and this shall try the work of all. The foundation is Jesus Christ, and the superstructure must be in harmony with it. A man may build with gold, silver, precious stones, or he may put into the building

wood, hay, straw. If the work of any one abide, the builder will receive a reward. If the work of anyone is consumed he shall suffer loss, but he himself shall be saved, yet so as by fire. As to the defiler of the temple of God, he shall be destroyed.

CHAPTER 3.

It has often been noticed that chapter 3 is like its subject, parenthetical. This dispensation is a parenthesis in the ways of God's government in this world. The history of the world can be read without it. In the prophetic outlook in the Old Testament it does not appear. It is passed over as though it was not to exist. The sufferings of Christ and the glory that was to follow are very minutely described: His death, His resurrection, His session on the right hand of God, His reign over the earth in Zion, and everything placed under His feet. But this present time—the greatest of all dispensations—is as completely left out as though it were of no account.

The way in which the apostle commences here, gives me the impression that what was at the moment present to his mind was the exhortation set before the saints in the next chapter. Both chapters begin very nearly alike. In this he is the prisoner of Christ Jesus; and in the next he is the prisoner in the Lord. I think the reason of this is that chapter 3 is the setting forth of the administration of the grace of God to the nations, which was committed to him, without noticing the responsibilities flowing from such unspeakable privileges. In chapter 4 exhortations come in at once regarding their walk, that it might be in harmony with the infinite blessings that had reached them, and the new relations into which they had entered. Hence we have him speaking of himself as a prisoner of the Lord, the name of the

Lord indicating authority, and setting before us the One to whom we are answerable, and to whom we give account of our actions. The 3rd chapter speaks of the outflow of grace to the Gentiles, and the infinite grace with which they had been visited. Hence the *Lord* would not be so fitting to speak of in this connection.

The administration of the grace of God toward the nations was given to Paul, and this grace included the mystery. It was also revealed unto His holy apostles and prophets in the power of the Spirit. But the administration was given to Paul himself only, that they of the nations should be joint heirs, and a joint body, and joint partakers of His promise in Christ Jesus by the glad tidings of which he had become minister, according to the gift of the grace of God, by the effectual working of His power.

The mystery does not in the least alter the divinely ordered and established governmental relations of the world. As to the world itself, it is still composed of Jew and Gentile. On earth there are now the Jew, the Gentile, and the church of God. The last is God's witness here during the absence of Christ. Its calling is heavenly, and its true nature is divine, though, alas! its present condition is that of a ruin. The gospel is the power of God to salvation, His way of gathering souls out of the world from both Jews and Gentiles, making of both one new man in Christ.

But the world goes on as it ever has done. Having rejected the Son of God it will have nothing to do with His gospel, nor will it allow anyone either to believe it or to hear it, if by any means it can succeed in hindering. And as Jew and Gentile together were joined in the crucifying of Christ, so are they together joined in hindering the preach-

ing of the glad tidings. Against Paul the Jews were the principal antagonists, but they found very little difficulty in ensuring the co-operation of the Gentiles. The Jew was the inveterate enemy of Christ, because the effect of the preaching, where it was believed, blotted out the distinction between the two races, and the pride of the Jew was by this means turned into madness; and as Paul was the preacher the brunt of the persecution fell upon him. For this he was denounced as a disturber of the people and a breeder of sedition, as one who had no right to live. He was falsely accused, beaten, scourged, stoned, and in deaths oft.

The devotedness of the apostle to the service entrusted to him by his beloved Master becomes manifest, not only in the patient and self-sacrificing way in which he goes about his work, but in the anxiety that seems to be ever on his heart, lest the saints should be unduly burdening themselves with the sorrows that continually beset him.

He desires that the Ephesian believers should not faint at his tribulations for them, for the oppositions which he had daily to encounter, and the hardships which the enemy heaped upon his path, were but mighty witnesses of the determinate purpose of God for their blessing, and in this they could glory. That which so terribly aroused the wrath of the Jews was the discovery that the riches of the gospel, which they in their insane folly had despised, were now going to the Gentiles. Had they really believed the gospel to be a worthless fable they would not have objected to its being preached to the nations. The arousal of jealousy on the part of a rejecter of anything which another accepts is a powerful witness that he has an inward feeling that it is of real value.

(To be continued)

NOTES ON THE BOOK OF DANIEL.

(J. B.)

Chapter 2.

"*BUT there is a God in heaven.*" "*BUT they shall not cleave one to another.*"

THE glory had departed from Israel; the world power which should have been theirs, given by "the Lord of the whole earth" (Joshua 3. 11, 12), was now given to a heathen monarch. The visions and dreams, by which the Lord had talked with the worthies of Israel, were things of the past (Lam. 2. 9): what now was left for faith?

The God who was silent in Jerusalem was now speaking in Babylon; the king's spirit was troubled and his sleep disturbed. He naturally wished to know the meaning of this new experience; and concluding that his every wish must be gratified, he demanded an explanation from those to whom he had been accustomed to turn in his difficulties. But he was faced with what was to him an unparalleled experience! "The Most High" would not explain His visions at the king's command! He would only give the secret to Daniel, and Daniel had not been called.

The king was an appalling personality at that moment, enraged as he was by coming in contact with a will more powerful than his own. But Daniel knew where to look for protection in the hour of fear and oppression, and had proved "the God of heaven" sufficiently to believe that He would for the sake of His own people make known to them the secret which He withheld from the king. So, when all man's authority and wisdom had been proved to be mere foolishness, Daniel changed the whole scene of turmoil and perplexity with the resource of faith: "*But there is a God in heaven.*"

The king, too, was to be taught what was in his heart; but chapter 3. shows

that he did not learn by the experience of chapter 2. Indeed, he appears to have interpreted the vision and its explanation in such a way as to exalt himself even more than before! But, on the other hand, what a self-effaced dignity had Daniel in the sense of the sufficiency of the "God of heaven," as he stood before the world ruler; conscious, too, of the superiority of God-given wisdom!

Let us now consider the secret which was revealed. The Image was in the form of a man and represents "the times of the Gentiles," i.e., the whole period of Gentile supremacy and rule over the world while the nation of Israel is set aside, having forfeited the world-power which would have been theirs if they had walked in obedience to their God, the God of the *earth*. The kingdom set up in their midst, and the temple worship, had steadily deteriorated, until God had used Nebuchadnezzar to remove the guilty city and people from His sight in judgment.

Now, under the new title of "the God of heaven," He had set up Gentile power as a test for the residue of men. Man, as such, would now be tested with the gift of power from the God of heaven. God had in the beginning "made man in His own image," "upright," and "to have dominion." Will this Gentile monarch, so highly favoured and responsible, answer to God's dealings with him any better than the kings of Israel? Will any of his successors? Will the power and dominion retain any of the image, the uprightness, or the stamp of a God-given dominion? Are Gentiles to be trusted with power and dominion any better than the seed of Israel? The

answer is clearly furnished by the steady decline of each God-given power, until it proves the truth of the inspired words, "Man that is in honour and understandeth not, is like the beasts that perish." Then, when the iniquity of the Gentiles is full, God will set up the kingdom of the Son of man, who will receive it from Him, hold it for Him, and deliver it up to Him (1 Cor. 15. 24-28).

Fallen man, when placed in this position of honour and dominion, so abuses it that nothing remains but the hideous misrepresentation of what originally came from the hand of God. Nebuchadnezzar used God's gifts to exalt himself against God, and to cause suffering to all who crossed his will. This impious double stream of self-exaltation and self-will has flowed down the ages, and will reach its height at the close of the fourth empire, when the head of that empire—called, not *a* beast, but *the* beast—will set himself in the temple of God to be worshipped as God! He will also condemn to starvation and death all who do not worship *his image*. The iniquity of the house of David never reached this pitch! How ready the high-minded Gentile to tell the Jews of their sin against the Lord, and the justice of its punishment (Jer. 40. 3). See, in another connection, Romans II. 20, 21. It is remarkable that the heads of these four empires, Babylon, Persia,

Greece and Rome, all sought divine honours. We shall hear more of them in chapters 7. and 8. as "beasts." Each successive empire bears less of the impress of God-given authority, until at the last nothing is left but brute force, which even with its iron heel cannot prevent the existence in its midst of an element which will not cleave to the rest and renders what is left of the empire "brittle." Thus the image only requires the descent of God's precious "Stone" to be broken to pieces and blown away! "As a dream when one awaketh, so, O Lord, when Thou awakest, Thou wilt despise their image." This hideous dream of the night shall pass away before the glorious "day of Christ." The chosen people Israel, repentant, cleansed, forgiven, shall receive their once "disallowed Stone," and It shall become the Head, not only of the nation of Israel, but of the whole world.

In this chapter, we have the first of another series of most interesting "buts," viz., the "buts" of God's over-ruling providence, which run through the events of the world, turning the wheel whithersoever He will. The revived fourth empire will endeavour by force to make the greatest world-combine that has ever been made, and will succeed *up to God's limit*: "But they shall not cleave one to another."

OUR GOD.

THERE is a very encouraging word in Isaiah 64. for us to wait upon God. In J. N. Darby's New Translation it reads: "Never have men heard, nor perceived by the ear, nor hath eye seen, O God, beside Thee, *who acteth for him* that waiteth for Him" (verse 4). If we may have God acting for us, it is well to drop our own futile efforts and wait for Him. In a footnote the alternative reading is given. "*What He will do for him* that waiteth for Him." God is honoured when we wait for Him and wait upon Him, and if we honour Him will He fail us? The great principle with which we began our acquaintance with Him when we had to "stand still and see the salvation of the Lord," holds good in every crisis of our lives. Let us rejoice that He acteth for those who trust their lives to Him.

A SIXFOLD EXHORTATION.

(J. F. ENGLISH.)

Psalm 37.

IN this Psalm, which is a precious word of exhortation and comfort for the godly man or woman living in and passing through a world such as we are left in, we have six very marked exhortations:—

“Fret not thyself because of evil-doers.”

“Trust in the Lord, and do good.”

“Delight thyself also in the Lord; and He shall give thee the desires of thy heart.”

“Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in Him; and He shall bring it to pass.”

“Rest in the Lord; wait patiently on Him.”

“Wait on the Lord, and keep His way.”

We are let into the secret of the present state of things, for we know from 1 John 5. 19, “The whole world lieth in the wicked one,” which is the explanation of the prosperity of the wicked and the rule of unrighteousness.

The first and strong natural tendency is to fret ourselves because of evildoers, and to begin to adopt their thoughts and practices; and so the first exhortation is, “Fret *not* thyself.”

How little would we fret ourselves, did we remember whose we are. We are the Lord's; His beloved, for whom He laid down His precious life and suffered all the agony of Gethsemane's Garden and the cross of Calvary. And He is the One into whose hands is given all power in heaven and on earth; the silver and the gold are His and the cattle upon a thousand hills. Furthermore, we are the beloved of the Father who gave Him for us. The measure of the Father's love to us is seen, in that “He spared not His own Son, but

delivered Him up for us all.” Well might the question be raised, “How shall He not also, with Him, freely give us all things?”

The source of all peace and quietness of spirit is to recognize no power over us or our affairs other than that of the Lord. To us there is one God—THE FATHER, and one Lord—JESUS CHRIST. Nothing can happen to us but by His permission, and if we recognize this, we are able to bow to His will, and not fret ourselves at evildoers, *but rather be found following the positive exhortation*: “Trust in the Lord and do good.”

What a contrast this is to fretting, and following the thoughts and practice of the evildoers. Conscious as we are that the Lord is over all, and trusting Him for our present circumstance, we can be like Him, *and do good*. He lets His sun shine upon the just and the unjust; He sendeth His rain upon the good and the evil, and He would have us be like Him, manifesting an absolutely altogether contrary spirit to those who know Him not and are found amongst the evildoers. He has given us every reason to trust Him, for in Christ He has given us to know both His love and His power; so that we can contentedly let go by and leave alone all that He withholds from us, and whatever may be our circumstances, to *bless* and *curse* not.

Delight thyself also in the Lord, and He shall give thee the desires of thy heart. If the Lord is the delight of my heart, then my desires will all be in accord with His; and I will have the answer to the desire expressed by the Psalmist in verse 2 of Psalm 63., “To see Thy power and glory, so as I have seen them in the Sanctuary.” What a joy to have such a heart's desire

fulfilled ; and that is what He promises to those who delight themselves in the Lord.

Commit thy way unto the Lord. Be glad to let Him lead in His way. The proverb says, "There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof is death." Our disposition is to make a way for ourselves, and if we do this we go astray and miss the way that He has chosen for us. The Lord Jesus is the "WAY," and to trust Him sufficiently to commit all our life into His hands, is the way of blessing for us.

"Choose Thou my path for me,^q
Rough let it be or smooth."

Rest in the Lord. We should be content to know that *He* is over all. Like the little girl who had no fear during a great storm at sea, for, she said, her father was captain of the vessel, and he was on the bridge. The Lord is working, although sometimes such does not seem to be the case. The Lord Jesus, in one of the darkest moments of His pathway, rejoiced in spirit and said, "I thank Thee, Father." He just rested in the Father. He knew the Father was working. We, too, know that He is ever working, and

often quote that word, "We know that all things work together for good to them that love God." Rest in the Lord !

Wait on the Lord and keep His way. Patience is that which we all so sorely lack. We are slow to wait, and all too keen to act without Him. Very much like King Saul, who could not wait for Samuel ; but the word still is, "They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength." Exaltation is connected with the waiting. We like it to be known who we are, and are anxious to exalt ourselves. Nobody likes being nobody, but the word is to wait on the Lord. He has not yet come into His inheritance, but when He does, we shall not be left out, for it is to be His joy to share all that He inherits as man—and that is the whole universe of God—with His beloved co-heirs. He is waiting in patience, and He asks us to share His patience, and ever to bear in mind He is soon coming, and then will end all the need for giving heed to these needed and blessed exhortations, for we shall then be where—

"All stain of sin shall be removed,
All evil done away,
And we shall dwell, with God's Beloved,
Through God's eternal day."

THE word "friend" has a double meaning. My friend is a man to whom I can open my heart, also a man who is kind and friendly towards me ; the term always implies a certain amount of intimacy. The Jews called the Lord "the friend of sinners," and truly He was so. He called His disciples His friends, because He had communicated to them all that the Father had given Him. Any familiarity with the Lord impresses me painfully, and I consider it carnal even when it is linked with piety. He is not ashamed to call us brethren. In this last sense it is quite improper to imply the word to Jesus, and to call Him our Brother. But if we say, what a wondrous Friend of sinners Jesus was when He gave Himself upon the cross, or, what a Friend of sinners is the Jesus who ever lives to intercede for us, the thought assumes quite another character, but we must avoid a freedom which is not becoming.—(J. N. D.)

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Anglo-Israelism.

"I enclose the article on 'The Future of the Anglo-Saxon Race,' cut from the *Daily Mail*, April 2nd, and should be grateful if you could make a few comments on it. It seems to me to aim at establishing the kingdom without the King."—HANTS.

THERE is not a shred of Scripture that will support this "British-Israel" dream, for dream it is, and never was there one so baseless. The author of this long article quotes one sentence from *Ezekiel*, without giving chapter and verse; claims that *Isaiah* points to Britain as the heir to the promises, but does not tell us where; and would have us believe that *Daniel* prophesied that Britain will break in pieces and consume all the Continental empires and stand for ever. He did nothing of the sort. He tells us that the House of David was removed, at the fall of Zedekiah, the last king of David's line to reign in Jerusalem, to what Ezekiel calls "a high mountain and eminent, the mountain of the height of Israel"; but says that the prophet does not tell us where this high and eminent place is, but that *Isaiah* locates it in the "Isles" that are north and west of Jerusalem, and these, he informs us, are the British Isles in the North Atlantic. We can only conclude that he has not searched the Scriptures as to these things, for had he done so, he would have been preserved from this foolish juggling with texts, these misleading assertions and unwarrantable conclusions. The Prophet Ezekiel does most definitely tell us where "the mount of the height of Israel" is. He tells us that it is in the land of Israel, the country which God lifted up His hand to give unto their fathers (chapter 20. 40-42). That land is not the British Isles, but the promised land of Canaan. Further, when he attempts to make *Isaiah* support his statements, why does he drop the figure of the mountain for that of the Isles? If he had searched the Scriptures he would

have known that *Isaiah* speaks often of this same holy mountain, and it is always Zion at Jerusalem, and that he speaks almost as often of the Isles as does Ezekiel, but these Isles are the countries of the Gentiles in which the children of Israel are scattered, and out of which the Lord will gather them to plant them in "the land of Canaan, the lot of their inheritance" (Ps. 105. 11). The mountains and the isles are never the same.

The passages in which *Isaiah* speaks of "the mountain" and "the isles" are too numerous to quote, but a concordance will help our readers in considering the subject. *But we would call special attention to Isaiah 24. 14, 15.* The author of this paper has wrenched the words, *Israel in the isles*, from this text, has printed them in capitals and put them in inverted commas and applied them to Britain. We have rarely seen such a perversion of the words of Scripture. The chapter describes a time of unparalleled sorrow in the world—the great tribulation yet to come, but in the midst of it some shall begin to acknowledge and praise God, and the people "in the isles of the sea" are called up to magnify the Name of the God of Israel. The exact words are, "Wherefore glorify ye the Lord in the fires, even the Name of the Lord God of Israel in the isles of the sea." And the chapter closes with the Lord of hosts, who is none other than the Lord Jesus, reigning, not in Great Britain but "in Mount Zion, and in Jerusalem, and before His ancients gloriously." Such an abuse of Scripture as the Rev. W. Pascoe Goard makes of this one will be condemned

by all who revere it, and they will surely reject the teaching that makes it necessary.

Ezekiel says not a word in the 17th chapter of his prophecy, to which we suppose this author refers, as to the house of David being removed to Britain; it is a vain imagination and a gross misinterpretation of a beautiful prophecy. The fall of Zedekiah is foretold in this chapter. The final and unpardonable sin that he had committed was to break the oath that he had made in the Name of the Lord with King Nebuchadnezzar; for this he was taken captive to Babylon and slain there, the throne of David became vacant, Jerusalem was destroyed and the people dispersed. It looked as though the nation of Israel would become extinct and the promises that God had made to Abraham and David utterly fail. But God would not break His oath, and He here declares that He would take a tender shoot from the highest branch of the high cedar and plant it in the high mountain and eminent: "In the mountain of the height of Israel will I plant it." Who could this tender shoot be but the One who should grow up before God "as a tender plant and as a root out of a dry ground" (Isa. 53.)? The beginnings of Matthew's and Luke's Gospels interpret the prophecy for us. A lowly branch of David's line is exalted, and what looked like a dry tree is made to flourish, for a virgin daughter of David's line brings forth a son whose name is JESUS, and "He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of His father David: and He shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of His kingdom there shall be no end" (Luke 1. 32, 33). And "all the trees of the field," i.e., all the great ones of the earth, its

kings and rulers, shall know that this is the Lord's doing (Ezek. 17. 24). It is Christ who is the subject of the prophecy and not the house of David, and certainly not Britain, though He will raise up the house of David when He is set on the throne of David—but this has not yet come to pass.

The endeavour to make "the stone cut out of the mountain without hands," of Daniel 2., apply to Britain is almost too absurd to call for comment. The image of the prophecy plainly describes Gentile supremacy in the earth from Nebuchadnezzar, the head of gold, to the confederation of ten kings, who shall give their power and strength to the Beast in his war with the Lamb (Dan. 7. 24; Rev. 17.), and in this war Britain will be in the confederation of nations and will be against God and His Christ. The stone cut without hands is the kingdom and power of Christ that will crush all opposition and put down all evil. So shall the times of the Gentiles close and the reign of righteousness begin.!

It does not require an extensive knowledge of the Word of God to perceive how false in every part is this endeavour to make the Anglo-Saxon races the tribes of Israel, and the British throne the throne of David. There is no throne of David or kingdom of Israel in the world to-day, for this is the time of which Hosea speaks: "For the children of Israel shall abide many days without a king, and without a prince" (Hos. 3. 4). If it were true that the throne of David has been in Britain since 580 B.C. and that the Kingdom of God has been here since that date, how strange it is that the Lord Jesus, the true King, made no reference to it when He was here, and did not visit it. He preached "the kingdom of heaven is at hand," is coming, and He was surely right.

When He was asked when the Kingdom of God should come, He replied, Say not, Lo here! or lo there! for behold the Kingdom of God is within you, or in the midst of you; for He was there, the only King. But He was rejected by that generation, and His Kingdom in its public manifestation is not to be brought about by gradual development, but, "as the lightning, that lighteneth out of one part under heaven, shineth unto the other part under heaven: so shall the Son of Man be in His day" (Luke 17. 20-25).

The Bible nowhere makes it clear in its specifications for the development of the kingdom, as this paper asserts, that the next forward step will be the unification of Anglo-Saxon civilization, nor that the Lord is coming to take over the throne of His father David as a going concern. But it does clearly state, "Behold, He cometh with clouds . . . and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of Him" (Rev. 1. 7).

Faith Healing.

"I should value your help in how to deal with the claims of 'Faith Healing' movements. Please state scriptural reasons to counteract their claims. What answer can be given to those who show apparent results of healing? If you can assist me through the columns of 'Scripture Truth,' your remarks will be appreciated"—LEICESTER

ONE of the many errors of these so-called "faith healers"—we speak of the sincere ones—is the confounding of the Old and New Testament dispensations. They take the promises of health and earthly prosperity which were made to Israel on the ground of their obedience to God's law (see Exod. 15. 26 and other Scriptures), and give them a present-day application. They do not in this rightly divide the Word of Truth. Israel had no promise and blessing beyond this life. They were to live long in the land, be free from the diseases of Egypt and prosper in every way if they obeyed. Their blessings were earthly and temporal.

And Great Britain and the United States of America are included in these kingdoms of the earth.

Romans II. shows us that during this period, while "the fulness of the Gentiles," the church, is being gathered in, Israel are cast away, they have been cut out of the olive tree of divine favour, and the Gentiles have been grafted in; but Israel are to be grafted in again when their Deliverer comes out of Zion, and then "all Israel shall be saved," but they will be saved by being gathered to Canaan, the land of promise, and established there.

We should not have given so much space to this question, were it not that we find that many earnest Christians are being ensnared by it. The harm that it does is to turn them from their heavenly calling and heavenly hope and to occupy them with national efforts and Christless politics, and with a scheme of things which perverts the Word of God and will only disappoint them.

The gospel of the grace of God which is now preached as the result of the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ does not offer these things at all. It offers heavenly and spiritual blessing; it gives a heavenly hope, and opens up an incorruptible, undefiled and unfading inheritance in heaven (Eph 1 3; 1 Col. 1. 23; 1 Pet. 1 4).

A few references may help us to see the difference: "Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the

things which are seen are temporal ; but the things which are not seen are eternal " (2 Cor. 4. 17, 18). Whether the light affliction is persecution, sickness or adversity, probably all three, those Christians who entirely escape them are evidently great losers. In the 12th of this same Epistle, Paul speaks of his thorn in the flesh, which must have been an affliction both agonizing and humiliating. He tells us how he pleaded with the Lord to remove it, but learned that it was sent for his good and blessing, and that there was grace with the Lord to enable him to endure, and magnify the Lord in the trial. He would have been a great loser if he had been healed of the thorn. Again, Romans 8. 18 says that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us, and the sufferings are of such a character that we are said to groan within ourselves, while we wait for the redemption of the body (verse 23). The body is not to be immune from suffering until the Lord comes and transforms it into His own likeness (Phil. 3. 20, 21). There is no instance in the New Testament of any apostle healing Christians "by faith." Paul left Trophimus at Miletum, sick (2 Tim. 4. 20) : he directed Timothy to use natural remedies for his "often infirmities" (1 Tim. 5. 25) ; he thanked God for His mercy in raising up Epaphroditus from a sickness that was nigh unto death (Phil. 2. 27). John the Apostle desired that Gaius might prosper in his health as he did in his soul (3 John).

They overlook the fact that the Lord disciplines His saints through the body. Sickness may come upon the children of God as chastening for wrong doing, as it did at Corinth, where very grave disorder at the Supper of the

Lord was tolerated (1 Cor. 11. 30), but that is only one of many reasons. Epaphroditus was sick through zeal for the work of the Lord ; Timothy, through having a weak constitution. Paul was allowed to suffer that he might not be puffed up. But for whatever reason it is always true, "Whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth," and the branches in the Vine that bring forth fruit the Father purgeth that they may bring forth more fruit. But these "faith healing" doctrines would take the saints of God out of His discipline, to their serious loss.

Another, and a worse error, is that they put sickness and sin on the same footing, and teach that Christ bore our sicknesses as well as our sins upon the cross. It ought to be clear to everybody that if He did, then we should never again suffer sickness, just as He has freed us from the load of our sins. They quote Matthew 8. 17 in support of this doctrine, but they misinterpret it, as anyone can see if they read it in its connection. It is what He did in His lifetime. "He healed all that were sick : that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses."

The claims that they make of cures should be received with caution ; some professed cases when investigated have been found to be no cures at all, and some that have been genuine have been found to be of the sort that can be made by the exercise of a strong will over a weak one, or such as great excitement can effect. We must remember that Christian scientists, spiritists and hypnotists can also claim cures.

We do not question that in answer to the prayers of God's people sicknesses are cured and sufferers raised

up We have often seen it, but then it has been the prayer of faith, in the Name of the Lord Jesus, which means that the prayer was according to His will and under His direction (see Matt 18 19, 20). But this, and the instructions given in James 5 14, 15, suppose a very different state of things and of mind from that of these "healing campaigns" In the one, there is the quietude and deep exercise that goes with the presence of the Lord, in the other, crowded meetings, throbbing

with excitement, and everything that appeals to the curious and to lovers of sensation

Nor would we despise good health; it is a great mercy from God, to be given thanks for when given to us and to others, and we may rightly make our requests to God about it, both for ourselves and others, and desire it for one another as John desired it for Gaius, and Paul for Timothy, but all must be subject to the will of God

Forgiveness of Sins (John 20. 23).

"During a recent address on the varied aspects of the forgiveness of sins in Scripture, the speaker stated that John 20 21, 23 referred to evangelists sent forth to preach the gospel In the case of those who received the Good News and believed it, their sins were remitted, whereas if the message was rejected their sins were retained Hitherto I have understood verse 23 as referring to administrative forgiveness by an assembly in matters of discipline I shall be glad to know, therefore through the medium of 'Scripture Truth,' if the above verses will bear the former interpretation"—UPMINSTER

WE should not care to apply this passage to evangelists sent forth to preach the gospel now; the commission that abides for them until the day of grace closes is given in Luke's Gospel (24. 46, 47) About this there can be no question and they need no other than that. The commission in John's Gospel is different, as we should expect it to be, for we do not find mere repetition in the Scriptures, and for this same reason we should look for an interpretation of it different from that which Matthew 18. 18 plainly bears. In this latter Scripture the binding comes first, and has in view those already in the Christian circle. The obdurate and unrepentant brother (verse 18) is to be treated as "outside" by the one whom he has trespassed against, by the judgment of the assembly, which acts on the authority of the Lord, whose presence is in the midst (verse 20); and until grace produced repentance in him this would continue; when he did repent he would be loosed from that judgment.

1 Cor. 5 and 2 Cor. 2 give an even more extreme action, and its reversal when it had produced the desired result. Here we have the assembly on earth carrying out the will of heaven, where their action is ratified, and this is definitely *administrative* action, both in retaining and remitting. In John 20. 23 the remittance of sins is put first, which leads us to the conclusion that its primary interpretation has a wider outlook than those already "within" (1 Cor 5 12). It seems to contemplate an administration of grace, specially apostolic in character, to the world. The apostles were specially delegated of the Lord to represent Him, as He had represented His Father (verse 21); for this He breathed His own Spirit into them, He gave them the Holy Ghost (verse 22). They then had to go forth as ambassadors for Christ, praying men in Christ's stead to be reconciled to God; their words were a savour of death unto death in them that perished, and of life unto life in them that were saved (2 Cor. 2), and a sure proof that men

were of God was that they heard the apostles (1 John 4. 6). Only in a very modified degree could these things be said of preachers since apostolic days. They belonged to the inauguration of the gospel dispensation and the beginning of the church on earth, of which Apostles and the Holy-Ghost-inspired prophets were the foundation.

Those who believed the apostolic word were baptized by them and received into their company; they were "added to the church," "added to the Lord," and by thus receiving them the apostles released them from the old position in which they had stood, whether they were Jews, guilty of the murder of their Messiah, or Gentiles, who had spent their lives in the worship of demons. This was administrative, of course, and had to do with earth and the changed position and new fellowship in which the forgiven ones stood. As to the eternal forgiveness of sins, and the setting of a soul in true relations with God, which the gospel proclaims, not even an

apostle could do that, for who can forgive sins but God alone?

There are interesting and instructive instances in the Acts of the Apostles of this remitting and retaining sins. In Samaria, Peter, by the laying on of hands, communicated the Holy Spirit to the believers there, and the ban that had kept Samaritans and Jews apart for centuries was removed by their admittance to Christian fellowship; but he retained the sin of Simon Magus (chapter 8), and Paul, filled with the Holy Ghost, most solemnly retained the sins of Elymas the sorcerer (chapter 13), and again he retained the sins of the Jews (chapter 13. 46; 28. 25-28). Wherever the apostles communicated the Holy Spirit to men they forgave their sins, in the administrative sense of the word, and when they did not, they retained them. They had special power also within the assembly, as when Peter discovered the sin of Ananias and Sapphira, and when Paul committed blasphemers to Satan.

Zechariah 8. 10.

"In the 'Answers to Correspondents' column, could you refer to this verse and give light upon it, in view of the article on 'The Jews,' in January issue? Does it connect primarily with the present days, and may one look for any alleviation of 'the affliction'? The article mentioned would lead one to think not."—SURREY.

THE great things spoken of in the beginning of this chapter could only be fulfilled in the coming Kingdom of the Lord, when Israel shall again be His people and He will be their God "in truth and in righteousness," verse 8. In the next section, 9-19, the words were a message to the remnant of Israel that had returned to the land from the Babylonian captivity, and they correspond to the words of Haggai, who was contemporary with Zechariah. They had neglected the house of the Lord and His interests, and the consequence was that He had impoverished and afflicted them. There

had been a revival, feeble and brief it was, but nevertheless the effect of it was prosperity to them, as verse 12 shows. It was always the way with God's dealings with Israel; when they considered their ways and turned to Him and feared His Name and served Him, they prospered; when they forgot Him they were afflicted.

The remainder of the chapter is prophetic and to be fulfilled during the reign of the Lord in Jerusalem.

No part of the chapter has any reference to present-day conditions.

“SIR, WE WOULD SEE JESUS.”

(J. T. MAWSON.)

“We would see Jesus, for the shadows lengthen
Across the little landscape of our life ;
We would see Jesus, our weak faith to strengthen
And keep us peaceful in a world of strife.”

YES, if we are to tread our pilgrim way with confidence to the end, we must see Jesus. If we are to fight the good fight and lay down the weapons of our warfare in final triumph at His feet, we must see Jesus. No Christian life can be right in any department of it if clouds obscure His face from us, and the whole fabric of our “most holy faith” must collapse if we do not hold fast to the truth of His most holy person.

Yes, we need to see Him, who have found secure and eternal rest in His person and sacrifice, we need to know that He is crowned with glory and honour, we need Him as the perpetual and all-satisfying object of our hearts, and men need Him, and God needs Him. There can be no blessing for men, no peace for the world, and no glory to God apart from Him. Consider the condition of the world—of these lands, England, Scotland and Ireland, and think of the world as it is—and tell me, What hope is there for mankind apart from Christ, and what glory can there be for God in this creation apart from Him? Who can unravel the present tangle? But history is only repeating itself, and things are as they have been, except that the utter bankruptcy of man's resources is being more and more disclosed. Yet all was described in graphic terms long ago. Said Isaiah, as inspired by the Holy Ghost, nearly 3000 years ago, “The whole head is sick, and the whole heart is faint. From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it: but wounds, and bruises, and putrefying sores; they have not been closed,

neither bound up, neither mollified with ointment” (chapter 1. 6).

But was it for such a state of things as this that God created the world, and is man as He made him, and has He been thwarted in His intentions, and have His plans failed? Let us consider the question. The stars that make the night skies radiant proclaim His power and divinity, and this lower creation makes manifest His wisdom, but His supreme work in creation was man, and His delights were with the sons of men. The persons of the Godhead took counsel together, and said, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness,” and “The Lord God formed man of the dust of the earth.” In the last act of creation something more than the almighty creative word was brought into operation. As the almighty fingers fashioned every member of the man who was to represent Him in the earth, a tenderness entered into the work of God that was not manifested in any previous work. How near God came to man when He breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and brought the woman to him to be his mate and helpmeet. With the man at the head of it, creation was complete, and God pronounced it “very good,” and rested from His work.

But how soon was that Sabbath disturbed, for God's noble and beautiful creature fell before the first onslaught of His arch-foe, who is called the dragon, that old serpent, and Satan, and instead of standing for God, and withstanding the adversary, Adam turned his back upon his Maker and allied himself with his destroyer. It looked

as though God had been defeated, as though Satan had succeeded in His everlasting discomfiture; for he had discovered and attacked the vulnerable spot in the man's constitution, and bribed him into becoming a traitor to his God. It looked as though all that expenditure of power and wisdom and tenderness in the creation of man had recoiled upon God, and that His chiefest and choicest work had proved to be His undoing.

The shadow of sin and death lay darkly over that fair garden, and hidden behind the trees of it, guilty and afraid, crouched the sinner and his wife, when God came forth to seek them. Not as an avenger came He, not as a Judge, but with tender love in His heart, crying after His lost creature, "Adam, where art thou?" But how could God, who had cast Satan down from his high estate for sin, spare the man? If He did spare him, what would become of His righteousness? And if He executed His just judgment upon him, what of His mercy, His lovingkindness, His purposes of blessing for men? Here was a crisis, and a great problem; was God able to meet it? Sullenly and afraid the man waited, exultantly and defiantly the devil waited to see what He would do; to see who would triumph, God or the devil. They had not long to wait, for God announced His resource. "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise His heel." God was not defeated, His counsels would stand, and in this word was foretold the overthrow of the devil and the salvation of men.

"Soon as the reign of sin began,
The light of mercy dawned on man:
When God announced the blessed news,
'The woman's Seed thy head shall
bruise.'"

God was the first gospel preacher, and He announced in that first gospel word the coming of a Person, the woman's Seed, who should undo the works of the devil. How much this promised Deliverer was needed was proved as the centuries rolled by, for "all we like sheep have gone astray, we have turned everyone to His own way." There was no difference in this, no exception, for "there is no man that sinneth not" said Solomon, and no man was able to deliver himself from the tempter's power, to break the yoke of sin, or wash out the stain of it.

But the fulness of time seemed long in coming, and the eyes of those who looked for salvation must have failed them through watching and disappointment if God had not constantly lighted up the gloom with words of hope and promise, and of these there is none greater than those given by that gospel-prophet, Isaiah. "Behold," said he, "a virgin shall conceive, and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel" (Isa. 7. 14). I boldly speak of this as the greatest of all the prophecies spoken by the prophets, for it is the first of them all that is recorded as being fulfilled in the New Testament. By it is declared what God would do. He shows that He Himself would intervene by the woman's Seed, taking the cause of fallen man's redemption completely out of his puny and sinful hands. How the critics of Isaiah's day must have mocked at these words. A virgin conceive! That is an utter impossibility! And the man who dreamed such a dream as that was a demented man! Yes, most truly he was, if he was not inspired by the Holy Ghost, and if he spoke his own word instead of God's. But such a thing would outrage the course of nature, it is impossible! Yes, it is impossible with men, that is the very lesson that

God would teach men by the manner of His intervention, and this prophecy was not a dream of a disordered mind but the very word of God. This was the sign that He would give. It was the sign of man's complete impotency for his own redemption, but it was a sign that when men were hopeless, God would undertake their cause; but, also, that this should all proceed from Himself and not from man at all; in this matter man must stand aside and see the salvation of the Lord. "A virgin shall conceive and bring forth a Son." **THE WOMAN'S SEED** shall bruise the serpent's head.

In the first chapter of Matthew this astonishing word is fulfilled; the virgin-daughter of David's royal line brings forth the promised Son, and lays Him in a manger, and His name is Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, **GOD WITH US**. God had come to dwell among men. Does anyone say, "Sir, we would see Jesus"? In answer I bid you stand in thought with those shepherds who beheld with adoration the lowly Babe, wrapt in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger, and draw near again with those wise men from the East, who brought their gifts to Him. Look upon that Babe, and be as wise as were those Gentile strangers, wonder and adore, as you see this miracle of grace. God come down to man, for this is Jesus, Jehovah the Saviour!

I am glad that here in the first chapter of our New Testament that lovely name—the sweetest name that our ears have ever heard—is given to us twice in capital letters, so that it may arrest us as we read. It stands there upon the title page of the New Testament as the title of the Book. But Jesus is Emmanuel, and Emmanuel is Jesus. If men were to be saved, God must come down to do it, and here we

learn that having come He has come as Saviour.

In the person of Jesus, God was with us, and is with us still, for we Christians have the closing words of this Gospel of Matthew for our constant comfort, the last words of our Lord Jesus Christ in it, "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end." Hence we can with confidence follow the lowly, rejected Nazarene; and carry out His word, for He will be to the end what He was at the beginning, "God with us."

There are those who deny that the Deity of Jesus is taught in any Gospel but that by John; to be rid of this great truth altogether they say that that Gospel cannot be relied upon; but here, in the opening of the New Testament, we find the blessed fact of the Deity of Jesus definitely, most definitely, asserted, and we could not read this Gospel with anointed eyes without seeing it on every page. It is woven into the very texture of it, as the gold was woven into the ephod of the High Priest, along with the blue and scarlet and purple and the fine twined linen. Take just one instance: He stood in the midst of men, with their sorrows and pains and burdens and sins; and extending His hands to them, He said, "Come unto Me, and I will give you rest," and His word stands good to-day. He says to the world, devil-ridden, sin-burdened, sorrow-blasted, "Come unto Me, and I will give you rest." Come as you are; come with your sins, your problems, your difficulties, your burdens; bring your sighs, your sorrows, your broken hearts, Come, and I will give you rest. Could the greatest of men stand up and speak thus? He knew all about men, every tear on every cheek had come under His notice, He had heard every groan, and knew the deep unsatisfied craving in every heart. He looked upon the world

through eyes that saw all and comprehended all, and He offered to relieve all. Who could do that but God? And the Christians can bear witness to the fact that His deed is as good as His word. He has never promised what He cannot perform. If no other word had ever reached us from His blessed lips, that invitation alone proves that He is indeed the Everlasting God, who opens His hands in infinite kindness to satisfy the needs of the creatures He has made; it reveals the fact that in His bosom there throbs a heart of love that longs to relieve the sorrows that sin has caused, and He can do it, and will do it for all who come to Him.

But His life and His words alone could not have affected that which had to be accomplished, and so we read in the twenty-seventh chapter of Matthew that He was nailed to the cross. They led Him to the place which is called Golgotha, and there they crucified Him. Jesus, whose name is Emmanuel, was taken by wicked hands and nailed to the cross, and over His sacred, thorn-crowned head, was this accusation written: "THIS IS JESUS . . ." And again the words are in capitals in our Bibles. Ah, Pilate wrote truer than he knew when he penned with his official hand that indictment. It seems as if the Spirit of God was determined to show to all men by this very accusation, that this is Jesus, that it was because He is Jesus that He died, for apart from that cross He would not have been Jesus, apart from that cross He could not have been the Saviour. He might have gone to the glory of God from the mount of transfiguration, for that glory was His, but He could not have gone as Jesus, nor could He have worn there that Name that is above every name. The only way in which He could establish His right to that

Name, was by going to Golgotha, and there giving up His life in sacrifice for sinners.

It is popular in these gospel-rejecting days to reject the cross and despise the blood, and to preach Jesus as a great leader of men, a reformer, a socialist, or anything you like except a Saviour from sin. But such a Jesus is no Jesus at all. Do you say, "Sir, we would see Jesus"? My answer is, Look at the centre cross on the hill of Calvary. **THIS IS JESUS**—the thorn-crowned Nazarene, despised and rejected by men, crucified upon the cross of a malefactor and made sin for us there! This is Jesus, and beside Him there is none other; "Neither is there salvation in any other; for there is none other Name under heaven, given among men, whereby we must be saved." What tongue of man shall tell out the blessedness of this salvation, or describe its glory?

"Brightly it beamed on men forlorn,
When Christ the holy Child was born;
But brighter still in splendour shone,
When Jesus dying cried, 'Tis done.'"

The first prophecy which the New Testament records as fulfilled, tells us of the greatness of the Person whose name is Jesus. The second prophecy tells us of the place of His birth, and declares that He is to be the Ruler, the Governor of all whom He saves: "And thou Bethlehem, in the land of Juda, art not the least among the princes of Juda: for out of thee shall come a Governor, that shall rule My people Israel" (Matt. 2. 6). It should be clear to all that if the Creator comes into His creation He must eventually be supreme in it. We scarcely need the Scriptures to tell us that, though they do tell us it most emphatically. This prophecy had very special reference to His Messiahship, but we will look at it in its wider application—

CHRIST IS LORD OF ALL. If it is true that you cannot know the Saviour apart from His cross, it is equally true that you cannot know Him apart from His Lordship. He was obedient unto death, even the death of the cross, "Wherefore God also hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a Name which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Phil. 2. 9, 10, 11). Would you see Jesus? Look up to the right hand of the Majesty on high and see Him there both Lord and Christ. The Spirit of God has linked up these two things together. The One whose name is Jesus, who was despised and rejected by men, is the Lord, and if these two things greet us at the very threshold of the New Testament at the birth of the Lord, and are now proclaimed from the throne, they were also told out at the cross, for the accusation written thereon was, "THIS IS JESUS, THE KING . . ." And faith read the writing then and embraced the truth, and cried, "Lord, remember me, when Thou comest into Thy kingdom." How blessed will that kingdom be when it comes, and there can be no peace for this world until it does come. Men will continue to strive, selfishly, covetously, sinfully, hateful and hating one another, until He comes to break oppression, and until the universal

sceptre is put into the pierced hand. When the scythe of judgment has swept this godless world, then He will come down like rain upon the mown grass, and as the Sun of Righteousness with healing in His wings He will arise,

" And bid the whole creation smile
And hush its groan."

And then under His beneficent rule men, subdued by His judgments and spared by His mercy, will make haste to beat their swords into ploughshares, and call everyone his neighbour under the vine and fig tree. The reason why riots and bloodshed and turmoil and strife and crime continue in the world to this day, in spite of all its boasted progress, is because the rightful King is rejected, the Prince of Peace is not owned, men will not have Jesus as Lord.

But all who own Him as Saviour and Lord may have peace, and how blessed is the sway that He exercises in that life that does own Him. We do not look for peace in the world that will not own Him, for "there is no peace, saith my God, for the wicked," but we may have it, each of us every day, by yielding to His gracious claims, for He has said, "Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you, not as the world giveth give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid."

God grant that while we pray, "Thy kingdom come," we may know the peace of it before it comes, by yielding a glad obedience to Jesus who is both Lord and Christ.

WHAT a privilege it is to be enabled to lay hold of One who reveals Himself to us as "the God of hope." The radiant bow shines on the darkest clouds, and with renewed vigour we gird our loins and press on to our goal, when thus we know our God. We abound in hope in the most trying circumstances, and know that our labour is not in vain, though we see no results now, for the hope that the God of hope has given us will not put us to shame, for His love already fills our hearts. We are His and where He is we shall be, this is our hope, both sure and steadfast.

THE LORD'S PORTION IS HIS PEOPLE.

(ARTHUR CUTTING)

"For the Lord's portion is His people; Jacob is the lot of His inheritance. He found him in a desert land, and in the waste howling wilderness, He led him about, He instructed him, He kept him as the apple of His eye. As an eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth them on her wings so the Lord alone did lead him, and there was no strange god with him"—Deuteronomy 32. 9-12.

OUR first appreciation of the Lord lay in the fact that He must be everything to us. Our need of Him awakened by divine grace was but to make us appreciate His sufficiencies to meet that need and give satisfaction to us.

The next thing we are made to discover really surpasses the grace of the other, and is, we are to be for His satisfaction, and to meet a need that was in His heart, and that will not be fully satisfied until, looking round the whole blood-washed throng in heavenly glory He will see of the travail of His soul and be satisfied.

It is the realization of this last fact that gives us confidence in praying one for another. He is deeply interested in the pathway of His own children, and Psalm 56 tells us that He is evidently interested sufficiently to keep our diary for us. He telleth our wanderings He bottles our tears and keeps register of all in His book.

That He should be so much to us when we think of His greatness and glory is not nearly so surprising as that we should be so much to Him. He could say of Israel, "Ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto Me" Almost the same words are used of us in Titus 2. "He purifies to Himself a peculiar people," something to be His special treasure. This will help to bring home to us the fact that He is interested in every thing that relates to us and our happiness. All this comes before us in that one pregnant sentence, "The

Lord's portion is His people." Now we have brought before us the four ways by which His interest in us was first proved.

1. *His grace* found us: "He found him"! He did not stumble upon us. We had been the object of a very gracious and persistent search. "He sought us" long before "He found us"! Oh, the wonders of His love!

"Oh! the love that sought us,
Oh! the blood that bought us,
Oh! the grace that brought us to Himself"

Who is going to fathom the depth of that love—a love that will not let us go. His blessed willing feet took Him the whole journey until He found us.

2. *His mercy* compassed us about—He led him. What a shelter that mercy has been many a time.

"And since our souls have known His love,
What mercies hath He made us prove."

3. *His wisdom* instructed us—"He instructed him" watched over him. Elihu says, "Who teacheth like Him?" (Job 36 22). Isaiah 48. 17, says, "I am the Lord thy God which teacheth thee to profit, which leadeth thee by the way that thou shouldest go."

"His wisdom ever waketh—
His sight is never dim."

4. *His power* keeps us "He kept him" That has been proved right up to the present moment, and all these things have been the way he has proved to us how much we are to Him. Then it speaks about the nest in which all these

things have been enjoyed by many young Christians who are reading my words. The stirring up these nests comes. The nestlings are to do their own flying. We shrink from some changes, we are eager for others, but whether pleasing or painful, changes there must be. In the eagle's case they had to be stirred up to make them take wing—no starting to fly without a nest stirring; but is that all? No. She spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them and beareth them. He will support and keep us from falling all the time. Many times it may be if the Lord leaves us here we may feel the need of the wings spread abroad to

keep us, for we are weak and temptations are strong.

"In weakness be Thy love our strength."

In waiting on the Lord we will be able to renew our strength and mount again. What cheer all this is! No mere bit of religious sentiment but bona fide fact. We feel our need of a lead too.

"Saviour, lead me lest I stray"

is our hearts' earnest prayer, and here is the answer. "So *the Lord alone* did lead him, and there was no strange God with Him." Oh, that this may be true of us!

"OF HIS FULNESS."

"Of His fulness we all have received, and grace upon grace."—John 1. 16 (N.T.)

WHAT does this mean? It is the ocean rolling in upon the indented shore line, filling up the creeks and the bays, until every gap and crevice is filled with the ocean tide. Thou art one gap and I am another, we have nothing to show but our emptiness, and we need nothing more, just in that measure in which we hold to something of self, do we miss this fulness, but where there is need felt and confessed, there flows the fulness, grace upon grace.

O John, once so courageous, now languishing in prison, with disappointed hopes and failing faith, hear this—"The *blind* receive their sight, and the *lame* walk, and *lepers* are cleansed, and the *deaf* hear, the *dead* are raised up, and the *poor* have the gospel preached to them. And blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in Me." The waters are flowing, the tide of grace is flowing—and every

human need is being met, who can this be but the Christ, and if the Christ, then enough for thee!

What a shame it is to us that we should bemoan so much our dryness and the absence of spiritual power in our lives! Let us prepare a channel for the waters to flow into them. "In Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily, and ye are complete in Him." These words of Scripture are overwhelming in their greatness and truth. What shall we say about them? We can but turn to Him of whom they speak and say, O Thou Fountain of living water, fill up our tiny vessels, not only meet our needs, but make us overflow, make us to know in our experience, that just as every creek and crevice on the seashore becomes one with the ocean when the tide rolls in, so may we be filled with Thy fulness and know that we are one with Thee!

THE TESTIMONY OF OUR LORD.

(A. J. ATKINS.)

A Study of 2 Timothy. (Continued from "Scripture Truth" May issue.)

THE expression, "the testimony," occurs only once in this epistle, and then is introduced in what seems to be merely an incidental way. A close study of the epistle, however, would lead us to consider it the underlying subject. This letter, the last Paul wrote, we suppose, gives us, in view of general defection and departure, inspired guidance as to the maintenance of the testimony, bringing out our resources, relationships and responsibilities in this connection. It is well to observe that its dominant note is one of encouragement.

Though only a brief letter, its sweep of thought is tremendous. It looks back "before the world began" (1. 9) and on to the "eternal glory" (2. 10). Its historical viewpoint is the period between the resurrection of Jesus Christ (2. 8) and the appearing (4. 8). It is from these events that the testimony takes its character. "The 'promise of life in Christ Jesus' is the very starting-point of the epistle which is livingly personal, not ecclesiastical" (J. N. D.).

The shadow of grave general failure hangs over the epistle. The times in view are "perilous," that is, difficult and grievous. The downward stages of departure are referred to as "erring from the truth" (2. 18), "resisting the truth" (3. 8), and, finally, "turning away from the truth" (4. 4). The letter is a sustained exhortation to faithfulness. "Truth all through, and truth connected with unaffected and true godliness, is the leading thought, and a suffering place in this world" (J. N. D.). All that is indicated as to failure, and inculcated as to faithfulness, is embraced in true Pauline style

between gracious benedictions. We may be sure that only in the sense of grace—divine grace—can we face the failure, accept the admonitions or realize the resources.

As we might expect, this last epistle, while not a climax, is a true conclusion to a continuously developed ministry. There is no recapitulation, but we can discover a number of most interesting suggestions showing continuity with Paul's earlier ministry. These remind us that the epistle does not supersede what has preceded, but supplements it, and reveals how the blessings of Paul's gospel can be realized when the outward and visible order has become corrupted. This continuity, to begin with, is suggested strikingly in the fact that "*in Christ Jesus*," the keyword of Paul's gospel, occurs seven times, conveying to us a most precious assurance that the vital verities are still valid. All *in Christ* is secure.

But there are more specific allusions to which we may well refer. "My gospel," "Jesus Christ of the seed of David raised from the dead," "the power (*dunamis*) of God," "I am not ashamed," "The Holy Ghost which dwelleth in us," "righteousness" (2. 22), "I am persuaded," "He is able," "If we have died with Him . . . if we suffer with Him" (2. 11, 12), cannot but remind us of *Romans*.

The stress laid upon *the Lord*, the allusions to "the day," evidently that of the judgment-seat; the reference to "a workman needing not to be ashamed" (cp. 1. Cor. 3. 12-15) suggest the first epistle to the Corinthians.

The "holy calling," "God's purpose and grace," the "elect," "eternal glory," are links with Ephesians and

Colossians; while "I am ready to be offered," "that day" (4. 8) (the day of Christ), "the Lord strengthened me," breathe the spirit of Philipians.

There appears to be in our epistle a sevenfold description of the faithful men, of which Timothy is the type, and which it is the purpose of the epistle to produce and preserve. (1) Spiritually speaking they are Paul's *children* (2. 1, Gk.); that is, they are the product of his gospel. (2) They are *faithful men*. (3) They are *good soldiers* of Jesus Christ; willing to abandon themselves to the good fight of faith with devotion and daring. (4) They are *workmen* (2. 15), having a definite task to perform and an account to render. (5) They are servants—bondslaves—of a Master; yes, His absolute possession. (6) They are *vessels*; not agents, but vessels, designed to contain and convey something deposited in them, and needing a living hand to fill and use them. (7) They are *men of God*, an expression only used in the Old Testament in dark days, and then of valiant men who stood for God. What an encouragement to Timothy and to us to be in the line of these mighty witnesses of old!

Paul himself was pre-eminently one of these. From his specific personal references to himself in this epistle, we see him in a sevenfold way. He is: (1) An *apostle*, a vocation peculiar to him (and to his colleagues, of whom, however, we do not hear one word in the letter); he was called and commissioned by the will of God to this place. An apostle is one *sent*, a missionary; and in this secondary sense, we, too, are *sent* (John 20. 21). (2) He is a *prisoner* (1. 8); but the Lord's prisoner. (3) A preacher (1. 11), that is a *herald*, to sound forth heaven's good news. (4) A *teacher* (1. 11), having treasures of true knowledge to impart. (5) A

sufferer (3. 11). Paul often speaks of his sufferings; there is evidently something in them of great moment for the saints. Were they not the counterpart of the wondrous place of blessing which was his to experience, and to set forth for others? (6) He was a *martyr*; "ready to be offered" (4. 6); and (7) lastly, a *victor*, who has fought the fight, finished the course, and kept the faith; whose life-work is complete, and who awaits the crown, the victor-wreath (4. 8), from His Lord. The lineaments of Christ are indeed to be seen in these characteristics. How closely he followed the Master! The cross, the crook (of shepherd care for souls), and the crown are an epitome of his wonderful life.

But he speaks even more intimately still to Timothy and to us. Let us listen as he tells of his *trust*: "I know whom I have believed"; his *persuasion*: "He is able to keep"; his *spirit*: "I endure all things for the sake of God's elect"; his *ministry*, comprising "teaching, manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering, charity, patience, persecutions, afflictions"; his *expectation*: "I am ready to be offered," and beyond that the appearing; his *prayer*—how like His Master's!—"I pray it may not be laid to their charge"; and, lastly, his sublime *confidence*: "The Lord will preserve me from every wicked work unto His heavenly kingdom"; all closing in the doxology: "to whom be glory for ever and ever, Amen." What a man of God! Nay, what a God this man had, and what a Master!

Though he alludes thus in touching detail to himself, yet it is plain that these blessed divine Persons fill his faith's horizon; and it is they whom he desires to be prominent. "Of God" and "in Christ Jesus" are still as ever his spiritual outlook.

He speaks of the *will of God*; his apostleship and all good he found and founded in that holy and gracious will. We read of the *gift of God* that Timothy had received and was to stir up. With Paul it was never a question of human ability but of divine grace and gift. Unto *everyone* of us, too, has been given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ (Eph. 4. 7). Behind and before all, is "*God's purpose and grace* given us in Christ Jesus before the ages of time." What commenced thus in divine counsel before the advent of evil, God will surely preserve from all evil unto His day and glory. Again, Paul writes, "*the foundation of God standeth sure. . . .*" Whatever God has founded will stand. "Whatsoever God doeth, it shall be for ever." There is, too, the *Word of God* which is not bound; the word of truth; God breathed, with the life of God in it, living, operative, authoritative, and sufficient; the Holy Scriptures, able to make wise unto salvation, and to furnish thoroughly the man of God. The *sovereignty of God* is referred to in connection with the recovery of those ensnared by Satan (2. 25, 26), and as the Judge of all (4. 1).

As already remarked, the expression

"*in Christ Jesus*" occurs seven times. We just note them. (1) The promise of life in Christ Jesus. (2) "God's purpose and grace in Christ Jesus," (3) "faith and love which is in Christ Jesus," (4) "grace in Christ Jesus," (5) salvation which is in Christ Jesus (6) godliness in Christ Jesus (7) faith which is in Christ Jesus.

It is also to be noted that the title, "*the Lord*," occurs fourteen times. (1. 8, 16, 18, 18; 2. 7, 14, 19, 22, 24; 3. 11; 4. 8, 14, 17, 18.) It is certain that there can be no real testimony where the Lordship of Christ is not acknowledged and acted upon. It is an immense comfort to know that whatever difficulties may arise, Christ is Lord, and our Lord.

We see, then, that our resources are not in any human system, nor any visible order, but in the grace and faithfulness of God and of Christ Jesus our Lord, and in the word of truth and the Holy Ghost. The faithfulness of the man of God springs from his simple and steadfast reliance upon divine faithfulness. "He abideth faithful; He cannot deny Himself"; that is our standby.

(To be continued.)

"*Be still and know that I am God.*"—Psalm 46. 10.

WHAT a mistake we make when we try to force the truth of God into our moulds, and make it suit our notions. Luther rendered this passage, "Be silent unto God, and let him mould thee." Ah, that is what we need! We need to give our brains a rest, to cease from our planning and scheming, our rushing here and there to establish our wishes and to propagate our views; we need to be still and let God mould us. If God moulds us we shall surely become like Christ.

"Like Him in faith, in meekness, love,
In every beauteous grace;
From glory into glory changed,
Till we behold His face."

We shall cease to be theologians, which God never intended us to be, and we shall become imitators of God as dear children, and more careful to live the truth than to profess it, if God moulds us. What a marvellous thing it is that God wants us, that He might mould us according to His own grace and after His own thoughts. Let us hasten to yield ourselves to Him.

“LOVE TO THE BRETHREN.”

(H. J. VINE.)

FOR anyone to be entirely devoid of “*love to the brethren*,” is a sure sign that he is still unregenerate. “He that loveth not his brother abideth in death,” we are told. There may be proud claims of light and righteousness, of being in advance of others, or of some doctrinal or ecclesiastical advantage, but the Word is emphatic, “He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love.” On the other hand, it is said, “Everyone that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God.”

The LORD HIMSELF gave a *new* commandment. Love is the fulness of the law; and the *new* commandment says, “Love one another as I have loved you.” The Lord Jesus was on His way to suffer and die for us when He said, “as I have loved you.” The disciples to whom He said that were about to be scattered and leave Him. One to deny Him. Yet He loved them through all, and said, “*Love one another as I have loved you.*” We cannot love the brethren too much, therefore. We may and do come short of the standard He gave, but to be absolutely without love proves that such an one is still lifeless Godward, though religious, it may be, even as Paul was before he was saved, “being exceedingly zealous,” as he said, “and profited in the Jews’ religion above many my equals” (Gal. 1. 14). When, however, God’s Son became the joy and rejoicing of his heart, instead of persecuting as formerly, he preached the “faith which worketh by love” (5. 6). And he wrote, “Though I give my body to be burned (i.e., like a fanatic), and have not love it profiteth me nothing”; also, “Be ye therefore imitators of God, as beloved children, and walk in love, even as Christ loved us” (Eph. 5. 1, N.T.). What a change the true knowledge of God in Christ brings about!

If the entire absence of love to the brethren proves the death state of such, *knowledge* of the opposite is granted to those who have that love, for we read, “We know that we have passed from death unto life, *because we love the brethren*” (1 John 3. 14). We may not love all the ways of some; but we *love the brethren*. Our measure may be very small, but those who are born of God do *love the brethren*. It is striking that the last but one of the seven assemblies (Rev. 3.), “PHILADELPHIA,” means “*love of the brethren.*” An “opened door” is granted to them right on until the Lord Jesus Himself comes again. None can shut that door. Attempts would doubtless be made, but it is an *opened* door, therefore all such efforts fail, thanks be to God.

Another encouraging word of assurance is given: “Everyone that loveth Him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of Him,” and, “By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep His commandments . . . and His commandments are not grievous.” As someone has said, “His commandments provide channels for the new nature to flow in.”

That we should increase in this is the Holy Spirit’s expressed desire for us. “We beseech you, brethren, that ye increase more and more” (1 Thess. 4. 10), for “Ye yourselves are taught of God to love one another. And indeed ye do it toward all the brethren.” Our LORD JESUS CHRIST loves all and has redeemed us all by His precious blood. All are born of God. All are indwelt by the HOLY SPIRIT. All address GOD as “FATHER,” and happily they may follow together Him who is “not ashamed” to call them “BRETHREN.”

THE EPHESIAN EPISTLE.

(JAMES BOYD)

Chapter 3. continued.

IN order that the saints might be thoroughly acquainted with the purposes of God for His own glory, and for the glory of His beloved Son, and that they might have some apprehension of the greatness and the glory of that unto which all the ways of God, that seem so unintelligible to men, were leading, he bows His knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. In chapter 1, the prayer of the apostle is to the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory. There God is viewed as the Sovereign of the whole universe: the supreme Ruler, almighty Autocrat, and Author of all the glory that shall fill all things; while Christ is viewed as the Man of His counsels, in whom is set forth the exceeding greatness of His power that shall eventually place us along with Him in the heavenly places, with everything under His feet, as we can now be viewed in Him in that place.

In this place, however, that which he asks for on their behalf is spoken only in connection with his prayers. "Making mention of you in my prayers." But here in chapter 3 his prayer seems to be on their behalf only. He says: "For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." I am not suggesting that he does not in both prayers, nor in all his prayers, take up this attitude, but an earnestness is discoverable in the attitude which he assumes here, which is absent in chapter 1. Therefore, I doubt not that whatever importance the things possess in his mind, in the first prayer, he feels them to be of still greater importance in this second prayer.

To the Colossians he writes: "For I would that ye knew what great con-

flict I have for you, and for them at Laodicea, and for as many as have not seen my face in the flesh; that their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgment (full knowledge, N T.) of the mystery of God, in which are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." In order to enter into this, and indeed into the mind of God anywhere, it is not only necessary that we have divine faith in that which we read, but that a subjective state of soul be produced in us, so that we may be able to enter into the force and grandeur of the truth that is set before us.

In this second prayer of the apostle for his Ephesian brethren, he speaks of the God and Father of our Lord Jesus, as the One of whom every family in heaven and earth is named. To Abraham He called Himself the Almighty God; and later on to Israel He says. "I am Jehovah." But the first took in but one man, and the second but one nation. When we come to the name of *Father*, every family in heaven and upon earth is taken in. Therefore to be in true relationship with Him Christ must be owned. No one can be in true and vital relations with Him who does not own Christ as Lord, and also Son, for He is not only the God of Christ, but also Father.

In this wonderful prayer his desire is that the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ would give the saints according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power by His Spirit in the inner man. The outward man does not count for much here, it has to perish, or be altogether changed. It is earthy, made of dust, and must put

on the heavenly, which shall be done at the coming of Christ for His assembly, which is the great subject of this Epistle.

A great deal was made of the outward man in the past dispensations, for the man after the flesh was under probation, and all that man was had to be taken note of. The natural prowess of a man was not to be overlooked but taken into consideration. This, however, is all over, and all is a question of the work of God in the soul and the power of the Holy Spirit, for our conflict is not with flesh and blood, but against wicked spirits in the heavenlies. Everything that is done for God in this dispensation is done in His power, and His power is perfect in our weakness.

Therefore as to our entering into the light of those heavenly and eternal things, the outward man is much more likely to be a hindrance than a help. Paul speaks of always being delivered unto death on account of Jesus, that the life of Jesus may be manifested in our mortal flesh. The treasure he had was in the earthen vessel, "That the excellency of the power may be of God, and not from us" (2 Cor. 4. 4-15). And as all things were for the sake of the saints, he could let the outward man perish, seeing that the inward man was renewed day by day. The outward man has nothing to do with the things that are eternal. This may be a hard lesson for us to learn, but only in the measure in which we learn it is there any advance in the things of God.

Some people think they have only to read the Scriptures and get acquainted with the letter, and they will know all that God has placed on record. But this is altogether a mistaken notion, and greatly misleading. If our own human intellects were all that is

required for us to apprehend the great thoughts of God, the gift of the Holy Spirit would have been unnecessary. John says to the babes in Christ: "Ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things" (1 John 2. 20). By the teaching of the Holy Spirit the whole counsel of God is open to us, and apart from Him we can know nothing of heavenly things. But to all who are willing to hearken with desire to learn, He says: "Behold, I will pour out My Spirit unto you, I will make known My words unto you" (Prov. 1. 23). How good and gracious our God is, and what pleasure it is to Him to lead on His own!

The next thing is Christ dwelling in our hearts by faith. He is the centre supreme of the whole redeemed creation, that new creation that shall be radiant with the glory of God, and where He shall have satisfaction in everything that His eye shall rest upon. We shall be at the centre of the marvellous sphere, which shall be the result of the putting forth of the wisdom, the power, and the love of the eternal Father. All that fabric of unspeakable bliss shall have for its basis the work of redemption, for its crown the glory of the Father, and for its centre the Bride of Christ with Himself dwelling in her adoring heart. But even now, that Christ may dwell in your hearts is the desire of the whole divine Trinity, and of all that know anything of the price that He has paid for our redemption.

Thus rooted and grounded in love we dwell in God, and God in us, for love is not only of God, but God is love. And this enables us to apprehend with all saints what is the breadth and length and depth and height; and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, and be filled to all the fulness of God.

What a joy it is to have this heavenly Christ dwelling in our hearts by faith, and to be in the enjoyment of that love that surpasses knowledge! The one set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was, the Revealer of the Father, the Image of the invisible God, in whom is all the fulness of the Godhead, who fills all things with the infinite blessing that lies in Himself, establishing all that God purposed to bring to pass before the ages of time; the Revealer, Fountain, Depository, of all the infinite, shoreless ocean of unfathomable love eternal; and Head and Husband of His body and Bride—His Assembly: that this glorious Christ may find His home in our hearts, that He alone might fill them, so as to be the spring and fountain from which all our affections and activities flow, our satisfying object, and this in the power of the Spirit of our Father—His Father and ours, the brightness and the love of whom fills our hearts to overflowing, and we filled to all His fulness. That this may be brought about in the saints is the burden of his prayer to the

Father. Having thus brought the saints to the summit of their glorious privileges, which may be entered upon by us while we are here upon earth, the apostle can only commend them unto Him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, unto Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus, throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.

We may think of ourselves as but poor ignorant things and little able to enter into those great things of God, and we are sometimes afraid that we may go too far in our asking, but we have to do with One who is able to do far above all that we ask, and indeed all that we think; and that without increasing the power that works in us. He has given us His Holy Spirit, and He is able to give us entrance into the depths of God (1 Cor. 2. 10). May we know how to avail ourselves of the open door that is set before us, and of the power that is ready to lead us into these things that eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man!

“*The Lord is near. Be careful about nothing.*”—Philippians 4. 5, 6 (N.T.).

DWELLS He apart from any trusting servant
 When clouds prevail, and adverse winds arise?
 Doth He not hear, or grows His love less fervent,
 Because of raging seas and stormy skies?

MY empty cup for Thee to fill;
 My trembling heart for Thee to still:
 My yielded life to do Thy will,
 O Lord, my Lord, I bring Thee.

To watch with Thee while others sleep;
 To feed Thy tired hungry sheep;
 To bring them drink from fountains deep,
 O Lord, my Lord, now use me.

FORGIVEN

(J. T. M.)

"Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile."—Psalm 32. 1, 2.

HAVE you become dull in your soul of late, my reader? Are you low in spirits? Have you lost that vigour and spontaneity that those have who are rejoicing in God's favour? If so, consider afresh these words with which this Psalm of David, given for instruction, opens. If you are a Christian at all, the blessedness of which he speaks is for you, to be enjoyed by you. Oh, the blessedness of the man who knows it!

There are three words used for sin—"transgression," "sin" and "iniquity." They describe, in a threefold way, the character of the sins of which we have all been guilty. **TRANSGRESSION** means a going away from a definite command, a rending of oneself apart from the One who gave the command; it is a pulling away of the shoulder from the hand that is laid upon it in loving restraint. How guilty we were of that, alas! How opposed to the will of God we were, how determined to do our own wills and have none of His. Thus we rebelled and thus were we separated from the God who made us and loved us. **SIN** means missing the mark, for if we are lawless, and the Scriptures say, "Sin is lawlessness," we must miss the mark. If the earth broke away from the law that binds it in its orbit round the sun, how terrible would be the consequences: it would miss the mark, the whole reason for its existence, and destroy itself. And we have sinned and missed the mark. How could we be right and fulfill the purpose of our being when our vision was warped by sin, and all our aspirations were wrong? Hence nothing satisfied us—we had no real peace, we were restless and disappointed. Even what we aimed for we failed to secure, or if we did carry off the prize we got something along

with it that turned it to gall and bitterness. **INIQUITY** means crooked, distorted—a divergence from the straight path. God's path for us was a straight one, a path of righteousness, but we all went astray from it in doing our own wills. What a mess of things we made by our sins: we pulled ourselves away from God, we failed to find any satisfaction, and all our ways were crooked, twisted ways. There was more, and worse: our sins were a challenge to God's supremacy, a rebellion against His throne; they were a dishonour to Him, they called for His righteous judgment.

This threefold character of our sinning has been met by a threefold grace on God's part. The transgression is **FORGIVEN**. Here the word means to lift away from. The great burden is removed: it no longer weighs upon the soul and conscience before God. Oh, the relief if it! How great is the blessedness of being forgiven! The load is gone. The sin is **COVERED**, it is concealed, blotted out of God's sight, so as to offend Him no more. The iniquity is not **IMPUTED**. It is not reckoned, it no longer stands against us in God's book of remembrance. It is remembered no more. It is as though it had never been.

We know well that we could have known nothing of the blessedness of Psalm 32., if our great Saviour had not endured the sufferings of Psalm 22. It is because He was forsaken that we may be forgiven. Yes, we owe it all to the precious blood of Jesus, and so we can sing, "Unto Him that loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God His Father. To Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen."

A COMPANY OR THE PERSON ?

(W. BRAMWELL DICK.)

"Tell me, O Thou whom my soul loveth, where Thou feedest, where Thou makest Thy flock to rest at noon ; for why should I be as one that turneth aside by the flocks of Thy companions ?"—Song of Solomon 1. 7.

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

WE quite understand that the Song of Solomon gives us the feelings and aspirations of Israel, or, more truly, of the remnant of Israel. It may also be used to set forth the reciprocal affection between Christ and the assembly as His bride. We think we may, however, use it—as we propose to do now—as expressing the exercises of individual believers, and the gracious way in which our precious Lord answers these.

Thus we believe the verse to which we here call attention puts in words clear and plain the unspoken feeling of many hearts. In the numerous religious organizations, alas, so leavened with evil doctrine and practice, there must be thousands who sincerely love the Lord, and who are asking, "Where can we go ?" Amongst those who are associated with companies where the truth in its simplicity and purity is valued, and in greater or less degree held, there sometimes arises a feeling of dissatisfaction, and they ask, "Where shall we go ?" The question in either case is unfortunate. It conveys the thought of looking for a *company* better than the one with which the questioner is connected. When the Lord Jesus spoke in that searching, testing way that produced such a serious result that "many of His disciples went back, and walked no more with Him," He said to the twelve, "Will ye also go away ?" Peter instantly replied, "Lord, to *WHOM* shall we go ? Thou hast the words of eternal life. And we believe and are sure that Thou art that Christ, the Son

of the living God" (John 6. 66-69). Peter did not say to *WHAT* but to *WHOM*. He thought not of a company but of a Person, and that Person He whom he owned as Lord, and whom he knew to be "the Son of the living God."

Now, surely, that is precisely the force of our first text. The speaker sought indeed a place, but she sought the place only in order that she might find the Person. He had won her heart, captured her affections, and her only desire was to be found where *His* company might be known and enjoyed. We believe that in the closing moments of the history of the church upon earth the Holy Spirit is seeking to revive and deepen in the hearts of saints bridal affections. As this is effected we will have an irresistible desire to be near to Him whose bride we are ; to have His company and to give Him the joy of our company. In all sincerity we will say to Him, "O Thou whom my soul loveth." How it must delight His heart to hear us address Him thus ! and how gladly will He respond to our desire, "Tell me . . . where Thou feedest." This may mean, "where Thou feedest Thy flock" (*see* New Trans.). There is a place where He is to be found, and where those who will not be satisfied with anything short of His company are to be found with Him. He it is Who feeds them, who ministers to them out of His own inexhaustible resource ; who makes Himself indispensable to them ; who by filling them with His love, draws forth their love, and brings them down at His feet in adoration.

Shelter from the scorching rays of the sun, it may be of affliction as another has suggested, is to be found in His company; rest from the toil incidental to our pilgrim journey; satisfaction because fed by His bountiful hands. Realizing what it means to have His company in the midst of His own, we can well understand the further question: "Why should I be as one that turneth aside (roving) by the flocks of Thy companions?" Alas! How many turn aside! How numerous are the rovers! They belong to Christ. In a coming day they will be numbered among His companions, but dissatisfaction has crept in. They look at their fellow-believers through their own eyes and not through Christ's eye; they measure them by their own standard and not by His standard. They gravitate to a company more pleasing to them, without inquiring what is pleasing to Him, and thus they miss the mark, for the believer who seeks any thing or any one other than Christ is doomed to disappointment. If we reach Him where He is to be found we will be occupied not with the companions but with Himself, and where He finds His delight there will we find all our joy and satisfaction.

This brings us to the familiar, and unspeakably precious words of our second text, which we venture to suggest is for us the New Testament answer to the Old Testament question. In Matthew 16. 13-20 the Lord Jesus had divulged the great secret with regard to His assembly. Just as the matchless story of the love of God for a perishing world came first from His lips (John 3. 16.); so it was fitting that He should give the first intimation as to His assembly. How we should rejoice in the words (verse 18), "*I WILL BUILD MY ASSEMBLY*" (New Trans.). The only person who has a right to say and can say without

challenge "I will" is God, and here God the Son incarnate—"the Son of the living God"—speaks and says, "I will build My assembly." Yes, pessimists! who continually tell us that the church has gone to pieces, that failure is writ large over everything that is of God, and that there is nothing for which to stand to-day, repeat these words until they are burned into your soul, "*I WILL BUILD MY ASSEMBLY.*" Will He do it? He is doing it; notwithstanding all the terrific power, indicated by "the gates of hell," that for twenty centuries has been directed against it, He will "present the assembly to Himself glorious, having no spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing" (Eph. 5. 27). *Hallelujah!*

In chapter 18 the Lord Jesus sets forth the order that becomes His assembly. Difficulties might and would arise. They might have to deal with an awkward, erring, sinning brother, but for that they would receive authority. Two might pray about it, and where two or three should be gathered in His Name they could count upon His presence in the midst. Why did He not say the assembly should pray about it, and where the assembly was gathered together in His Name there He would be? Could it be that He was looking down the centuries to the present time, when it would be impossible to find all the assembly gathered together in one place, but where there might be two or three who sought to walk in truth; who desired to please Him; who longed to be where He was to be found; upon whom He could confer assembly privileges, accompanied by assembly responsibilities? This seems to be a just inference—does it not? Further, it seems to us that this applies not only to prayer for the definite matter specified, nor only to any meeting for

prayer in connection with His interests, but that it presents that which was the gathering point of the assembly in its best days, and of those in this day who desire to be found in the path of His will.

“For where two or three are gathered together *unto My Name*, there am I in the midst of them.”

He is present. His Name is the rallying point, the authority of that Name is owned; the holiness of that Name is acknowledged; and the fragrance of that Name is enjoyed.

Now let us connect question and answer:—

Ques.—“Tell me, O Thou whom my soul loveth, where *Thou* feedest?”

Ans.—“For where two or three are gathered together unto My Name, there am I in the midst of them.”

Many to-day are looking for a company; the questioner was seeking His company. For which are we looking? If a company, our choice will be found to be varied and we may choose according to our personal predilection, and wherever we find it we are likely to be disappointed. Nor need we ask the Lord to direct us to a company, but He will draw us into His own company, and give us devotion to His Name. And we shall surely find others whom He has attracted to Himself. That will mean not numbers, perhaps “two or three”; not something spectacular, more likely something which in the eyes of the religious world will seem contemptible; not the setting forth of theories by the wise and prudent, but the simplicity of babes (Luke 10. 21). It will mean, however, the company of Himself. We hear His call, we answer to it, we are drawn to Him, and as we have remarked we do find a company but it is that of the “two or three” to whom He is everything, who desire none but Himself, and to whom the highest honour

and the greatest privilege is to be gathered together unto His Name with Himself in the midst. It may be said “that verse is repeated in prayer in numberless pulpits every Lord’s day; it is used wherever a few Christians meet together; and it is claimed by many companies of Christians.” “What then are we to do?” Go direct to Him with this earnest question, “Tell me, O Thou whom my soul loveth, where *Thou* feedest, where *Thou* makest *Thy* flock to rest at noon.” He will not turn a deaf ear to that. He will answer and He will lead. *IF?* Ah! There is an “if,” is there? Yes, and we had better consider that before we go to Him. The disciples in Acts 19. 7–9 were apparently to find Him not in the well-filled synagogue but in the school of the Gentile Tyrannus. The Hebrew Christians were to find Him not in the camp with its religious formalism and eminent respectability, but outside the camp with the reproach of Christ attaching thereto. The Corinthians were to look for Him not amid the various factions that claimed a man as their leader, and a certain line of teaching as their charter, but where He gathered His own in assembly around Himself. We may address Him as “Thou whom my soul loveth”; but do we love Him enough to let everything go, to be despised, to bear reproach, to be looked down upon even by those who profess to belong to Him, to be considered of no account; all in order that we may be found in His company where He gathers two or three together unto His Name? Some may leave; they did so when He was on earth, as we have already seen. Was it the company they left? No. They left Him. How tragic the words: they “walked no more with Him.” Paul the Spirit-inspired exponent of that of which we have written was deserted by all in Asia (2 Tim. 1.

15), and was left with two or three (chapter 4.), who like himself valued the company of Christ above everything else. Revelation 3. 7-13 leads us to expect that just before the Lord comes for His own they will be few, feeble, despised, who seek to keep His Word and not deny His Name. We want then to-day to ask, not, Where is the truth? but, Where is Christ? For the answer to that we want to go to Him, ask Him, and follow His leading. Thus will we be preserved from turning aside, roving, by the flocks of His companions. Those who do so are not satisfied with His company, they want that and something more. Hence we have denominationalism, sectarianism, pro-ism, anti-ism and all the other wretched things that the enemy has invented, and of which Christ is outside. Is there a path to-day? There is. Is there plain direction for the perplexed Christian? There is. How may we know it? Firstly, let us read John

7. 17 (New Trans). "If any one desire to practice His will, he shall know concerning the doctrine, whether it is of God." Secondly, having assured ourselves that we do desire to practise His will, let us go to Him and say, "Tell me, O Thou whom my soul loveth, where Thou feedest, where Thou makest Thy flock to rest at noon." Thirdly, satisfied that we do love Him so much that nothing but His company will satisfy us, let us listen to His voice: "For where two or three are gathered together unto My Name there am I in the midst of them"; and lastly, where He leads let us follow, seeking with all our heart that His Person, His Word, His Name may be everything to us. May our beloved Lord in His infinite grace attract us to Himself; maintain us in loyalty to His Word; and enable us to answer to His will for us until days of exercise are ended and in His presence, with all His own, He shall praise His Name for ever and ever!

TO-DAY

"ALL will be well," we say, and seek to gather
 Light for the sad hour from to-morrow's ray:
 Oh, that we might this truth lay hold on rather—
 Our Lord is here, and *all is well to-day.*

TO-DAY His mercy and His power enfold us;
 TO-DAY His blessed footprints mark our way;
 TO-DAY His Father's hand is strong to hold us:
 All things are ours, and all is well to-day.

(T. R. R.)

"In the Lord."

"Your labour is not in vain in the Lord" (1 Cor. 15.).

WHETHER the labour is in the Lord or not is the important thing. If it is "in the Lord" it is sure and abiding, and will not fail. Labour in the Lord is the fruit of His grace, and done in subjection to Him. It is His work, the workman is maintained by Him, and His glory is the motive and the end of it.

Faith in God delivers us from weariness to-day and fear of to-morrow.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

"When I see the Blood."

"Did not the writer of the hymn :

'I hear the words of love,
I GAZE UPON THE BLOOD,
I see the mighty Sacrifice
And I have peace with God.'

make a great mistake in the second line, and is it not in conflict with Exodus 12. 13, WHEN I SEE THE BLOOD, I will pass over you?"—BARRHEAD.

WE are not inclined to find fault with Horatio Bonar's beautiful hymn. The words in question simply mean that he rested in the sacrifice and blood of Jesus, instead of anything that he could bring to God or do for Him. We know that our conception of the value of that blood is very poor, and that only God can tell its full worth; and, further, it is not when we see the blood, but when He sees it, that He can pass over us in righteous pardoning grace; yet we must not overlook the fact that the same word that said of the blood in Egypt, "When I see the blood," also said, "The blood shall be to you for a token," and it said that first. It was for God's eye, but it was also for the eye of the sheltered people; it spoke to God, but it also spoke to them. It spoke to them of God's determination to bless them and of the righteous way that He had found by which He could do it; it spoke to Him of death accomplished and of judgment borne, and made Him as a consequence their Protector, Redeemer, and Saviour.

It is even so with the blood of Jesus: it is the pledge and token of God's great love to us—the blood of the new covenant. It tells us of the length that God would go to bless us, and the price that He would pay. And though our conception of this is not the *ground of our peace*, yet how peace-giving and full of blessing is this side of the truth! On the other hand, the blood is that which has met divine justice in its utmost demands, so that as a consequence God has raised up Christ from the dead, and is Just and yet the Justifier of him that believeth in Jesus. It is here we rest without a question.

Again, God has set Christ Jesus forth, a Propitiation through faith in His blood. A propitiation is a mercy seat or meeting-place, and it is the blood of Jesus that makes it possible for God to meet the sinner. The Creditor and the debtor both look upon the blood and the Creditor is satisfied, and the conscience of the debtor is cleared. There are these two sides of the truth, and we must not forget one in pressing the other.

The Disciples of the Lord.

"In the first three Gospels, Peter, James and John seem to be the three principal apostles. But in John, Andrew and Philip are more prominent, and are mentioned together in chapters 1., 6., 12, and in chapter 14., Philip's demand to see the Father brings a long reply. Is there any *typical* teaching in it? Andrew came to the Lord and abode with Him on the *second* of the days in John 1, and Philip was called on the *third*. Does Andrew typify the godly Jewish remnant of Christ's day, who were subsequently built into the structure of Christianity, and does Philip (whose heretical belief was that Jesus was the son of Joseph) typify the remnant of a future day, and Nathanael the spared nation of Israel in kingdom days? Please elucidate all as far as wisdom is given you."—MASSEY CREEK.

IN the first three Gospels, but especially in Matthew and Mark, the disciples seemed to be viewed more in

their official capacity as chosen and called apostles. In each of these Gospels their calling and appointment

to this office is recorded, and Peter, John and James were plainly the chief among them, and in view of the witness they were to bear, especially to Israel, they were permitted to see the glory of the Lord in the Mount and His sorrow in the Garden.

In John's Gospel their appointment as apostles is not recorded, they appear there more in relation to the work of the Lord in their souls; it is interesting to mark His individual and personal dealings with them. We believe that the days of John I. indicate periods in which the varied activities of the Lord are seen, and with this we will deal, but we would put first in importance the work of grace in the souls of the disciples, for in this they were pattern men.

It is generally accepted that the unnamed disciple who followed Jesus along with Andrew, was John, the writer of the Gospel, and we should put the work that was manifested in him as the most important and deepest of all. He is introduced to us as following Jesus without being told. He was drawn after Him by the attractiveness of His Person, and the last sight we have of him in the Gospel he is still doing this, following the Lord without a command. And between this first and last appearance, he is the disciple whom Jesus loved, leaning his head upon His bosom, and standing by His cross. There are many other interesting features of the work in his soul, and his relations with the Lord in consequence of it, recorded in the Gospel, but these will suffice to show how deep this work was. He represents the work that the Lord is doing in this present day. He, the Lamb of God, becomes the object of the hearts of His own. How could it be otherwise, since He was the Lamb of God of them? Their one desire is to abide

with Him, and the Spirit is given to be the power by which all this becomes real. These points of interest are easily discernible in verses 29-39.

In John, then, is seen that work which gives a deep knowledge of the Lord's love to His own and issues in personal devotion to Himself that follows Him wholly and refuses to permit any rival to Him to have a place in the heart. Along with this goes the knowledge of the Father, and, of course, the worship of Him. With less than this the Lord cannot be satisfied, and it is this that the Holy Spirit labours to produce in this present day.

But Andrew was associated with John in this following the Lord without a command, and he also is a pattern for us, standing out as he does as a contrast to Philip, with whom he is so often named. Whenever he is mentioned in the Gospel after this introduction, he is bringing someone or something to Jesus. First, Simon, his brother (chapter 1.); then the lad with the five loaves and two fishes (chapter 6.); then Philip, in his quandary about the Greeks (chapter 12.). He represents that work in the soul that sets those who are the subjects of it in motion; they must serve the One who has become so attractive to them; having found an all-satisfying portion in the Lord, they must bring others to Him; He is their true Centre, and the Centre also of all their activities. This is true Christian service, and, more than being effectual in the blessing of others, it is acceptable to the Lord.

Simon Peter comes in also in this day's work, being brought to Jesus by Andrew. And in him is brought out the truth that all who are brought to the Lord in this period of grace become living stones for the spiritual house

which God is building, and we might add, that in this is involved praise and worship (1 Pet. 2.), and also stability in witness for the Lord, not only in what we do but what we are (John 21. 19; 1 Pet. 2. 9). These three disciples and the work in them and its results, then, seem to cover the work that is being done in souls in this wonderful time, when the Father and Jesus Christ, His sent One, may be known and followed and served and worshipped in the power of the Holy Spirit.

In Philip there seems to have been a lack from the beginning. He was commanded to follow the Lord and never gained that intimacy and knowledge that marked John and Andrew. He was not so successful in his service in chapter 1., for Nathanael does not seem to have been as deeply impressed by his testimony as Simon was by Andrew's; he had no conception of the Lord's fulness and power when the Lord proved him as to the hungry multitude, in chapter 6.; and he did not know what to do with the Greeks until he had consulted Andrew, in chapter 12. The secret comes out in chapter 14., when the Lord said to him: "Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known Me, Philip?" He was not a man wholly absorbed, and so he had failed to understand who the Lord was and what His mission was. We should earnestly pray and seek that we may be more like John and Andrew and Peter than Philip.

But it does appear that he represents the Jewish remnant that will be called to follow the Lord after the saints of this church period have been raptured to heaven, and who will never have that full and deep knowledge that is our privilege. If this is so, we should

not call his testimony to the Lord as "the son of Joseph," heretical, for these awakened Jews will only follow the One who is legally and without question the true heir to David's throne, and it is here that Joseph comes in, as the genealogy in Matthew's Gospel proves. Faith accepts the great fact that the Lord was "the Seed of the woman," that He came of a virgin mother, and no doubt the nation of the Jews will recognize and understand that, but his title to the throne of David must be flawless, and this title comes through "*Joseph, the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ*" (Matt. 1. 16). Nathanael belongs to this same day, and would represent the nation of Israel awakened through the testimony of the Lord's messengers, and brought through grace to the confession of their sins, for this is involved in the Lord's words, "An Israelite indeed in whom is no guile."

To sum up, then, we have in the day of the Baptist's testimony (verses 29-34), the period of the Lord's life on earth to His death as the Lamb of God on the cross, and His ascension to heaven, from whence He has given the Holy Spirit. In "the next day after" (verses 35-42) we have the present church period, in which the Holy Spirit is gathering souls out of this world, and attaching those who are so gathered to the Person of the Lord by the bonds of eternal love. In "the day following" (verses 43-50), we have, first, the remnant of the Jews and then all Israel gathered to own Jesus as the Son of God (not only Son of David and David's legal Heir) and the King of Israel (verse 49). Then, finally, in verse 51, we have the widening out of the glory of the Lord, both heaven and earth become subject to Him as the Son of man.

Spirit, Soul, and Body.

“For a number of years I have had your Magazine and have derived much light and blessing through it. Have wondered why nothing has appeared on the different parts of our personality—spirit, soul and body. I suppose that the spirit is the immortal part and the soul the animal life. We often hear the expressions ‘immortal soul’ and ‘the soul shall live for ever.’ Is this right, ought not these things to be said of the spirit, or is the same word translated sometimes ‘spirit’ and sometimes ‘soul’ in the Word? If you could give a paper on the subject I should be glad. Also could you give Scriptural proof of the immortality of man? I do not mean of the believer only.”—S, NORWOOD.

WE question whether we can divide between soul and spirit, it requires a sharper instrument than our minds to do that; the word of God can do it, but that is a proof that it is God’s word and keener than any word of man. This we learn from Hebrews 4. 12. Yet such a statement as we get in that text, and 1 Thessalonians 5. 23, as well as other passages, show that spirit and soul are distinct entities. A correspondent writing to us on this subject recently, points out that “No saint of God on departing this life is said to give up his soul, but his spirit. Jacob is said to give up his spirit (Gen. 49. 33); and Job says, Man giveth up his spirit, and where is he? (Job 14. 10). Yet it is the soul that passes into hades. Our Lord gave up His spirit on the cross (Luke 23. 46), but His soul went into hades (Acts 2. 27). We have the spirits of just men made perfect (Heb. 12. 23), but in Revelation 6. 9 we see the souls of martyrs under the altar crying for vengeance upon their enemies, and in Revelation 20. 4 we see the souls of the faithful who were slain under Antichrist raised to reign with Christ. Stephen commits his spirit to the Lord Jesus, but says nothing about his soul; but the Lord tells His disciples not to fear them that kill the body and can do nothing more, but to fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell (Matt. 10. 28). The question is—Is soul and spirit the same thing? The terms seem to be interchangeable, but

on examining such passages as 1 Thessalonians 5. 23, Luke 1. 46, I think I can see that while they are separate entities, both may be truly one, the one side spoken of in respect to the body, and on the other in relation to God. Man is called a soul but not a spirit” (J. Boyd).

We give this quotation from our correspondent’s letter as an interesting contribution to the subject in question, and we feel that we may safely say, on the authority of the Scriptures advanced in it, that in regard to survival after death, the spirit has special reference to God and to the Lord Jesus, to whom it goes, and the soul is prominent when resurrection to life is in view.

It would seem right to say, then, that what distinguishes man from every other creature of God is that he possesses spirit, soul and body, and these make him a complete man. With his spirit he may be in intelligent relationship and communion with God (Rom. 8. 16, 2 Tim. 4. 22; Philem. 25) with his soul he holds on to his body, whether now or in resurrection, and by it forms and fulfils the relationships that belong to his natural life. Yet we cannot shut God out of the exercises and desires that connect themselves with the soul, for David cried, “Oh God, my soul thirsteth for Thee” (Ps. 45), and Mary sang, “My soul doth magnify the Lord” (Luke 1.). Indeed, the passages in the New Testament which show that spiritual life

and affection lie in the soul are very numerous. It is the soul that is saved and purified, it has to be watched for and cared for, the lusts of the body war against it, and the keeping of it must be committed to God. Hence we would say that we cannot tell where the spirit ends and the soul begins.

It is true that the actual word "immortality" is not used in Scripture in speaking of the soul. When used in regard to men, on the one occasion

that it is so used, it describes the deathless condition of blessedness into which those will enter who are Christ's, and who are still alive, at His coming, in contrast to those who have died and gone to corruption, who will put on incorruption (1 Cor. 15. 54), but that the soul survives the death of the body and will never die, even in those who have died without faith, is plainly taught in the New Testament. Some of the texts that we should quote for this are: Luke 12. 5; 16. 19-31; Revelation 20. 11-15; 22. 11.

"Men ought always to pray, and not to faint."—Luke 18. 1.

HERE is a word for us, a profound word, which gives a clear insight into things, and reveals a secret, a secret that is worth more than piles of gold: pray and not faint, pray always and faint never; pray not and you will surely faint. Sufferer on your bed of pain, pray and you will not faint; Christian, tried and persecuted by unsympathetic relatives, pray and you will not faint; Child of God, beset by difficulties at work, in business, in the world, pray and you will not faint; young believer, learning lessons of your own frailty and the strength of sin, pray and you will not faint. Cease to pray and you will faint, for the battles of life are too fierce for him who buckles on his armour and forgets God. Prayer brings God in, and God is omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent, He cares and hears and answers, and this is why men ought always to pray and not faint.

"Your iniquities have separated between you and your God."—Isaiah 59. 2.

THE moon in an eclipse complained to the sun, "Why dost thou not shine on me as usual?" "I am shining as I always do," the sun replied, "but the earth has got between us." And you, Christian, who have lost the joy of your salvation, and no longer bask in the sunshine of God's countenance, is it the earth and its pursuits that has got between your soul and Him, or what is it? He is the same, and His love as great as ever.

"I'm further from God than I was when last I saw you," said a backslider to me. "He is no further from you," was my answer. "What do you mean?" he asked eagerly. "I mean that you have only to turn round and you'll find Him there." "Your sins have hid His face from you" (Isa. 59. 2). Like a cloud of smoke they have risen up and blotted out the brightness. Confess them, forsake them, turn afresh to Him. He is unchanged.

WHOM WILL YOU FOLLOW ?

(J. T. MAWSON.)

"For unto the angels hath He not put in subjection the world to come, whereof we speak. But one in a certain place testified, saying, What is man, that Thou art mindful of him? or the son of man, that Thou visitest him? Thou madest him a little lower than the angels; thou crownedst him with glory and honour, and didst set him over the works of Thy hands: Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet. For in that he put all in subjection under him, he left nothing that is not put under him. But now we see not yet all things put under him. But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour."—Hebrews 2. 5-11.

I WILL quote two Scriptures. "All we like sheep have gone astray, we have turned every one to his own way," and "He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake." The first describes the road that we take when we follow Adam, the second the road we take when we follow Christ. There are these two leaders, and we are following one of them, our choice must be one or the other. This is not theology, worn out and exploded, as some would say, it is fact, stern and solemn fact, as all will discover either here or hereafter. Let us consider these two leaders.

The question is asked, What is man? And we have to ask another, Which man? for there are two, the first and the Second, Adam and Christ. God created Adam and was mindful of him. He crowned him with glory and honour, and set him over the works of His hands. How great were the capabilities that God gave him, and the possibilities that He put within his reach as He crowned him lord of creation, and gave him dominion over the fowl of the air, the fish of the sea, and the beast of the field. It was not long, however, before he lost the place of honour and trust that God gave him, for the devil offered him another crown. "Ye shall be as gods," said he, and that was a crown that he thought he could wear in independence of God; it allured him from his fidelity

to God, and he grasped at it, and turned his back upon God to do it. That crown was a chimera, and he gained nothing but a guilty conscience and a great dread of God, and the crown with which God had crowned him was struck from his rebel brow, and he passed out of Eden a crownless man.

The majority of men are following the fallen head of the race. The life and nature of Adam is in every one of his children, and though they can do great things they are never satisfied with the results of their labour, and there lies within the very consciousness of the race the sense that something has been lost. Men are reaching out and stretching forward continually for something that always seems beyond them, and the tragedy of Tantalus is the continual tragedy of the race. It is the devil that deceives them; he can redeem no promise that he has made, but he lures them still with false hopes. The crown that God gave, this overlordship, they have lost, but they are seeking it, the urge for it is within them, but they are seeking it in independence of God.

They would not so describe their ambitions and would rather cling to the vain dream of evolution, that flatters them into believing that they are striving after something that man never possessed before; but it is a delusion, and the unpleasant truth is that man is fallen, defeated, crownless.

He has lost his best possession, his crown, which would have given completion and satisfaction and glory to his life. The crown could only be held in fealty to God his Maker—if he had held fast to that he would still have lifted up his head with great nobility and exercised his authority as lord over creation; and he would have been a free man with God as the Captain of his soul, where he is now a slave of sin and Satan, and his desire for “liberty, equality and brotherhood” would have been gratified, and not have grown into a frenzied cry, attended by blasphemy and blood.

There have been great men in the world's history who seemed in their day on the point of achieving the great ambition. There was Nebuchadnezzar, who ruled over the earth and then fell from his high estate to the level of the beasts; there was Alexander, who conquered the world and died in a drunken debauch; there was Napoleon, who crowned himself Emperor of France and died of cancer, a dishonoured exile in St. Helena.

There have been many men in different spheres of life who have grown great and famous and have thought that they would secure the fadeless and immortal crown; they have followed it, and fought for it, and expended every power they had to secure it, and just as they thought that they had achieved their ambition and reached their destiny, they tumbled into the grave. The fact becomes clear and plain that the crown lies on the other side of death, and death which was God's judgment upon Adam, the disobedient and fallen head, lies upon the whole race. Death is the end of man's ambition; his hopes lie shattered beside his open sepulchre; he cannot grasp the crown he craves

for because he cannot grapple with and overthrow the power of death. “*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). That is the secret, the solution to the terrible problem.

What was to be done? God had great purposes in regard to man when He made him in His own image; He intended that he should indeed be head over everything that He had created. Then have His purposes failed? If so, then the devil has gained a victory and God's throne is no longer the throne of God. No, God's purposes have not failed, and God has not failed. He had in reserve another Man, the second Man and the last Adam, His well-beloved Son, and in Him He has triumphed and recovered more than was lost. In due time God sent Him into the world. “He was made a little lower than the angels.” “He made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men.” When He appeared as a lowly babe in the manger at Bethlehem, the child of the virgin mother, it was not the beginning of His existence. The Hebrew epistles tell us that He is the Son, the Creator, for by Him God made the worlds. He came from the glory of God into the world of man's failure and sin, to stand firm and invincible in every place where man had been defeated. He comes into our view in the manger; we trace His footsteps through the earth, the Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; we see Him confronted by Satan's temptations and power, and finally by death itself. The prince of this world, who had defeated and degraded Adam's race, came, but found nothing in Him. He was unmoved by Satan's subtle wiles,

because He had set His God always before Him, and desired nothing for His own satisfaction but the love and will of His Father, and the deliverance and blessing of the devil's poor dupes.

I would dwell upon the achievements of the second Man, our Lord Jesus Christ. He withstood the devil's three-fold temptation in the desert, and when that arch-enemy returned in a more subtle form, and endeavoured to turn Him from the way of God's will, saying, through Peter, "This be far from Thee," He discerned the snare and answered, "Get thee behind Me, Satan, for thou savourest not the things that be of God." He had come for the suffering of death; it was for this that He was made a little lower than the angels, but His death was not for Himself; death had no claim upon Him, it was for others He died, for you and me. His love led Him into the depths of death, that He might lead us out of them and crown us with a brighter crown than Adam lost, on the other side of death. He died to glorify God and establish all His purpose in regard to men. Think of Him in that hour. He should have been crowned with the royal diadem and led amid the acclamations of the people to the throne of David, this was His right, but instead He was crowned with thorns and nailed to the cross, and He knew that it would be so. He had become man thus to suffer, and He took the cup, filled to the brim with sorrow and shame and woe, not from Pilate, or from the chief priests, from neither man nor devil did He take it, though both were concerned in it, but from His Father. "The cup that My Father hath given Me, shall I not drink it?" He said, and refused to allow His disciples to fight on His behalf, or to defend Himself by word or act.

He has been raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, and now

WE SEE JESUS, CROWNED WITH GLORY AND HONOUR. He has gained the crown; it shines upon His brow, but He has gained it by overthrowing the power of death; it is in resurrection that the crown is His. We do not yet see all things put under Him; they will be according to God's unalterable decree, but this is the "not yet" time, but it is nevertheless a time of great blessedness in which THE CROWNED CHRIST is leading God's many sons to glory. We read, "It became Him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the Captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings." He has qualified to be the Leader of the many sons by His suffering. Many enemies blocked the way, they stood a formidable host between us and the crown and the glory, for the devil's intention was that man should be crownless for ever, but Jesus has met every foe Himself, and without aid; He did not conduct the fighting from a safe place in the rear, and from thence urge the sheep to be valiant in the fight and to the slaughter. This was His place. He went before them. He stood up in the face of the foe, and when arrows of death and judgment flew in a blinding cloud they found their mark in His bosom. He gave Himself for us. He willingly died in our stead. He has cleared the way. If we may change the figure and adopt one used by the prophet Isaiah: He has smitten the sea when it roared and made the depths a way for the ransomed to pass over. He has made a clear road for us right up to the glory of God.

I appeal to my readers, and especially to those who have youth and energy on their side, which of these two leaders will you choose? If you follow the first the world will honour you and your name may be inscribed

high up in its temple of fame, but you will surely go astray and miss the prize and go down to disappointment and death without a hope and without a crown. If you follow the second Man, owning Him as your Lord, He will lead you in the paths of righteousness, and bring you at last to the glory with all the sons of God. You will be crowned there, for whom He called them He also justified, and whom He justified them He also *glorified*, and these are they whom He leads out of their bondage into this glorious liberty of the sons of God. It is true that He is still despised and rejected of men, and those who follow Him must not expect to be popular in the world that hated Him, but faith weighs the value of present things with what the future holds; it sees Jesus now crowned with glory and honour, and refuses the false glory of the world that lies in the wicked one, and gladly follows Him to the day of glory yet to be.

“O, who will follow the Nazarene,
Of God and man forsaken?
Such grief and sorrow ne'er were seen,
His life from the earth was taken.

“He shall see of the travail of His soul,
The spoil with the great dividing.
The heavens and earth shall He control,
In grace and truth abiding.

“O, who will follow the Nazarene?
O Lord, our hearts awaken!
May no false pomp Thy glory screen,
Thy life from the earth was taken.

“And O, Thy name is above the skies,
All past Thy toil and sorrow.
Though the earth may woo me, my heart
replies
That I wait the grand to-morrow.”

Consider our great Leader, the Apostle and High Priest of our profession. If we have believed in Him, God has committed us to His care, for two reasons. *First*, He could trust no other, no man or angel was equal to this great work of bringing the sons of God home to His glory, only Jesus, who has destroyed him that had the power of death which is the devil. He has prevailed to bring us safely

home; and *second*, His sons are too precious to God to be committed to any other person, and their dignity is too great. We are the sons of God. Let us consider the dignity that is ours. Our Scripture tells us that He is not ashamed to call us brethren, and that not because He has come down to our level and become one of us, but because He has made us one with Him, for “He that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one,” and it is for this cause that He is not ashamed of us. We are His brethren and loved with the same love that rests upon Him, for we are the sons of God on our way to the glory of God. And He has entered into heaven as our Forerunner. We are well aware that the feelings of the place into which a forerunner enters indicate how the one whom he represents will be received. It is even so in our case, impossible as it may seem. Because He has entered heaven, so shall we; if He, our Leader and Forerunner, has been received there with joy and honour, so shall we; as to this our hope is both as sure and stedfast as the immutable Word of God. We do not travel with uncertainty, we are not travelling to disappointment and death. How glorious is our prospect! When He shall appear in glory then shall we appear with Him in glory, and when we see Him we shall be like Him. Creation waiteth for the manifestation of the crowned sons of God; when the first man lost his crown he involved the whole creation over which he was set in his fall, but it is to be delivered from its travail, its groaning is to be hushed and the curse for ever rolled away, and this shall surely be when the second Man, the triumphant Man, appears, the Firstborn among many brethren, all of whom shall be conformed unto His image and crowned with Him.

"MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS OF GOD."

(H. J. VINE.)

I Chronicles 16. 42.

IN order that Israel, God's chosen people for earth, might give expression to their thanksgivings, praise and worship to God, minerals were quarried from the hills, wood was gotten from the forests, and strings from animals slain. These were made into cymbals, cornets, trumpets, psalteries, and harps, as ordered by King David, for the Levitical singers and the 120 priestly trumpeters to join "as one, to make one sound to be heard in praising and thanking the Lord." They were called the "musical instruments of God" (I Chron. 16. 42; 2 Chron. 5. 12, 13); "the instruments of music of the Lord which David the King had made to praise the Lord, because His mercy endureth for ever, when David praised by their ministry" (7. 6), and they were also designated later in revival times, "the musical instruments of David the man of God" (Neh. 12. 36). Thus equipped, Israel—divinely called "*the Lord's people*"—found a suitable mode of expressing their national and earthly praise to the Lord; but this cannot be too earnestly emphasized—*the music of praise was TO GOD, and not for the mere entertainment OF MEN!*

In the assembly of God to-day the music of praise by the Spirit is also **GODWARD**; but the instruments mentioned in the epistles which have been given for the guidance of the assembly are of better materials, for they must be in keeping with a better "ministry," based upon the death, resurrection and ascension of Christ, the glorified Head of the assembly, and formed by the coming of the Holy Ghost. Unlike the lifeless instruments connected with the old order, a new creation in Christ has provided living instruments with the

vital melodies of redemption uprising in the heart. It is true they have been quarried from the hills of a world of sin, gotten from the forests of darkness and unbelief, and brought out of death into life. Being born again, and having proved the Lord's goodness and pardoning grace, they are fitted to offer up spiritual praise acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. Once dead in offences and sins, they are now alive to God, being made nigh to Him in Christ through His atoning blood, so that they are both the priests of God and the instruments of God through the redemption work of our Lord Jesus Christ, and are able to respond to the word—"By Him therefore let us offer the sacrifices of **PRAISE TO GOD!**" They are living instruments themselves, and they have the living power of the Holy Spirit to fit them for this Godward "ministry."

These living instruments are the only instruments of music mentioned as being in the assembly which is in Christ, in the New Testament; but, oh, how surpassing all that went before are the grace, the melody, the spiritual songs and the theme provided! Romans 15. 6 speaks of our glorifying God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ "with one accord" and "with one mouth." One hundred and twenty priests sounded their trumpets as one, we are told in 2 Chronicles 5. 12, and in chapter 9. 9 we read of Sheba's queen giving the king "an hundred and twenty talents of gold, and of spices great abundance, and precious stones: neither was there any such spice as the queen of Sheba gave king Solomon"; but in Acts 1. 15 we have the chosen materials for the new and richer music, for the more surpassing excellence of assembly offering to the Lord when "the number of

the names together were about an hundred and twenty " also.

We are given both striking contrasts and beautiful similarities in the Old and New Testaments. When the law of holy demand was given three thousand were slain! When the Spirit was given at Pentecost for the preaching of free grace three thousand were saved! In the typical system of the old covenant, when the music of praise TO GOD at the place of Jehovah's name was introduced, one hundred and twenty priests sounded their trumpets, as we have said; "and the trumpeters and singers were *as one*, to make *one sound* to be heard in praising and thanking the Lord"; so when the inauguration of the new worship was to take place, after Christ had ascended to heaven, when, as we have seen, the hundred and twenty were together, we read, "These all continued with *one accord* in prayer and supplication. . . . And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with *one accord* in one place" (Acts 2. 1). Then, with a sound from heaven, the Spirit came upon them and filled them. In regard to the assembly of which Christ is the ascended Head to-day, we read, "There is *one body*, and *one Spirit*" (Eph. 4. 4); and, being "filled with the Spirit," the new musical instruments of God are fitted for making melody in the heart TO THE LORD (5. 18, 19); also for singing with grace in the heart TO THE LORD (Col. 3. 16). Moreover, if the talents of gold were received by Solomon from the Queen of Sheba, along with precious stones and spices of unequalled excellence, how much more precious must the gift of the Father to His Son have been; when, having been rejected on earth and glorified in heaven, He received the hundred and twenty as the Father's love gift; and, accepted in divine righteousness, having Him as their

preciousness, the sweet fragrance of worship flowed forth, as "WITH GREAT JOY" they were found together with one accord, "PRAISING AND BLESSING GOD" (Luke 24. 53).

Such harmonious worship rising to *God Himself* is a suitable ending to the choice Gospel of Luke, which has in its beginning song after song expressing the soul's rejoicing and glory in the Lord. Many of the Psalms too show how the hearts of the godly turned their praise to Him, singing, "*Blessed be the Lord!*" "O give thanks unto the Lord!" "BLESSED BE GOD!" "*Blessed be the Lord God of Israel from everlasting and to everlasting!*" "I will praise the Lord with my whole heart in the assembly of the upright!" and, toward the close there burst forth HALLELUJAHS, richly responding to the dealings of Jehovah, in which the soul has learned something of His mercy, justice, loving-kindness, righteousness, long-suffering, equity, glory and greatness, tuning the "musical instruments of God" to such lofty anthems of praise that the final words ring out, "Let everything that hath breath praise the Lord! HALLELUJAH!" Yes, and He is ten thousand times more worthy of such high praise than our highest apprehension of His worthiness appreciates! Yet what we have learned of Him makes our praise flow to Him!

"Worthy of homage and of praise,
Worthy by all to be adored,
Exhaustless Theme of heavenly lays!
Thou, Thou art worthy, Jesus, Lord."

When the saints gather together in the assembly to-day, and the Holy Spirit brings the wonderful love and loveliness of God's beloved Son before the hearts of the redeemed, the richness of responsive music in the heart to God may vary greatly, and that according to the measure of our experimental knowledge of Christ; but in

every case, whether smaller or greater, the glad strains sound sweetly in God our Father's ears. When Paul wrote concerning assembly order in 1 Corinthians 14. 15, he said, "I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also."

In three Psalms in the inspired Song Book of God's earthly people, we are told of "an instrument of ten strings" used for His praise (Ps. 33. 2; 92. 3; 144. 9). In the first of these His "word" is the main theme; in the second His "work"; and in the third *the Lord Himself*; ending, "Happy is that people, whose God is the Lord." It is clear that man, according to the designs of God's love, is to be for His own pleasure, all his powers being used for His praise. This can only be through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus. In 1 Corinthians 14. 15 two strings are spoken of as sounding their notes of praise in the assembly—*the spirit and the understanding!* The law demanded love from man's *heart, mind, soul, and strength!* The finished work and the present grace of God's Son alone could bring to pass response from these four strings, which the law failed to do. Now as blessed in Christ Jesus, our voice too is to sound forth His praise; also our mouth and our lips are to praise the One who is so worthy. When He was on the earth Jesus loosed "*the string*" of the tongue of one man. How could the strings resound with the music of praise unless His work of divine grace freed them and tuned them to do so? All will be gloriously freed and harmoniously tuned soon, when our Lord Jesus Christ comes again! All ten strings, yea, all

the being of the redeemed—will be fully fashioned for the praise and glory of God then. For this we were predestinated and called of God.

"Then, Saviour! Thou shalt have full praise,
We soon shall meet Thee on the cloud,
We soon shall see Thee face to face,
In glory praising as we would."

Man's Creator and Redeemer only could both design and bring to pass the scenes of universal rejoicing and splendour, with Jesus as the visible Head and Centre of all, with every part attuned by Him, where the will of God is the delight of every soul, and where all resounds with holy melody and worship in response to the leading of the Son of God. He is truly "the Chief Musician" as well as the Song Leader in the assembly (Hebrews 2. 12). "I will sing!" He said. If those who run in the way of faith are exhorted to look off unto Jesus, surely the singers in redemption's choir likewise need to be told to heed the note raised by the Song Leader! and those who share in the music of God's praise to mark well the rhythm and harmony of the Chief Musician. The power of the Spirit is given to enable us so to do, but though our "efforts now to praise are often weak and lowly, a nobler, sweeter song we'll raise with all the saints in glory!" There will not be a note out of tune then! There will be no discord! The musical instruments of God—the redeemed singers on high—shall sound forth His worthy praise in heavenly perfection. Faith anticipates the joyful strains.

Hark, the Chief Musician sings
Sweetest song of sacred fame!
Here He died, above He lives.
Praise sublime to God He brings!
Touches He ten ready strings!

There is always the tendency to lose dependence when we are enjoying the results of dependence. It is when you have been most signally used of God that you are in danger of forgetting that you are dependent altogether upon His grace.

THE PRAYER MEETING.

Some thoughts expressed at a recent meeting for prayer which encouraged us to continue to gather together in the name of the Lord for that purpose.

WE found great encouragement to continue in united prayer from the prayer of the apostles and their circumstances in Acts 4. This is how it presented itself to us.

"*Being let go they went to their OWN COMPANY and reported. . .*" There were those with whom they were of one mind, and who were waiting eagerly to hear how they had fared in their witness for Christ. We gathered that this oneness of mind, having one common interest, and so being in true fellowship as to the glory of God, is essential to success in meetings for prayer, and in this we were confirmed by the Lord's words, "If two of you shall agree" (Matt. 18. 19).

"*They lifted up their voice to God WITH ONE ACCORD and said, Lord, Thou art God, which hast made heaven and earth and the sea, and all that in them is.*" They were deeply conscious of the all-pervading power and majesty of God. We feel that this is necessary in the prayer meeting. We of course approach God as our Father, in the name of the Lord Jesus; this defines the freedom of our access to Him and the character of it, but we need to be braced up and thrilled by the thought of His greatness and power. He is the mighty Creator, the eternal God, who has the final disposal of all things in heaven and earth, and our prayers, if right, are an appeal to Him to speak that it may be done, as was the prayer of the apostles.

"*Who by the mouth of Thy servant David HAST SAID. . .*" They had His word also, and so have we. And this surely is essential if our prayers are to be intelligent. God has spoken and we must not divorce our prayers

from His word; instead we must turn to His word in order to have direction as to how to pray and what to pray for.

"*The kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord and against His Christ . . . for to do whatsoever Thy hand and THY COUNSEL DETERMINED before to be done.*"

No opposition can triumph against God. He makes the wrath of men to praise Him, and when their evil bursts forth against Him and against Christ, He directs it in channels that He had before determined. We felt that we needed to have the sense of this in our souls, so that there might be no faltering or doubt in our praying. And this would be specially necessary and strengthening in places where there is great opposition to the work and word of God.

"*And now, LORD, BEHOLD their threatenings.*"

All the circumstances can be brought to His notice. The things that would make us quail may be referred to Him and left in His hands, and so tranquillity of mind secured as to them. He sleeps not, and nothing can escape His eyes.

"*Grant unto Thy servants that WITH ALL BOLDNESS they may speak Thy word.*" This was their desire and prayer, and they needed to pray thus, as we do. They were frail men as we are, and they had proved how frail they were, and Peter more so than the rest. It was only by heavenly power and grace that they could stand against the enemy in bold witness for Christ, and this is equally true for us. It is not human courage we need; we might get this without prayer, but if we are

to be strong in the Lord then we must pray.

“*By stretching out THY HAND to heal; . . . by the name of Thy holy child Jesus.*”

It is God's hand, not ours, that does the work; as it was then, so it is now. They had no illusions as to this, nor need we have any; the work to

be done is impossible with men and only possible with God. How blessed was this united cry to God for the manifestation of His hand, and how blessedly answered!

They were filled with the Holy Ghost and spake the word with boldness, and with great power they gave witness to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them.

PRAYER AND PRAISE.

O LORD, as we together meet
In Thy blest name to wait on Thee,
And bow with reverence at Thy feet:
May each by faith Thy glory see!

For, Lord, we do not want to meet
And fail to prove Thy presence here:
May then our joy be full, complete,
As Thou amidst us dost appear.

How wonderful Thy promise, Lord,
To two or three that meet to pray!
How rich the grace that doth afford
This privilege to us to-day!

And thus once more Thy love doth make
Us conscious of Thy present grace,
Which loves with those Thy place to
take,
Who seek in humbleness Thy face.

L. M.

(ARTHUR F. POLLOCK)

Together, Lord, we wait on Thee;
Be all in all to every heart!
Our wonder, that with us Thou'lt be;
Our joy, with Thee to be apart.

And thus shut in with Thee, we pray,
We praise, we worship and adore,
As Thou Thy love and grace display,
We praise Thee, Lord, yet more and
more.

Thou ledest, too, our praise, blest Lord,
To Him of all the Source and Spring.
'Tis Thou, Thyself, dost strike the cord,
Leading our praises, as we sing.

Blest Father, Infinite, Supreme,
Down low before Thy throne we fall;
Resplendent glories round us beam,
And in Thyself, we find our all.

“HOME-FELT KNOWLEDGE OF GOD.”

[DROPPED on an expression in an old book that pleased me greatly. It was, “*an home-felt knowledge of God.*” This is the kind of knowledge that God desires that all men should have of Him, for He would have all men to be saved, and salvation lies in this sort of knowledge. We know the difference between knowing a person by sight and knowing him intimately. The little Scotch lassie understood this in regard to the Saviour, when she said to her friend, “D’ye ken Jesus, Jeanie?” “Aye,” answered Jeanie, “a’ folk ken Jesus.” “Aye, but d’ye

ken Him to speak tae?” “An home-felt knowledge of God” goes further than speaking to the Lord as a friend. It describes the knowledge that the child has of its parents, it is the knowledge that the prodigal had as he sat by his rejoicing father, while the whole house made merry because of his repentance, return, and reception; it is family knowledge, and God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, who believe, crying, Abba, Father. And thus we have this *home knowledge of God*, and it is a *felt knowledge*.

THE EIGHT SIGNS OF JOHN'S GOSPEL.

(JAMES GREEN.)

Sign VIII.—The Draught of Fishes. Read Chapter 21.

THE last chapter of John's Gospel is one of restoring grace, and forms an addendum to the great subject of eternal life which has occupied us previously. It will show us that the abiding principle of divine life is the resource of the Spirit in a day of failure and departure from the true calling of the children of God. Chapter 20., verses 30, 31, tells us that there were many other signs wrought by our Lord, but that the seven recorded in this Gospel were with the express design of presenting to faith the fact that Jesus is the Christ, and in resurrection this supreme title has a larger significance than Messiah, as in chapter 1. 41, for it involves the source and power of life, with Headship over all things. Then also in His holy person Jesus is the Son of God, Revealer of the Father (chapter 14. 9), and the Centre, as risen, of a new sphere of blessing (cf. 1 John 5. 5). Then follows the consequence of believing this witness, that through His name life would be possessed. Blessed and glorious fact, life, the gift of God through Jesus Christ our Lord; life, upon which no stain of sin shall ever rest, and which death is powerless to touch. Eternal life in the Son who is the life, made the inalienable possession of all who have been born again through the action of the Spirit, and by the incorruptible Word of God which liveth and abideth for ever. Life is always in Scripture evidenced by the knowledge of God, but whilst in the Old Testament this was limited to the knowledge of Jehovah, God Almighty, and in the millennium will be connected with the most high God; the supreme character of life, to which more especially the term eternal life is applied in the New Testament, is the

knowledge of the Father and the Son whom He has sent (John 17. 3).

Consider for a moment the wondrous privileges of such a life which the Son has revealed, a life entirely heavenly in its resources and object. Its relationship, that of sonship in Christ the Son: its home, the Father's house: its joy, the love of God: its occupation, untiring worship: its service, the display of the infinite grace of God: its power, the Spirit of God: its intelligence, the mind of Christ: its object, to bring unending glory to God: its honour, to express the character of Him who is its source: its wisdom, the resources of eternal counsel: its wealth, the riches of the glory of God by Christ Jesus. Such is the character of the life which is hid with Christ in God, imparted now to the believer in the Son, and known by faith and happy experience (1 John 5. 20). Two lines of truth, seen in the ministries of Paul and John, coalesce in these blessings. Paul reveals the workmanship of God in forming a vessel, the church, in which the life will be at the last displayed, and shows its exalted position and union with Christ; whilst John unfolds the life in the character and relationship essential to such a display, and which will result in glory to God through unending ages.

What, then, is the purpose of this eighth sign? Others have pointed out that in the gathering of the fish out of the sea, a foreshadowing is afforded of what God will accomplish by the remnant of Israel in view of the millennial blessing of the Gentiles; but there is also a spiritual significance applicable to the present time. In order to apprehend this, we must

remember that the writings of John are the latest communication given by the Spirit of God in the Scriptures. At the time he wrote the church responsible had left its first love, declined from its separate path, and made shipwreck of faith. But while in this, the dispensation of grace as far as it depended on human responsibility had gone the way of all dispensations, at the same time there was in it the abiding and unalterable principle of divine life, and however much this was obscured in testimony, nevertheless it provided that which God could revive. It is with a view of showing how divine grace triumphs over man's failure, and accomplishes its purpose, that this last sign is given.

Chapter 21. is in two parts: verses 1 to 14 have a collective aspect; from thence to the end is individual. In the first part we have blessing following disappointment, in the second, restoration following failure. Note the persons involved. Simon Peter, the man to whom had been entrusted the keys of the kingdom of heaven, but who had denied his Lord, Thomas, a devoted soul (John 11. 16), but of materialistic thoughts (John 20 25); then Nathanael of Cana, a guileless man and an Israelite, typical of such who form the Israel of God now incorporated in the church; also James, the first of the apostles to seal his testimony by martyrdom; lastly, his brother John, the apostle of love, who was to be the final survivor of the apostolic band, and two others, unnamed. Here we may, in such a combination, discern the moral characteristics needed to be maintained if the church was to be a faithful witness of the heavenly life of her Lord—discipline, devotion, truth, sacrifice, love, faith. At the same time there is an indication of the denial, materialism,

and Judaizing principles which would bring about the disaster. These men had seen the risen Christ, had conversed with Him, and touched Him, and were partakers of the Divine life He had bestowed; but somehow it would appear that these things had ceased to control them, and they turned to the object of material gain, and are found fishing in the sea which, called by its Gentile name, is significant of that forgetfulness of eternal realities and seeking of material gain in the Gentile world, that so soon caused the church to lose its heavenly witness to its absent Lord.

It was night. Children of the day, *fishing in the night*. Was it surprising that in result they caught nothing? Had they so soon forgotten His words, "Without Me ye can do nothing"? Nothing! nothing that God counts anything has marked the earthly-mindedness of those who have forgotten the calling wherewith they were called. But the morning is breaking, the first rays of light are shining on the waves, revealing the disappointed men, the empty nets and boat, and "Jesus stood on the shore." These are His own disciples to whom in no upbraiding voice He addressed His tender inquiry, "Children (lit., boys), have ye any meat?" Sadly enough came their answer, "No," as it comes from many a heart to-day, the confession that though they have laboured it has been in vain, and of the meat that endures to life eternal they are lacking.

"Cast the net on the right side of the ship and ye shall find," and they obeyed His word. In this lay the secret of success and revival; they heard, they obeyed, they found. Through the long dark night they had been following their own devices, now they obey His word. They knew Him not at first, that stranger on the shore,

but something in His words thrilled their hearts and moved them to action, and as they obeyed, they found not only supply but they found Him. John is symbolic of awakened affection, and Peter of action—two qualities which must ever go hand-in-hand, if there is to be soul revival. Then what a reception—He knew they were cold, and His hands had prepared a fire; He knew they were hungry, and there was bread and fish of His own providing, He knew their feelings, their shamefacedness, and He sets them at ease, "Come and dine," and He waited on them. Was ever such tender compassion? And, blessed Master, just as Thou wast yesterday, Thou art the same to-day and for ever; ever seeking to revive the fainting affections of His own, and to recall them to His own sufficiency and the inadequacy of their own efforts.

Then, further, He would recall them to that which His power had wrought, He had filled their net, they had broken down, but not He. The full significance of the great fishes of mystic number may await the day of glory, although its factors may suggest—the will of God perfectly fulfilled $10 + 7$, and divinely sealed 3×3 ; $17 \times 9 = 153$ (cf John 17. 4, 5).

Great is the desire of the Lord, as conveyed in this sign, to recall His own to the attractiveness of His person, that He may have them around Himself as their only Centre; but if He is to have this pleasure, He must first of all work individual restoration, and this is what we have in the second part of the chapter, and the lesson taught therein is a deeply serious one. The Lord turns to Peter to search his heart with the question of love. To all this matter was of deep concern, for they had all forsaken Him in the crisis of His sorrow. "Simon, son of Jonas,"

his name by nature, touching just that natural zeal in which Simon had so trusted, "Lovest thou Me more than these?" The three questions are different in form, the Lord stooping lower and lower as it were, until He finds a point of contact with Peter's heart subdued by the power of grace. "Lovest" (*agape*, the strongest word for love), "thou Me more than these?" Peter once thought he did, and then would not have hesitated to accept the challenge. But now as thoughts of his denial, of his fishing, of the Lord's grace pass through his mind, he seeks to reply by a much weaker word for love, which even so the Lord must discern, "Thou knowest that I am attached (*philo*) to Thee." Lord, Thou hast bound me to Thyself, but what can I say in response to love like Thine? The second time the Lord does not use the comparative "more than," but using again the same word *agape*, asks, "Lovest thou Me?" But again Peter will not advance on the affection of which only the Lord could be conscious. At the third time the Lord takes Peter at his own estimation: "Hast thou affection for Me?" (*philo*) Hast thou even as much as even this weaker word would convey? The grief that filled Peter's heart told that the restoring work was done. The depths of self-confidence had been sounded, and he casts himself upon the Lord's conscious knowledge, as though to say, Lord, if Thou canst not find in me even the least bit of response worthy of Thyself, at least I can rest on the grace of Thy heart and the power of Thy love. "Thou knowest," using for the first time the word for objective knowledge, *ginoskeis*, "that I am attached to Thee."

Is there not in this scene by the lake a message for our own day? Is it not possible that we also may need

a similar searching in respect of the spirit of self-trust into which we have been betrayed? Has "Simon, son of Jonas" nothing to say to us, and may not the question, "Lovest thou Me more than these?" apply to our own case? Comparing ourselves with others we have trusted in our own zeal for His name, we could imagine, yea, thought, that the Lord was not so pleased with others of His saints as with the select company of our choice; evil might be with them, but not with us, for were not we of all people "Holding the Head." But can we dare to speak of our love, our correctness, our zeal, and not rather magnify His grace in attaching us to Himself and with us also the other sheep and lambs of His flock? But what, then, of these others? "Lord, what shall this man do?" Peter's question betrays the root from which all his trouble sprang, he would fain be a keeper of the vineyard of others, but his own vineyard he had not kept. "What is that to thee? Follow thou Me." May the words grip our souls with commanding force. Wouldest thou see a revival, wouldest thou be a true helper of others with thy soul set free from sectarian bias in the largeness of God's purpose for His church? Then follow for thyself thy Lord with single eye, and you shall find the place where He dwells, where He feeds His flock, and causeth them to rest. Because He loves, He rebukes and chastens. He calls to repentance for having kept Him outside so long, while we have been occupied with our own religious zeal. Yet still in spite of all, He would humble us at His feet, in order that He may send us as He sent Peter to fill His own desires.

Peter was now at His disposal; a vessel meet for the Master's use. Was ever such a gracious commission? "Feed My lambs, shepherd My sheep."

They are starving, feed them with the bread which endures to life eternal; scattered they are, gather them to Me; and as you do so remember I have no other place to give you amongst men than that of My own rejection and death. "Follow thou Me." How emphatic are the words, how individual the command, how supreme the behest! "Follow Me," not what others are doing, who, indeed, like John may be already following, but thou thyself, as though all depended on this one thing. Some may find fault, and others condemn, but how little will such things count with him who has heard his Master's word and whose one purpose is to do it! In the Lord's remark concerning John there lies great comfort for these closing days. John abides, not, indeed, in bodily presence, but in his ministry of eternal life, in the Son and in the Father. Around is wreck, ruin, a state which is soon to be judged, on every hand much that professes with the lip, but yields Him no pleasure from the heart. But He abides, the Son, the infinite One that the finite can never contain, making His abode with the man that trembles at His word, manifesting Himself to the man who loves Him by keeping His commandments. Blessed indeed beyond all conception is the grace which in this eighth sign shows us His love triumphing over sin and failure, and at the last hour calling to repentance and obedience and happy service for the sake of His beloved flock.

Beloved reader, may the consideration of these eight signs which the Holy Spirit has recorded in John's Gospel lead to a deeper appreciation of the glories of the Son of God, and a fuller present enjoyment of the life eternal in which the Father is known and glorified through Jesus Christ our Lord.

THE PRECIOUSNESS OF THE SAINTS' DEATH.

(T. OLIVER.)

Summary of a Brief Address at the Burial of an aged Christian woman who succoured many and adorned the doctrine by wearing spiritual ornaments.

Scriptures read : " Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints " (Ps. 116. 15).

" Having loved His own which were in the world, He loved them unto the end " (John 13. 1).

AT such a time the verse read in the Psalms seems difficult to believe, because viewed from the natural standpoint death is cruel, snapping cherished bonds irrespective of class or condition. Death is no respecter of persons. The " saints " are those described as " His own," loved to the end which goes beyond death. " He died for us that whether we wake or sleep we should live together with Him " (1 Thess. 5. 10). Again, " Whilst we are at home in the body we are absent (away from home) from the Lord." Therefore the apostle was willing rather to be absent from the body and to be present (i.e., at home) with the Lord (2 Cor. 5. 6, 8). Thus death to the Christian is the way of being at home with the Lord. The Lord loves us too much to allow us to be too long away from home.

Death ceases to have its cruel sting for the Christian when he or she realizes that love controls and adjusts everything in our lives and in our deaths too. And moreover, when the soul apprehends in some little measure the magnitude of God's victory over death, the prophetic Scripture is endorsed, " Death is swallowed up in victory." Moreover, God gives us the victory in the apprehension of the lordship of Christ (1 Cor. 15. 54-57). As a consequence we become steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, for we know that our labour or toil is not in vain or empty-handed in the Lord.

The apostle would not have the Thessalonian believers to be ignorant or in the dark concerning those who had fallen asleep in Christ, so that they

might not be submerged in hopeless gloom, " for if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so also those who sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him " (1 Thess. 4. 14). An alternative reading puts a helpful construction on the words, viz., " Those who have been put to sleep through Jesus." That is in analogy with the mother putting her child to sleep at night with the confident feeling that the sleep was only of a brief duration. In the morning we shall awake in His likeness, for " when He shall appear we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is " (1 John 3. 2).

Those who are put to sleep through Jesus are not going to lose anything in the day of glory. Indeed in the resurrection they are going to momentarily precede those who are left over in the waking or living condition in view of the coming of the Lord. The Lord Himself will come for His own.

There is nothing more calculated to stimulate our hearts and to encourage us, building us up on our most holy faith, than words such as these.

Those described as saints in this dispensation are those redeemed by the precious blood of Christ. The word translated " saints " in the 116th Psalm is a very peculiar term. Scholars tell us that it means people who have been the objects of the mercy and loving-kindness of God, and if aged then they have experienced a greater portion of that loving-kindness. They are those who are loved all the way to an end which opens out into eternity. If

we are recipients of mercy, then we are permeated by it and thus transmitters of God's love and mercy to others, so that we ought to be known as merciful people, that is, "people full of mercy," which will disestablish all the hardness of spirit which is too often in evidence.

In conclusion we may say a word to those who are not in the description "redeemed by the precious blood of Christ." There is no reason why that descriptive change should not be effected now. Scripture abounds with evidences of the importance of the present moment, e.g., "now is the

day of salvation" (2 Cor. 6. 2). Thus instantaneous conversion is not a fantasy of a visionary, but sober fact. "Bowing the knee to Jesus, believing on His name," is the only way. There is no other name under heaven given amongst men whereby salvation can be secured than the name of Jesus. In saying this we discharge our responsibility, but a grave responsibility rests on the hearer. We take this opportunity of presenting the gospel, because in the ordinary hustle of life men are apt to ignore the fact of the brief duration of human life and the very solemn issues of life and death which hang thereon.

"We know that all things work together for good to them that love God."—Romans 8. 28.

WE are often comforted by the words of others who have experienced the loving-kindness of our God, but if we are to bear witness to it we must experience it for ourselves. An old saint was speaking of God's great goodness so joyously that it seemed as though she had never known a trial. "But have you never had any clouds?" she was asked. "Clouds?" she replied; "Why, of course, else where would all the showers have come from that have refreshed and blest me so." No clouds, no showers; no trials, no refuge; no labour, no "well done." But all is in His hands, who tempers all, balances all, and has nothing but our present and eternal good in view.

"And He said to them, When I sent you without purse and scrip and sandals, did ye lack anything? And they said, Nothing."—Luke 23.

IT seems to me that our Lord would draw us aside at the close of each day and ask us this same question, Have ye lacked anything to-day? And what can we answer? Can we tell Him that He has disappointed us, and not cared for us with the tender care of perfect love? No, we must give the disciples' answer, Nothing.

*"He who hath made our rest secure,
Doth here all good provide."*

If we have had disappointments it is because we sought for some satisfaction outside His will, and such disappointments are blessings, for they drive us from the broken and empty cisterns to Him, the fountain of all good, in whom we have all things and abound.

“MARANATHA.”

(L. R.)

The Lord Cometh.

I Corinthians 16. 22.

THE last verse of the Old Testament refers to the coming of the Lord, and so do the last verses of the New Testament; but with what a difference! Under law there could be no glad anticipation, rather fear, “Lest I come and smite the earth with a curse” (Mal. 4. 6).

But He who spake as never man spake gave this to be the hope of the disciples who sorrowed at His going away, “I am coming again, to receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also” (John 14. 3, New Trans., J. N. D.). Not “lest I come,” not “I will come,” but always “I am coming.” Then in Revelation 22. it is three times repeated, the last time with the affirmation, “SURELY I come quickly”; and the saints respond, “Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus.” And that word, His last to His saints on earth, abides for us to-day, and still His saints answer, “Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus” (Rev. 22. 20).

Yet the long years have passed away, centuries have come and gone, and still He sits at the right hand of God; still the saints labour, sorrow and fall asleep; and in the world there has, perhaps, never been such universal unrest and distress. Is it not time, beloved, that we should ask our hearts, nay, that we should ask Him, “Lord, why is it?”

Many saints doubtless add their “Amen. Even so,” and the hope of His coming is the joy of their hearts, the light that shines above the all-encircling gloom. Who shall tell of the glory to which they are going, or the joy of being for ever with the Lord, or the happiness of a world in which

He reigns, and in which love is the rule?

Very long ago the Psalmist wrote, “The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord, and against His Anointed. . . . Yet have I set My King upon My holy hill of Zion” (Ps. 2. 2, 6). Scripture makes it quite plain that before this prophecy can be fulfilled the Lord will come for His own, bidding them arise to meet Him in the air, and “so shall we ever be with the Lord” (1 Thess. 4. 17). Meantime may we not well inquire whether the Lord has some purpose of His love to be fulfilled in us, some purpose of love towards a ruined world? At His first coming a messenger had been sent to prepare His way; now that His second coming seems so imminent, and ere the day of grace closes, has He need of messengers again who in a special sense shall announce His advent? The saints who look for Him, who desire to occupy till He come, must also desire above all to be in present, abiding communion with Him, so that nothing matters except to learn from Him what He would do by His Spirit in and through them. Some Christians are deeply engaged with the questions of the day, but “the Lord cometh.” If He came to-day these things would count for less than nothing. Do we desire His coming enough to yield ourselves afresh to Him that His will may be done in and through us?

We take the Holy Supper week by week, perhaps; the Supper of Remembrance indeed, but also the pledge of His coming again, “for as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye

do show the Lord's death till He come " (1 Cor. II. 26).

It may be asked, is it really so urgent? Gregory, who lived in the fourth century, thought that things were so bad then that the Lord would come; and Luther said his times were so evil he did not see how the world could go on much longer. Nearer our own day, less than a hundred years ago, the Lord's personal coming for His people was proclaimed with such power that many were awakened to look for Him. One memorable morning the expectation so filled the hearts of those who had assembled to break bread in remembrance of Him that no one thought of going out into the world again, they sat rapt in the realization of His nearness. Yet He came not; and the daily tasks had all to be taken up again. Why, then, be so urgent about it now? Because all the signs of the times, all the foreshadowings of the end point to it. In past years some signs seemed evident; to-day it would seem that none are wanting. We see a widespread and growing apostasy, a stirring of national feeling among the Jews, godlessness and love of pleasure, and the casting off of all restraint and authority. More than all, the quickening of the hope in the hearts of the people of God bids us humbly trust that indeed the Spirit and the Bride are saying, Come (Rev. 22. 17). We do not, it is true, look for "signs" of the Lord's coming for His saints, but when the heralds of His coming to reign cry aloud, we may well rejoice with the joy of those who shall first be with Him.

Do we sufficiently consider that the Lord awaits that day? Not until then shall He see of the travail of His soul and be satisfied; not until then shall His deep love for His own flow out to them unhindered; not until then shall

His prayer be answered, "Father, I will that they also, whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am" (John xvii. 24).

We recall the Genesis narrative of a well-beloved son, heir to his father's wealth, whose tent was empty because the bride his father had chosen for him was not come to it. We see him in the field at even, lifting up his eyes to the distant horizon for the first sight of her, and then, "Behold, the camels were coming" and "she lighted off the camel," and when the servant had told her, "It is my master, she took a veil and covered herself," and Isaac brought her into his tent and loved her (Gen. 24. 63-67).

No one, surely, has ever read this unmoved, and yet how far surpassing is the joy of the heavenly Bridegroom, the Eternal Lover of our souls, in the Bride He has purchased at such untold cost.

"Love that no tongue can teach,
Love that no thought can reach,
No love like His."

Do we remember that this earth is the Lord's inheritance? We read in Psalm 2. 8, "Ask of Me, and I shall give Thee the heathen for Thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for Thy possession"; and in Hebrews 1. 2, "Whom He hath appointed heir of all things." True, men cast the Heir out of His inheritance, saying, We will not have this man to reign over us; but is it nothing to Him to behold His inheritance as it is to-day? Think of the heavy burden of unemployment lying on so many countries; think that in China hundreds of thousands are dying of starvation, or being slain by the sword; war, famine and pestilence each exacting their toll of misery; think of the upheaval in India, of the sorrows that threaten the great multitudes of patient

toilers there, and how easily the preaching of the gospel of the glory of Christ could be forbidden; think of the inarticulate, suffering millions in Russia, starved and degraded, denied the worship of God and the possession of the Bible; think of the heathen in their darkness, enslaved by the dominion of the prince of this world; and all this in our Lord's inheritance! All

this going on under His eye! All this waiting to be righted at His coming!

The Lord grant us grace to be deeply moved, to enter a little more into His love, His boundless compassion, that the urge of all these things may be in our spirit, so that we rest not until we better know HIS MIND FOR THE MOMENT, and then order all our ways accordingly.

THE MYSTERY OF GODLINESS.

"And confessedly great is the mystery of godliness: He who was manifested in flesh, was justified in Spirit, appeared unto angels, was preached among Gentiles, was believed on in the world, was received up in glory."—1 Timothy iii. 16.

THE [introductory clause is most instructive as well as impressive. "Mystery" means a truth once secret but now fully divulged, never a sacrament. The secret (now revealed) of piety or godliness is the truth of Christ. He is the source, power and pattern of what is practically acceptable to God—His person as now made known. True life is living by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me. To look on Him, or for Him as a Jew once might in faith, is not enough. Here He stands revealed in the great essential lineaments of the truth. The church lives, moves, and has its being in presenting Him thus to every eye and heart. Men may disbelieve or gainsay to their own destruction; but to present the truth of Christ is, we may say, *the* reason of the church's existence.

Some doubtless will cry out as if "He who," as in the Revised Version, grievously displaces "God," as in the Authorized Version, which follows editions formed on the more modern copies. But weigh well the better attested reading, and you may soon happily learn how much more exact is the relative in this connection, as it also really supposes the selfsame truth in the background. For where would

be even the sense of saying that Adam or Abraham, that David, Isaiah or Daniel, or that any other human being, "was manifest in flesh"? An angelic creature so manifested would be revolting for the end in view, and could no more avail than a man. If only a man, no other way than "flesh" was open to him; the mightiest "hunter before the Lord," the subtlest wit, the most consummate orator, or poet, or warrior, or statesman, "he also is flesh" no less than the least one born of woman. Not so the one Mediator between God and men; for though He deigned to become man, He was intrinsically and eternally divine. But for the counsels and way of grace, He might conceivably have come as He pleased, in His own glory, or in His Father's, or in that of the holy angels, without emptying and humbling Himself to incarnation and atonement. Here the opening and immeasurable wonder of the truth is the glory of Him who was born of the virgin and thus manifested in flesh. So in the kindred passage of John 1. it is written, "The Word became flesh," where it had been carefully laid down before that "the Word was God," as well as "with God," in the beginning before He made anything in the universe created by Him. W. K.

THE EPHESIAN EPISTLE.

(JAMES BOYD)

Chapter 4.

NOT in every epistle—may I not say, not in any other part of God's Holy Word?—are the eternal counsels and purposes of love revealed before our adoring hearts in the same fulness as they are in this epistle to the assembly at Ephesus. In Romans we have the compassions of God let loose for the deliverance of the slaves of sin from its cruel bondage, in order that being made free they might be able to yield themselves to His delightful service. The first epistle to the Corinthians sets before us the order of the house of God on earth, regulating our conduct in connection with its sacred character. The second epistle is mainly occupied with the encouragements and consolations of God, and with the power of life in the risen Christ, with the effect of this upon the apostle himself in the tribulations which he endured in the service of the glad tidings. In Galatians we have the folly and loss eternal to those who would allow themselves to be enticed from Christ to the old covenant. And along with this the blessedness of the principle of faith, which involves sonship and eternal inheritance. In Colossians we have the hope laid up for the saints in heaven, along with the fulness that resides for them in their exalted Head. As for Philippians, while it sets forth true Christian experience while on the way to heaven, it is an epistle that specially stimulates our spiritual energy to press on to reach the prize, the heavenly calling of God in Christ Jesus. It is full of the affections of the writer, and in their affection for him he most touchingly confides. He speaks with joy of their fellowship with the gospel, and he lets them know for their comfort that it was well known in the palace and other

places, that he was in prison, not because he was "a pestilent fellow" or "a breeder of sedition," but that he was there on account of his testimony for Christ. In Thessalonians he is occupied mainly with the rapture of the saints, and the day of the Lord. But not in any of these epistles does he unfold the eternal counsel of love. For this we have to get back to Ephesians.

Chapter 4. is a continuance of what we have looked at in chapter 2, that is, at the close of that chapter where we have the calling wherewith we are called set before us, of which we are to walk worthy. And in order to walk worthy the requisite state of soul is plainly set before us, and the moral characteristics are those that were gracefully manifested in the life of Jesus here upon earth—lowliness and meekness, long-suffering, bearing with one another in love, using diligence by the exhibition of these moral qualities to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. Three circles of this unity are set before us: "There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all." How contrary to all this the state of Christendom is! Instead of there being only one body, the bodies in that which professes the name of Christ are uncountable. The Spirits also seem to be innumerable, and everyone seems to have a hope of his own.

But the Scripture here is not telling us what should be, but what is. There is one body, and that body is of Christ. It cannot be in any way altered. In whatever state the profession of Christ

may be found this is ever true. It is just as true now, and as unalterable, as it shall be when we are all glorified. What then may we do? Manifest it in its true character; let it be manifested as one. This necessitates our putting on the beautiful characteristics of Christ. And this, alas, we have failed, and do fail, to do.

Then we have that which is just as true as the fact that there is but one body and one Spirit; that is, that there is one Lord, one faith, one baptism. But as to this, the testimony is just as false. The Lordship of Christ, the faith, and the import of baptism are, as far as the testimony of Christendom is concerned, as false as is anything else. And as to the third unity the witness to it is also false and corrupt. God is above all omnipresent, and in all true believers. It may be admitted that He is above all, but that He is omnipresent and in believers is denied or ignored.

But these moral qualities that were seen in Christ can only be adopted by each of us individually. Therefore we each may even in the present corrupt state of this profession maintain a true testimony to our absent Saviour and Lord. We have by grace His life and nature, and if we keep the flesh in the place of death, which is its proper place, those beautiful lineaments will be displayed. He has said: "Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest unto your souls" (Matt. 11. 29).

And surely His longsuffering was severely put to the test. Though here on earth in lowly grace for the salvation of sinners, He had to endure their contradiction against Himself. And oh, how patiently that contradiction was borne! When reviled He reviled not again, and when He suffered He

threatened not, but committed Himself to Him who judges righteously.

And as to "forbearing one another in love." Bearing with one another may test us greatly, but love can do it. It is said of it that it beareth all things (1 Cor. 13. 7). Indeed, bearing with one another is in a sense not only a duty but a privilege, gladly taken up when we realize that we are children of the one family of God, and that we are members together of the one body of Christ. No closer or sweeter relationship could be formed. Peter says, "Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently" (1 Pet. 1. 22).

Let us see that love is the ruling principle with us all. Some may reply to this, saying, We must be careful to maintain righteousness. But you cannot have righteousness without love. Righteousness is an attribute. Love is nature. God is love. He is never said to be righteousness. In the place where divine love reigns, righteousness shall be maintained. Anyhow, in God's universe love does rule, for the supreme ruler is God, and He is love. Even natural affection, if not governed by the holy love of God, cannot be anything but corrupt. Even brotherly love among the children of God has to be safeguarded by the love that is incorruptible, the love that is of God. Where this love rules, righteousness, holiness, grace and peace will not be absent; and the unity of the Spirit shall be maintained in a practical way. But where love is not in activity it is all disintegration, and everything seems as though there were a host of spirits animating their respective systems or bodies.

There is, however, but one Spirit and one body in true Christianity. The

body that of Christ ; and the Spirit, the Holy Spirit of God, the one Spirit who forms the one body : " For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body " (1 Cor. 12. 13), and this the one body of Christ universal. A member of that one body is every soul sealed by the Holy Spirit of God. And every soul is sealed who has believed the gospel.

To-day I see but little testimony to this anywhere. Everything seems to be in a fragmentary condition. Some take the ground of being gathered in the truth of that body, and that with myriads of saints in rejection by them. Whatever they may verbally declare, their practical ways proclaim the secret of their pride of heart, refusing all who cannot see eye to eye with them in their limitations and extravagances. They may mean well ; but I have nothing to do with that ; I have to do with people's actions. God only knows the heart.

There is one body and one Spirit, and also one hope of our calling. One bright prospect is before us all ; and that is, to be with Christ where He is, and to be like Him as He is. Where He is we shall be. What a glorious prospect ! What a joy it will be to be with Him, to be ever in the atmosphere of that love that surpasses knowledge ! And oh, to think that every one of us in that vast company of ransomed and glorified saints shall be able to say with hearts overflowing with gratitude and thanksgiving, " HE LOVED ME, AND GAVE HIMSELF FOR ME " !

How marvellously captivating is all this to our renewed minds and hearts !

But to find those who are members of one body, and that the body of Christ, at variance with one another, and speaking evil of one another—what an evidence of the allowance of some foreign element belonging to the flesh, that disturbs and upsets our whole nervous system, and paralyses all our spiritual energy !

And to find those who are indwelt by one Spirit maintaining divergent views on questions not at all vital, and pressing them in such a way as to rend the saints practically asunder, and put them into little cliques and parties, each little company with a brazen wall around itself, in order to prevent fellowship with saints of God from surrounding gatherings not with them, is a certain evidence that the voice of the Spirit has unhappily fallen upon deaf ears, and that their own vain notions are preferred to the Word of God. Yet such is the state of the profession of Christ in this present day. How grieving it is to the Holy Spirit, and dishonouring to the Lord !

" One Lord, one faith, one baptism." Here a wider circle comes up before our vision, not all in vital relationship with Christ. " Not every one that saith unto Me, Lord, Lord, shall enter the kingdom of heaven " (Matt. 7. 21-23). And the next circle is still wider. The Father is only in believers, but He is over all in the universe and everywhere present.

MAN has been the victim of two opposite but corrupt and misleading tendencies—a disposition to personify or make a god of anything in nature, which is Polytheism ; or to ignore personality altogether, and identify God and nature, which is Pantheism. Both are idolatrous, or perversions of the religious instinct, one being the idolatry of untutored paganism, the other that of an over-refining, philosophizing intellectualism. The Hebrew faith in the living God is the chief historic witness against the one. The Christian faith of the revelation of God in Jesus Christ is the adequate and abiding bulwark against the other.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

The Father and the Son raising up the Dead.

Who are the dead that the Father raises up, and who are they that the Son raises (John 5 21)?
—BAHAMAS.

WE must not suppose that this word of the Lord's teaches that the Father raises up and quickens some and the Son others, as though They acted independently of each other in giving life and blessing to souls. It does nothing of the sort. It teaches that the Son is co-equal with and one with the Father as the source of life, and the Giver of it to men. The words are in answer to the hatred of the Jews who persecuted the Lord for healing the impotent man on the sabbath day. He shows that His activities of grace were really the Father's activities. There was no clash or discord between Himself and the Father, and no independence of the Father on His part. They were one in these works of grace as in all else. The Son had become man to show to men the Father, and He did this by doing the Father's works in absolute dependence upon the Father, and receiving all direction from Him,

and yet He was co-equal with Him as the source of life. By becoming man He had come within the reach of the malice of men, and they were quick to seize upon opportunities to dishonour Him, and the Father knew and noted this, and because of this He has committed all judgment to the Son, that all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. If the whole passage is considered it will be seen that there are interwoven in it the co-equality of the Son with the Father, His oneness with the Father when on earth as representing the Father before men in works of grace; the Father's delight in Him and His intention that all should honour Him, as was only His right, since He is co-equal in Deity with the Father; His present power to quicken and raise up the spiritually dead, and His authority for the final judgment of all whether dead or alive.

The Tongues Movement.

"What do you think of the Tongues Movement? Why should not spiritual gifts, as well as graces, be now in exercise in the church as they were in apostolic days? Does the church honour the Holy Spirit by neglecting His gifts rendered as He will?"—FROM A BRAILLE LETTER

THE gift of tongues was one of the gifts given by the Holy Spirit at the beginning of the history of the kingdom of God on earth. It showed that the Holy Spirit was above all the limitations and boundaries that had been imposed upon men because of their presumptuous folly at Babel (Gen 11), and that national distinctions, as between Jew and Gentile, for instance, were no longer a feature of God's dealings with men. The gospel which was preached by the Holy Spirit through His servants was to gather

out of every people, tongue, kindred and nation a people for His name. This was such a new thing, and so startling to the Jew, that this startling gift seemed necessary to confirm and emphasize it. And we can see its value when, as on the day of Pentecost, a vast crowd from almost every part of the earth heard in their own tongues the wonderful works of God. The disciples of the Lord had to bear witness to the uttermost parts of the earth, and the gift of tongues was part of their endowment, to enable them to

carry out this commission. In those days the Holy Spirit was unquenched and unfettered and was able to equip fully those who went to men of other tongues, to speak to them, and the Apostle Paul, who was the greatest evangelist of them all, spoke with tongues more than them all (1 Cor. 14. 18); but we may be sure he knew what he was talking about.

Now the time came when this spectacular gift was greatly abused. In order to attract attention to themselves, the most carnal in the carnal Corinthian Assembly used it for their own distinction, thinking nothing of the edification of the assembly, and they brought the proceedings thereby into ridicule and confusion. Because of this the apostle, inspired by the Holy Spirit, devotes almost one entire chapter (1 Cor. 14) to the regulation of those who had this gift. And if those who profess to have it now are subject to these commandments, we do not see that anyone could find fault, however much their profession to have the gift might be doubted. First, it was the poorest of all gifts, as to its value. "In the church I would rather speak five words with my understanding than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue" (verse 19), says the apostle, and "greater is he that prophesieth (that is, speaketh to edification) than he that speaketh with tongues" (verse 5). Second, if they spoke with a tongue, they spoke "into the air," and no one was in anywise benefited, unless there was an interpreter (verse 9). Third, in using the gift as they were doing, they were acting like children fascinated by a new toy and the sound it made, instead of like sober, spiritual men (verse 20). Fourth, they were causing the unbelievers who might come into their assemblies to mock at them, and so were doing them an injury when they might have brought

them face to face with God. Fifth, the tongues were a sign to the unbelievers, i. e., God would speak to them in their own tongues, that hearing they might believe (verses 21, 22). Sixth, if there was no interpreter the one who spoke in the tongue had to keep silent and speak within himself and to God (verses 27, 28). After the Word was widely spread, this gift, along with that of healing, fell into disuse; it had become unnecessary, and was evidently a bane and not a help, because of the unspiritual character of those that used it. We have no hint in Scripture that it would be revived again at the end of the dispensation, in which we now are, but the graces of Christ which will commend Him to others if manifested in the lives of Christians: these we should look for until He comes.

The chapter we have quoted from puts the edification of the saints of God in the highest place. All things that were done in the assembly had to be done with this object in view (verse 26), and those who could not contribute to this had to be silent.

The spirits of the prophet had to be subject to the prophets (verse 32), and this does not seem to be the case with those who profess now to speak with tongues, they confess that they cannot control themselves; and the women had to be silent in the church (verse 34), and it is chiefly women we understand who claim now to have this gift. Subjection to these important "commandments of the Lord" (verse 37) would regulate these things now as then.

Note, the chapter contains THE COMMANDMENTS OF THE LORD and, as far as we can ascertain, in this modern movement the Lord is not addressed or spoken of as Lord, but as Jesus. Those who speak according to and under the direction of the Holy

Spirit will address Him as Lord (chapter 12. 3).

Within the last century there have often been manifestations of this alleged speaking with tongues, and some of those who have afterwards been delivered from the influence of them have confessed that they were not the mouthpiece of the Holy Spirit

but of some other spirit. It is easy to be deceived by these movements that are not of God, for "Satan transforms himself into an angel of light." Our safety lies *in subjection to the Lord* and the knowledge of His Word, and purpose of heart to seek the edification and peace of the saints of God, and fear of anything that would make us prominent instead of Christ.

THE GREATEST ENEMY.

[I]t is Gibbon, the historian, who tells what the effect upon Clovis, the invincible King of the Franks, was, when first he heard the story of the sufferings and death of the Lord Jesus. He was deeply moved, and, fierce soldier though he was, he could not restrain his tears. Suddenly he grasped his sword hilt and exclaimed, "Ah, had I but been there with my Franks." They were generous and ingenuous words, the words of a soldier and a man of violent deeds, and he had not yet learned the spirit of the Lord, whose name he afterwards confessed, yet they were beautiful words, in spite of their ignorance. They remind us of

the way that Simon Peter acted in the garden. But both Clovis and Simon were wrong; the true and intelligent followers of the rejected Saviour do not smite His foes with the sword; they pray for them and pity them as He did, yet they may use the sword, but it must be upon an often unsuspected and more subtle enemy, and that enemy is self. It is self that often stands between us and the glory of our God; it is self that often obtrudes when none but Christ should be seen. Self is the enemy, the great rival to Christ, and we may rightly use the sword upon self.

Faith.

FAITH—that most precious, priceless, divinely-wrought principle, positively delights in being called to lean absolutely and abidingly upon the living God. But it must be the real thing. It is of little use talking about faith if the heart be a stranger to its power. Mere profession is perfectly worthless. God deals in moral realities. "What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he have faith?" He does not say, "What doth it profit though a man *have* faith?" Blessed be God, those who, through grace, have it, know that it profits much every way. *It glorifies God* as nothing

else can do. *It lifts the soul* above the depressing influences of things seen and temporal. *It tranquillizes the spirit* in a most blessed manner. *It enlarges the heart*, by leading us out of our own narrow circle of personal interests, sympathies, cares and burdens, and connecting us livingly with the eternal, exhaustless spring of goodness. *It works by love*, and draws us out in gracious activity towards every object of need, but specially towards those who are of the household of faith. It is faith alone that can move along the path where Jesus leads.

“TO THE SON HE SAITH.”

(J. T. MAWSON.)

Hebrews 1.

THERE seems to [be a beautiful order in the quotations from the Old Testament that are given in Hebrews 1 concerning our Lord Jesus Christ. They are well-set gems, as we should expect them to be as we consider Him who is their theme. Verse 5 gives us two, and shows us by its twofold testimony that He is the Son. If we might say so, the first word that came forth from the Father's mouth when Jesus was born into this world was that He was the Father's Son. He was always the Son, and the fact that He became flesh did not annul this relationship of changeless and eternal affection. **HE IS THE OBJECT OF THE FATHER'S LOVE.**

The next quotation, in verse 6, shows the Father's determination that even though He had become man, He should not have less honour than He had before. The angels must worship Him. The second word from God's mouth, as His beloved Son lay in the manger, tended by His Virgin mother, declared His unchangeable Deity. He was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, yet He was and is always above them. **HE IS THE OBJECT OF THE ANGELS' WORSHIP.**

The third quotation (verse 8) declares Him to be supreme in God's far-stretching realm, and in this supremacy He shall uphold the righteousness of God, as once He maintained it in His own life in the flesh amid surging tides of iniquity. He is God upon an everlasting throne, and yet Man, anointed with the oil of gladness above His companions. These shall surround His throne, rejoice in His joy and bask in His favour; they shall hear His wisdom and see His glory. Once they were sinners, but saved by grace they

are now His brethren, sanctified by Him and one with Him, but He is always above them, the Firstborn among His brethren, and their God, who will hold the sceptre of righteousness for their eternal good. **HE IS THE OBJECT OF THE ADMIRATION AND WORSHIP OF ALL THE REDEEMED.**

The next quotation (verse 10) declares Him to be the Creator who made the earth and the heavens, that in them He might bring into full manifestation what God is in His righteousness as opposed to all iniquity, and when these works of His hands have fulfilled their purpose, He will set them aside as one would a disused garment, and establish a new creation in which righteousness shall dwell, but in that new creation He will be the same; as He was and is, so shall He ever be, the pledge that His word shall stand and that every thought of the heart of God that has been expressed in blessing shall abide. He is the unchanging One, and so **THE OBJECT OF THE UNWAVERING TRUST OF A UNIVERSE THAT SHALL BE BROUGHT INTO BLESSING BY HIM.**

Then finally (verse 13) every foe that would resist Him—and how evil must all those be that would resist Him, who was God manifest in the flesh, full of grace and truth—will be silenced and crushed beneath His feet for ever, for no discordant voice must be heard in that world to come in which everything that hath breath will praise the Lord. He must be supreme Ruler, but also the great Leader of the loud Hallelujahs, as He is the cause and the theme of them. **HE WILL BE THE OBJECT OF UNIVERSAL AND HARMONIOUS PRAISE.**

"THE GRACE OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST."

(W. BRAMWELL DICK.)

"For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though HE WAS RICH, yet for your sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty might be rich."—2 Corinthians 8. 9.

I.—"HE WAS RICH."

WHAT a sparkling gem is this! We find it where perhaps we should be least likely to look for it; though as we read the chapter we can well understand why the divine Author should use this mighty lever in seeking to encourage the believers at Corinth to a practical expression of love and fellowship. We propose, however, to take this magnificent verse as it stands, and, with our Editor's kind permission, to invite our readers to consider with us (1) Christ's riches; (2) Christ's poverty; (3) Our riches; and, finally, Christ's grace. Let us then in the first instance think of those three words,

"HE WAS RICH."

Who was rich? "Our Lord Jesus Christ." When was He rich? Obviously, before He became poor; in other Words, before he came into Manhood. We must therefore travel back to where He was, and consider who and what He was prior to His incarnation. In doing so we desire to remember that we are thinking of the greatest person in the Universe. His majesty, His greatness, His holiness, may well fill us with awe. Only so far are we permitted to travel, and then we seem to hear a Voice of indisputable authority saying,

"THUS FAR AND NO FURTHER."

Our safety will be in adhering closely to the statements of the Holy Scriptures; and in praying to be saved from the vain imagining of our own treacherous minds.

Let us turn to that familiar portion in Proverbs 8. There can be no question that He who speaks under the

name of "Wisdom" is "Our Lord Jesus Christ." What does He say? "Riches and honour are with Me; resplendent wealth and righteousness," Verse 18. (see New Trans., footnote). We must reproduce verses 22-31 as given in J. N. Darby's excellent translation.

"Jehovah possessed me in the beginning of his way, before his works of old. I was set up from eternity, from the beginning, before the earth was. When there were no depths, I was brought forth, when there was no fountains abounding with water. Before the mountains were settled, before the hills was I brought forth; while as yet He had not made the earth, nor the fields nor the beginning of the dust of the world.

"When He prepared the heaven I was there; when He ordained the circle upon the face of the deep; when He established the skies above, when the fountains of the deep became strong; when He imposed on the sea His decree that the waters should not pass His commandment, when He appointed the foundations of the earth: then I was by Him (His) nursling, and I was daily His delight, rejoicing always before Him; rejoicing in the habitable parts of His earth, and my delights (were) with the sons of men."

We note that He ("Our Lord Jesus Christ") says, "I was set up from eternity, from the beginning, before the earth was" (verse 23). "Then I was by Him (His) Nursling," i.e., "the Nursling of His love"; it might also be "His Artificer." Why not both?

(verse 30). Who *could* thus be other than God the Son? "*He was rich.*"

In Isaiah 9. 6 where His incarnation and His future sitting upon the throne of David are foretold, we read, "His Name is called Wonderful, Counsellor, *Mighty God, Father of Eternity, Prince of Peace.*" Of whom could this be said but God the Son? "*He was rich.*" In our first introduction to Him in the New Testament He is set forth by His lovely Name *JESUS*, which means "Jehovah the Saviour." So that He who became Man was God the Son. *He was rich.* But yet again in Matthew 1 we read, "They shall call His name Emmanuel, which is, being interpreted, '*GOD WITH US*'" (verse 23). That lowly babe was He who ever was, as He now is and ever shall be

THE ETERNAL SON OF THE ETERNAL GOD.

O my soul, prostrate thyself before Him whose greatness thou canst never know, but in whose presence thou mayest worship and adore!

We give ear to His own words as recorded in Matthew 11. 27, "*No one knows the Son but the Father.*" Here is an unqualified statement that came from His own lips. There is abundant evidence that as Man, as Son of God in incarnation, He *is* known; therein lies the very essence of Christianity; but as the One Who is, who was, who ever shall be, "*THE SON,*" there is that which we do not, can not, and never shall know.

"The higher mysteries of Thy fame
The creatures grasp transcend;
The Father only Thy blest name
Of SON can comprehend."

"*He was rich.*" The Gospel according to John is essentially

THE GOSPEL OF THE ETERNAL SON.

Chapter 1: "The Word" who was

"in the beginning with God" and who "was God." "The only begotten Son, who *is* in the bosom of the Father." Observe in chapter 5 how often between verses 19 and 27 "our Lord Jesus Christ" spoke of Himself as "*THE SON.*" It was as man that He spoke, and it was of Himself as man taking the place of subjection to the Father, that He showed how the Father acted through Him, and of that which He had conferred upon Him; but the object was "That all may honour *THE SON*, even as they honour the Father": for "He who honours not *THE SON*, honours not the Father who has sent Him" (verse 23).

Who but *THE ETERNAL SON* could speak of Himself as the "*I AM*"?

"*I AM* the bread of life" (6. 48).

"*I AM* the light of the world" (8. 12).

"Before Abraham was *I AM*" (8. 58).

"*I AM* the door" (10. 7, 9).

"*I AM* the good Shepherd" (10. 11, 14).

"*I AM* the resurrection and the life" (11. 25).

"*I AM* the way, the truth, and the life" (14. 6).

"*I AM* the true Vine" (15. 1).

"*I AM*" (18. 5, 8).

"*He was rich.*" In that portion of indescribable preciousness to which we shall have occasion to refer again, God willing, Philippians 2. 5, 6, we read that "Christ Jesus . . . subsisting in the form of God, did not esteem it an object of rapine to be on an equality with God." That refers to the past eternal ages when "*He was rich.*"

Himself God in the eternity of His Being; with God before time began; "His Nursling," "His Artificer." "*He was rich.*" Now read Colossians 1. 16, 17. "By Him were created all things, the things in the heavens and the things upon the earth, the visible and the invisible, whether thrones, or lordships, or principalities, or authorities: all things have been created by Him and for Him. And *HE IS BEFORE ALL*, and all things subsist together by Him."

All this could be true only of Him who is the Eternal Son. In closing we cite the well-known Scripture, Hebrews 1. We make no apology for quoting it *in extenso*, and we venture to add an illuminating note from the New Translation from which we have transcribed all the Scriptures referred to in this paper.

"GOD having spoken in many parts and in many ways formerly to the fathers in the prophets, at the end of these days has spoken to us in [the person of the] SON . . . by whom also He made the worlds . . . the effulgence of His glory and the expression of His substance" (verses 1-3).

Here we append the note as to the term SON, and to which we ask our readers' earnest attention.

"The absence of the article here is important, though difficult to render in English; the result is, that God, speaking in *the* prophets, is clearly distinct, and using them as His mouth. *ἐν υἱῷ*, literally 'in Son' is not exactly 'as Son,' because that would be the character of the speaking, yet is perhaps the nearest to an adequate expression. . . . It is God Himself who speaks; not by another; not as the Father nor in the Person of the Father; not merely the Holy Ghost using a person

not divine, but *as Himself a divine Person, and that Person THE SON.*"

We might go through the New Testament, Gospels and Epistles alike, and we would find this fact fully established. Surrender this supreme fact and we hand over to the enemy the key of the citadel. It is not surprising that Satan should make this the special object of his attack, and should get his agents to endeavour "by good words and fair speeches to deceive the hearts of the simple." Full well he knows that if only that were abandoned everything else would be easy; and the ultimate collapse of Christianity would be inevitable. It may be we scarce realize how he is putting forth every effort to secure this. In theological halls and from popular pulpits, the eternal Sonship of Christ is openly denied. By various seemingly religious communities the world is being flooded with literature which while protesting loyalty to the Word of God refuses that which is the central fact thereof. Among those who have ever been credited with unswerving devotedness to the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, the subtle foe might seek to get an entrance, that he might rob them of that of which they have read, and written, and spoken, and sung, and in which their souls have found inconceivable delight. Brethren! Let us buckle on our armour! Let us pray that we may be preserved; that we may be enabled to maintain the priceless truth intact; that we may find in the Second Epistle of John divine guidance as to our relation to those who would assail it; and that we may be enabled to contemplate with increased and ever increasing joy the glory of Him of whom we have read that

"*HE WAS RICH.*"

(To be continued, D.V.)

THE LOVE OF CHRIST.

LIKE a spring tide¹ the love of Christ rose to its full height at the cross, but from that height it will never ebb: it is a tidal wave, as full to-day as ever. It is eternal and unchanging; the cross expressed His love in its fulness, and His love abides, for having loved His own which were in the world, He loves them to the end.

We may change, and He may be compelled to reproach us for having left our first love, but He never leaves His first love—that knows no variation, it is the one affection that is unalterable. It may suffer, and suffer long, but it is kind; it may have to rebuke its object, but it earnestly remembers Him still. His love is unaffected by our neglect, though feeling that neglect deeply.

Say to yourself, "The Son of God loved me—ME! Ah, here is the wonder of it: there was not a single thing in me to draw out His love, and yet He has loved me with a love so devoted that He emptied Himself to enrich me, He died to possess me."

Perhaps some backslider says, "I

have forfeited His love because of my unfaithfulness." Ask Peter if his defection changed Christ's affection. He will answer, "No. My failure made me miserable, as I well deserved to be, but He looked upon me in tender pity, He probed my heart and showed me the secret and spring of my sin; He forgave me and showed me that His love had not altered; and He restored to me the joy I had lost, refined and made fuller, and—wonder of wonders—when I could not trust myself, He trusted me with the dearest objects of His heart, the lambs and sheep of His flock."

He has set His heart upon you. You are indispensable to His happiness. He counted no cost too great. He gave Himself for you.

The love of Christ! Who can set it forth? It is a love that passeth knowledge, and yet we are to know it. Yesterday it was expressed at the cross; to-day it is expressed from the glory. Told out in death, it abides in life, and will continue for ever and ever.

LOST AND FOUND.

A CORRESPONDENT points out that in the wonderful fifteenth chapter of Luke the opposite to "lost" is not "saved," but "found." The Shepherd says, "I HAVE FOUND my sheep which was lost." The woman says, "I HAVE FOUND the piece which I had lost." The Father says, "THIS MY SON was dead and is alive again, he was lost and IS FOUND." If the Lord had used the word "saved" instead of "found" our thoughts would have been concentrated on the sheep, the piece of silver, and the son; but He used the word "found," and that concentrates the thoughts on the Finders. "I have found," "I have found," "My son . . . is found," shows the joy that has come to the Finders. That that they valued was lost. They were the gainers when they found that which was of such value to them. Of course the sheep and silver and son were saved, that goes without saying, but this is greater. The Triune God rejoices; the Godhead can say, "I have found" when one sinner repenteth.

THE TESTIMONY OF OUR LORD.

(A. J. ATKINS.)

2 Timothy.

(Concluded.)

YES, it is faithful men that are needed in the last days contemplated in this epistle. Not that there was ever a time when faithfulness was not required in God's saints and servants, but it assumes outstanding importance when departure has set in, and there is strong temptation to lose heart or to turn aside. It is of interest in this connection to remark that the names of a number of such men are brought to our notice in this letter, among others: Timothy (worshipping God), Luke (luminous), Mark (shining), Tychicus, Carpus (fruitful), Aquila (eagle), Onesiphorus (who brings profit), Erastus (beloved), Trophimus, Eubulus (prudent). How much we may rightly gather from the significance of their names (some of them are suggestive), may be a matter of opinion; but we may certainly regard these men as setting forth in their lives different aspects of Christian faithfulness. Nor must we overlook sisters Eunice, Lois, Prisca and Claudia. How much God's testimony owes to faithful women!

Certain things we notice Timothy was to be: (1) Be not ashamed of the testimony of our Lord; (2) Be partaker of the afflictions of the gospel; (3) Be strong in the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ; (4) Be a vessel unto honour, sanctified and ready for use; (5) Be gentle and patient; (6) Be perfect ("*artios*," "complete in the adaptation of parts and aptitude for use"); (7) Be wary. That is to say, the faithful man is to be—by grace—courageous, enduring, strong, sanctified, gentle, resourceful and ready, and cautious. Only the knowledge of Him who "abideth faithful" can produce these qualities and blend them in a disciplined Christian character.

The development and maintenance of Christian character is, however, not the *end* in view, it is a means to it. Faithfulness subjectively inwrought in the man of God stands in reference to an objective reality—the *truth*. The testimony relates itself objectively to the truth, on which it depends; and subjectively to the vessel formed and fitted by grace to be its exponent. The truth is set forth in the faith, and the mystery of the faith is to be held inviolate at all costs. The chief concern of men of God in that day, as in this day, must be to "keep by the Holy Ghost which dwelleth in us, *the good thing* committed unto us" (1. 14). What is this good deposit? Surely it is the "faith once for all delivered to the saints" (Jude 3. R.V.). It is *the truth*. Where is this to be found? In the *word of truth*, the Holy Scriptures, inspired, profitable and complete (3. 14-17). Further, in and from these precious writings is to be obtained "a form," an outline of sound words, which (words) Timothy had heard of Paul (1. 13). We have them in his epistles. The truth is not to be hazily held and vaguely transmitted—there needs to be *an outline*, something clear and definite. Theology has doubtless often gone astray, and man's mind working in God's things has fallen into grievous error but, for all that, we must have doctrine. It is like the bony framework of the body, absolutely necessary to vertebrate life. When people decry "doctrine" we have good cause to wonder if their faith has much depth. Much of the New Testament is doctrinal. Well has it been said, "Let us beware of an undoctinal devotion."

We ought to thank God that all the truth was revealed in New Testament

days, and like Timothy we have but to "continue" in the things we have learned of Paul; and we can also thank God that in these last days the Holy Spirit has opened up afresh Paul's gospel that had become forgotten in the corruption of the historic church. It has pleased God to recover His saints to the truth. The recovery is to what Paul (and the other apostles) taught; and thus is distinguished *real recovery* to the truth from the adoption of the notions and novelties of men. There is no "development" of the truth of Scripture, though there is in our apprehension of it. Such a development always enlarges our apprehension of what is in the Scripture already. It puts us more in possession of God's mind in His Word. Another principle, too, is of importance in this connection—no fresh unfolding of truth can unsettle or upset old truth, but builds upon it. "New truths always confirm the old." "It is a happy thing to know that when we are grounded upon the Word of God, the further light we receive never overthrows the old, but completes and makes it clearer" (J. N. D.).

It is, then, solemnly incumbent upon us to "keep the faith" (4. 8); to cherish it vitally, guard it valiantly, and preach it vigorously. It is our all. Keeping the faith demands the refusal both of error and evil. Varied forms of these are alluded to in this epistle. It has been well said that the last days are characterized by *evil men* and *silly women* (3. 13 and 6); the former being the leaders, the latter the led; the former active agents, the latter passive ones; but all alike resisting the truth in its spiritual power and moral claim, or corrupting it. We have seven men mentioned as warnings in this latter: Phygellus and Hermogenes, of those who turn away

from *Paul*; Hymenæus and Philetus, who erred concerning the truth; Jannes and Jambres, who resist the truth by Satanic power; and Alexander, who resisted Paul's words and hated his person. We also have Demas, a disciple, referred to, who departs from Paul having loved this present world. We could not, however, speak of him as an evil man, but rather as a back-slidden saint. All stand as beacon lights to us.

The faithful man is to *flee* youthful lusts, for such war against the soul and ruin all testimony. He is to *shun* vain babblings, and *avoid* questions that lead to strife. From ungodly professors he is to *turn away*. From vessels to dishonour he is to *purge himself*. He is to *depart from* iniquity, that is unrighteousness, all that is not right. The demand thus is not only for clear convictions, but clean company. Separation, godly, holy, sincere and humble separation, from what is inconsistent with the name of the Lord is imperative. It is necessary to emphasize this in a day like the present when, as perhaps never before, the spirit of compromise characterizes not only the world, but the professing church; and "Christian charity" is invoked to cover and condone much that is utterly contrary to the will of God and the name of Christ.

Our fathers may not always have been marked by the gracious spirit of Christ in their ecclesiastical affairs and discussions, but at least they had clear convictions, *and put conscience into them*, and were willing to suffer for them. Is it so with us? But while separation is thus imperative for the disciple, it is itself a negative thing, and if it becomes an object in itself—the classic example of which is the Pharisees of old—it is destructive of all true peace and blessing. We

cannot build upon negatives. The true mainspring of separation is always holy *love* and *obedience* to God. If it is not the outcome of these, it is but self-sufficiency and self-will, leading inevitably to sectarianism and schism. If compromise is the spirit of the religious world, sectarianism is the spirit of the flesh.

Scripture always sets before us the power of positive truth, e.g., "Let us go forth"—there is separation; "unto Him" there is the positive truth. Here also in our epistle the main call to separation (2. 19-21), into the exposition of which we do not here enter, comes after the reader has received and realized the holy calling of God's purpose and grace; been strengthened in the grace that is in Christ Jesus; been introduced to God's elect ones, and the salvation which is in Christ Jesus for them; learnt that Christ abideth faithful, and has been shown the foundation of God, and its seal—"the Lord knoweth them that are His."

Moreover, following immediately on the call to separation are the questions, what the believer is to *follow*; that is, to pursue as the object of his life, and then with whom? What a clear and simple answer is given! "Follow righteousness, faith, love, and peace." If we really estimate aright the full Christian meaning of these things, there is nothing in them wherewith to credit ourselves religiously, rather everything to humble us. Do we not feel how deeply we come "short of God's glory" in respect of each? But it is our *individual* privilege and responsibility thus to seek to live and walk. But not alone, for if we are following these things we cannot fail to find others who are doing so too, and we are to pursue this path "with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart." It does not say "*all* them

that call on the Lord out of a pure heart," for we could neither find them nor get them together in the confusion of Christendom, but those with whom we do *walk*, whose company we keep, are thus to be characterized; and faith and love on our part would desire to recognize these wherever possible.

It is apparent that no ecclesiastical community or circle is in view for, as has often been pointed out, the characteristics mentioned are moral. No company of saints could possibly claim that all its members were calling on the Lord out of a pure heart, nor having a monopoly of such. May it not be that if we had grace to act simply, sincerely and consistently upon these directions, present pressing problems connected with "Christian fellowship" might become simplified? Timothy was to act upon these instructions at Ephesus (where it is generally supposed he was at this time); and we are to do so in the locality where God has placed us. The point to seize is that individual responsibility is hard pressed.

To sum up then. The church on earth as a professing body is ruined; but everything that is vital, all that is *in Christ*, remains. If the days are evil, the Lord is faithful. The paramount need is for faithful men. The pressing obligation of such men is to keep inviolate by the Holy Ghost the good deposit entrusted at all costs. This can only be done by trusting and using aright the word of truth; by holy separation to Christ from every form of evil; and by pursuing what is morally excellent with the pure in heart; by unwavering confidence in Christ, looking with love and labouring in loyalty for His appearing and the manifestation of His heavenly Kingdom. To Him be glory for ever and ever. Amen!

JUDGMENT BEGINNING AT THE HOUSE OF GOD.

WE were discussing this very solemn statement in 1 Peter 4. 17, 18. What did it mean? It seemed right to connect it with chapter 1. 17, "And if ye call on the Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man's work, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear." If God must judge evil amongst those who do not and will not know Him, He cannot tolerate evil in those who call Him Father. He must take notice of that which is wrong in His own house, or it would be impossible for Him to judge it outside; but He deals with it there as a Father, in chastisement and discipline. "If we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged, but when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, *that we should not be condemned*

with the world" (1 Cor. 11. 31, 32). There are multitudes who profess that He is their Father, who have never been born again and who continually falsify His character—they will be condemned with the world; judgment will come to them as a thief in the night (Rev. 3. 3) and they, the whole false profession—for every true child of God will be gone when it happens—will be spued out of the Lord's mouth (Rev. 3. 16). Then, having judged that that bears His name but had no vital link with Him, God will deal with the wide outer circle of the ungodly and sinful. It is better to suffer now according to the will of God, and if needs be under His chastening hand, than to be without chastening now, but with judgment without mercy in prospect.

ETERNAL in the heavens
Is our prepared abode;
Radiant and pure, in light divine,
There shall we dwell with God.

No more the aching head
No more the pilgrim feet,
The toil to win the daily bread,
But rest—divinely sweet.

“He shall feed His flock like a shepherd; He shall gather the lambs with His arm, and carry them in His bosom.”

—Isaiah 40. 11.

THINK of the greatest things and those most admired by men—the mountains in their grandeur, the oceans as they heave and roll, and the heavens stretched out above us in their splendour by day and night—what are they? The work of God's hands, and as such we do well to admire and enjoy them, but how small they are in His sight. He has measured the waters in the hollow of His hand and weighed the mountains in scales, but His saints, the lambs and sheep of His flock, what of them? Ah, they are precious in His sight. He feeds them like a shepherd, He cares for them and carries them. He loves them, they are His treasures. The works of His hands shall wax old as a garment and as a vesture He shall fold them up, but His sheep shall never perish. He gave His life for them, and thus He made them His. He has secured them for Himself at a great price and none shall pluck them out of His hand. Rejoice in this, most suffering and tried saint of God—you are of more value to the good Shepherd than mountains, sea and sky.

THE EPHESIAN EPISTLE.

(JAMES BOYD.)

Chapter 4 continued.

“But to every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ.” All the grace we require for the service given to us in this wonderful sphere of blessing comes from our exalted Head, and is bestowed upon us directly by Him. All fulness resides in Him. Nothing needful for the carrying out of that which is the purpose of His love resides in us. He gives according to His knowledge of the one to whom He gives the gift, and according to the position given to him with relation to the service in which all His servants are engaged. And all comes from Him who is on the right hand of God. He had followers when He was here upon earth, and they had their special work assigned to them. In Mark 3 we read of Him calling twelve to be with Him, and that He might send them forth to preach. In Luke 10 we find Him sending forth seventy. But none of these are necessarily the individuals we have in view here. He is said here to give apostles, but this is the action of the risen and glorified Christ. Possibly most of the twelve were the same, if not all. But whether they were the same, or whether they were different, the gifts bestowed upon them, and the service given to them were different. Those sent out by Him when He was here on earth and in presentation to Israel were to announce the kingdom of heaven as at hand. But now their service is in connection with those who are to be members of the body of Christ.

“Wherefore He saith, when He ascended up on high He led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men.” Now to say that He ascended involves the fact that He first descended into the lower parts of the earth, for the point of His departure is not here from

heaven but from earth. When He came down from heaven He came only to earth. He came here to reveal the Father, and bring the love of God to men; but when man would have none of Him He went down further, even into the lower parts of the earth. He said in the day of His rejection: “As Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale’s belly, so shall the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth” (Matt. 12. 40). Truly He might have said in the words of Jonah, “I went down to the bottoms of the mountains: the earth with her bars was about me for ever” (Jonah 2. 6).

But He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens. He went down to the very bottom of creation. It was necessary that He should bear the complete judgment that rested on man, though this is not just the thought here, He went down into the stronghold of Satan, and there broke the power of the enemy. He went down as the victim, and has ascended as the Victor. He led captivity captive. The devil has no prison now. There is a prison for him, in which he shall be bound and shut up for a thousand years. But Christ has set His captives free, and is gone up far above all heavens, that He may fill all things. The first Adam has filled this world, but the last Adam shall fill the vast universe. Every trace of the first and failing head shall pass away for ever. The first has filled this sphere with lust and pride, the Last shall fill everything with the love of God. Everything from the heart of the earth to the heights of all heavens shall be filled with Christ. Everything shall be filled with the glory of redemption, and the glory of redemption is the love of God.

And now this ascended and glorified Man has given some apostles, some prophets, and some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the perfecting of the saints, with a view to the work of the ministry, with a view to the edifying of the body of Christ, until we all arrive at the unity of the faith and of the Son of God, at the full-grown man, at the measure of the stature of the fulness of the Christ.

To fill the universe with the fulness that is in Christ a body seems to have been necessary. If we think of our own bodies, and how necessary they are to us, we may be able to form some true thought of the importance of the body of Christ to Himself. It is in the body that the man gives expression to himself. The mind gives expression to itself through the body, and all its activities are shown forth in the various members. Here, however, it is needful that the imagination be kept under control, for we are dealing with the great and holy thoughts of God. But that Christ shall be displayed in His assembly is unmistakably written on the page of holy Scripture. Even now does He thus manifest Himself, coming to light in His members. The assembly is said to be the epistle of Christ (2 Cor. 3. 3). When He appears He shall be glorified in His saints, and admired in all them that believe (2 Thess. 1. 10). We are partakers of His life and nature, and as luminaries it is our privilege to shine in His light in this dark world. His desire as expressed to the Father in His prayer (John 17.) is "That they all may be one; as Thou, Father, art in me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in us; that the world may believe that Thou hast sent me."

The nourishment of the body is by the gifts given from the exalted and glorified Christ, and by the fulness that resides in Him, and this shall be continued until we all come to the

unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ. . . . From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.

What a marvellous organism this is! unnoticed by the men of this world. "Made in secret, and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth." Here it is not so much a matter of ministry, as of *growth*, the body as it were feeding itself, its self-building up in love. The nature of God, for God is love.

When this glorious truth has worked its way into our souls by the power of the Spirit, we may be able to say with the apostle: "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; for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ." The same apostle when writing to the Colossians says as to Christ, "Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus." When we have thus got Christ before our souls we shall not be children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive.

Of this devilish activity on the part of those who are enemies of the gospel, there is a superabundance to-day, and that almost, if not wholly, confined to the Christian profession. But of this we are well warned in God's Word. Nothing should take us by surprise. We are told about everything that the devil can bring in to overthrow the

faith of the saints of God. And then we know he never wearies in his efforts. The evils have been coming in from the very beginning. Paul speaks of all the Asiatics as having departed from him, and simply because he was for the Name of Christ in disgrace with the rulers of this world. In the second chapter of the second epistle to Timothy the servant is warned against profane and vain babblers. They were there in his day. In chapter 3 the profession of Christ is in a miserable state of corruption. Instead of their souls following hard after Christ, they are running breathless after pleasure. In chapter 4 they prefer fables to the word of truth.

To-day all these evils swarm through Christendom like a colony of wasps. They are everywhere and full of devilish activity and venom against Christ. And many who are not deeply infected by their virus are weak and enfeebled by the poisonous atmosphere of their surroundings. From the tents of such corrupt men let us make hasty retreat, lest we fall under their deadly influence. And let us seek to get the babes in Christ out of their infantile condition.

As regards those not skilled in the word of righteousness, they are in great danger. Their thoughts are altogether occupied with the adjustment of their relations with God from the standpoint of the sinner, not from the standpoint of divine counsel, and the ways taken by God for fulfilment of those counsels. Hence all their concern is for the salvation of the soul. Their own selves and their security are the things around which all their thoughts revolve.

But when all this has been perfectly and divinely settled, and the soul is in the enjoyment of the love that was manifested toward us when we were yet sinners, the thoughts of God usward,

not only in the sense of compassion, but for the fulfilment of His own eternal counsel, purpose and grace, given us in Christ Jesus before the world began, those thoughts of God usher us into a world of bliss entirely different from anything we have ever seen or heard of with respect to this world, whether in innocence or guilt. And His thoughts, not our own desires for our own happiness, but for His own glory and our eternal delight, become the subject of all our meditations, hopes and expectations; and each one of us with a full heart cry out in His holy ear: "How precious also are Thy thoughts unto me, O God! How great the sum of them! If I should count them, they are more in number than the sand" (Ps. 139. 17).

Milk is not now the only nourishment that suits us. We can take with thankfulness the strong meat belonging to them that are of full age (Heb. 5. 12-14), who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil. The wind of doctrine that issues from the infernal regions which at one time we may have been ready to hail as balmy breezes from the Paradise of God, we shall not now be likely to be mistaken as to its origin.

How infinitely delightful it is to dwell upon the fact that God is love, and that from the fulness of the Godhead that dwells in Christ we are being nourished and built up in the true knowledge of Himself. From this fulness that dwells in our exalted and glorified Head we draw our inexhaustible supplies: and thus the body increases with the increase of God (Col. ii. 19). And knowing this we are not surprised when we see the anxiety of the servants of the Lord, as recorded in the New Testament, that the saints should increase and abound in love to each other, for dwelling in love we dwell in God, and God in us.

CALLED OUT AND CALLED INTO.

(H. J. VINE.)

"THE GOD OF GLORY" called ABRAHAM out of his country, and from his kindred, into the land of promise (see Acts 7. 2, 3); he was called out of one place and called into another, and he became the friend of God. The calling out cost him much exercise of soul and conflict, but that is not worthy to be compared with the blessing and honour and favour which he was called into. His faith embraced a rich inheritance, a heavenly city (Heb. 11.), the sure promise of God; yea, the true God Himself as Abraham's God. As a contrast to Abraham, his nephew Lot declined from the path of separation, and disastrous results followed the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, where he had become a magistrate; for he lost everything that a man and especially a righteous man could rejoice in.

The same God revealed Himself to Moses as the "I AM," and called ISRAEL out of Egypt, out of the house of bondage, to enter into the promised inheritance; and He revealed Himself in covenant relationship with them as JEHOVAH; and Israel is honoured as the nation which is to have the headship of the appointed earthly system of nations, and as Jehovah's people to serve Him in special nearness and make His Name known in all the earth; but, like many who claim to be His people to-day, they backslid from the Lord; therefore the day of their full blessing has been postponed, it is yet future; but when they receive Jesus—Jehovah Saviour—their true Messiah, they will possess and enjoy all that they are called into—the adoption (*nationally*), and the glory (*on earth*), and the covenants, and the law (as given to Israel), and the service, and the promises (Rom. 9.). Their calling out involved much testing

and disciplinary dealing; but the blessing, mercy, and glory into which they are called is so surpassing that the former is not worthy of being compared.

It is the same God—THE ONE TRUE GOD—who has called out from among the nations THE CHURCH, correctly rendered THE ASSEMBLY. From the fellowship of world-associations and aspirations, which are not after Christ, those who form the assembly are called into assembly-associations and hopes, which all vitally centre in Christ, who was rejected on earth, and is exalted in heaven; they are called into the greatest, most glorious and most honoured fellowship that God could make known to men.

We read, "God is faithful, by whom ye have been called into the fellowship of His Son Jesus Christ our Lord" (1 Cor. 1. 9). To those who are the called at the present time God is made known in His Son, who has revealed Him; and our true and eternal relations with THE FATHER, THE SON and the HOLY SPIRIT are to be entered into by us as the called of God; these rise far above those made known to Abraham and Israel. They were counselled by the FATHER before the world began; the SON came from heaven to redeem us and has secured them in Himself risen from among the dead and ascended on high; the HOLY SPIRIT has baptized all those who are saved into one body, He indwells them, has sealed them, and given them the necessary power to enter into the heavenly assembly-blessings unto which they are called.

The fact is, Christ's body, the assembly which is formed of believers sealed by the Spirit, has the earth-rejected Lord as its exalted Head in heaven, and its completion is necessary for the

establishment of the earthly covenants made in regard to Abraham and Israel. Indeed, those who are of the faith of Christ, now rejected and exalted, must be taken up to be with Him on high first, before those who are to share the promises in regard to the earth can truly possess them, as it says in Hebrews 11. 40, "God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect." The truth as to the Head of the assembly being set above all things in the heavens and on the earth, involves that His body must eventually be glorified with Him, for the assembly is "the fulness of Him that filleth all in all" (Eph. 1. 23).

The Lord said to His own, "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free"; and again, "If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed." Understanding what we are called out of, and what we are called into, gives real liberty to the children of God to-day. Twice in John 17 we read of the Son saying to the Father, "They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world"; also, "I have declared unto them Thy Name, and will declare it: that the love wherewith Thou hast loved Me may be in them, and I in them." The "FELLOWSHIP" of such is consequently divinely deepened; and

"SOUND DOCTRINE" is maintained by the Spirit who is given to lead us into all truth; moreover "PRAYER" in the Name of the Son of God marks them; and "WORSHIP" in Spirit and in truth; for, we are told, "The Father seeketh such to worship Him" (John 4. 23). They are called "The true worshippers."

To decline from the path of separation therefore involves great loss, but to be preserved in it brings increasing gain in the Son and in the Father, in the Holy Spirit's grace and power. The very thought of political legislation as to how such should pray and worship is repugnant to their very nature, as well as to their faith. That men without faith and men of conflicting beliefs should be asked to meet in parliament to vote and decide regarding this is an iniquitous denial of the revealed truth of God in regard to the assembly of which Christ is the Head, and of which we have spoken. His coming again to take His assembly soon to be with Himself for ever will show that she belongs not to the world—that she partakes of the divine nature—that her constitution is spiritual and vital, that her destiny is heavenly, also that she is the body and bride of Christ, who is rejected from the world, but is yet to shine forth publicly as **HEAD OVER ALL.**

MANNA, WHAT IS IT ?

"And hungry souls there are, that find and eat
God's manna day by day—
And glad they are, their life is fresh and sweet,
For as their food are they.

THE soul that believes in Jesus as Saviour finds Him to be its life and support every moment. The one who in sorrow, sickness, or anything else, turns to Him in faith, finds in Him all-sufficient sympathy and succour. He ministers to such His grace, shows them the way He comported Himself in similar circumstances. This is manna.

He made Himself acquainted with our circumstances down here in order that He might minister to us the same kind of support that He received from heaven when He suffered in His life of obedience and faith on earth.

THE BIBLE : WHENCE IS IT, FROM HEAVEN OR OF MEN ?

(J. T. MAWSON.)

[F I were shown a picture in mosaic, a supreme work of art, and were told that many artists had had a hand in its production, but that very few of them were known to each other, and that they lived in places widely separated, and that each had concentrated upon his own part of the picture as though it were to be complete in itself, and not a part only of the great masterpiece, I should conclude that one mind had designed the picture, and chosen, directed and controlled the workmen, and nobody would charge me with stupidity for coming to such a conclusion.

Now when I read the Bible and begin to discern the beauties of its sixty-six books and epistles, and see how harmoniously they are blended together, forming one complete book with one great central theme, and that no part of it could be dispensed with without serious loss to the whole ; and when I learn that fifteen centuries passed between the first writings and the last, and that the contributors to it were men of widely different stations in life, learning and culture ; that kings, great leaders of men, prophets and priests, fishermen, physicians, publicans, and pharisees all had their part in producing it, I conclude that one mind must have chosen, called, sanctified, moulded, and taught the writers, and directed and inspired each one in his contribution to it, and I ask, whose mind can have done it ? There is but one answer to the question, and it is the Bible's own answer, "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God"—it is God-breathed. Shall the man who accepts that answer as the only possible one, be considered stupid

and ignorant ? Surely not, for there is none other.

We should have supposed that since God had given His Word to men, they would have valued it above all their treasures, and preserved it from all possible harm, but it has not been so. Some have ; the Word of God has been more to them than life, and they have gladly died for it, but they have been but a small remnant, the majority have neglected it. And it has been a forgotten book, often for generations, and men have lived as though God had never spoken to them. But whenever it has been re-discovered and read, as it has been again and again, it has proved itself to be quick and operative, and men have repented of their Godless lives under its searching power, and have been enlightened and revived and pardoned and blest.

It has often been a forgotten book, but it has always been a hated book ; men have hated it as they would hate a living foe of whom they were in mortal dread. They have loved darkness rather than light, and have done their best to destroy the Word, for it exposed them and confounded them. Decrees have been issued against it by evil men in authority ; both pagan and papal Rome have made great efforts to extirpate it, or to keep it hidden from the people ; but it has survived the rage of its enemies and during the last century two Bible Societies alone, the British and Foreign, and the American, have issued 500,000,000 copies in eight hundred languages and dialects. Its preservation as well as its production proclaims it to be the Word of God ; it is indestructible ; heaven and earth shall pass away but it shall abide.

THE OLD TESTAMENT AND THE NEW.

The popular thing is to eulogize the New Testament and to treat the Old as mythical and legendary, a mass of fables and parables, and that in spite of the fact that the spade of the archæologist, digging in Bible lands, is constantly proving the truth of Bible history, and that "in all the wide scope of their investigations they have found nothing that discredits the book as a narrator of facts" (Kyle). This is not an honest treatment of the Bible, for whoever reads it with any care must see that the Old Testament is woven into the very texture of the New, and it cannot be torn from the book and cast upon the rubbish heap without leaving the New in hopeless tatters. How bewildered we should be in our reading of the New Testament if the Old were worthy of no better treatment than this. There are many questions that arise as we read the New—Who was Adam, and from whence did he come, and how did sin enter into the world through him? Who was Abraham and what were the promises that God made to him, and why did He make them? Who was Moses and what was the law that came by him, and why and how did it come? And David, what were the sure mercies that God guaranteed to him? And the woman's Seed, the Child of the virgin mother, Him whose name is Immanuel, and to whom all the prophets gave witness, what and where are the words that were spoken of Him? And the great red dragon, who is the Devil and Satan, who hates the Man-child, the Seed of the woman: how did he gain the ascendancy over man and become the prince of this world and its god? The New Testament raises these questions and they are vital questions, and the Old Testament

answers them, and no other book known to man does, and as we read it, we learn how the sore bondage of sin commenced, and of the necessity for regeneration and redemption of which the New Testament speaks, even if we have not learnt this necessity in our own experience of sin in our own hearts and lives, and how futile are all our own efforts to overcome it.

The Hebrew Scriptures were divided into three parts—Moses, the Psalms and the Prophets—and it is interesting and instructive to see that the first chapter of each of the four Gospels has a link with each of these three divisions. And as it is in the first chapters, so it is throughout the Gospels. Matthew has not less than seventy quotations and references from the Old Testament, Mark not less than thirty-five, Luke not less than forty, and John not less than forty, and in every book in the New Testament, with the exception of the shorter epistles, there are many quotations. They shine like gems in its pages for they all bear witness to Christ.

THE PREDICTIONS OF THE BIBLE.

A great proof that God has spoken in the Scriptures lies in the accuracy of its forecasts. An early instance of this is Noah's prophecy as to his posterity, in which the future condition and history of the three great divisions of the human race are described in a few words. "*Cursed be Canaan : a servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren.*" Though his descendants seemed at the first to be the greatest of all people, they became the most corrupted and degraded of all, and Ham's children are chiefly found in Africa from which land the descendents of both Japhet and Shem drew their slaves for centuries.

"*Blessed be the Lord God of Shem ; and Canaan shall be His servant.*" Of

Shem's race came Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and God was not ashamed to be called their God. He brought them into covenant relationship to Himself, and will yet fulfil all the promises made to the fathers to their children.

"God shall enlarge Japhet, and he shall dwell in the tents of Shem: and Canaan shall be His servant." From Japheth have sprung all the European nations who have spread out to the ends of the earth, and have entered into the favour that belonged to Israel, who have been cut out of it for the time being because of their unbelief, as Romans 11 shows.

We ought to notice in this connection that when the gospel first moved out from Jerusalem and the land of the Jews, a man from each of these three great divisions of humanity was saved by it and brought into the unity of the kingdom of God and the body of Christ, showing how the gospel obliterates all distinctions of race and nation. They were the Ethiopian Eunuch, the Hamite (Acts 8); Saul of Tarsus, the Shemite (chapter 9), and Cornelius the centurian, the Japhethite (chapter 10).

The Jews also are proof of the foreknowledge of God and the truth of Scripture. Three thousand years ago Balaam was compelled against his will to prophecy of them, "Lo, the people shall dwell alone, and shall not be reckoned among the nations" (Num. 23. 9). And Moses warned them at that time, that if they disobeyed the commands of their God and disregarded His covenant, they would be plucked out of their promised land and scattered among all people, that they would find no ease for their minds or rest for the soles of their feet; that they should be a people of a trembling heart and failing eyes and sorrowful mind; that their lives would hang in doubt and that in

the morning they would long for the night and in the night they would say, Would God it were morning; that they would become an astonishment, a proverb, and a by-word among all nations, and that they would be carried into Egypt by ships and sold there for slaves until none would buy them (Deut. 28).

These solemn words have been fulfilled to the letter. Upon the thirty-sixth anniversary of that fateful Passover when they cried after their Messiah, "Away with Him, crucify Him," practically the whole nation was gathered in Jerusalem, when Titus, the Roman, besieged the city. Exasperated by their stubborn and fanatical defence the invaders and conquerors burned and destroyed the city and temple; butchering nigh on a million of the people without remorse, and sending the remnant to the Egyptian slave markets, where they were sold until they became a glut, and no one would buy them. But they have outlived all their ancient enemies, those that oppressed them in their early history are only known now by their broken monuments unearthed by the excavator's spade, but the Jews abide, unabsorbed by those nations amongst whom they are scattered, and maintaining their identity and characteristics in spite of fierce persecutions. They are an indestructible witness to the accuracy of prophecy in the God-breathed Scriptures.

But the most arresting of all the predictions of Scripture and those that are more important to our purpose than any other are those that spoke of the coming of the Lord to earth. It will be impossible, in our limited space, to quote all of these; a life of Jesus might easily be written from these Old Testament prophecies. My readers must be satisfied with a few texts in

this paper ; they may search out the rest for themselves.

His Forerunner.

“ Behold I send My messenger before Thy face ” (Mal. 3. 1).⁵

“ Saying prepare ye the way of the Lord ” (Isa. 40. 3 ; Matt. 3. 3).

The manner of His birth.

“ The seed of the woman ” (Gen. 3. 15).

“ Behold a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and thou shalt call His name Emmanuel ” (Isa. 7. 14 ; Matt. 1. 23).

The place of His birth.

“ But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall He come forth unto Me that is to be ruler in Israel ; whose goings forth have been from of old, from [the days of eternity—marg.] (Micah 5. 2 ; Matt. 2. 5).

The slaughter of the children.

“ Thus saith the Lord ; A voice was heard in Ramah, lamentation, and bitter weeping ; Rahel weeping for her children refused to be comforted for her children, because they were not ” (Jer. 31. 15 ; Matt. 2. 18).

The flight to Egypt.

“ Out of Egypt have I called My Son ” (Hosea 11. 1 ; Matt. 2. 15).

His home at Nazareth.

“ He shall be called a Nazarene ” (a reproach) (Ps. 22. ; Isa. 53. ; Matt. 2. 23).

His Mission.

“ The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings to the meek ” (Isa. 61. 1 ; Luke 4. 18).

His character and entry into Jerusalem.

“ Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion ; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem ;

behold, thy King cometh unto thee ; He is just, and having salvation ; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass ” (Zech. 9. 9 ; Matt. 21. 5).

His rejection by the people.

“ The stone refused by the builders ” (Ps. 118. 22).

“ Despised and rejected of men ” (Isa. 53. 3).

“ Cut off ” [and shall have nothing—marg.] (Dan. ix. 25).

The price of His betrayal.

“ They weighed for My price thirty pieces of silver—a goodly price that I was prized at of them ” (Zech. xi. 12, 13 ; Matt. 26. 15).

His death by crucifixion.

“ And they shall look upon Me whom they have pierced ” (Zech. 12. 6).

“ And one shall say what are these wounds in Thy hands ? ” (Zech. 13. 6 ; John 19. 34).

The object of His death.

“ For the transgression of My people was He stricken ” (Isa. 53. 9).

His glorious resurrection.

“ For thou wilt not leave my soul in hades ; neither wilt Thou suffer Thy Holy One to see corruption. Thou wilt shew me the path of life ” (Ps. 16. 10, 11).

His ascension to glory.

“ Thou hast ascended on high, Thou hast led captivity captive : Thou hast received gifts for men ” (Ps. 68. 18).

These are but a few of the array of texts that might be marshalled to prove the fact that the book came from the One who is omniscient, and who had purposed from the beginning to send a Saviour to men, and who cheered the hearts of those who looked for that Saviour, by His immutable promises.

There is one other Scripture that I must not overlook; indeed, I have left it to the last of this series that we might be the more affected by it: it is Psalm 22. As to it I will quote in full the Note in the Scofield Reference Bible.

“Psalm 22. is a graphic picture of death by crucifixion. The bones (of the hands, arms, shoulders and pelvis) out of joint (verse 14); the profuse perspiration caused by intense suffering (verse 14); the action of the heart affected (verse 14); strength exhausted and extreme thirst (verse 15); the hands and feet pierced (verse 16); partial nudity with the hurt to modesty (verse 7), are all incidental to that mode of death. The accompanying circumstances are precisely those fulfilled in the crucifixion of Christ. The desolate cry of verse 1 (Matt. 27. 46); the periods of light and darkness of verse 2 (Matt. 27. 45); the contumely of verses 6-8, 12, 13 (Matt. 27. 39-43); the casting lots of verse 18 (Matt. 27. 35), all were literally fulfilled. When it is remembered that crucifixion was a Roman, not Jewish, form of execution, the proof of inspiration is irresistible.”

How impressive and conclusive is the New Testament explanation of these texts. The prophets . . . who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you: Searching what or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ that was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow (1 Peter 1. 11).

THE LORD'S USE OF SCRIPTURE.

The way in which the Lord, who gave Old Testament Scriptures to His people, used them is instructive. He confirmed those very incidents which are most derided, and which the critics

declare could not be anything but fables.

He spoke of:

The creation of Adam and Eve (Mark 10. 6; Gen. 2. 24).

The murder of Abel (Luke 11. 51; Gen. 4).

The deluge, and Noah and the ark (Luke 17. 26, 27; Gen. 7).

The burning of Sodom and the petrification of Lot's wife (Luke 17. 28, 32; Gen. 19).

The burning bush in the desert (Luke 20. 37; Exod. 3).

The lifting up of the brazen serpent (John 3. 14; Num. 21).

The sending of the manna (John 6. 31; Exod. 16).

The visit of Elijah to the widow of Zarephath (Luke 4. 26; 1 Kings 17).

The cleansing of the leper, Naaman (Luke 4. 27; 2 Kings 5).

The visions of Daniel (Matt. 24. 15; Dan.).

The preservation of Jonah in the belly of the fish (Matt. 12. 40; Jonah).

He met the temptations of the devil in the wilderness, not as the mighty God, who could have crushed him in a moment, but as the dependent and obedient Man, which He had become for God's glory and our salvation, and as such His one all-sufficient weapon in this great conflict was the Scriptures. He needed no other. He met each assault by the quotation from Moses, and stood invincible, victorious. These quotations are worth recording, we need them in our conflict with the foe; their value cannot be exaggerated since by them Jesus overcame the devil and has set us an example that we should walk in His steps. They show us: (1) That God is the Author and Sustainer of all life; (2) That He is to be the Object and end of the life that

He has given ; (3) His will must govern the lives of His creatures, and none should depart from it. He who holds fast to these three things will not be overcome by the devil. I give the texts as they appear in Luke's Gospel.

1. It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God (Deut. 8. 3).

2. It is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God and Him only shalt thou serve (Deut. 6. 13; 10. 20).

3. It is said, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God (Deut. 6. 16).

He met the questionings of men by the Scriptures. When the Sadducees, who were the modernists of that day, came to Him with what they thought was a clever question, that would bring the hope of resurrection into ridicule and confound Him, He exposed their folly and ignorance and shut their presumptuous mouths by quoting from the third chapter of Exodus, and asked, "*Have ye not read that which was SPOKEN UNTO YOU BY GOD*" (Matt. 22. 31).

In John's Gospel there is recorded the most determined contradiction of men against Him, and in that Gospel He speaks with the utmost plainness about the Scriptures, and of the writings of Moses in particular. "If ye believed Moses," said He, "ye would have believed Me, for He wrote of Me. But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe My words" (John 5. 46, 47). There could be no more solemn word than that for those who despise the writings of Moses.

But more remarkably than all is the fact that in His prayer to His Father, recorded in John 17, He gave the Scriptures an honoured place, saying of His disciples, "None of them is lost but the son of perdition, that the Scriptures might be fulfilled" (quoting

Ps. 109. 8). He showed His disciples at the last supper that the things that were written concerning Him must be accomplished, even though it meant His being reckoned among transgressors, and slain as a malefactor (Luke 22. 37). And when Peter in his zeal for his Master drew his sword to fight for Him, he gently chided him, telling him that He had no need of his carnal weapon, for His Father would promptly send twelve legions of angels to protect Him if He did but ask, but He would not ask, for if He did the Scriptures that said it must be so could not be fulfilled (Matt. 26. 53, 54).

When raised from the dead also, the Lord used the Scriptures to instruct His disciples and to establish their faith; and we should have supposed that if ever they could have been dispensed with it was then. But He did not dispense with them. He opened them to His astonished followers as they had never seen them before, and He made their hearts burn as He showed them things concerning Himself in all the Scriptures. Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms, all had to yield their testimony to Him, and the disciples had to learn from the Scriptures that it behoved Him to suffer and to rise again the third day; and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name among all nations, and thus would He enter into His glory. Thus it had been written and thus it was fulfilled, for the Scriptures cannot be broken.

IN THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES.

In the Acts of the Apostles the record is given of the preaching of the Lord Jesus Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit come down from heaven. In chapter 1 Peter shows how the Scriptures which spoke of the traitor had been fulfilled, and very definitely

states that *the Holy Spirit had spoken* by the mouth of David concerning Judas (verse 16). In chapter 2 he explains to the people that the Holy Spirit had come fulfilling what God had said by the prophet Joel. Here are the words: "It shall come to pass in the last days, *saith God*. I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh" (verse 17). In chapter 3 he speaks of the times of restitution, and says, "of which *God hath spoken* by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began" (verse 21). In chapter 4 the apostles and others gathered together for prayer, and in the prayer meeting they gave the *Scriptures exactly* the same place as they had given them in their private conference in chapter 1, and in the public preaching of chapters 2 and 3, "They lifted up their voice to God and said, Lord, Thou art God . . . *who by the mouth of Thy servant David hast said*" (verses 24, 25). It is plain that these Holy-Spirit-filled men accepted the *Scriptures* as the Word of God and boldly quoted them as being fulfilled in their day.

THE EPISTLES AND THE REVELATION.

It is said that "Paul is without authority," and that in many important matters he is at fault, but of himself and his writings Paul declared: "Which things we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth" (1 Cor. 2. 13), and "If any man think himself a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord" (1 Cor. 14. 37). And of these epistles of Paul, Peter wrote: "And account that the longsuffering of the Lord is salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also, according to the wisdom given him hath written unto you; as also in all

his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to understand, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other *Scriptures*, unto their own destruction" (2 Peter 3. 15, 16). Here then we have a divinely given description of those who imagine themselves learned enough to criticize and wrest the *Scriptures*, whether these be the writings of Paul or any other, they are "unlearned and unstable," and blind and foolish too, for they do not harm the *Scriptures* that they endeavour to destroy; instead they destroy themselves, for salvation is only found in God and the word of His grace which they refuse.

The Revelation of Jesus Christ was given Him by God (chapter 1. 1). They are the true sayings of God (chapter 19. 9). The words are true and faithful (chapter 21. 5). And again, "He said unto me, These sayings are faithful and true; and the Lord God of the holy prophets sent His angel to show unto His servants the things which must shortly be done" (chapter 22. 6). And if any man takes from them or adds to them his doom is sealed (chapter 22. 18, 19).

THE GOD OF THE BIBLE.

Let us finally consider the character of God as the Bible shows Him to us, for we could have no surer proof of its truth and origin than this, and it is that we might know Him that the Bible has been given to us, and that we might know Him better is the object of this paper.

He is "the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords, who only hath immortality, dwelling in light which no man can approach unto, whom no man hath seen, nor can see: to whom be glory for ever and ever." (1 Tim. 6. 15, 16).

Yet "*The Lord is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart*" (Ps. 34. 18). "*Thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is holy: I dwell in the high and holy place with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones*" (Isa. 57. 15).

The heavens are the works of His fingers. Yet "*Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings He has ordained praise*" (Ps. 8. 2, 3).

"*He telleth the number of the stars, and calleth them all by their names*" (Ps. 147. 4). Yet "*five sparrows are sold for two farthings and not one of them is forgotten by God. And even the very hairs of your head are all numbered*" (Luke 12. 6, 7).

We read, "*Our God is a consuming fire*" (Heb. 12. 29). Yet "*God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes*" (Rev. 21. 3). He is, "*of purer eyes than to behold iniquity*" (Hab. 1. 13). Yet "*He commendeth His love toward us while we were yet sinners*" (Rom. 5. 8). He is the "*just God*" (Rom. 3. 26).

And yet "*Him that justifieth the ungodly*" (Rom. 4. 5).

Who could have conceived a Being of such majesty and power, and yet such condescension and grace? Who would have thought that the One who is so great as to know by name the uncountable stars, could be so deeply interested in His weak and failing children as to number the very hairs of their heads? The vast, illimitable universe is subject to His will and yet He is particularly interested in the smallest detail of the lives of those who put their trust in Him. Who would have dared to hope that the One whom the heaven of heavens cannot contain, would dwell with the poor and needy, to revive their contrite hearts and uphold them

in their trials? And what angel or man could have invented a gospel that presents the Holy God, who is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity, loving, pardoning, justifying and blessing ungodly sinners? It is thus that the Bible, His own Word, shows Him to our wondering eyes, and those who are wise will believe and worship. How great is the blessing of those who believe His testimony, who find their refuge from every ill in Him, and can call the God of the Bible their God.

But God was not, and could not be, fully known until the only-begotten Son which is in His bosom came forth to reveal Him, then, and not till then, was God manifested in flesh. Then, and not till then, did any, either men or angels, behold Him fully revealed. In the Old Testament Scriptures His power and wisdom and the glory of His many attributes were disclosed, but in Jesus His nature is revealed, so that if we would know God, in the fulness of His nature and the blessedness of His love, we must read the New Testament Scriptures. David longed for a complete and all satisfying revelation of God to his soul, and in the Psalms he cried, "*O send out Thy light and Thy truth: let them lead me . . . then will I go unto the altar of God, unto God my exceeding joy*" (Ps. 43. 3). God has answered the deep longing for the light and the truth that was ever in the souls of His saints in that old dispensation, and in the New Testament days, the fulness of the times, He "*sent forth His Son, made of a woman,*" and He is **THE LIGHT** and He is **THE TRUTH**.

As we read the Gospels we see the light and hear the truth. Behold the Lord healing the lepers and blessing the children, moved with compassion for the widow in her sorrow and raising her dead son to remove that sorrow,

stilling the storm to relieve His disciples of their fear, and feeding the multitude lest they fainted on their homeward way, weeping with bereaved and faithful Mary, and yearning with tears over unfaithful and rebellious Jerusalem. Hear Him saying to an outcast sinner, "Thy sins are forgiven," and to another, "Neither do I condemn thee, go and sin no more." See Him stretching out His hands to weary and sin-sick men, and saying to them, "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden and I will give you rest." Behold His acts of kindness and listen to His words of grace, and in beholding and hearing Him, you will behold and hear the Father. How attractive God has become in Jesus: we see God in Christ, not imputing our transgressions to us, we draw near to Him with confidence, we feel that He is all we need, a Saviour God and the all-sufficient object of our otherwise empty, unsatisfied hearts. But we were not there to see and hear these things. We are dependent on a record of them, and that record we have in the Bible. It gives us the divinely inspired account of all that Jesus said and did that are necessary for our faith and salvation.

But the Bible tells us not only of the life and words of Jesus; it tells us also of His death. We learn from its pages that from the time that sin came into the world, death was a necessity if men were to be delivered from death and judgment. The Old Testament shows this in many types and shadows, such as Abel's lamb, and the sprinkled blood of the Passover Lamb in Egypt. They were like so many lamps shining in the darkness for the encouragement of faith until the true Light should come. They were no more than that, for the blood of those victims offered upon Jewish altars was common blood; it had no value though it flowed in rivers, yet

it spoke to faith of the Lamb of God, and of His blood that cleanseth from all sin. John, the beloved, stood by the cross of Jesus, and he saw Him hanging there with thorn-crowned head, bowed in death. He saw "one of the soldiers with a spear pierce His side, and forthwith came there out blood and water." And he tells us, "*He that saw it bear record, and his record is true: and he knoweth that he saith true, that ye might believe.*" That true, unimpeachable record is given in John 19, and I cannot pass it by lightly. I appeal to my readers. Have you believed it? Has it moved and melted you, and brought you in adoring faith to the feet of the Lamb that was slain? The record has been made to this end. How terrible is that unbelief that rejects it or treats it with indifference. That great act, which John the eye-witness records, was the supreme manifestation of the love of God, for we read, "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins."

THE NECESSITY FOR THE DIVINELY INSPIRED WORD.

If the only-begotten Son of God, divinely perfect and blessed, came into the world and died for the eternal blessing of men, it is only fitting that a record of His coming and His words and ways, also divinely perfect and blessed, should be given, that those for whom He came might have a divine and perfect assurance of it. Admit the former and the latter follows in logical sequence. To suppose that God would send His only-begotten Son into the world that we might live through Him, and having done that, allow an imperfect, contradictory human record to be the only record of His life and death here, would be to suppose Him to be guilty of colossal folly. The record must be as perfect in its

own sphere as the One whose life and mission it records was perfect in His, or else we have no sure knowledge, no certainty, of the things upon which our soul's eternal welfare depends.

If the Holy Scriptures are what the critics say they are—mere ancient human documents, in which are recorded events which the writers did but poorly remember, or which they greatly exaggerated or embellished; if they may be cut and criticized, accepted or rejected, in parts or wholly, then where are we in this matter? The angel's triumphant declaration that he brought "good tidings of great joy" when he announced the birth of Jesus may be a mockery; we cannot be sure that our great Redeemer ever did say, "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Such wonderful words may have been put into His mouth by one of these "imperfect but very imaginative human writers," as Shakespeare put words into the mouths of his characters. Yet we might well ask what human mind could have imagined such divine words as those are? Did our Lord really warn men of "the damnation of hell," and speak those words about the "many mansions" in His Father's house? We cannot say unless the record of them is divinely perfect and divinely sure.

WE BELIEVE GOD, AND THE WORD OF HIS GRACE, and we are confident that if "God so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting

life," He would see to it that we should be in no uncertainty about it, else "His unspeakable gift" would have been in vain and none could have said, Thanks be unto God for it! The Scriptures are God-breathed; the men who wrote them were moved by the Holy Ghost; they had not the things they wrote from hearsay, or from their own imperfect observation, but from the source of all true knowledge—from God Himself. Hence the Lord's own veritable words are given in the divine records, and in those records they are divinely placed, and there they shine like apples of gold in pictures of silver for our blessing and joy. God be praised who has opened our eyes to see them!

Fear not, believer in Jesus, this book is part of your precious heritage, and no weapon formed against it shall prosper, and every tongue that shall rise up against it shall be confounded. From its pages you have learnt the way of salvation; it has been a lamp to your feet and a light to your path. You have tasted and proved and staked your immortal soul upon its precious promises, and its truths have comforted you greatly in hours of trial and temptation. There are still depths within it which you have not fathomed, for, indeed, the best of us are but as children paddling on the verge of a mighty ocean, but it is here for us, God-given and God-preserved, by God's Spirit we can understand it, and we shall always find blessing in it if we remember the great subject of it is—

C-H-R-I-S-T.

"THY WORD IS PURE FROM THE BEGINNING, AND EVERY ONE OF THY JUDGMENTS ENDURETH FOR EVER."—Ps. 119. 160.

"The prophecy came not in old time by the will of man; but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost."—II Peter 1. 21.

The following Addresses were given at High Leigh, August 23-28.

“HIS FULNESS.”

(J. T. MAWSON.)

Sunday Afternoon, August 23.

“And of His fulness have all we received, and grace upon grace.”

[T may be that at these meetings questions will be raised in your hearts: questions as to your past, questions as to your present mode of living, questions as to your future, of what you shall do with your lives, and how and where you shall serve the Lord to whom you belong. Some of you may have sleepless nights through exercise of heart about these questions, but don't be afraid of that, the deeper your exercises are the greater the blessing, if they turn you wholly to the Lord Jesus, for you will find in His fulness an answer to every perplexity, and every question. I will read to you my text in its connection, omitting the parenthesis in verse 14 and the testimony of John the Baptist in verse 15. “The Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth. And of His fulness have all we received, and grace upon grace.” What does it mean? It is the limitless sea of divine grace flowing in upon the shore of human need, wave upon wave, filling up every inlet and creek and cave; and all it looks for is room for its blessedness. It is the fulness of the Godhead brought down to us in Jesus, for in Him it pleased the Father that all fulness should dwell, and the fulness dwelt in Him, and still dwells in Him *for you*, for “in Him (who is your Saviour) dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.” You have not a need that He cannot meet, there is not a crevice in your heart that He cannot fill. Will you be humble enough and sincere enough to receive from Him?

The penalty and the power of sin.

I have found that if I wanted the explanation of a great saying at the beginning of any book in the Bible I had only to search that particular book for it, and I believe we find in John's Gospel what His fulness, grace upon grace, means. If any one of you are troubled about the past, if your sins lie upon your conscience, an intolerable load, I would ask you to consider verse 29 of our chapter, “Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world.” This is the first public testimony that was borne to Jesus as He appeared among the multitudes of men, and it is as the Lamb of God that you must first make His acquaintance. This is the beginning of His fulness for you, the first wave of it, that can sweep away your sin-caused misery, and deliver you from the burden and penalty of your sins for ever. Dwell upon the title that is given to Him here. He is the Lamb of God, and that marked Him out at the beginning of His public pathway for suffering and death. His life of service to men and God was to reach its climax at the cross. He was to die there as a sacrifice for sin. And He set Himself stedfastly to reach that predicted end. Nothing could turn Him from it, for apart from His death His fulness could never have reached you, you could never have been saved. But now you may know that He bore your sins in His own body on the tree, that He was wounded

for your transgressions and bruised for your iniquities. Weary, heavy-laden sinner, "Behold the Lamb of God," and just as Bunyan's pilgrim lost the burden that was bound upon his back when he came to the place where stood a cross, so shall you lose yours. You shall be saved from the penalty of your sins.

But there is more, the grace flows, wave upon wave, hence in verse 33 we read, "the same is He that baptizeth with the Holy Ghost." He removes the *penalty* of sin and He also breaks its *power*. And I believe I am right in saying that there are some of you here who, while being quite sure that you have been delivered from the penalty of sin, are still sighing, it may be secretly, under its power. You are slaves who should be free. *His fulness* can set you free and nothing else can. If you have believed the gospel, He has given to you the Holy Spirit, who dwells in you. "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." The price is the blood of the Lamb, and now He has taken possession of that which He has purchased by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, and it is by the Spirit that His fulness will reach you, setting you free from the power of sin.

Let us consider this. How is it brought about? I know, from my own experience, that the usual thought in a young Christian's mind is that he must grapple with his sin as one would grapple with a huge snake that held him in its coil, and he hopes and believes that the Holy Spirit has come to aid him in this struggle and give him final victory, and because he can see nothing beyond this notion, and is taught nothing beyond it, he struggles, in vain, until in despair he cries out, "O

wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me?" And that is the point of victory to which you will speedily come, I trust. The Holy Spirit must stand by, if I may use the expression, and wait until that point is reached. But when you lie a helpless, wretched soul, admitting defeat, and emptied of all your self-confidence, you are ready for His fulness, wave upon wave.

Mark the fact, that following the announcement that the Lamb will baptize with the Holy Ghost, we have "*the next day* after," when "John stood and two of His disciples, and looking upon Jesus as He walked, he saith, Behold the Lamb of God! And the two disciples heard Him speak, and they followed Jesus." John was entranced and bore witness to the One whose glory filled his vision, and his testimony was used by the Spirit to send these two men after Jesus. Here lies the secret of deliverance from the power of sin—your heart must have an object that will carry your thoughts and desires outside yourself, and Jesus is the only One worthy and able to do this. The great work of the Holy Ghost is not to give you extraordinary gifts or great power that will make you famous, but to fill your thoughts with your Saviour's grace and glory; He has come to take of the things of Christ and show them to you. An unsatisfied and selfish heart can never be free from the power of sin; and this question of freedom from sin's power is a heart question. You need to learn what is meant by, "the expulsive power of a new affection"; then you will be able to say, "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord."

The world and its spell.

I pass on to chapter 4 where the story is told of a woman who had come under the spell of the world, and it had

disappointed and degraded her. Hers, up to that hour, had been an unsatisfied life, and she had been the sport of the devil. With weary foot she carried her pitcher to Jacob's well on that mid-day as usual, a solitary sinner, shunned by all who knew her. But what a day that was to be for her! Jesus was there before her, for her sake He had journeyed into Samaria, and there He waited for her. What a difference that short interview with the Lord made to her! It changed her and sent her running to the men of the city, saying, "Come and see a Man . . . the Christ." He was a Man; as to that there could be no question, for He was thirsty and hungry and weary, but this man was the Christ! Her eyes had been opened, to see what others could not discern who looked not at Him by faith, and her heart also had been opened and of His fulness she had received. "Do you mean to tell us," those men would say, "that He talked with you?" "Yes," she would answer. "You would not talk with me, you all shunned me, and I do not wonder at it now, and no Jew would have dealings with me, but He sat by my side out yonder and did not make me afraid, but He talked with me until my misery gave way to hope and hope to joy; even His disciples marvelled at it, and I marvelled more than they." "But He did not know you; if He had known you, He would not have talked with you," they would say. "Not know me!" she would answer. "Why He knew me through and through and yet He did not spurn me. He told me all things that ever I did."

But what was it that He had said to her that had changed her so? Not the exposure of what she was, but the *revelation of His fulness*. Listen to His words, for they are the words of eternal life. "Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again: but

whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst, but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life." What an arresting word! Yes, but a true word, and the word of Him who spake as never man spake. The world cannot satisfy any human heart, nothing can but the fulness of God; but that fulness is in Christ and HE GIVES IT. He has not come to us demanding what we could never give, but giving, and He gives without stint, grace upon grace. See how He proposed to raise her from a degrading search for happiness in a world that can never give it, to God Himself whom she had altogether forgotten. His gift of living water was not only to satisfy her, but was to spring up within her to its source; to the region from which it had come, to God Himself. This was something more than freedom from the power of sin, it was the creature put in right relations with God the Creator, but God revealed, not now in His power, as when He made the worlds, but in His love as Father who sent His Son to be the Saviour of the world, for the Father seeketh worshippers.

The failure of Organized Religion.

We come now to chapter 7, and here there is exposed another side of the world. It is not its gross and degrading side, but its religious side. It was on the last great day of the greatest religious feast in the Jewish calendar that Jesus stood and cried. "If any man thirst, let him come unto Me, and drink. He that believeth on Me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water." The Lord looked upon the weary faces of those zealous religionists, and into their hearts, He knew how empty of

blessing were all their forms and ceremonies and how obnoxious to God was all their ritual. He had watched them throughout that feast and waited for the last great day of it, and then He presented Himself instead of all that that had disappointed them, "COME UNTO ME," He cried. How magnificent is His offer and how blessed must be His fulness who makes it. He does not speak of a river, but of rivers, and rivers of living water! and these not flowing in only, but flowing out—flowing out to a barren, polluted, sin-burdened and disappointed world. And the only qualification is thirst. "if any man thirst, let him come unto Me." There are many who are trying organized religion in these days. Ritualism makes its appeal to them, but it is a dead and barren thing; there are no living waters in it, it leaves *the soul* unsatisfied and unsaved, while it gratifies the senses and deadens the conscience. You may not have been attracted by that sort of thing, but do you thirst? Have you been trying to satisfy yourself with going to meetings, and a humdrum round of religious duties? Do you feel that your life is not the life that the Bible describes, that there is a lack in it, and that consequently you are not happy yourself nor the blessing to others that you desire to be? Here is the answer and remedy. "COME UNTO ME." Remember the words "His fulness," and you will come with great expectation. Take His own words to Him, and say, "Lord Jesus, these words are Your words. I have not yet realized their meaning, but I come to You and ask You to make them real to me."

Search no longer in your own heart for anything to satisfy you and bless others. "Come unto Me." Turn not to religious ceremonies. "Come unto Me." Do not trust in gifted men, or

in conferences, Scriptural literature, or correct ecclesiastical position. "COME UNTO ME." Have personal dealings with Christ. Drink of His fulness and the waters will flow out from you. In your home and at your work, when you teach in the Sunday-school class or stand up to bear witness to the world of your Saviour, in life and testimony, day by day, hour by hour, **RIVERS OF LIVING WATER!**

Come, then, to Him, and say—

"Oh, fill me, Jesus, Saviour, with Thy love,
Lead, lead me to the living fount above,
Thither may I in simple faith draw nigh,
And never to another fountain fly,
But unto Thee."

What shall we do?

There are two Old Testament Scriptures that I will refer to in closing, to illustrate the exercise and diligence that are necessary on our side. In 2 Kings 3 three kings and their armies were on the verge of death from thirst, there was no water for man or beast. But God's prophet, His representative in the midst of the land, appeared, and being the prophet of grace, he brought in God's fulness for the need of that host. He said, "Thus saith the Lord, Make this valley full of ditches. For thus saith the Lord, Ye shall not see wind, neither shall ye see rain; yet that valley shall be filled with water, that ye may drink, both ye, and your cattle, and your beasts. . . And it came to pass in the morning, when the meat offering was offered, that, behold, there came water by the way of Edom, and the country was filled with water." God alone could send the water, but they had to make room for it; to dig channels for it, and remove everything that would hinder it from flowing into the valley. And here is your side of the questions. Some of you have longed

for a deeper knowledge of the fulness of Christ, but you have not longed enough to dig the ditches. There are things that are hindering the inflow of the waters, and you know what they are, and if you don't, and will carry David's prayer to God—"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" (Ps. 139.)—He will show you what the hindrances are. Then in the energy of the grace that He gives, arise and get rid of them. "Make the valley full of ditches." At the time of the morning sacrifice the waters flowed. That sacrifice spoke in figure of the preciousness of Christ to God, and it is as we appreciate Him, and are prepared to count other things but dross for the excellency of the knowledge of Himself, that a new morning begins for us and the waters begin to flow.

There is another necessity, and this we see illustrated in Ezekiel 47. It is

the story of the river of blessing that flowed from the house of God, and into which the prophet was led step by step, until he found it to be waters to swim in, unfathomable and shoreless. But he could not have gone into those waters if he had not kept in company with the man who held the measuring line. This man was a figure of the Holy Spirit, "who searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God" (1 Cor. 2. 10). He it is that "will guide you into all truth" (John 16. 13). The fulness must flow into us, we must make room for it and receive it wave upon wave, and we are to be led into it also, and the Spirit of God is the only one who can lead us into it, hence we must heed the exhortation, "And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption" (Eph. 4. 30). May every one of us be able to say with full hearts and radiant faces, "Of His fulness have all we received, and grace upon grace," for His Name's sake.

WHAT grace, O Lord, and beauty
shone
Around Thy steps below;
What patient love was seen in all
Thy life and death of woe!
For ever on Thy burdened heart
A weight of sorrow hung;
Yet no ungentle, murmuring word
Escaped Thy silent tongue.

Thy foes might hate, despise, revile,
Thy friends unfaithful prove;
Unwearied in forgiveness still,
Thy heart could only love.
O, give us hearts to love like Thee,
Like Thee, O Lord, to grieve
Far more for others' sins, than all
The wrongs that we receive.

OUR GREAT SAVIOUR.

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

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

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

Monday Evening, August 24.

GOD'S CHASTENING.

(J. J. ANNING.)

"Whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth."—Hebrews 12. 6.

I WANT to bring before you seven outstanding incidents in the life of Jacob. The biographies of Holy Scripture are authentic and ungarished, and so generally realistic that we can put ourselves in the circumstances of the individual and learn from his experiences if we will. It is not easy to learn from another's experience, most often we gain our wisdom and learn our lessons by our own bitter failures, but without doubt histories such as Jacob's are recorded by the Holy Ghost that we may see how heart answers to heart, and we may by them be preserved from many a false way if we are teachable, for, "all these things happened unto them for examples, and they are written for our admonition."

I suppose that I look at life differently from the majority of you young Christians. For me it is to look back on years of indifferent service with many failures, but then, when I take stock of it all, I thank God that His promises have never failed, and spite of everything in me He has ever been constant. For most of you the adventure of service under our great Leader is still fresh, and with all the healthy optimism of youth you carry on undauntedly, following Him alone who is worthy to be followed. Go on.

"E'en your wants and woes shall bring
Suited grace from high descending,
You shall taste of mercy's spring."

It is a great consolation to know that God is greater than our wants and our failures.

We see a great principle exemplified in Jacob's history; it is, whatsoever

a man sows that he reaps, and that holds good for us. We also learn as we read his story, that God does not discipline the world, it is "whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth"; not Esau but Jacob is the subject of this patient care of God for his ultimate good.

1st Phase.

The name Jacob has an ugly sound, it means "supplanter," and I don't suppose any of us would care to be likened to Jacob, but heart answers to heart, and if we are honest we must own that we are very much like him. He was indeed a supplanter. He earned the name that was given to him at his birth. We see his cunning in getting hold of his brother's birthright; we see his evil strategy in getting the blessing from his father Isaac, yet Jacob believed that God would fulfil all the promises that He had made to his grandfather and father, and he was keen on getting these promises for himself, for he set great store upon them, and because of this he was a man that God could take care of. If only he had waited God's time, he was dead certain to have come into them all, but he didn't. He saw his brother had forfeited his right to God's blessings in the promises, for he had indeed treated holy things as if they were common, and sold his birthright for a mess of pottage, so little did he care for it, and not only so, but he had made associations in marriage with outsiders. He had, as it were, cut himself off from God's line of promise, and that line of promise must have devolved upon Jacob his brother, but Jacob chose to

allow the wickedness of his heart to get the better of him, and to try to make sure certain in his own way, and he had to pay the price.

2nd Phase—Genesis 28.

The second phase of Jacob's life is Jacob as an outcast. He fled from his brother's fury in fear of his life, and journeyed to Haran at the advice of his parents, to remain there until the anger of Esau was past. He had his staff, nothing is said about his luggage, and when the sun was set, he had stones for his pillow. Thus did he begin to reap what he had sown. But outcast as he was, and destitute, God cared for him and appeared to him in a dream, and renewed to him the promises that He had made to Abraham and Isaac, and added to them a big, big plus: "Behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land; for I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of."

He does not seem to have been tremendously comforted—he was afraid and he said, "Surely the Lord is in this place and I knew it not," nor did he know the Lord, and the unconditional character of His promises; if he had, he would not have made the vow he did. What a revelation of human nature is in that vow. If the Lord will take care of me, "then shall the Lord be my God." But that spot where God first spoke to him was a landmark in his history, and he took the stone that had been his pillow and set it up for a pillar and a witness and he called it Bethel—the house of God, and the gate of heaven. Was this the first ray of light in his soul? It looked like it, and God never forgot it, as we see in chapter 31. 13, when He said to him, "I am the God of Bethel,

where thou anointedst the pillar, and where thou vowedst a vow unto Me."

3rd Phase—chapters 29.—31. ver. 10.

When Jacob reached Haran, he continued to reap what he had sown, he was paid back in his own coin, and by deceit he was made to be a servant for twenty years. What a life he had in Haran! His father-in-law deceived him as to his wives, and changed his wages ten times, and he had no altar in that foreign land, no blessing, and no communications from God throughout those twenty years, and as far as we know, no news from home; and yet God cared for him, and he seems to have been conscious of that care when he declared that "God suffered Laban not to hurt me." He might have escaped all that chastening if he had had as much confidence in God as he had desire to possess His promises, but God allowed it all with His final blessing in view.

4th Phase—chapter 31. ver. 11—33. ver. 1.

God is faithful, and would not suffer Jacob to be tempted above what he was able to bear, and when those twenty years of trial were over He visited him and gave him the call to "arise and get out of this land, and return unto the land of thy kindred." And Jacob arose and started back to his home, but when he heard that Esau was coming to meet him he was terror-stricken, and he prayed in his anguish to God.

"And Jacob said, O God of my father Abraham, and God of my father Isaac, the Lord which saidst unto me, Return unto thy country, and to thy kindred, and I will deal well with thee: I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies, and of all the truth, which

Thou hast shewed unto thy servant ; for with my staff I passed over this Jordan ; and now I am become two bands. Deliver me, I pray Thee, from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esau : for I fear him, lest he will come and smite me, and the mother with the children. And Thou saidst, I will surely do thee good, and make thy seed as the sand of the sea, which cannot be numbered for multitude ” (Gen. 32. 9-12).

God answered that prayer marvellously. He appeared Himself to Jacob, and had, as it were, the whole matter out with him ; He wrestled with him until the breaking of day. God said, “ What is thy name ? ” and Jacob had to confess that his name was Jacob, with all that that meant, but there and then he tasted that God is gracious. To put it into everyday language, Jacob was converted there, and he held on to the One who had wrestled with him, and would not let Him go until he got the blessing. That was faith. It is ever so, when a man yields to God’s strivings and owns the truth as to himself, he learns what God is, and realizes that God is his only hope, and is blest.

Then God brought him down, He crippled him, but in his weakness God made him a victor ; and said to him, “ Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel ; for as a prince hast thou power with God and with man and hast prevailed.” From that day Jacob’s staff must have been a real comfort to him. I don’t suppose that he took a step after that day without his staff, he was a weakened and dependent man.

5th Phase—chapter 33. ver. 17-34.

We should have thought that when God had changed his name and blessed him he would have hastened to Bethel,

the house of God ; but does he ? No, he turned aside, as we read :

“ And Jacob came to Shalem, a city of Shechem, which is in the land of Canaan, when he came from Padan-aram ; and pitched his tent before the city. And he bought a parcel of a field, where he had spread his tent, at the hand of the children of Hamor, Shechem’s father, for an hundred pieces of money. And he erected there an altar, and called it El-elohe-Israel.”

The fear of Esau over, see how Jacob fails ; he is no longer a pilgrim and a stranger, he buys land and builds a house far from Bethel, and an altar too, and calls it by a name that means, “ the mighty One, the God of Israel.” He does not take the name of Jacob now, he is exalting himself, and attaches the name of God to his own name, while not obeying His voice. How like Jacob we are, how ready to turn aside and compromise with what we know to be God’s will. There is no doubt about it, the Good Shepherd has a hard time with us, but I want you to understand something of the greatness of the grace of the Good Shepherd, He does not cast us off when we fail Him.

“ Oh, wondrous Love ! that ne’er forgets
The objects of its tender care,
May chasten still, while sin besets
To warn and guard them where they are.”

What a harvest Jacob reaped for this coming short of God’s will. He exalted himself and he was abased. Chapter 34 reveals it to us, and he goes from that place with his name stin as he says.

6th Phase—chapter 35.

See how beautifully chapter 35 opens. “ And God said unto Jacob, Arise, go up to Bethel, and dwell there : and make there an altar unto God,

that appeared unto thee when thou fleddest from the face of Esau thy brother." God had been faithful, and Jacob was not abandoned, and the God of Jacob is our God. He is our Shepherd, and has made Himself responsible to take us all the way home to glory, and to work in us that which is well pleasing in His sight. It is all here in picture in God's dealings with Jacob.

At last Jacob was ready to answer to God's call, but he feels that things in his household needed to be put right; a few preliminaries were necessary before he could start. So we read: "Then Jacob said unto his household, and to all that were with him, put away the strange gods that are among you, and be clean, and change your garments: and let us arise, and go up to Bethel: . . . And they gave unto Jacob all the strange gods which were in their hand, and all their earrings which were in their ears: and Jacob hid them under the oak which was by Shechem." Perhaps as we feel that God is calling us to go forward and to enter more fully into His purposes for us, we realize that there are things that need to be straightened up in our lives. Things that would do for Haran or even for Shechem won't do for Bethel. The oak of our story surely speaks of the cross. I think it does. The cross of Christ answers all the failure of the past, we may lay all our folly and pride and failure at the foot of His cross. It is there that we are delivered from our idols. It is there that we pour contempt on all our pride.

At last we see Jacob at Bethel, and there he can raise his altar to the God of Bethel and worship Him, and there God blessed Him, and spake with him, and revealed Himself openly to him

in grace, making known His Name to him as He had done to Abraham, and confirmed to him his new name Israel. And Jacob poured out a drink-offering there, and may not that have been the acknowledgment before God that his very life belonged to Him?

7th Phase—Hebrews 11.

I suppose there is no finer death-bed in the Bible than Jacob's. We have the account of it in Hebrews 11., where in a few succinct words we learn that Jacob died blessing the sons of Joseph, worshipping God and leaning on his staff. I wish that by the grace of God every one of us might learn right away to make use of the staff, that you young Christians might begin with it in your early Christian life. If you do you will not have so many sad memories when you come to look back on life's journey. The staff denotes the pilgrim, and the dependent pilgrim, one who leans upon a power outside himself.

And Jacob worshipped God, no longer is he bemoaning his few and evil days, he is thinking of the One who had kept His promise from start to finish. One who had never failed him—the One who is the same yesterday, to-day and for ever. He was Jacob's God, and He is ours. He understands our frailty and weakness—bears with us in our wrongdoings, chastens, disciplines and teaches us, because He loves us. That we may know Him better in this way is my reason in bringing His ways with Jacob before you, and my prayer is that by the knowledge of Himself and His ways we may become more conformable to the place of blessing we are bound for.

"Rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His Name's sake"
(Acts 5. 4).

Monday Evening, August 24.

SECRET LIFE AND PUBLIC TESTIMONY.

(A. J. POLLOCK.)

Read Matthew 6. 6; Exodus 2. 11-15; 1 Samuel 17. 33-37.

I WANT to speak about the relationship between our *secret* life and our *public* testimony. Every one of us must have a secret life before God, and every one of us must have a public testimony. Some are very highly gifted, and are naturally very much in evidence in public testimony, but it would be a poor thing if we allowed the idea of a public testimony to be in the hands of a few gifted people.

Every one of us has the privilege of public testimony—brother and sister, gifted or otherwise—and I want to emphasize just what is stated in this Sermon on the Mount by our Lord about praying in *secret* and the Lord rewarding *openly*. I do not believe we shall get very far unless we have a secret history in our souls before the eye of the Lord alone, that our nearest and dearest cannot share, and everything of any spiritual value springs, I believe, from that. We have to settle things with Him. There are many questions that we sometimes run to some brother to solve, whereas if we take these things into our closets, and speak to the Lord, He will give us our answer very often in a very effective way. Indeed, we should get our directions from the Lord Himself and not from this servant or that servant, however rightly we may value their help and direction.

And I think we can emphasize this thought by these illustrations from Scripture that I have read. God intended to use Moses. Moses, perhaps, was the most prominent servant of the Lord in Old Testament times. There was no man quite like Moses. He had a very honourable position, for He became a type of Christ as the Great Apostle,

and in the book of Revelation, you remember, they sang the song of Moses and the Lamb.

Wonderful position Moses had in the history of the Old Testament! We find in the book of Numbers that when Aaron and Miriam found fault with Moses because of his black Ethiopian wife, the Lord suddenly called out Moses, Aaron, and Miriam, and allowed Miriam to be stricken with leprosy, and He let her see that what was inside was to be visible outside. If there had not been the leprosy of evil thoughts inside, there would have been no evil words outside, and the hand of God would not have brought the leprosy upon her body outside.

There is a beautiful parenthesis in the account; it says: "Now the man Moses was very meek, above all the men which were upon the face of the earth" (Num. 12. 3). In the few verses we have read it did not look very much as if Moses was meek. He was brought up in that peculiar providential way in the palaces of the Pharaoh, and versed in all their learning. But the call of the blood was strong, and when he saw his fellow countrymen being misused, his heart went out to them. One day he saw an Egyptian and a Hebrew striving together, and he looked this way and that way, and when he saw no eye upon him, he slew the Egyptian. Then next day he found two Hebrews striving, and when he approached them he who did the wrong said, "Intendest thou to kill me, as thou killedst the Egyptian?" He feared that the thing was known. It got to the king's ears, and he had to flee.

What a change! From the palace,

the place of power and position, to find himself a solitary unit in the desert, and for forty years that man, with all his capabilities and with all his powers, was just humbly keeping sheep in the desert. What was he learning? He was learning to be meek—he was learning in secret what by-and-by was to shine out in public. What a wonderful experience!

I would like to speak very earnestly and affectionately to our younger brethren. I quite ally myself with dear Dr. Anning in saying how indifferent one's service has been, and how one has had to discover pride and the assertion of the flesh in one's heart, and a desire to be big in the things of the Lord. It is a great matter when all that is completely taken from us.

God was going to make Moses, indeed, into a very great servant. I have seen people who have got into a prominent place in service, and I have felt like this: Oh, how they need the grace of God, that they may not have any exaggerated sense of their own importance!

It is only as there is a secret history in our souls that we shall be preserved from that. I think, dear friends, one of the most horrible things is what we may call *pious swank*—to try and make out we are something other than we are. That is not meekness, it is pride and hypocrisy, and I believe God would teach us by a secret dealing with Himself the emptiness and folly of it all.

Now let us look at the other incident we have read. David was a very remarkable servant of the Lord in the Old Testament. If anybody had said to David the shepherd lad, keeping his father's sheep, that he was going to be called to be the shepherd of Israel, to be king for God over His ancient people, he would have been

very astonished. But God had His hand upon him, and as he kept his father's sheep he was faithful. One day there came a lion, and he might have been excused for saying, My life is more valuable than the life of a lamb—but no; he showed his devotedness to the task given to him, and he went after that lion and took it by the beard and slew the monarch of the forest. Then the bear came. We know what a terrible creature it is, but undaunted he went after the bear and delivered his lamb from it. And now there comes the crisis of his history. There appeared that great giant, Goliath of Gath, eight or nine feet high, excelling in all the training of war, with tremendous accoutrements upon him, and here is this shepherd lad. And Saul looks at this stripling and asks if he is sufficient to go. Modestly David tells Saul what he has done in secret—about how he had dealt with the lion and the bear, and said that the God who had delivered the lion and the bear into his hand would deliver this Philistine also, who had defied the armies of the Lord. And Saul said, "Go."

David had learned what God could be to him in secret, and now when a question of public service and testimony to God's faithfulness and power came, he was ready to take his place in confidence in God.

Oh, how we shall see light in His light by-and-by, and learn how He has loved us, and drawn us away from ourselves, and saved us from being our own enemies! If we will seek Him in secret, He will show us ourselves and He will show us Himself, and we shall learn these lessons more deeply now.

These do not exhaust the illustrations that we might have of how God deals with His servants. Take Peter in the New Testament. The Lord saw

his affection for Him, and saw mixed with that affection a great deal of self-confidence, and He knew that with that self-confidence He could not do much with Peter. Now the Lord did not arrange Peter's fall, it was Peter's condition that brought it about, but the Lord in His tender love to Peter allowed it. Peter, the very first of the Jewish apostles! It is extraordinary to think of Peter failing in the way he did—denying his Lord with oaths and curses, quailing at the taunt of a servant maid as she spoke of his Galilean dialect. And oh, the bitterness of Peter's soul! The Lord looked upon him, and he went out and wept bitterly; but that experience of his own weakness and his Master's grace was the making of the servant.

When the day of Pentecost came, that wonderful day, when the promise of the Father came down upon the disciples, and inaugurated the great Christian dispensation, what should we have said to Peter? Peter, you have failed tremendously—you get behind the rest and take a back seat. John or James should speak and not you, who has failed so terribly. If something very correct or precise is wanted, James might well speak. If something very loving, John should be the spokesman. But Peter, your mouth should be closed.

But that was the very mouth God opened that day. How different God's ways are from man's! You have got to be melted before you can be moulded. Perhaps we have got to be broken before we are made serviceable vessels; and Peter's fall was just the occasion

that the Lord took for forming him for the great testimony God had called him to.

Then take the Apostle Paul. God had separated him from his mother's womb, marked him out to be His great servant to bring out the truth of the church. Caught up to the third heaven he heard things not lawful to be uttered, and what happened to him? He had a thorn in the flesh—something exceedingly humiliating, something most painful as a messenger from Satan to buffet him. It was as if an evil spirit were smiting him continually. God allowed this lest his flesh should be exalted beyond measure.

To the dear young Christians I address myself. Do cultivate this speaking to God in secret, and having your private history with God. *Take time*, get into your closet, shut the door and get to know what the mind of the Lord is as to yourself; and know this much, if you come out from the presence of the Lord, you cannot come out with fleshly pretension, you cannot come out with carnal ambitions in the things of the Lord.

But I believe, dear friends, there is one thing that we ought to crave in connection with our testimony—that we should be first affected by what we speak. When we speak, we should crave that our words may come home to our own hearts before they come to the ears of our hearers.

I am sure that if the speaker does not earnestly desire for himself what he is putting before his hearers there cannot be the unction and power of the Holy Spirit.

“**L**ORD, I was in the far-off land. I loved from Thee to stray,
 And when unto myself I came, a swineherd far away,
 One moment—then the welcome sweet, the kiss, the Father's home;
 Far distant was the distance: to Thy bosom I am come.”

Wednesday Evening, August 26.

THE CONQUERING LINE.

(ROBERT WHYTE.

Romans 8. 37; Hebrews 2. 10; Revelation 22. 3, 4, 5.

THERE is a hymn, a line of which runs, "Christ leads the conquering line", of that I want to speak to-night. From the day of our conversion to the crowning day, "We are more than conquerors through Him who loves us."

The Captain of Our Salvation.

The first consideration is the Captain of your salvation—for everything for this conquering line depends upon Him. Who is this Captain of your salvation? What are His credentials?

His Worth.

On a night long ago all heaven seemed to be in ecstasy—a Babe was born in Bethlehem and heaven rejoiced and praised the Name of God, for that Babe was the Saviour, Jesus Christ the Lord. And when the shepherds came and saw that Babe they bowed down and worshipped Him of whom the angels spake in their burst of praise. Then we come to the baptismal water of Jordan, and there we find that the Captain of your salvation is the object of the Father's delight. The heavens are opened and the voice of the Father is heard from heaven saying, "Thou art My beloved Son, in whom I find My pleasure"—thus is His wonderful worth declared. Throngs of needy men crowded round Him and He healed them all, and we hear them say, "He hath done all things well"; and again, "Never man spake like this man." God, angels and men bear testimony to His wonderful worth; and even the demons cried out and said, "Thou art the Holy One of God."

His Work.

Then we must consider His great work. We do not for the moment speak about His life, but about His death—for it is on that death everything depends, and upon His precious blood all our blessings and hopes for time and for eternity are based. Listen to His own words. "Wherefore when He cometh into the world, He saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared Me. in burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hast had no pleasure. Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of Me,) to do Thy will, O God" (Heb. 10. 5-7). When He came the Baptist could speak of Him as the One who was competent, saying, "Behold the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world." Think of Him as the waves and billows of God's judgment against sin roll over His blessed head! There the greatness of the work that had to be undertaken is seen, and the cost at which it was done. He only was competent for the task—and He did complete it, for His victorious cry from that cross e'er He dismissed His spirit was, "It is finished."

His Words.

Think of His words also. Just when stepping forth to Gethsemane and to Calvary He said to His sorrowing disciples, "Be of good cheer, I have overcome the world." Then to His Father He said, "I have glorified Thee on the earth: I have finished the work Thou gavest Me to do." And then as He went forth from the upper room with His disciples He and

they sang a hymn. It is not thus that men go to defeat—that hymn was a psalm of victory. The Captain of our salvation has spoken also in resurrection. When sending forth His disciples into the world He said, “All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth”—Go forth in My power—“and Lo, I am with you to the end of the age.” On the resurrection day He said, “Go to My brethren,” the first time the word brethren was applied to His disciples in the sense in which He used it then, “and say unto them, I ascend unto My Father and your Father, to My God and your God.” This is the Captain of your salvation.

The Companions.

In following the Captain of your salvation, who has been made perfect through suffering, who are your companions or comrades who follow with you? You have not to choose your own comrades, God has chosen them for you. They are the sons of God, the many sons whom your Captain is bringing to glory. They are not captives dragged behind His triumphal car, nor mere servants, but sons being led to glory—and they are to be conformed to the image of His Son that He may be the Firstborn among many brethren. What dignity is stamped upon those who follow this great Captain—they are the sons of God!

These companions of yours are called saints also; the Romish church makes saints of those who are dead, but God does not make His saints like that—He calls them by His gospel, pardons all their sins through the blood of Jesus, and gives to them the Holy Spirit to indwell them, and all who are thus blest are saints of God, the excellent of the earth—in whom God finds His pleasure. These are your comrades—sons of God, being led home to glory:

saints of God, sanctified and set apart for the pleasure of God, and the pleasure of this great Captain of your salvation. Beggars they were, but God has placed them among princes; sinners they were and far off, but now accepted in the Beloved: they could not be nearer or dearer to God. And though it doth not yet appear what they shall be, we know that when He, the great Captain, shall appear, they shall be like Him, for they shall see Him as He is.

The Chorus.

Every army has its song, and great wars have produced stirring songs. You who follow your great Leader must sing. You are called upon to speak to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, making melody in your hearts to the Lord. You have no cause to grumble though sometimes you groan, but you have great reasons for singing, and the greatest of all these is what Christ has done for you: “Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood; and hath made us kings and priests unto God, and His Father, to Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever, Amen.” This song that you sing now with glad hearts anticipates that time when countless multitudes shall sing, when He shall appear in the midst of the throne, as the Lamb that was slain. “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.”

The Communications.

You need continual supplies of grace from above. You must not let the enemy get between you and your home base; you must keep in touch with your place of supply. Where is

that? Heaven; and who is there? Christ is there and your Father is there, and you are encouraged "to approach boldly to the throne of grace that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need." How do you keep in contact with the heavenly supplies and come to the throne of grace? It is by the Holy Spirit, for God has given His Holy Spirit to you that you may be in communication with God the Father, and your Lord Jesus Christ. We have the Lord's words, "He shall receive of Mine and show it unto you." He represents your absent Lord, He is another Comforter, a Paraclete who takes charge of us in order to keep the communications intact between heaven and us who are following the Lord. The Word of God and prayer have their place in these divine communications, you cannot know the truth of God apart from the Holy Scriptures, and you cannot carry out the truth apart from prayer. The place of dependence is the place of power, and as you declare our dependence by praying in the Holy Spirit there is no hindrance to the fresh supplies of needed grace.

The Conflict.

Now consider the conflict—Christian conflict is a very real thing, the language of Scripture indicates this. Timothy was exhorted to "endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ." The good fight must be fought. The Christian soldier is not put into the reserves or pensioned off, for there is no discharge in this war. The devil, the world and the flesh are a triple alliance opposed to every one who follows our great Captain. You are called upon to resist the devil, and you do that by the Word of God. That Word will make you strong for the fight. John, the beloved apostle, said, "I have

written unto you, young men, because ye are strong, and the Word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked One." It was in this way that your Lord overcame the devil. The Word was His weapon, and He has left you an example that you should walk in His steps.

But having overcome the wicked one you have the world to face. It will spread its allurements before you. Love it not, nor the things that are in it. The love of the Father is not in those that love the world. The love of the Father is your greatest treasure; guard it well, and beware of the world.

The flesh is the traitor within the gates, and fleshly lusts war against the soul. You will need to be on your guard here and reckon yourself dead indeed unto sin, and walk in the Spirit, then you will not fulfil the lusts of the flesh. Every provision has been made for you so that through Him that loves you you may be more than conquerors.

Confidence.

No soldier can fight well who has not confidence in his leader, but you cannot doubt yours. He has said, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee," so that you may boldly say, the Lord is my Helper, I will not fear what man shall do unto me. What confidence the knowledge of the Lord inspired in the heart of Paul. "I can do all things," he said, "through Christ that strengtheneth me." And when weak and buffeted by Satan, he gloried in his infirmities and his weakness became strength in the conflict, for the grace of the Lord was sufficient for him.

Compensations.

Finally you have the compensations—there are a great many. What are the compensations to those who

overcome? There is "the tree of life which is in the midst of the paradise of God." How refreshing it will be to eat of this fruit when all warfare is over. And it is the Lord Jesus who says, "I will give," to the overcomer. What a recompense it will be to be led by Him into that paradise and fed there by Him!

There is also "a crown of life." Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life, and after that the bread of life. "To him that overcometh I will give to eat of the 'hidden manna,'" and a name from Christ, inscribed upon a white stone.

"Called by that secret name
Of undisclosed delight
(Blest answer to reproach and shame),
Graved on the stone of white."

Then a seat with Christ upon His throne and the honour of walking with Christ in white. And a name inscribed in the Book of Life. The overcomer is to be a pillar in the temple of God and to abide there for ever, with the new Name of the great Leader inscribed upon him. What wonderful compensations are held out to the overcomer—you may read of them in Revelation 2. and 3.—and the world comes with all its offers: honour, dignity, sensations and pleasures, but

all these are fading away; it cannot offer you anything on the other side—all that it has is on this side, it has nothing for eternity. But for the overcomer there is all that I have enumerated in your hearing and much more. It was this which was in the mind of the apostle when he drew near to the conclusion of his journey, and said, "I have fought the good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith. Henceforth is laid up for me a crown of righteousness which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day; and not to me only, but to all them who love His appearing."

Conclusion.

Then you have the grand finale of which we read in the closing part of Revelation. "His servants shall serve Him, and they shall see His face, and His Name shall be in their foreheads." Thus we pass on from conversion's day, through the conflict to the crowning day—the day of glory that is most surely coming. Then shall be brought to pass the saying, "Death is swallowed up in victory. Thanks be unto God that giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

THE CONFLICT.

(DAVID ROSS.)

"Great is the mystery of godliness."

"The mystery of iniquity doth already work."

I WANT to read from a letter written to an assembly of young believers and then from two letters written to young men (2 Thess. 2. 3-8; 1 Tim. 3. 15, 16; Titus 2. 11-14).

This world has been the arena in which a mighty conflict has been waged, is being waged, and will yet be waged. You have been hearing of the Captain—I want to bring before

you the opposing forces in this great and mighty conflict.

On the one hand there is the mystery of lawlessness—godlessness. I have seen it working on the Continent, and we see it here in this land. But, thank God, the mystery of godliness is also revealed.

From 1 Timothy 3. 16 we learn that the mystery of godliness is confessedly

great. Draw near to Bethlehem's manger and behold the Babe that lies there, and read the words of Holy Scripture: God was manifest in the flesh. Behold that Babe grow to manhood, and mark that life lived to the pleasure of God and to the blessing of man, until He was received up into glory, and there you see the mystery of godliness in all its fulness revealed. The church of the living God, to which you and I belong by grace, is the pillar and ground of the great truth of the Incarnation of the Son of God. But from 2 Thessalonians 2. we learn that there is to be another incarnation. A man is to appear who is called the Wicked, the lawless one, the godless one, and in him there is to be incarnate this mystery of lawlessness, for to him the dragon (Satan) will give his power and seat and authority, and he will oppose and exalt himself above all that is called God. These two mysteries, these two great opposing forces, have been working ever since the foundation of the world. On the first page of human history as recorded in Holy Scripture the enmity is set between the serpent and the Seed of the woman, and the power represented by the serpent is going to be incarnate in that lawless one; and, thank God, the Seed of the woman is the Incarnate Son of God, and we see in Him the mystery of godliness.

The destruction of government.

Now just as you see in the body of a man in which some disease is working indications of it in the shape of boils and eruptions, and then by and by it heads itself up in some deadly growth that means death, so we see in the world to-day indications, bubblings up of this mighty power of godlessness; we see it in this land, but there are

more examples of it in other lands. In Russia, so we are told, are great regiments of those who label themselves "the godless." Now as we see this sort of thing developing, the mighty hosts advancing, Satan leading on, you and I are called to the other life to join the ranks of those who live "godly."

Every Christian is in this fight. First of all let us look at the characteristics of these godless movements as manifested in the world to-day. In 2 Thessalonians we are told that there is a restraining force in this world—it may be the Holy Spirit. Probably it is the divinely ordained institution of *government*. Hence the godless one is out to overthrow government. A time is coming when the restraining influence will be withdrawn and anarchy will be let loose in this world. But only for a time, for that lawless one shall be consumed with the spirit of our Lord's mouth and destroyed by the brightness of His coming. But how shall the godly act in order to strengthen that which restrains? By the ballot box? There is very little hope in that. It is by prayer both in secret and in public. "*I exhort, first of all that 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 tranquil life in all GODLINESS and sincerity*" (1 Tim. 2. 1, 2). Here is a mighty bulwark that God has given to His people to erect against the opposing and approaching forces of anarchy and godlessness. Prayer is our first weapon. Are we using this weapon? If not, we are letting those in authority down. Probably they do not esteem our prayers very highly, but God has exhorted the ranks of the godly to pray for Governments, that the power of godlessness may be restrained and that His people may

live quietly in godliness and gravity, despite the efforts of anarchists, Communists, and all others whose creed and practice is after the working of Satan.

The destruction of morality.

The next attack is on morality. The godless are out to destroy *morality*, and in this the women are especially involved. Hence there is a special word in this epistle for women who profess godliness in relation to their dress, for between dress and morality there is a profound connection: "*In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with broided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array; but (which becometh women professing GODLINESS) with good works.*" I have seen rank after rank of the godless marching in the streets of a great Continental city—women, children and men—and one of the distinguishing features was the scantiness of their attire. In one of the greatest exhibitions of Europe are to be found the propagandists of the cult of Nudism, and undoubtedly this is one of the many ways in which the mystery of iniquity is producing its evil works. Godly women, on the contrary, are to be characterized neither by the scantiness nor the luxuriousness of the dress, but are to be robed in the garments of modesty and good works. Modesty, however, does not mean "dowdiness," and it is well to remember that a badly-dressed woman is no better testimony to godliness than one who is over- or under-dressed.

In the military ranks of the godless some of the keenest soldiers are women; and, thank God, in the ranks of the godly the women are no way

behind the men in enthusiasm, indeed they often surpass them. I was reading the history of Switzerland, and it tells of a city that the enemy expected to capture because there were so few men in it, but they found when they came to the walls an army two or three times greater than they expected. Where did they come from? They were the women. The women have a great influence upon this world—upon the conflict—but it is women who are not concerned to know the latest fashion, but women who are concerned to be adorned with good works—modesty. But in connection with this onslaught on morality there is another injunction from the apostle which has a special appeal to the men. Trained soldiers are needed, but they are to be young men exercised unto godliness. "*Exercise thyself unto GODLINESS. For bodily exercise profiteth for a little: but GODLINESS is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come*" (1 Tim. 4. 7, 8). The Christian who neglects his body does so at the risk of loss of health and usefulness in the service of God; but a graver risk is incurred by the Christian who, yielding to the modern craze for sport, cultivates his body and neglects his soul. The fashionable cult of the human body tends to occupy with the material, temporal side of man's being and to exclude from the thought the spiritual, the divine and the eternal. Sunday, once devoted to the things of God and of the Spirit, has become a day of recreation, and there is a grave danger lest the woods and open-air spaces, so great a boon to the city workers, may become again, under a materialistic philosophy and an undue cultivation of the physical, the shameless groves of Ashtaroth. To face all these tendencies what is needed is a band of

Christians exercised unto the godliness which is profitable for the present life and that which is to come, men who have "meditated" upon divine things, "given" themselves wholly to them; trained in self-discipline and Christian doctrine, and thus able to save themselves and others.

The destruction of home life.

Again, we find another symptom of the workings of the mystery of iniquity in the decay of *Family Life*. In Russia, according to reports, free love has done its deadly work, and in our country the divorce court records show the greatness of this cancerous evil. Thus the young men are exhorted, as a first duty, to show godliness at home—**AT HOME**. "*If any widows have children or nephews, let them learn first to show GODLINESS at home, and to requite their parents; for this is good and acceptable before God*" (1 Tim. 5. 4). In Germany they speak of the *Strassengel* and *Hausteufel*—the street angel and the house devil. That is not godliness. In our land and in other lands the home life is being destroyed. Here again the women play a momentous part. Mother, you have a very small sphere—only those little bairns to look after, and the house to tidy up day after day. But in the midst of the increasing immorality you may maintain the power of godliness in the home. Your home can be like a little island where the graces and virtues of godliness are exercising their restraining and health-giving influences. May God exercise us all as to whether we are exercising godliness in the home. That is the weak point with many of us, there is no doubt about it, and the godless gain an advantage because of the lack of godliness in the home.

Destruction of Christian doctrine.

But there is another attack, and we see this in professing Christendom. What is it? It is Modernism. The Apostle Paul warns Timothy that there are those who will bring unsound words—words not according to godliness. "*If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to GODLINESS; he is proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings*" (1 Tim. 6. 3). What have these Modernists done? They have retained all the terms of the Christian faith and emptied every one of its contents, and we have to beware lest we are affected by this subtle move of godlessness. We are to fight this religious manifestation of the mystery of godlessness and lawlessness; but how?—by holding fast the form of sound words, by preaching the Word, and by being careful that our manner of life is consistent with the Word.

There are those in high positions in theological and ecclesiastical spheres who say things about our blessed Lord that they would not have dared to say thirty years ago. It may be we have not the learning to match these people, but we have the words of Jesus Christ. Let us see to it that all we hold and all we teach is according to godliness. And where is the standard? The mystery of godliness—the Babe of Bethlehem—the Man of Galilee—the Man of the cross—the Man in the glory—the Son of the living God. Let us measure every teaching by the revelation of godliness in Jesus Christ, our blessed Lord.

The destruction of the soul.

There is another cult that Paul exposes in this letter to Timothy—the cult of gold worship, and that cult can cover itself with a very fair religious appearance, but the Word denounces as perverse and corrupt men who believe that gain is godliness. The words are powerful: “*Perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness: from such withdraw thyself*” (1 Tim. 6. 5).

A Pope of Rome, in showing a visitor his treasures in the Vatican, said to him, “You see, I cannot say what my predecessor Peter said, ‘Silver and gold have I none.’” “No,” said the saint, “neither can you finish the verse, ‘but such as I have give I unto you. In the name of Jesus of Nazareth, rise up and walk.’” Anything for money, and it does not matter whose money: the professing church has sold itself to the godless one for gain, and has bowed down to it, as the Israel in olden days bowed down before the golden calf. Money in itself is neutral, capable of noble as well as ignoble use, but the *love of money* is the root of all evil, and the will to be rich has proved the destruction of many an individual and community. Let us not follow the cult of gain, but cultivate godliness. The great antidote is, “**GODLINESS** *with contentment is great gain.*”

Destruction of vital religion.

Another phase of the mystery of godlessness which is already working is “the form of godliness, but denying the power.” There are not only the *Modernist* in the Christian profession and the *Commercialist*, but also the

Ritualist, and we see what is vital being submerged by what is formal. Could anything be more destructive of vital religion than this? By it the senses are appealed to and cultivated, and the conscience is deadened. The propagators of this cult and their dupes are described in terse language in the Scriptures. “*For of this sort are they which creep into houses, and lead captive silly women laden with sins, led away with divers lusts. Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth*” (2 Tim 3 6, 7). Our safeguard is to maintain godliness as a living force.

Destruction by persecution.

Wherever the mystery of godlessness can show its more open enmity to godliness it will do it by persecution. We do not get much of that in this land, but many of our brethren in other lands are suffering. I have just heard of two Christian pastors in Russia who have been banished to Siberia for preaching the Word, and we are in the same conflict and fighting on the same side as these, remember, we are in the same Body, and it is our privilege to bear them up in their sufferings by prayer. Yet, if we are determined to live godly, we must expect, in a greater or lesser degree, persecution. What can prepare us for it? “Continue thou in the things which thou hast learned,” and above all don’t forget what you learned at your mother’s knee. From a babe you have known the Holy Scriptures, and these Scriptures are able to make you wise unto salvation, so that you can face with courage any persecution that the godless bring upon you.

The final triumph.

The grace of God has appeared to men and we can rejoice that we are

saved by grace, but that grace has also taught us how to live soberly, righteously and **GODLY** in this world. Our Saviour came to redeem us from lawlessness. I would appeal to the younger Christians that they may resist in their own lives the spirit of the age which is lawless, which throws off all restraint. The day is coming when they will absolutely say, "Let us break their bands asunder and cast away their cords from us." Is there any young man that is feeling like that? Wanting to break away from the restrictions of a Christian home instead of thanking God from the bottom of his heart for the privileges of it? The grace of God has come and brought you salvation; it has taught you to live soberly, righteously and godly in this world. And the grace of God has given us a great hope. It is the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ. Christians are looking for the time when Christ will take us to be with Himself. But when we look upon the world's confusion (and sometimes we must take a bigger view than our own small corner) and see the desperation and the difficulties of the statesmen, what are we looking for? We have found grace and we are finding guidance and we are looking for the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ. His coming is the only hope. Do you sometimes think that God has forgotten His universe?

"Careless seems the great Avenger,
History's pages but record
One death struggle in the darkness
'Twixt old systems and the Word;
Truth for ever on the scaffold,
Wrong for ever on the throne,

But that scaffold sways the future
And behind the dim unknown
Standeth God amid the shadows,
Keeping watch upon His own."

He sees you and me, and He is coming; the heavens will glow with splendour and the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ will come. And that lawless one, that exalteth himself above all that is called God, will be blasted by the brightness of His coming, and Satan himself shall be bruised beneath our feet.

Young men, are you enduring hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ, and are you training yourself into godliness wholeheartedly? Young women, are you giving right thoughts to your dress—being adorned with good works, which present a powerful resistance to this mighty force of evil? Volunteers are wanted—who is going to volunteer? In one of Britain's wars an officer wished a very difficult task performed. He went to his company and said, "This task in all probability means death," and therefore he would not order any man to go upon this mission. He said, "I want volunteers to step forward," then turned round so that they should not be influenced, and when he turned round again, the line was unbroken. With a flush of anger and shame upon his face he said, "What, has nobody volunteered?" And a non-commissioned officer said, "Sir, the whole company has volunteered." They had all stepped out. We have presented our message to this company to-night, and I wonder if we shall be able to say when we report to our Captain, "The whole company volunteered to-night"? May God grant it.

I'VE seen Thee, Lord, in death for me,
And in Thy life have liberty;
But who shall tell the cost to Thee?
Thou gav'st Thyself—God's holy One—
His spotless Lamb, His blessed Son.
O love, what wonders Thou hast done!

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

The Eternal Son.

"Some are saying that the Lord Jesus was not THE SON from all eternity but that He became the Son when He took human flesh. Do not Matthew 21:37 and Romans 8:3 prove to us that He was ever the Son, and is it not dishonouring to the Lord to teach otherwise?"—GRASMERE.

THE truth as to the Person of the Son of God is the most sacred of all truths, and they are wise who, realizing this, avoid speculation and controversy as to it. The Word of God is plain enough in what it has revealed to us, and we are amazed that any one who professes to love and read the Word should deny the eternal Sonship of the Lord. By so doing they deny the Father and the Son before the Incarnation, for if there was no Son, then there could be no Father. We believe that "the Son of His love" (Col. 1:13, N T) describes the Lord in the essential glory of His own eternal being in the bosom of the Father before the worlds were made. It describes Him, not in relation to men or angels, or anything that is created, but in His eternal relation to the Father in absolute Deity. If this could be taken from us we should be robbed of the very source of the gospel, and its greatest lustre and joy, and our faith would be greatly impoverished.

Let us take two texts of the many that we might quote, which speak of His being sent by the Father and His coming forth from Him. "We have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world" (1 John 4:14). From whence did the Father send the Son, from heaven or from Bethlehem? If the answer is, from heaven, then He was the Son to be sent before He became flesh. Again, "I came forth from the Father and am come into the world" (John 16:28). There are two steps, if we may use the word, in that statement, the "forth from" and the "into." If He came forth from *the*

Father it must have been as Son that He came; if He came into the world it was as having become flesh.

It was said in a recent paper by one of our contributors, when commenting on the words "God is love," "This blessed fact has come to light by the appearing of Christ; but it is a fact that never began to be, for love is what God is; it is the divine nature itself. And this means that the past eternity was no frigid void: love was there. The fact that God is love demands the truth of the Trinity, for love must have some object. We may be sure that the Unitarian God is foreign to Scripture. Scripture unveils to us a holy circle of love within the very being of God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit, dwelling in ineffable reciprocal relations of fellowship and love within that sacred unity" (A. J. Atkins). It may be argued that that is mere inference, but it is not; we have the Lord's own words as the basis for such thoughts. "And now, O Father, glorify Thou Me with Thine own self with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was" What glory was it that He had with the Father before the world was? Could it be other than that which was proper to Father and Son in Deity? And again, "Father . . . Thou lovedst Me before the foundation of the world" (John 17.). Whom was it that the *Father* loved? The *Son* most surely.

We quote also from the late J. N. Darby. "There are persons who take it that Christ was only Son as come into the world. The positive answer to this is given in Hebrews and Colossians, that by Him, the Son, the world

was made. He is also called Son as born into this world. There is 'This day have I begotten Thee' in Psalm 2. That is not quite the same thing, though the same Person, of course. He was begotten in time, that is true, as to His human estate. But Hebrews and Colossians are conclusive. It is of immense import, because I have not the Father's love in 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 in 1 Corinthians 15. I lose all that the Son is, if He is only so as incarnate, and you have lost all the love of the Father in sending the Son as well" (*Collected Writings*, Vol. 25, p. 340). "The notion of Sonship in Christ only when incarnate is destructive to the very elementary joy of the church, and abhorrent to those who have communion by the Spirit in the truth" (*Collected Writings*, Vol. 3, p. 135).

We quote also from "The Son of

God," by J. G. Bellett. "It was once asked me, Had the Father no bosom till the Babe was born in Bethlehem? Indeed, fully sure I am, as that inquiry suggests, He had from all eternity. The bosom of the Father was an eternal habitation, enjoyed by the Son, in the ineffable delight of the Father." "Deprive Him of the bosom of the Father from all eternity, and ask your soul if it has lost nothing in its apprehension and joy of this precious mystery, thus unfolded from everlasting to everlasting? I cannot understand a saint pleading for such a thing. Nor can I consent to join in any confession that tells my heavenly Father it was not His own Son He gave up for me."

We quote from these writers, not as authorities, for the Word of God only is that in our estimation, but because we are in full agreement with them and feel they set forth the truth in a better way than we are able to do.

Imputed Righteousness.

"Would you explain what is meant by the latter part of 2 Corinthians 5. 21? If 'Christ' be substituted for 'Him' at the end of the verse, does that make it clear that the 'righteousness of Christ' is imputed to the believer?"—KINGSTON, JAMAICA.

THE "Him" at the end of the verse is Christ, but that does not "make it clear that *the righteousness of Christ* is imputed to the believer," by which is meant that His fulfilling of the law is put down to the believer's account. Scripture never says that, and it is not true, though the thought abounds in Bible commentaries. What it does state is that believers are made *the righteousness of God* in Christ. What does this mean? It means that believers are to be the expression of God's own righteousness *in Christ* for ever. They are to be the product, if we may use the term, of the righteousness of God which is revealed in the

gospel (Rom. 1. 17), for it will be verified in them. It is not man's righteousness, for no man had any (Rom. 3. 10), and it is not by the law, either Christ's keeping it or ours, "for the righteousness of God without the law is manifested" (Rom. 3. 21), but it is declared in the fact that God justifies the believer in Jesus, and is just in so doing (verse 26). He imputes righteousness to those who have none of their own, who are in fact ungodly (chapter 4. 5). But the question must arise in every awakened soul, How could God's righteousness be manifested in doing that? for His righteousness is His consistency with all that

He has revealed Himself to be. There must be no clash between His mercy and His holiness. God is love, and must act in love, yet He abhors and hates sin and must punish it. How, then, can He show mercy to sinners and yet judge their sin, how can He justify the ungodly and be just in doing it? He can do this, not because Christ kept the law for us, for He did not keep it for us but for Himself, but because He was delivered for our offences and raised again for our justification.

He did keep the law, He fulfilled every jot and tittle of it. He found His delight in doing it and He showed forth the beauty of it. That was His own personal righteousness as a Man upon earth, and it was without a flaw; but that does not avail for us, nor is that imputed to us. If He had not gone beyond that, He would have abode alone for ever (John 12. 24); we could neither have been in Him nor with Him. What, then, was the value of His life on earth and His unwavering obedience to God, in the matter of our justification? It served to prove that He was without spot, that He knew no sin either in motive or act, and that being sinless and holy He was the one suitable and sufficient sacrifice for our sins. So we read in our verse, God "hath made Him to be sin for us." He was made all that we were when upon the cross, that He might bear the judgment of it all and remove it from God's sight for ever, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him, that we might become in fact all that God could desire us to be in Christ, but in Him raised up from the dead.

Where do we see God's righteousness in its activities? Not at the cross only, where our sin was judged and Jesus died, but also in the raising up of our Lord Jesus Christ from the dead.

God's glory demanded that He should be raised up and that He should go to the Father (John 16. 10). But He has gone into the glory as having made purgation for sins, His exaltation is God's righteous answer to His completed and efficacious sacrifice at Calvary. Now believers are in Him there. They are no longer in Adam, for they are dead with Christ to that old association (Rom. 6.). "We thus judge, that if One died for all, then are all dead," and now in Christ, "which died for them and rose again," those that live are a new creation. They are as Christ is before God. He has become their life, and their righteousness is equal to their life, for Christ is both. This is true of all believers.

When in God's marvellous ways we are clothed upon with our house which God has made, and mortality is swallowed up of life (2 Cor. 5. 1-4), every intelligent creature in the universe will see us not in Adam with the corruptible bodies that we inherited from him, but in Christ, an entirely new creation, with no trace of the old remaining, and beyond the reach of condemnation and death for ever. We shall be there as God's righteousness, it will be fully manifested in us, for we shall be there as those who have been reconciled to God, and entirely for His pleasure and glory, the complete answer to and result of Christ's being made sin for us. The verse in question gives us, we believe, the climax and completion of the great subject of the righteousness of God revealed in the gospel.

The simple meaning of "imputed righteousness" without works, is not that a certain amount of righteousness is transferred from Christ to us, His good reckoned to our account, but that God accounts us righteous by faith: the one who believes is righteous before God.

THE WORD OF GOD AND THE COMING OF THE LORD.—REVELATION 22.

(J. T. MAWSON.)

"I, JESUS, have sent My angel to TESTIFY UNTO YOU THESE THINGS in the churches.

"I TESTIFY unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book . . . if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things that are written in this book.

"HE WHICH TESTIFIETH THESE THINGS saith, Surely I come quickly."

WE do not believe in making much of what may appear to be signs of the coming again of our Lord, for we may be so easily mistaken in these and injure souls by turning them to sensational and passing events rather than to Christ. Our business is to minister the truth as to the One who is coming, to so speak of Him and occupy the hearts of His saints with Himself, that they will long to see Him, and will cry, "Come, Lord Jesus." But there are some signs we cannot evade; they force themselves on our notice continually and shout at us wherever we turn. One of these is the way the Word of God is treated by many who have professed to have heard it, and to have become His servants as a result of it. How presumptuously they treat the Holy Word!

It is JESUS, our Lord, who, in this last chapter of the Revelation, declares Himself to be the Alpha and Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end, who testifies that every word of it is sacred, and not to be tampered with; and solemnly warns those that hear it of the terrible and eternal pains and penalties that those must suffer who dare either to add to it or take from it. But this solemn warning seems to have no weight, and the Lord Jesus Himself seems to have no authority with these men, who set their boasted learning above His Word, and think themselves competent to

criticize it, and to say what of it is truth and what is error, what is the word of God in it and what the ecstatic dreams of fallible men.

To those who are subject to the Lord and to His Word, and delighted to be so because of the joy and blessing that such subjection gives now, and the certainty and hope that it gives as to the future, "the words of the prophecy of this book" are infallible and sure, and so, indeed, are the words of all Scripture. To them this profane and impious tampering with the words of Scripture is a sign of the last times, in which men are casting off the fear of God and despising His Word, and taking "counsel together against the Lord and against His Anointed, saying, Let us break their bands assunder, and cast away their cords from us."

It is by His Word that God holds and exercises the consciences of men, but if they refuse to accept the Word as the Word, and arrogate to themselves the right to choose and refuse those parts of it that suit their moods and whims, what hold has God upon them? They have in this cast away His cords from them and broken His bands assunder, and they imagine that they are free.

This is a sign of the last days, and with it the Lord connects His coming again: "He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly." Shall we not then, as we see His Word so

mishandled, expect Him? When men will not have the Word of God, which is a word of grace and warning, to enlighten and correct and restrain and bless them, but will go their own wilful ways in defiance of His Word and will, is it not then the time for Him to appear who will judge the world in righteousness? And when those who by solemn oath have pledged themselves to be the faithful custodians of His Word are faithlessly treating it as a conglomeration of truth and fable, is it not the time for the Faithful and True Witness to appear? And since the time has come when they will not endure sound doctrine but, having itching ears, heap to themselves teachers, who deny that judgment is coming, and scoff at the thought of God's intervention in the affairs of the world, and are both adding to and taking from—chiefly taking from—the words of the prophecy of this book, is it not the time for Him to fulfil His word, and come quickly?

It is His last word, and is it not as sure as any other word that He has spoken? Shall we accept every other word in this book as the word of God and have a doubt about this? It is His last word, and it is a word from His heart for the heart of His church, His bride, and it is the heart that will understand it and not the head. He had said unto John of the whole book, "These sayings are faithful and true; and the Lord God of the holy prophets sent His angel to show unto His servants the things that must shortly be done. Behold I come quickly: blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book"; and will not he be blessed who keeps this saying, and treasures it as the last word of the heavenly Bridegroom, the bright Morning Star? And what will the response be from the heart that

treasures this saying? There can be but one. "Amen, come, Lord Jesus."

It is His last word in this book in which we hear the thunders of judgment alternate with the thunders of heavenly praise; in which we see the pride and crimes of men challenge the very supremacy of God and call aloud for the wrath that is revealed from heaven against all unrighteousness, and which shall crush them utterly; in which the Lamb girds on His victorious sword and triumphs over all His foes, for He is King of kings and Lord of lords; and in His last words in this book, the voice of judgment changes to words of love; the voice that makes the earth tremble, now speaks in tender tones to the hearts of His saints, that in them there might be awakened a response to His desire, and that that response might find expression in a cry that will be as sweetest music to Him, "Come, Lord Jesus." He has heard this cry from many lips.

"They tasted His love and their souls were
on fire,
While they waited in patience His face to
behold."

Is not this the time when He should hear it afresh? Nothing short of His coming, His presence, can satisfy the hearts of those who know that they are loved by Him. And His coming is drawing nigh. It ever was nigh to His heart; we shall show how near it is to ours by going forth to meet Him with this cry upon our lips.

Let all who love the Lord remember that He cannot come to put the world right and establish God's righteousness in the earth, until He has taken His church, His bride, out of it. We can hasten that glorious day for which all creation groans, by looking earnestly for Him and crying with hearts expectant and fervent, "Come, Lord Jesus."

"THE GRACE OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST."

(W. BRAMWELL DICK.)

Continued from September Number.

"For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though He was rich, yet for your sakes HE BECAME POOR, that ye through His poverty might be rich."—2 Corinthians 8. 9.

II.—"HE BECAME POOR."

THERE are three significant statements in the Holy Scriptures concerning our Lord Jesus Christ.

1. HE "BECAME FLESH."—John 1. 14 (New Trans.).
2. "HE BECAME POOR."—2 Cor. 8. 9.
3. HE "BECAME DEAD."—Rev. 1. 18 (New Trans.).

His becoming flesh was the first step of His becoming poor. We have considered some of His untold riches, and it is in measure as we realize how rich He was that we apprehend how poor He became. Let us read that marvellous portion—Philippians 2. 5-8—and note the seven downward steps that He took. He who, as we reminded ourselves in our last paper, was "in the form of God, equal with God"; He who was so rich.

1. "Made Himself of no reputation";
2. "Took upon Him the form of a servant";
3. "Taking His place in the likeness of men" (New Trans.);
4. Was "found in fashion as a Man";
5. "Humbled Himself";
6. "Became obedient unto death";
7. "Even the death of the cross."

"He became poor." From "the form of God" to "the form of a servant." From "the form of God" to "the likeness of men." From "the form of God" to "the death of the

cross." What a stoop! He "became poor," He "Made Himself of no reputation," or "emptied Himself." He did not abandon His Deity, nor did He lay it aside. Yet He was found here "in the likeness of men." We can truly say to Him:—

"Thou wast the image in man's lowly guise
Of the Invisible to mortal eyes:
Son of His bosom come from heaven above,
We see in Thee incarnate, 'God is love.'"

See how when dealing with His humiliation the Holy Spirit jealously guards the glory of His person; "the form of a servant"; "the likeness of men"; "in fashion as a man." A real man! Yes. Yet different to any man who had ever been on the earth before He came, or who has been on the earth since He went back to heaven.

With reverent, wondering, adoring hearts we follow Him in His descent, and contemplate Him who in very truth "became poor." How poor He was in every sense of the word! Coming into the world, a manger was His cradle (Luke 2. 26). As a Man He was homeless (cf. Matt. 8. 20; John 7. 53; 8. 1), penniless (12. 5), friendless (Mark 14. 50); and His history as a man in this world ended by His being put upon a cross where men heaped upon Him all the contumely of which their wicked nature was capable. Hell exhausted its rage against Him. For our sakes He was forsaken by God. We behold Him upon the cross, with His head bowed in death, and we learn as we could learn nowhere else that "our Lord Jesus Christ though He was rich, for our

sakes *became poor.*" Precious, peerless Saviour! Adorable Lord! Thou blessed Christ of God, we fall at Thy feet and worship Thee! Can we not see in the parable of Ecclesiastes 9. 14, 15 an allusion to *our* Lord Jesus Christ? He was "the poor Man." He was the Wise Man, and He has attracted us to Himself, so that now we love to remember "that same poor Man" who by His wisdom, yea, by His death, has delivered us.

We must not, however, close our meditation on Philippians 2, without, with glad, rejoicing hearts, following Him in the seven upward steps of His glorious ascent:—

1. "God hath highly exalted Him," and
2. "Given Him a Name which is above every name: that
3. "At the Name of Jesus every knee should bow," of
4. "Things in heaven," and
5. "Things in earth," and
6. "Things under the earth"; and that
7. "Every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (verses 9–11).

No longer is He the poor Man, but unspeakable riches are His. Not only because of who He is as the One who "was rich," but because of all that He has acquired on the ground of what He has done. As Man He now occupies the highest place in the glory of God and God Himself has placed Him there. The first man was endowed with riches by the Creator, but aspired to greater riches, even to being as God. He left his first estate in order to attain that, and by God he was debased, and came crashing down to the woeful condition of an outcast from that place of blessedness where he had been supreme. The second Man, who was equal with

God, and who "was rich," came down, "*became poor,*" and "God has exalted," yea, has "highly exalted Him." Oh, the grandeur of it! *Our* Lord Jesus Christ who was rich, who became poor, is now the most highly exalted Person in the universe of God.

Who can tell the riches with which, as Man, He has been endowed? He has been "crowned with glory and honour" (Heb. 2. 9). He has been set in the place of authority as the Administrator of God's scheme of blessing. All things have been put under His feet; and He has been made Head over all things. "In Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily" (Col. 2. 9). He has received the gift of the Assembly, His body, His bride. He will yet exercise His beneficent sway as Messiah over Israel. He shall have the heathen for His inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for His possession (Ps. 2. 8). "He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth" (Ps. 72. 8). He shall be "the Centre and the Sun of the vast universe of bliss." He shall receive the praise of the whole creation when everything that hath breath shall praise the Lord (Ps. 150. 6); and for ever and for ever He shall be the object of universal adoration.

We shall next consider, God willing, His incomparable

"Love that gives not as the world, but shares
All it possesses with its love co-heirs;"

and we shall seek to learn something of our riches. Meanwhile let us delight our souls in Him who was so rich, who *became* so poor, and who is now so rich. Let us, with wondering, worshipping hearts, view Him where He was in "Godhead's fullest glory"; travel in company with Himself whither He went "down to Calvary's depth of

woe"; see Him rise victorious out from among the dead; behold Him "Ascending up far above all heavens, that He might fill all things" (Eph. 4. 10); gaze upon Him there invested with all the wealth of God; and let us prostrate ourselves before Him—"our Lord Jesus Christ."

III.—"THAT YE THROUGH HIS POVERTY MIGHT BE RICH."

What heart can conceive, what pen can set forth, what words can describe the riches of all those who "know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ"? The Old Testament prophet exclaimed:

"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."

The New Testament apostle has added:

"But God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God" (1 Cor. 2. 9, 10).

It is evident, therefore, that these riches are to be known and enjoyed, and that the Holy Spirit would seek to lead us into the knowledge and enjoyment of them, though it will take all eternity to explore them. In our last meditation we considered some of the riches of our Lord Jesus Christ. We use the word 'some' advisedly, for, in telling us of His riches, the Holy Spirit speaks of "*THE UNSEARCHABLE RICHES OF CHRIST*" (Eph. 3. 8). As we think of these we feel that no word could more aptly describe them, they are indeed unsearchable; and as we are reminded that it is the riches of "our Lord Jesus Christ" of which the divine author thus writes, our hearts go out afresh to Himself in inexpressible delight and in unutterable praise and worship. But just

here there bursts upon us this marvellous fact that His riches are our riches, that all that with which He has been invested as Man He shares with us. It is positively staggering, and altogether beyond the grasp of the natural mind, but it is true, praise God, it is true! Let us see! We are "children of God; and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ" (Rom. viii. 16, 17). To be the heir of a multi-millionaire would be considered in the world an enviable position. To be the heir of an earthly potentate would be reckoned the highest position next to the throne, but we are "*HEIRS OF GOD.*" This calls for no comment—just let the marvellous fact sink into our souls. We have also received sonship:

"And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father. Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ" (Gal. 4. 6, 7). We are set in this wonderful position of sons before the Father's face, clothed with all the dignity which belongs to those who are heirs of God, and to whom it is given to share all the wealth of heaven.

The Father finds His delight in us; the measure of His delight in Christ—if we can speak of measure—is the measure of His delight in us, and His joy is to bestow upon us His riches. But there is still more to be told: we are the bride of Christ. We have been brought into this relationship of holy intimacy, one with Himself, part of Himself, united to Himself, to be by His side, His spotless bride, resplendent with His beauty, for the joy and delight of His heart through God's eternal day. The extent of our riches is summed up in that comprehensive word in which the inspired apostle,

bursting forth into a pæan of praise exclaimed :—

“ Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with *all spiritual blessings* in heavenly places in Christ ” (Eph. 1. 3).

Enumerate all the spiritual blessings that are ours in Christ ; tell us the extent of “ the unsearchable riches of Christ,” and then, not till then, shall we know the immensity of our riches. Then as we read of the grand consummation of it all we learn that God has done it in order :

“ That in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus ” (Eph. 2. 7).

What a display will that be when those who were considered of no account in this world will be displayed before the universe as sons of God, and sharers with Christ in all the wealth of heaven ! Then it will be seen that what God has wrought has been *of Himself, from Himself, for Himself* ; and there will be the ascription of praise *to Himself* :

“ To Him be glory in the assembly in Christ Jesus unto all generations of the age of ages. Amen ” (Eph. 3. 21, New Trans.).

Let us never forget, however, as we revel in our riches, that it is through the poverty of “ our Lord Jesus Christ ” that we have been made rich. We had still been in the poverty, the beggary, the rags and ruin of the far country, had not He become poor. We had still been “ dead in trespasses and in sins ” had not He

“ Come from Godhead’s fullest glory,
Down to Calvary’s depth of woe.”

We have said it over and over again, and we cannot repeat it too often, He who was so rich became so poor. We now enjoy our riches, but we must not forget His poverty. We delight in all

that He has secured, but we shall ever remember what it cost Him to secure it. Blessed Lord ! Thou wast rich ; Thou did’st become poor ; Thou art rich ; and we are enriched with Thy riches. How our hearts do praise Thee, *our Lord Jesus Christ* !

Before we close we want to ask ourselves—Are we in the good of our riches ? Are we enjoying them ? Are we living up to our income ? Are we walking in the dignity of those whose riches are inexhaustible ? If so, the riches of the world will not attract us, and the greatest honour that the world might seek to confer—we will find it beneath our dignity to accept.

Alas ! Have we not to confess that though such riches belong to us we often live pauper-like lives ? One of the poets tells of a nobleman, who, posing as a man of humble birth, paid court to a peasant girl in a village whither he had gone to paint. They were married and he took her home to what she had supposed would be a nice little cottage, but which turned out to be a palatial mansion. He was loving, kind, attentive, all that a husband could be, but she was never at home there, and in course of time she declined and died. She had not been born into these circumstances and she was unable to enjoy them. We *have* been born into our circumstances, for we are children of God, sons of God, made meet to be the bride of Christ ; we have got a nature that can *only* enjoy the riches that are ours in Christ ; then shame on us if we are not enjoying them more and more as the days go by.

As we muse upon His riches, His poverty, our riches, may our hearts rise to Him in deepest praise ; and may there be that practical answer on our part that shall bring joy to His heart and glory to His Name !

Addresses at High Leigh, August 23-28—continued.

STRIVING FOR THE MASTERY.

(ARTHUR F. POLLOCK.)

Read 1 Corinthians 9. 24-10. 14.

OUR aim should be to excel. The Apostle Paul in our Scripture urges us so to run that we may obtain. On first thoughts ambition might be considered out of place in the Christian profession, for has it not often done much mischief in the House of God? It has, when the words of the Lord have been forgotten: "Whosoever will be chief among you let him be your servant;" but with those words not in our heads only but in our hearts we may be ambitious to excel, that with us our Lord may be well pleased.

If we would excel, what is the way? Self-discipline must not be overlooked. "Every one that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things," or as the French translation gives it, "puts himself under a régime"—the body kept in subjection as the servant and not the master, so that it may be the vehicle by which we carry out the will of the Lord. Paul, as is constantly the case, shows himself as an example of what he exhorts others. He says, "I therefore run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air, but I keep under my body." Do you realize, Christian, that your life is a race and a conflict? Wake up then, and follow Paul's example; be wholly set to win the prize, and keep a firm hand on your body and bring it into subjection. Then you will be able to say in your measure when the race is run and the conflict over, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith." Thank God for all the devoted, whole-hearted men and women who are on that line.

Now if Paul gives himself as an example as to how it is to be done, he

follows this with a solemn example of how easy it is to fail. He tells us of the woeful failure of the Israelites in the wilderness and says, "Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come." How careful God must be of us, since He has recorded these solemn examples of failure for our warning. Wise men and women will give heed to them. We read: "*But with many of them God was not well pleased: for they were overthrown in the wilderness.*" God had brought them out of the house of bondage, and had said, "I will take you to Me for a people . . . and I will bring you in" (Exod. 6. 6-8). It was between the bringing out and the bringing in that they were tested, and though God had made every provision for the time that intervened, they failed and displeased Him. They might have crossed the Jordan and entered Canaan as triumphantly as they crossed the Red Sea and witnessed the overthrow of their Egyptian oppressors, but they were overthrown in the wilderness. They were unfaithful to God's call and allowed all sorts of things to hinder them, and in this they are a warning to us.

We have been called out of the world to the heavenly Canaan—the race lies between the two, and the fighting; and abundant provision is ours, spiritual food, drink, guidance and protection. In pressing on in the race we shall be well-pleasing to Him who has called us, and not otherwise. May the love of Christ constrain us to this. If we can say, He "loved me and gave Himself for me," then the life we live will be by the faith of the Son of God, and it

is in that life that we excel and win the prize. We have been baptized unto Him, who is our great Leader, as Moses led Israel, and if we are true to our baptism we shall follow Him and devote ourselves to His interests.

Let us see how Israel was tempted and fell. "*And the mixt multitude that was among them fell a lusting; and the children of Israel also wept again, and said, Who shall give us flesh to eat?*" They forgot the slavery that went with these things, and God gave them their request, but sent leanness into their souls. It is worthy of note that the lusting began with the mixt multitude and extended to the children of Israel. There is a great mixture in the professing church of God to-day. The mixt multitude—a baptized profession—are within it, and having no vital link with Christ they have no taste for Him and His things; they have brought their lusts for evil things with them, and we need to beware lest we become like them: "Evil communications corrupt good manners." Our preservation lies in cherishing and cultivating the appetite for the things of Christ which God gave to us in the new birth.

Then we are exhorted, "*Neither be ye idolaters, as were some of them; as it is written, The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play.*" Is not this an apt description of the people of the present day, which seems given over to feasting, and pleasure and sport? It is one of the signs of the last days, in which men are lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God. It was during the absence of Moses on the mount that this idolatry broke out in Israel (see Exod. 32.). Our Lord is absent and we have the doctrine of His coming again, but is it a living hope? Are we expecting Him? Or are we being affected by the spirit of the worldly and making ourselves

happy in worldly things during His absence and forgetting that we are His witnesses, and forgetting that He has told us to watch? When the servant said in his heart, "My Lord delayeth His coming," his conduct became very defective, but everyone "that hath this hope in Him purifieth himself, even as He is pure." Our preservation from this snare is to have Christ and His coming as living realities before our souls.

Next we read, "*Neither let us commit fornication, as some of them committed, and fell in one day three and twenty thousand.*" This is the strong word used for the alliance of Israel with the daughters' of Moab. Not fornication in its strict sense (though we need to take heed to that in these days of increasing laxity of morals), but the formation of links in marriage with those with whom God had forbidden alliances. How the ambition of many a Christian to be here for God has been blighted by a partnership in marriage or business with unbelievers, the exhortation "Be not unequally yoked" (2 Cor. 6. 14) having been ignored. James is very strong when he says, "Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God?" (James 4. 4). It is disloyalty and unfaithfulness to the Lord who gave Himself for us and unto whom we have been baptized. Let us then take heed lest we lose thus our ambition to be for Christ.

"*Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted and were destroyed of serpents.*" The people murmured saying, "there is no bread, neither is there any water; and our soul loatheth this light bread." Have we lost the taste for the heavenly manna? Then indeed our souls have declined. We can test our spiritual state by the

measure of our eagerness to read the Holy Scriptures. Doubtless we do well to have general reading, but let us beware of any book that robs us of our appetite for the Word of God. Let us be sufficiently set for God, that we shall at once lay aside any reading from which we cannot turn with an eager desire to read the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make us wise unto salvation.

Then finally the apostle writes, "*Neither murmur ye, as some of them also murmured and were destroyed of the destroyer.*" Ten of the twelve spies had brought back an evil report, saying, "We be not able to go up against the people, for they are stronger than we" (Num. 13. 31). "Let us make a captain, and let us return into Egypt" (Num. 14. 4). In this day we find those who say that the Scripture sets too high a standard, the difficulties of attainment are too great to be overcome, and they drop back to that which is typified by Egypt. One who had for many years been in the front of the Christian warfare, but who has

apparently been overcome by this world, and given up his public witness, spoke to me of a very devoted and spiritual brother, remarking what a wonderful Christian he is, "But," said he, "the ideal he is going in for is an impossible one." And so apparently he seems to be content with something very far short of what was once his ambition. Is he not saving his life in this world and losing it as regards the future?

Let us then listen to the apostle as he says, "*Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall,*" and take courage and go forward in positive testimony, giving our lives devotedly to His service, as we read again, "God is faithful." "Wherefore, my beloved, flee from idolatry." And let our growing ambition be to bring all into subjection to the Lord, that we may be well pleasing to Him, so that in increasing measure we may answer to the exhortation, "Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do *all* to the glory of God" (1 Cor. 10. 12, 13, 31).

IN THE KINGDOM OF GOD.

(FRANK B. HOLE.)

Romans 12. 1-11.

YESTERDAY this Scripture somehow began to take shape in my mind as my message for you, and last night I had it very definitely confirmed. I was visiting a dying brother, a man who has not played a very conspicuous or great part in Christian work—he has just pegged away and served the Lord for a good many years in his own small corner. When I came to leave him I said, "Now I am going back to High Leigh where many young Christians are gathered." He said, "Tell them there are some little jobs left for them to do—it is not only the great jobs but the little jobs." He has been

in the building trade. "Tell them to do the little jobs well and clear up as they go along." Well, I will hand on his message to you, my young brethren, to-night. There is a great tendency to overlook the little jobs; they are not less important than the big ones, as our Scripture shows.

We are reminded here that we are one body in Christ and hence we all have different functions, and the great thing is for each to fulfil his own part, whether apparently big or little. In connection with the divine scheme of things it is necessary not only to do what the Lord will have us do but to

do it in the right way. You will notice all down through these verses that seems to be *the* point. Let the prophet by all means prophesy, but prophesy according to the measure of faith—or the minister, let him wait on his ministering—or the teacher on his teaching, or the exhorter on his exhortations—or he that giveth let him give with simplicity. The ruling is to be done with diligence—he who shows mercy is to do it with cheerfulness. To do not only spiritual things but to do them in a spiritual way; material things also are to be done in a spiritual way—even your giving must be done in a spiritual way. That seems to be the great point in this passage. The fact is that the apostle is bringing home to the believers in Rome what it really means to be in the Kingdom of God. You may remember that when he reviews his ministry before the Ephesian elders he seems to divide it into three parts. I have preached the gospel of the grace of God. That has been the first great item in my ministry. But then he speaks of going among them all—the circle of the saints—preaching the Kingdom of God. Thirdly he speaks of his faithfulness in not shunning to declare unto them the whole counsel of God. We get the gospel of God, the Kingdom of God, and the counsel of God, and we must not omit the one in the middle. The Kingdom of God means not only that the rejected Jesus is the rightful King, and that the hour is coming when He will take His throne, but the point is, everywhere he went among the saints he took care to make them to see the bearing of the truth that he unfolded. He said, Brethren, you have been brought into the divine kingdom, subjects of divine birth—you are under divine rule—the sway of God has been established in your hearts and that means this, and this, and this. He

showed them what it meant. Personally I am heartily glad for the plain words that have been spoken to-night; it is a note that has been missing; we have not had the Kingdom of God pressed as it ought to have been. There are these heavenly things, but what is the reflex light they cast upon us here? The Apostle Paul preached the Kingdom of God and brought the truth to bear in a practical fashion. You may depend upon it, it is that we want to-day. Having pointed out the way in which he is setting the Kingdom of God before the Roman believers, he shows them the alteration it is going to make in their lives, the new character coming out in them as subjects of the kingdom. At the beginning of the chapter we get that which underlies all this—what it is that is going to enable us to carry out these exhortations. A moment has to be reached in our histories when our hearts, being constrained by the mercies of God—referring to the latter part of Romans II.—absolutely surrender themselves to Him.

We are the subjects of divine mercy. We deserved nothing, but we are enriched with practically everything. If the sense of divine mercy takes possession of our hearts, then we shall see that our bodies, which were the vehicles in which sin wrought and dominated us—that were used by us to express all our sinful wilfulness—we must now present as a living sacrifice, something wholly and livingly devoted to God—to be absolutely at His disposal, set apart for Him and His service and acceptable to God, seeing it is our reasonable and intelligent service. In the sixth chapter, where we get very similar truth, I believe we get the verb yield used in a twofold way—first, the Kingdom as an accomplished fact, absolutely yielded, then secondly in a more present sense, going

on yielding. Has a moment ever been reached in our histories when we have been brought to the point of presenting our bodies a living sacrifice—something now devoted to God—set apart for His use, never to be recalled? It is our only reasonable service. That is the body—the next verse speaks about our mind. Be not conformed to this world—be not fashioned according to this age. You say, He is going to talk now about our dress. Well, suppose I do! I know we are very largely the victims of the fashions, yet we should be careful to dress as becomes godliness. But after all it is not primarily a matter of dress, it is a matter of the mind. “Be not fashioned according to this age: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind.” We get down beneath that question to a more fundamental matter. Be not fashioned in your mind according to this age. There are terrible fashions in the mind regions—the scientific world is full of fashions. Scientists seem to be the greatest devotees of the goddess fashion that you can find anywhere. No Parisian fashions exert their sway over minds in the way that the scientific fashions do. We are not to be fashioned according to this age, but rather transformed; we are to be non-conformists in this sense, not reformists—but transformed by the renewing of our minds. God begins at the citadel, in the very centre of our beings. Some may say, Be practical and tell us how to get our minds renewed. Soak them in the Word of God prayerfully, in dependence upon the Spirit of God. As we progress and prayerfully study the Holy Book it is wonderful how our minds get shaped according to God. We unlearn our own thoughts, we begin to imbibe divine

thoughts. Thus our minds are renewed and we prove what is the good and acceptable and perfect will of God. Well, we say, it is such a perplexing thing to decide, what is this will of God? The point here is not that you may discover, but that you may *prove* the will of God. How do you prove a thing? You put it to the test. A person tells you that if you put certain chemicals together they act in a certain way—you prove and test it and it works. It is not mere theory, it is proven in every day life—it is a practical proposition. In the same way you and I are to prove what is the will of God, and as we prove what it is we shall discover it is good, acceptable and perfect. We shall of course learn incidentally that our own wills are bad, and imperfect and very disastrous. Naturally we love our own wills—you and I are to have our wills removed that we may prove and carry out in practice what is the good and acceptable and perfect will of God. How much is our Christianity purely a theoretical thing? How much have we proved, experimentally proved, the blessedness of the will of God? We shall experience it if we present our bodies a living sacrifice to Him, and if our minds are not dominated by what the world thinks.

We come then under the influence of the Word of God. We think, reverently, His thoughts after Him, and are subject to Him. Our minds renewed, our bodies presented as living sacrifices, all these lovely things detailed in the chapter are the outflow. If we have not had such a moment in our histories, may the Lord give us the joy of having such a moment and to have it before we sleep to-night, for His Name's sake.

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

THE RETREAT.

(DAVID ROS)

"He said unto them, Come and see They came and saw where He dwelt, and *ABODE WITH HIM* that day"—John 1. 39.

"He that *ABIDETH IN ME*, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit"—John 15. 5.

"*CONTINUE YE IN MY LOVE*"—John 15. 9.

AS a background to my subject I will read from the Song of Solomon (chapter 2. 8-13).

In these meetings we have been stressing the fact that Christian life is a conflict. To-night two lines of a hymn are running in my mind—

"Go forth and serve Thee while 'tis day,
Nor leave our sweet retreat"

It is the retreat I want to speak about. Last night reference was made to Bunyan's famous allegory, *The Pilgrim's Progress*. That allegory was suggested to him by one of the greatest poems of our English language: Spenser's *Faerie Queene*.

In that poem the Christian knight is clad in all the armour of Ephesians 6 Toward the end of it he faces a mighty monster, and Spenser in graphic language describes a terrible fight that for three days was waged between the dragon and the Christian knight. After a long and strenuous encounter in which the dragon poured forth fire from its mouth, the tried and tired warrior was almost vanquished, when suddenly he slipped backwards and the tree of life was there, and that night he was refreshed by the tree of life. From the tree of life there flowed a balm to heal all his wounds and fill him with strength, and the next day he was ready for the fray; and so it happened three days, until at last the mighty monster was overcome. You are called to conflict, but you will not be of much use in it if you do not know the other side of life, the retreat and resources of it.

Cultivate the devotional side of your

Christian life. Your life is more than a fight, it is to be a blessed fellowship with the Son of God. He would have you know Him so well that you can speak of Him as "My Beloved"—the voice of my Beloved is heard; He sheweth Himself to those who love Him and says, "Arise, my love, and come away." The Lord desires your heart's affection. He wants your company; and for you it is only as you seek the sweet retreat of His presence that He can administer the balm to heal the wounds that you have got in the conflict for Him, and there only you will find the strength to go forth and serve Him and stand up without fear to all the fiery darts of the wicked one

It is interesting to see what the first words of our blessed Lord are that are recorded in each Gospel—words in keeping with the character of the Gospel in which they occur. In Matthew, where the Lord is introduced as the King who shall set up the kingdom of righteousness, He says, "Suffer it to be so now, for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness" In the second Gospel, where He appears as the Servant of God and man, He proceeds to His ministry without delay, preaching repentance—"Repent ye, and believe the gospel." In the Gospel of Luke the first words we read as falling from His lips are, "Wist ye not that I must be about My Father's business?" He is there as the perfect man, whose life was to be in complete obedience to the Father; and here in John's Gospel His first words are an invitation for us to "Come and see"

where He dwells. We are not told whether it was a tent or a house, and that was of no account—it was the person that made the place; and to be with Him was the desire of these men, as I hope it is ours.

His dwelling-place was in the Father's bosom. "No man hath seen God at any time: the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him." In the eighth chapter of Proverbs we read: "Then I was as one brought up with Him." In the German translation by J. N. D. it reads, "I was a bosom-child." He dwelt from all eternity in the unbroken rest of divine love with His Father, and He says to us, "Come and see." Oh, brethren, that we might draw near, with reverence and yet boldness, for we are invited to do so, because the Beloved says, "Come and see."

What was it that induced these two disciples to follow Jesus, and what is it that is going to induce us to follow Him? It is His attractiveness and beauty. John the Baptist stood still, and looking upon Jesus as He walked, he said, "Behold the Lamb of God." Did you ever look upon Jesus as He walked? Four views we have of Him in our Bible as He walks among men. We view Him in all His kingly majesty and meekness, and the greatness of His victory over death in the pages of the Gospel of Matthew. We look upon Him as He walked as the perfect ideal servant always doing the will of God—the Only Son of God, whose motto really and truly was what the motto of our Prince of Wales is, "Ich dien"—I serve. That is the Gospel of Mark. Nowhere is He seen more attractively presented than in the Gospel of Luke (the French infidel, Renan, confessed that Luke's Gospel is the most beautiful writing in the world's literature), but to us it is the

person of our Lord that makes it beautiful. There we trace the footsteps of the tender, loving Son of Man who treated with infinite kindness the sick and all that were afflicted; who knew what it was to heal the sorrow of a father grieving for his only boy, or a father grieving for his little daughter; and knew how to comfort a mother bearing to the grave her only son; and who, best of all, could relieve sin-burdened souls with the words, "Thy sins are forgiven thee." But what shall we say as we see Him walk as the Son of God, the Word become flesh? He "dwelt among us, full of grace and truth" and fully revealed the heart of the Father who sent Him. That is John's Gospel. If we contemplate Him as He walks with the Baptist we bow before Him in admiration and worship, and then call others to behold Him. I believe that our testimony will have the same effect as it had here—the two disciples left John and followed Jesus, and "they came, and saw where He dwelt, and abode with Him that day."

It is our privilege to *abide with Him*, but there is more, we are to *abide in Him*. The figure is taken from the vine and the branches. Apart from the stem of the vine the branch would wither and no fruit could be produced, and we must abide consciously in communion with the One from whom all life and grace comes for fruit-bearing; and He said, "Herein is My Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit." God had planted a vine, but how it must have grieved His heart when He had to say, "Israel is an empty vine, he bringeth forth fruit unto himself"—nothing for God, nothing but leaves. But at last God looked down upon this world and saw the fruit that delighted His heart and glorified His Name in Jesus, and it is

our privilege here and now to be bringing forth fruit for the gratification of the heart of God, and we shall as we abide in Christ. Are we living for the gratification of our own desires, or are we realizing that it is our privilege to live here for the gratification of the heart of God? Think of the joy that comes to the owner of an orchard when the fruit appears. I once saw an orchard of 1500 cherry trees—what a beautiful sight it was in the springtime—one mass of white blossom, but that would not satisfy the owner. It is not the blossoms that the owner is looking for, but the time of fruit. "Herein is My Father glorified that ye bear much fruit." How can fruit be brought to perfection? "Except ye abide in Me"—all the sap, the nourishment, the strength for fruit-bearing must be drawn from Him. There is no fruit for God apart from abiding in Him, for "without Me ye can do nothing."

My third text is: "As the Father hath loved Me, so have I loved you: (continue) *abide ye in My love.*" It is rather unfortunate that this favourite word of the writer, John, has been translated into the various English words—dwell, continue, abide, remain—four or five different English words are used to translate this one Greek word—a word thoroughly in keeping

with the character of John's writing: the man who laid his head on the bosom of eternal love, on the bosom of Him who was "the bosom child" of the Father's love. And what is the measure of the love in which we are to abide? The measure of His love to us is the love of the Father to the Son—and that is immeasurable and eternal. We are loved with an immeasurable and eternal love, and in it we are to abide. The Father had every reason to love the Son. He knew Him and loved Him with an infinite love, and He was worthy of it. And the Son knows us, and loves us. Why? Ah, that's the mystery that fills us with wonder. And the love wherewith He loves us is as immeasurable and changeless as His Father's love to Him. This is our "sweet retreat." Are we going to leave it?

The advantage is we can carry it with us. During one of the prolonged battles of the Great War, when the guns were thundering and the fury of hell seemed to be let loose, there was heard the singing of a lark. We have been called to a great conflict, and yet in the midst of it all there may be the singing of the birds, and the voice of the turtle-dove, and our hearts may be kept in the serenity and joy as we abide in His love which is stronger than death.

"Shew me Thy ways, O Lord; teach me Thy paths. Lead me in Thy truth and teach me: for Thou art the GOD OF MY SALVATION; on Thee do I wait all the day. Remember, O Lord, Thy tender mercies and lovingkindnesses; for they have been ever of old."

HOW good to have the requests to make of Him, which, if He but remember His own perfections, He will surely grant! And in all the matter of salvation, which is the matter here, this is assuredly the case. Salvation is the issue of His own counsels, the outflow of His love, the very display of His own righteousness and holiness. Thus all that He is pledges itself at once to the lost one who puts himself as such into His hands for the fulfilment in him of His glorious purpose.

"REJOICE IN THE LORD."

(J. A. TRENCH.)

The Hindrances and Helps.

An Address given in London in 1910.

Read Philippians 3. 1-21; 4. 4-7.

THERE is no part of the Word of God so stamped with joy as the Epistle to the Philippians, and yet it is the epistle of the Christian's path on earth. It shows us Christ as the power and joy of going on through the daily circumstances of the path, whatever they may be. This is not presented in doctrine; if it had been we might have said that it is all very fine in theory but it won't work. But the Spirit of God has presented this life of divine and heavenly joy on earth in the experience of a man preserved by the power of God. Having been enabled by infinite grace to live out this life of joy in his own experience, he was inspired to give us that experience by the Spirit of God. It is not a joy that depends upon the circumstances of the path. We are never left to be dependent on our circumstances for joy. The key-note of the epistle is, "My brethren, rejoice in the Lord." It is the blessed Lord Himself who is the source of the joy that comes out in the experience of Paul, when his circumstances were anything but joyful. To be imprisoned four years, chained to the soldier who kept him! Can you imagine what such an existence must have been for a man of such fine-strung sensibilities as Paul? And not merely that, but all going wrong in the assemblies. That was Paul's deepest interest upon earth, because it is Christ's.

The resources that were available for this life of joy in him are available for us to-day. Have we taken it to heart that it is the Lord's will that we should "rejoice in the Lord"? That is the only normal Christian state.

"Finally," as if it were the last word he was going to say (I suppose he did think he would close his epistle at this part), "Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord." But we find the Spirit of God leads him to write on, and it is blessed for us he was so led, because we find he is led to glance at the various hindrances to the realization of this blessed life of divine joy upon earth; not to occupy us with the hindrances but with the power to carry us on in spite of every hindrance.

First of all, as to the position of the Christian. "*Beware of dogs*," he says, "*beware of evil workers, beware of* (he was evidently going to say circumcision, but he used a term of reproach indicating the partial cutting instead of complete cutting—he is inspired to reserve that word now for the Christian)—"*beware of concision, for we are of the circumcision.*" "We are of the circumcision." How and why? Because through infinite grace we have been brought to see what we are in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, and unreservedly to give ourselves up as only fit for the judgment of God. All we are has come under God's judgment as carried out in the death of Christ, and this leaves room for the next thing, we worship by the Spirit of God, not by any machinery of the flesh, but by the Spirit of God. The blessed Spirit of God is the power of worship, and rejoicing in Christ Jesus is the spring of worship.

THE FIRST GREAT HINDRANCE.

Now he glances at the first great hindrance to the realization of this blessed life of joy, which is "confidence

in the flesh." Religious flesh, that is the first great hindrance. There is no greater, and I say religious flesh because though "that which is born of the flesh, is flesh," and there is no real difference before God in its character, yet there is a difference in our practical experience of it. If a man converted out of open profligacy is tempted to look back at what he was, he does so with a shudder and with a deep sense of all that infinite grace has delivered him from; but not so with one who like Saul of Tarsus had long cultivated the flesh and was blameless as touching the righteousness of the law, who had been preserved from the outward sin and had a high place in the estimation of his fellows. The danger in such a case is lest the eye should be turned back upon self and be occupied with any supposed gain made in a religious reputation. Paul is speaking of what he knew experimentally. "Though I also might have confidence in the flesh. If any man thinketh himself that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more." And then we find the things that he could look back upon. He says of himself, "*Touching the righteousness of the law, blameless.*" Blameless in outward life, we learn from one of his sentences in the Acts that he was a strictly conscientious man, and we learn from these verses he was the pink of perfection, he was an earnestly religious man, there was no one to come up to him in the way he had cultivated the flesh. But, what did it all count before God? What a discovery he made that day when he was on his way from Jerusalem to Damascus to track the lowly followers of Christ to prison and death, when a light above the brightness of the sun broke him down to the earth, and he found himself to be the most avowed enemy of the Lord Jesus Christ. That is what becomes of the flesh and its cultivation.

He was occupied with seeking to blot the very memory of the name of Jesus Christ out of the earth. How the whole system tottered down in that moment! The axe was laid at the root of things then, and he says, "What things were gain to me I counted loss for Christ, I do count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus, my Lord." And it was not only in the first flush of that wonderful revelation of Christ to his soul that he counted all that had been gain to him but loss, but there remained with him the sense of the worthlessness of everything out of Christ. "*Yea, I do count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things.*" The test had come and he had stood it. Now what does he think of his loss? He counts it only as refuse that he may win Christ.

I pray that we may get hold of what is presented as the power and practical deliverance from all that line of self-occupation that has been such a snare to many of us. "That I may win Christ"—reach Him in actual presence in glory. "*That I may win Christ, and be found in Him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith.*" Instead of his eye turning in upon self, and instead of looking back to all he had gained for himself among his fellows, by the earnest cultivation of the flesh, he is filled with the thought of being found in Christ in divine righteousness before God, in a righteousness wholly of God, and it only became his through faith in Christ Jesus, nothing of self entered there.

THE NEXT GREAT HINDRANCE.

The next great hindrance as it comes before him is the sin that

surrounds us in this world. How is this hindrance to be met? It is met in the power of that which is before us, all that which the heart sets before it as its object. "*That I may know Him.*" But, you say, has he not just told us he had suffered the loss of all things for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus, the Lord, and that he was able to look at his loss as refuse? How can he say, "That I may know Him"? Who was there ever that knew Christ as he knew him? The knowledge of Christ has this character. The more we know the more we want to know, and nothing can satisfy the heart that knows Him but to know Him better. God knows how, in His grace, to awaken the longings in order that He may come in with His own blessed satisfiyings. He satisfies longing souls. As surely as He awakens the longing in a soul it is that He may satisfy it, and as it is satisfied there is a necessity for deeper satisfaction and so the growth of our souls is carried on. "*That I may know Him and the power of His resurrection.*" For what? That his blessing may be more assured? No, but for fellowship with Christ Jesus, his Lord, to be conformed unto His death, that he may be able to go down more completely into the path of being identified with the Lord Jesus Christ in His rejection here, with nothing but a martyr's death before him. He says he is looking forward to his death. Very beautiful it is to see this in Paul, but it is not presented to us as a beautiful picture to admire in him, but he is inspired to set before us what is true, proper, normal, Christian experience. I do not mean by that that it is the experience of every Christian, but it is the only true, proper Christian experience.

"*If anyway I arrive at resurrection from among the dead.*" Pressing on

amongst things here, that is the goal of his soul. To be raised out of the dead in Christ, conformed to His glory. That is what is before the Lord's servant. He is not seeking a good situation here; there was a finer than that before him. He was pressing on to reach full conformity to Christ in glory, to be raised up from amongst the dead to be like Christ. That was the end of his path. You say, "Does that mean he was uncertain about reaching the end?" "No," he says, "if by any means I may arrive at resurrection from amongst the dead," that is, his eye is so bent on the end of the path that he does not care what is the character of the way that leads there. It may be smooth, it may be rough, it may be long or it may be short, but he is not occupied with the way but the end of the way, to be raised up from amongst the dead to be like Christ. Oh, what superiority was this over everything the god of this world could offer to men in this world! If only our souls were filled with what the apostle has before him here! Pressing on through everything here to reach that glorious goal! "Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect" (because there is no perfection as to condition known to Scripture short of reaching Christ in glory), "*but I follow after if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus.*" You must not think that he is speaking of mental apprehension of things. He is using the word that is now, so far as I know, only used in the language of the police court. We know what is meant by a policeman "apprehending" a man. "That I may lay hold." "If by any means I may lay hold of that for which Christ has laid hold of me." Why did the Lord lay hold of you and me? When the arrow of conviction first went to your conscience; when

the first ray of divine light first illuminated the darkness of your soul, what did the Lord lay hold of you for? Nothing short of being like Himself in the glory. That is what we are saved for. "I follow after if that I may lay hold of that for which Christ has laid hold of me." "Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended, but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind." How far do we know the power of that simple concentration of heart and mind upon the object God has set before us?

He had not many irons in the fire. "This one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind." He is so bent upon reaching the goal that he is not occupied with the milestones. He does not stop to measure the distance he has traversed nor what is yet to be traversed. His whole mind and heart are concentrated upon the end of the way. "*Forgetting those things which are behind,*" not dwelling upon the victories of the past, "*and reaching forth.*" He is using the strongest word in the language. It is a word that expresses the attitude of a man running a race—his head and neck reached out and the rest of his body behind.

THE POWER THAT DELIVERS.

"*Reaching forth to those things which are before.*" Here we find the power to deliver us from the things of this world. Have "the things that are before" their place in our souls? What holy energy it would impart to the life if only the things that are before, that God has set before us, were fully before our own souls for ourselves! "I press toward the goal for the prize of the calling on high of God, in Christ Jesus. The goal was Christ, and the prize was Christ. *Let us, therefore, as many as be perfect be thus minded.*" But, you say, I thought he said, "Not as though I were perfect." But in one

case he is speaking of perfection in condition and there can be no perfection in condition short of reaching Christ in glory. Now he is speaking of the place of the Christian in Christ before God, and he could not be more perfect as to his position. Nobody could be more perfect as to his position. But what he wants now is that those who are in the faith of their souls in Christ Jesus should be minded, as the apostle was minded, to press on to the things before, to reach the glorious goal instead of being attracted by the hundred and one things the enemy can spread out before our minds. I don't know whether we estimate aright the power of what we have set before us, the power of an Object worthy to control all hearts. Mr. Darby used to illustrate it by a mother who hears her child is run over. She runs to reach her child. She is not conscious of the goods in the shop windows. She is not trying to pass this thing and that, she is not conscious they are there. She has an object before her heart that engrosses her soul, to reach her child. Is Christ the Object to engross the soul? If only He was before the soul, shining in all His blessed excellency and glory before the soul, we should not have much difficulty in passing things by which the enemy seeks to attract us in the scene of His rejection. It would not be an effort to give up this or that, and what satisfaction comes with it! Where is the satisfaction to be found like that of a heart that is thus filled with the things that are before, with the glorious goal God has set before us, with Christ in glory, to reach Him instead of anything this side of the goal? "*Let us, therefore, as many as be perfect, be like minded.*" He won't let down the true mind of the Christian to anything below the standard. If you are not in the same mind as the apostle, if you have not grasped

the true proper object that God has set before the Christian, God will reveal it to you.

Then the last, "*Whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule.*" It might be thought perhaps, "I have only to go on myself and not mind anybody else." But that is not Christianity at all, because Christianity teaches me to think of everybody but myself.

THE TRUE PROPER CHRISTIAN LIFE.

It may come to it at last, you have to go on alone, but not before you have tried by every means and resource of faith to draw on the Lord's beloved ones with yourself in this path of pressing on to reach Christ. "Brethren, be followers together with me." Not admirers, but followers together with me, etc. Here is a sign of true proper Christian life. "Many walk of whom I have told you," etc. They are enemies of the cross. It does not say they are enemies of Christ, they profess to be His friends. The cross is the power of Christianity that separates from the flesh, and the world and the devil and the devil's things. "They are enemies of the Cross of Christ, whose end is destruction, whose god is their belly . . . who mind earthly things." You say he is speaking of mere professing Christians; that would not mean you at all. He does not tell you anything of the true relations of these people with God; what he judges is from their outward course, and nothing can be more solemn, and it is given for each of our consciences. They were inside the Christian circle because of course he is not speaking of heathens, but he is speaking of professing Christians minding earthly things. That was a terrible thing, and that was the road to destruction. If the Lord's beloved ones get on that road they will

be delivered out of it before the end, but the path that minds earthly things ends in destruction. What have we been minding to-day?

"*For our conversation is in heaven.*" It is a difficult word to represent in English, it might be more literal as "citizenship." But this is such a cold thing in English, but in Greece a man's citizenship was his deepest interest in life and came before all else. Therefore the Spirit of God could take up the word, "Our citizenship is in heaven." Its deepest springs are in heaven. So we are only looking for the Lord Jesus Christ to change our bodies of humiliation into bodies of glory. How beautiful it is! He has spoken of resurrection from amongst the dead, because martyrdom was impending in his case, but he doesn't close without showing you how we may reach the goal without death. It is ever so in Scripture. Whenever you find anything about death you will always find very soon after the true proper hope of the Christian, and that is the coming of the Lord and its effects. He always looked upon it as ingrained into the holy Christian life and we find it here. There is nothing between these two things to clash in the least. What he regards first of all as that which is true of the Christian is the pressing on with every energy of our whole being to reach conformity to Christ in glory, instead of reaching any position in this world and any attractions that the enemy could offer to us in the world. But at any moment the Lord Jesus Christ may come and change us in the twinkling of an eye without death at all.

WITH PRAYER AND THANKS-GIVING.

There is one thing more. He returns to the exhortation with which he was going to close. He returns to it in

chapter 4. 4. "Rejoice in the Lord always." Under no circumstances is it otherwise than God's will that you should rejoice. "*Let your moderation be known unto all men.*" Yieldingness that is the opposite of standing upon your rights. If they push you off the pathway into the street, go into the street. The Lord is going to have His rights and there is time enough for you to have yours when He gets His. Meantime, "*let your yieldingness be known unto men. The Lord is at hand.*" After all, you say, I think my cares are the greatest difficulty in realizing this life of blessed joy on earth. He did not close without a word about your cares. "*Be careful for nothing.*" You say, If you knew my circumstances you would know that I need to be careful for many things. But the blessed God knows your circumstances and He says, "*Be careful for nothing.*" But then He doesn't leave you without your resources. He only glances at the difficulty to bring in the power to enable us to go on in spite of everything, and every difficulty. "But in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God." There is the resource. I am entitled under all circumstances, whether in trifles or great things, to bring everything that would press on my heart to God. What a wonderful resource it is! "In everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving," not because of

the expected blessing but because we cannot get into His presence without thinking of Him, and what a wonderful revelation He has given us of Himself, and thus your heart bows in thanksgiving at the same time that you are relieving it by pressing all that was exciting care in you into the heart of God. You cannot but bow in thanksgiving. "*And the peace of God which passeth understanding shall keep your hearts and thoughts through Christ Jesus.*" He guarantees that if we only trust Him with our cares He will put the peace in which He dwells Himself, where no breath of trouble ever came, into our hearts and thoughts (often a difficult thing to manage) to keep them through Christ Jesus. You say, I cannot understand that. God has anticipated you. He does not expect you to understand it, but only to act upon it. Only trust Him instead of carrying that load of care. Trust Him and carry it all to Him and He guarantees He will put the peace of God in which He dwells Himself into your heart and thoughts to keep you through Christ Jesus, and He says it passeth understanding, and it will be a wonder to yourself and all your fellows. How blessed to have every hindrance, as it were, looked at, and the resource is given us by the blessed God that we may be able to realize this blessed life of heavenly joy here on earth. It is His will for us, it is His command to us, "REJOICE IN THE LORD ALWAYS, AND AGAIN I SAY, REJOICE."

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

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

Faith realizes how He enters into and sympathizes with the joys and sorrows, circumstances, trials and triumphs of the pilgrim way, and how compassionate and tender He can be with us, even in our failures.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

The Old Testament Scriptures.

"As I write a controversy is being waged in the local paper on the inspiration of the Scriptures. The combatants are two ministers; one, I believe, is a Christian, the other is a modernist. Without going into details, will you kindly give me some light on the following: When the Lord spoke to the two going to Emmaus concerning Himself in 'ALL THE SCRIPTURES' (Luke 24.), did there exist then A COMPLETE BOOK of the Old Testament Scriptures, or did they exist in separate portions only? The modernist in a reply has said that it was the Council of Jamnia in A.D. 87, which decided to give us the Scriptures as they now stand. He states that the Book of 'Daniel' and other books in the Old Testament have not been even endorsed by the Lord. He never referred to them. Will you give me some light on these matters?"—A BROTHER.

THE Old Testament Scriptures existed in one complete book in the time of the Lord Jesus. The version then in general use was the Septuagint, which was a Greek translation from the original tongue. It was made in Alexandria during the reign of Ptolemy Philadelphus, 284-246 B.C., though accounts differ considerably as to the exact date of its completion. It had the three divisions which Luke 24. 44 indicates, "the law of Moses, the prophets, and the psalms." All the books of the Old Testament as we have it were contained in it. Most of the quotations in the New Testament are from this version. The Council of Jamnia did not decide to give us these Scriptures as we now have them to-day;

it merely confirmed or gave a sort of official sanction to what had been generally accepted for centuries, and which by the Lord Jesus and in the later parts of the New Testament are called "the Scriptures"; though this could not have influenced the Council of Jamnia for it was composed of Jewish Rabbis.

The modernist combatant must have missed Matthew 24. 15 in his reading of the New Testament, for there the Lord speaks of "the abomination of desolation" spoken of by Daniel the prophet (Dan. 9. 27). There are in the New Testament citations from or references to, all the Old Testament books except Esther, Ecclesiastes, Canticles, Obadiah, and Nahum.

The Lord's Supper.

"I should be glad if you would say something in 'Scripture Truth' on the subject of the Lord's Supper that would help a dear Christian who has ceased to 'break bread,' saying that it is not for us, but it will be taken up in another dispensation."—GRASSMERE.

THE institution of the Lord's Supper as a memorial feast is given in two Scriptures, Luke 22 and 1 Corinthians 11. Luke's Gospel is the Gospel which shows us the grace of God flowing out to all men, whether Jew or Gentile, apart from all dispensational teaching; therefore the Lord's words at the Supper ought to make an irresistible appeal to every soul won from among the Gentiles, who would have had no hope but for His death. He said, "This is MY BODY which is given FOR YOU: this do in remem-

brance of ME. This cup is the New Testament in MY BLOOD, which is shed FOR YOU." It may be said that those words were for disciples present at the Supper and were not intended for the church throughout the centuries. We deny that altogether, yet there might be some reason in the argument if we had not 1 Corinthians 11. As to that passage surely no question can arise.

The epistle is addressed to "the church of God which is at Corinth, to

them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all that in every place call upon the Name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours." This reaches out and embraces all who own the Lord Jesus throughout this church age. For all these the apostle received from the Lord Jesus in glory this special communication. This shows how near this remembrance of Himself is to His heart; He does not wish to be forgotten by those whom He loves and for whom He died. And they are to remember Him, according to His own word, by doing this: "THIS DO in remembrance of Me" If this is not done, there is no remembrance of Him, in the way in which He desires it. And in doing this His death is shown "TILL HE COME" He has not come yet, so those who own Him as Lord, and show it by their obedience to Him, continue to take His Supper.

There are two sides to the Lord's Supper: (1) In responding to His desire we show that we do not forget

that He died for us. It is a matter of supreme moment to us that He should have laid down His life for us, and we love Him because of this inconceivable manifestation of His love. On the cross *He thought of us*; at the Supper *we think of Him*. (2) We show His death; we declare to all who can take notice that we stand identified with His death, that we are committed to it and to Him who was cast out and crucified by the world, and that it is our purpose to maintain this stand until He comes. The "we" is the assembly of God, we do it from that standpoint, we do it together. The Supper is the rallying point of those who stand identified with a world-rejected Christ. It is not an individual stand as baptism is, but collective. It is not "me" (Acts 8. 36), but "we." Could any loyal heart that understands the meaning of the Lord's Supper think lightly of it, or refrain from it, if given the opportunity? We think not.

John the Baptist.

"1. Comparing Matthew 8. 11 and 11. 11, it would seem that John the Baptist, though the friend of the Bridegroom, is neither in the Kingdom nor in the church. Why is this? What place will he occupy in a coming day?"

"2. What are the 'all things' Elias is coming to restore (Mark 9. 12) And how will he do it?"—HARROW

JOHN'S greatness and dignity lay in the fact that he was the fore-runner of the Lord and the announcer that the kingdom of heaven was at hand; none other born of woman had been so honoured. No doubt he was morally fitted for his great mission, indeed he proved that he was by his complete separation from all that was contrary to that coming kingdom, and his fearless denunciation of the state and ways of the people who were not ready for it and did not want it. But he was not privileged to have part in it, he was martyred before it was established, and those who are in the

kingdom which it was his mission to announce must be greater in position and privilege and nearness to the Lord than he. And they have the further greatness of bearing the moral features of the Lord who gives character to the kingdom (cf. Matt. 18.). But while he had no part in it on earth, he will surely have some part in it on its heavenly side. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (Matt. 8. 11) represent the true children of the kingdom, those whose faith looked for it and spake of it before it came, and John belonged to this race. In Luke 13. 28, "all the prophets" are added to the names of

these three patriarchs, and John was a prophet and more than a prophet. He must wait until the coming of the Lord for his place of honour, but he will surely get it, for faith and faithfulness cannot go without recognition. Ephesians 3. 15 should read: "The Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom *every* family in heaven and earth is named." How many families there will be we cannot tell, but certainly every testimony of God to men will have produced its family, and John the Baptist will belong to one of these families.

2. Are not the "all things" of Mark 9. 12 strictly Jewish, for Elijah and John's missions were to the Jews? We should say that they are covered by Gabriel's words to Zacharias, Luke 1. 16, 17, and the prophetic words of Zacharias, verses 76-79, which seem to be the new covenant interpretation of the three passages in the Old Testament which speak of the coming of Elias—Isaiah 40. 3, 4; Malachi 3. 1;

4. 5. The way he will do this will be to make them "remember the law of Moses My servant, which I commanded unto him in Horeb for all Israel, with the statutes and judgments" (Mal. 4. 4). Horeb had a significant place in Elijah's ministry, which was to call back the people to the law of Moses. He failed because the people would not respond, and John's mission failed for the same reason. If they had responded John would have been Elias to them, but his ministry brought about no change of heart in the people, and so their day of blessing was postponed, and the way of the Lord was not prepared, and what was "written of the Son of man, that He must suffer many things and be set at nought," was fulfilled. Yet the prophetic words of Luke 1. must be fulfilled, when another in the spirit and power of Elias will come and prepare the repentant and believing remnant of the people of the Jews to meet the Lord when He shall appear for their deliverance and blessing.

"My Father is Greater than I."

"In what sense is the Father greater than the Son? (John 14. 28)."—HARROW.

WE could not admit in any sense the thought of *inferiority* of one of the Persons in the Godhead to another. It is not of what is essential to Deity that the Lord is speaking here, but of *the place of subordination* that He had taken as having come forth from the Father and come into the world. He was the Sent-one; in this title He glories, and speaks of the fact not less than thirty-nine times in this Gospel of John, and "the servant is not greater than his lord, neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him" (13. 16). As sent by the Father He had become incarnate, and as the true and perfect Man His whole life

and labour was the doing of the Father's will and not His own; to this will He was obedient even to the death of the cross. Throughout the Gospel we see this blessed subordination to the Father. He did nothing of Himself; all the words that He spoke and the works that He did were the Father's. He had received the Father's commandment and He did it that the world that had rejected the will of God for its own might know that He loved the Father.

He came to declare what God is, and to become the Mediator between God and man, and in this—the servant's

place—He was subject to the Father, and in this sense the Father was greater than He, yet had He not been co-equal with the Father—God in His own blessed Person—He could not have

revealed Him nor been the Mediator. As to His Person, the Father is not greater than He, but as to the place of subjection to the Father's will that He took in incarnation He is.

IMMEASURABLE LOVE.

(W. R. DUNDEE.)

WHEN suns have ceased to give their light,
 When moons no more shall shine,
 Still will I sing with soul delight,
 Thou, Saviour Christ, art mine.
 When rolled the heavens are like a scroll,
 When fire the earth destroys,
 Thou still shalt rise before my soul,
 Supreme of all joys.

No thought Thy love could e'er convey,
 No words its power express,
 Eclipsing earth's most brilliant ray,
 Thou Sun of Righteousness.
 To save me Thou did'st condescend,
 My load of guilt to bear :
 O grace, I ne'er can comprehend,
 Thy Throne with Thee I'll share.

Love's ocean, whose receding beach,
 No eyes can ever see,
 Thy blessed Spirit loves to teach,
 'Tis lavished all on me.
 The tiniest drop from that vast deep,
 I treasure in my soul,
 My mind in perfect peace shall keep,
 Earth's deepest wounds make whole.

Then rise, my blessed Saviour, rise,
 While, self-abased, I sink,
 To learn with Spirit-opened eyes
 The strength of that blest link
 That binds my ransomed soul to Thee,
 Entwined around Thy heart,
 To learn through all eternity
 How great, how kind Thou art.

“LET us thank God for trials that are not removed, though brought before Him in believing prayer, and praise Him for answers that seem long in coming, knowing that the delay is needed to make us ready to receive them.”

OUR CIRCLE AND THE LORD'S.

(J T MAWSON)

John 2. 1-11, 12. 1-8.

TH**ERE** are two spheres of life in which we may know and serve the Lord; they are the natural and the spiritual. In the natural sphere we are in relationships which have been ordained by God the Creator, and it is very blessed when He is acknowledged in these. When He is, we may experience and prove the interest and mercy and grace of our Lord in them, and they may yield much comfort and blessing to us and glory to Him. Now while what is spiritual should pervade and give character to the natural sphere of life, there is the spiritual sphere into which what is of nature does not enter, it is the sphere where Christ in His own blessedness is everything, and if we are in it, it is for His pleasure. We get a glimpse of the natural sphere in John 2. and of the spiritual in John 12.

John's Gospel is the Gospel of the glory of the Son, and one of the first things revealed to us in it concerning Him is that He is the Word, the Creator of everything that was made. We learn also that He is divinely interested in the works of His hands, for He became flesh and dwelt among us. This is a great mystery, for there was no desire on the part of the world that He should come, and when He did come it did not know Him, but this did not change Him, He came full of grace and truth to take men as He found them and bless them where they were. He was not coldly distant from their joys and sorrows, their laughter and their tears, for this Gospel of John shows Him to us rejoicing at a marriage and weeping at a closed grave, the brightest and the darkest moments in domestic life.

He was the Creator who at the

beginning had created the marriage relationship as the crowning work of His creation, and now, though He had come to bring in a new creation that would not be marred by sin as the first had been, He did not brush aside the first as being beneath His notice, but He accepted the call to the marriage of His friends in Cana in Galilee, and there He manifested forth His glory by His first miracle.

Marriage is the beginning of domestic life, and I want to urge that it has the Lord's sanction and that His presence may be known in the Christian home. It is in relation to the everyday home life that we read, "He hath said, I will never leave thee nor forsake thee" (Heb. 13). These God-ordained relationships in the natural sphere are being more and more despised in the world as godlessness increases, but it must not be so with us who desire to walk in the fear of God all the day long. Husbands and wives, parents and children, brothers and sisters: all these relationships may be sanctified by the Word of God and prayer to our blessing and God's glory; on the other hand, to be without natural affection and disobedience to parents are signs of the last days and of the steep descent that men are making into irretrievable apostacy.

They were not great or rich, this couple that called Jesus to their marriage; indeed the fact that they had no wine would indicate that they were very poor, but Jesus was the Friend of the poor, and He is the Friend of the poor to-day, for what He was yesterday He is to-day and will be for ever. Oh that His servants would proclaim this fact with greater zeal and persistency. It was never more

needed than now, for the needs of the poor were never greater, and they are so easily deceived and so ready to lend eager ears to those who make promises to them that they can never fulfil. Jesus came to preach the gospel to the poor, and the gospel will not deceive them; it is the revelation of the heart of God.

This bridegroom and bride though poor, and though the ruler of the feast that they had appointed was a man without resources, were highly favoured people, for with Jesus at their feast they wanted nothing. Their Guest became the Servant of their need and He raised the joy of their marriage day to a level they could not have known if He had not been there. How blessed it is for us to see the first shining of His glory and to learn the heart that was in Him. He who, as I have read somewhere, had refused to turn stones into bread to appease His own hunger turns water into wine to give perfection to the marriage feast of His humble friends.

We should learn from the story that man on his best day is not sufficient for himself, but that the Lord, who is the Creator, is a faithful Creator, and rejoices with His creatures in their joys and pities them in their needs and delights to meet their needs when He is permitted. We who have confessed Him as our Saviour and Lord cannot do without Him in any sphere of life. He is indispensable, but all-sufficient. Let us not fail to acknowledge Him and to do His will and not mar our enjoyment of His good gifts by selfishly living unto ourselves.

Great as are His mercies to us in the natural sphere of life, sooner or later it will be invaded by death and broken up, and what then? Then we find that our Lord can be with us in our sorrow with the same grace as He was

with us in our joy. He does not withdraw Himself from us in our adversities. We learn this from chapter 11. of our Gospel. He came to the sisters where they were and He wept with them there. They were to learn the greatness of His power, but He would show them first the deep compassion of His heart, for power never won a heart, it is only love that does that. How great must have been His sorrow and how wonderful His tears when the Jews exclaimed, "Behold how He loved him"; but Martha and Mary were embraced in that love, and He made it manifest in the circle of their sorrow, that He might draw them into His own circle, as He did in chapter 12.

It is easy to see the difference between John 2. and 12. In John 2. the Lord was there for the sake of His friends, He was there to serve them and to bless and enrich them, and what a failure that marriage feast would have been if He had not been there. In chapter 12. His friends were there for His sake, the feast was not for them but for Him, He was supreme in that hallowed circle. I speak not of His disciples—poor dull clods they were in spite of all His love and patience, and loved not the less by Him for all their dullness—but of Martha and Lazarus and Mary. He had been much to them before, but now He is everything. Their Friend He had been, one in whose affectionate interest they had confided, but now He exceeds all that—He is to them the Christ, the Son of God, the Resurrection and the Life, and more. There is no anger in Martha's heart at her sister's apparent idleness, there is no complaining upon her lips. She is serving her Lord, ministering to Him whose love she had perceived in His tears, who had turned her deep sorrow into triumph and was greater than the power of

death. With what reverence, with what holy awe, and yet with singing in her heart would Martha move about her house that day, hands and feet and every movement in harmony with the song within her heart.

And Lazarus who sat with Him at meat, who had seen all earthly things fade from his vision as his eyes were closed in death, who had felt the breaking of all earthly ties as he passed out out of time into eternity, but who had been called back from the silence of the unseen world by the voice of Him by whose side he sat. What a bond there must have been between the Lord and Lazarus, between the Life-giver and this risen man! Martha and Mary would not be less loved, but in that sacred hour, not ties of nature that must all be riven were strongest, but this tie that the hand of death cannot break. When Jesus raised up the little daughter of Jairus, He gave her back to her parents and we read of her no more; and when He raised the widow's son He gave him back to His mother, and that is the last we hear of him; but Lazarus was not raised up that his sisters might again possess him, but that he might be for the joy of his Lord, to give pleasure to His heart; he was raised for the glory of God and to be one of those that made a feast for Jesus and sat at meat with Him.

And Mary—none but the Spirit-taught can understand the part that Mary took. There were some there that had indignation among themselves when she poured her precious ointment on her Lord; they did not understand; but the fragrance of that act rose up to heaven, it rose up to the angel hosts, and beyond them to the very nostrils of the Father, and He will never forget it. I have dwelt upon that scene; in thought I have watched her glide into

the inner chamber and bring forth from it that alabaster box of precious nard. She had not used it on herself, she had not used it on Lazarus, though it would surely have embalmed his body and kept it for awhile from corruption; she had *kept* it, mark that word. "Against the day of My burying hath she kept this," said the Lord. She had kept it for her Lord, the most precious of all her possessions was for Him. She poured it on His head, so Matthew and Mark have told us; it is John who speaks of the anointing of His feet. Some blind critics have supposed a contradiction here, but there is none. I have watched her in thought pour the precious ointment upon His head, for He was King, the King of Israel. It is thus that Matthew writes of Him; but He was the rejected King, unanointed, unowned by His people; but Mary said, "I will own Him. I will anoint Him." Ah, but He was more than the King of Israel; and as the truth as to who He was grew in its glory on her soul, she bowed in adoration at His feet and poured the residue of the ointment upon them. He was her Lord and her God. It was this, the climax of that great act that impressed itself on John, and he was inspired by the Holy Ghost to record what he saw.

What a foreshadowing was this of what was to be, of what is now wherever there is true love to Christ and intelligence as to His desires, for He delights to gather His saints in His presence and have them minister to Him. They may serve Him and commune with Him, and worship Him, as these three beloved saints did. He has His assemblies in the world, and if they are true to the high dignity that is put upon them, they will gather together to Himself and He will be supreme in their midst. There is no mysticism

about this, it is a great reality and many have proved it so to be. It is the one thing that we should desire above all things, and the Lord's service to us in our circle of things is that we might reach this end. He serves us in our circumstances that He might relieve us of all anxious care about our needs that we might be free to minister to Him in His own circle.

Of the three, Mary was the most intelligent, she had sat at His feet and learnt of Him and she knew what was suitable on this occasion, though others found fault with her. She anointed Him for His burying. She knew that He was a rejected Christ, and that He was to pass out of the world by death. This fact would expose the world in its true character to her, but she clung to Him, and in thought and spirit she was outside the world with Him. He absorbed her and carried her affections

to His own side, He was more to her than everything that she had prized.

And this should mark all His own whom He loves to the end, no matter how they treat Him. We fail of our highest privilege if we miss this, and we rob the Lord of that which is dearest of all to His heart, the response of love and worship from our hearts for His great love to us. We believe there is no occasion like the gathering together of the saints of God to eat the Lord's Supper for this, for it is there that we may respond to His request, "This do in remembrance of ME." We pray that we may understand its deep meaning better, and while we rejoice that the Lord delights to be with us in our circle of interests, may we not be satisfied with that, but seek in the simplicity of true affection to know the unspeakable blessedness of being with Him in His circle.

Who can be a Christian?

[AM quoting from a letter recently received from Persia. "A Kurd from Asia Minor said to a friend of mine, 'If Christianity is what M.S. declares and explains, only God can be a Christian.'" That was a striking conclusion for a non-Christian to come to, and an arresting one. And as we consider it we feel the force of it, for is not Christianity in its practical outflow the very nature of God manifested in His children? A hundred texts could be cited to prove it, one shall suffice. "Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another. No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and His love is perfected in us" (1 John 4. 11, 12). Only the power of God's Spirit can lead us into and maintain us in this.

Weary of a Cold Heart.

CHRISTMAS EVANS was a great preacher, probably the greatest that Wales ever knew. He has told how he was changed from being a cold, intellectual preacher to a fervent evangelist. He was going over the hills from Dolgelly to Machynlleth, when he slid off his pony on the roadside. He said, "I was weary of a cold heart towards Christ, and towards His sacrifice and towards His holy Spirit, and I asked God to do something for me, and He came and put a fire in my heart that has never burned low."

What shall we do about our cold hearts? Be ashamed of them surely, for shame belongs to those who are cold towards Christ and His sacrifice, who are cold in the presence of His cross. Then bring them to God and put ourselves in His hands. He can turn the frost to fire, and He surely will if we turn wholeheartedly and sincerely to Him, weary of our coldness towards His beloved Son.

THE MAN CHRIST JESUS.

IT is very important to remember that Jesus is always man. If He were not God, His humanity would have no value ; but, being God, the fact that He interests Himself in us as a Man, as men whom He is not ashamed to call His brethren, is infinitely precious. He can feel with us, take part in all our circumstances, trials, difficulties, and troubles. He loves us as the Father loved Him, a man and Son on the earth. His love has divine perfection, but He feels as a man, as a man on the earth, tempted in like manner as we are, apart from sin. He is ever man ; He thinks of us, as One who has passed through all these things with divine love and human sympathy. Not only does He know everything as God, but He has had the experience of man. Precious truth, unfathomable grace !

We have no need of saints—if they could hear us—to move His heart to favour us, to render His love warmer,

His interest more profound, or His knowledge of our condition more intimate. But He has had the experience on purpose to be able to understand and sympathize with His own in every circumstance of the life of God in man on the earth. How great is the intensity of the Saviour's love ! How near to us ! How intelligent and intimate is His heart in the conflict of faith ! He knows all, feels all, and is with us in everything to help us. Blessed be His love !

It is possible that He may not reveal Himself to us in visions, but His heart is not colder to us than it was to Ananias (Acts 9). His wisdom is not diminished ; His willingness is not weakened to help us, nor is His arm shortened. The intimacy and the confidence of our hearts ought to be the same to tell Him everything ; certain it is that His ear is open to listen to us.

(J N. D.)

Feeding upon Christ.

"He that eateth Me, even he shall live by Me."—John 6. 57.

THE man who feeds upon Christ does not hobble on crutches upon the heavenly road, for from this holy feeding he gains an inward strength, and no task or trial can terrify him. You may starve him but he has this inner food. You may darken his life, but he has this inner light, the light of life. You may make war about him but he has peace within, the peace of Christ. You may turn

the world into a hell to daunt him, but he carries his inner heaven safely through its fiercest fires. He has meat to eat that the world wots not of, and he is strengthened with all might by the food upon which he feeds unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness. He becomes like the One on whom he feeds and is more than a conqueror through Him.

Is thy spirit drooping ?
Is the tempest near ?
Still in Jesus hoping,
What hast thou to fear ?

Set the prize before thee,
Gird thine armour on,
Heir of grace and glory,
Struggle for the crown.

(J.W.S. 20 1x. 20.)

What will become of those cut flowers to-morrow ? They will fade and wither. So truth that is separated from Christ will lose its freshness and power and fragrance. What could be more objectionable than withered flowers ? just one thing : truth ministered apart from Christ.

"THE GRACE OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST."

(W. BRAMWELL DICK.)

Continued from November Number.

"For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though He was rich, yet for your sakes HE BECAME POOR, that ye through His poverty might be rich."—2 Corinthians 8. 9.

AS we consider the One who was so rich, for our sake becoming so poor, that we through His poverty might be so rich, we cannot refrain from inquiring why did He do it? We have learned that He was so rich that richer He could not be. The Centre of the Father's affection; the Object of heaven's worship; the One by whom, for whom, and for whose pleasure were all things created. He was indeed rich. What then did He want? He desired an object for His heart upon which He could lavish His love. Could He not have found such among the angelic hosts "that excel in strength, that do His commandments, hearkening unto the voice of His word. His hosts; ministers of His, that do His pleasure"? (Psa. 103. 20, 21). The divine answer is "He taketh not hold of angels" (Heb. 2. 16, margin). Why did He pass them by and come to our deliverance? They who were so attractive, so obedient, so pleasing to Him! We who were so unlovely, so unattractive, so disobedient, who had sunk to such an abysmal depth of poverty, and who had so tarnished His glory! Again we ask—*WHY?* From His glory He looked onward and saw that which attracted Him, which called forth the love of His heart, in which even then, in anticipation, He found delight (see Prov. 8. 31). They are called "His own," "one flock," "the church," "the Lamb's wife." And they were given to Him by the Father as those which He loved and which He gave as a love-gift to His Son (John 17.)

But then coming into the region

of time there was the intrusion of sin. That which He had seen so fair and so glorious was defiled by sin and had fallen to a state of indescribable ruin. What was to be done? Was God to be defeated? Impossible! Was "Our Lord Jesus Christ" to be deprived of the Father's gift? That could not be? Was He not to have that object upon which His heart was set? That was unthinkable. Love became active, for grace has been well described as divine love in activity, and He who was rich became poor. He became Man, came into our circumstances, bottomed the depth of poverty to which we had fallen, tasted death, and rose out from among the dead, a Man after a new order, the Head of a new race. Now seated at the right hand of God, He has, united to Himself by the Holy Spirit, those who were so poor, whom He now owns as His Assembly, His Body, His Bride, and with whom He delights to share the riches that are His. What can we do as we meditate on this, but magnify the grace of Him of whom we love to speak as "*our* Lord Jesus Christ," and with one heart and one voice, praise and bless His holy Name.

But this remarkable expression "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ" calls for further consideration. Only in Him and by Him could this grace be manifested for "grace and truth subsists through Jesus Christ." The apostle could also say, as a personal testimony and on behalf of his fellow apostles, "of His fulness we all have received, and grace upon grace" (John 1. 16, 17, New Trans.). We too, thank

God, have been made the recipients of that grace, hence it is that we delight to speak in terms of true affection of "our Lord Jesus Christ," and to magnify the grace of which He was the perfect expression. What an inexhaustible theme is "the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ." Now we are going to see that that grace not only gives, but by reason of its unlimited giving it makes demands. The demands can never be commensurate with the giving as we can easily understand, but our response will indicate the measure of our appreciation of the grace. In our first paper we merely mentioned the way in which this peerless setting forth of grace is used in the chapter in which it is found. The apostle was seeking to encourage the saints at Corinth to help their brethren who were in distress. They were not to look to the rich and say, "they can well afford to help"; nor were they to plead that they were too poor to do so; nor were they to look upon the matter as a merchant might consider some business proposition. They were to remember "the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ" and the outcome of that; and with their own hearts saturated with that grace seek to manifest it in a real way to their brethren in Christ. Then we want that grace for every circumstance in our Christian life, and, praise His Name, we can have it. In the presence of God where He appears for us "our Lord Jesus Christ" is on "the throne of grace," and to that throne we repair "that we may receive mercy, and find grace for seasonable help" (Heb. 4. 16 New Trans.).

For the conflict that we may expect if we are going to be true to Him, we need to "be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus" (2 Tim. 2. 1). The grace that was in Him and that was so perfectly expressed by Him in His pathway through this world, is now

seen in Him where He is at the right hand of God.

In closing, we pass on to the last verse of Holy Scripture, and what a verse it is! "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all" (or, "be with all the saints"). "Amen" (Rev. 22. 21). We have just heard His own "heavenly voice well known to us in present grace," introducing Himself to us by that name that is the embodiment of grace—"I JESUS." He has set our heart aglow by His glad announcement, "Surely I come quickly." He has produced the ready response, "Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus." He presents Himself as "Jesus," we reverently address Him as "Lord Jesus." We tell Him how we long to see Him; that our joy will be exceeded only by His joy; and, as our hearts beat high at the prospect of His return, we sing.—

"Lord Jesus, come,
That, lost in Thee, our souls
May bow and worship and adore,
In Thy blest presence evermore!
Lord Jesus, come!"

Then we have this benediction, as much as to say till He come we are assured of His unchanging, unwearied, unbounded, unceasing grace, "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ." We have reached the last month of another year and He has not come yet. We may be permitted to enter upon a new year and, if so, what it may have in store for us we do not know. Many of us may be safely and happily housed at home with the Lord. On the other hand, the moment of supreme joy may arrive, and we may all be "caught up together to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we ever be with the Lord" (1 Thess. 4. 17) Whatever happens, we can and we do in all sincerity say:—

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

CONTINUE IN THE SON AND IN THE FATHER. John 2. 24.

(H. J. VINE.)

THERE is some good reason for **THE SON** being named before **THE FATHER** in the above Scripture.

The whole verse reads, "As for you, let that which ye have heard from the beginning abide in you: if that ye have heard from the beginning abides in you, ye also shall abide in the Son and in the Father" (N.T.). The preceding verse says, "whoso denies the Son has not the Father either; he who confesses the Son has the Father also."

There is a constant restless activity which carries the mind beyond what is revealed. It often goes with the pride of advanced thought. So in the second Epistle of John we read, "whosoever goes forward and abides not in the doctrine of the Christ has not God" (verse 9, N.T.). On the other hand, "He that abides in the doctrine, he has both the Father and the Son."

It is by the Son the knowledge of the Father has been brought to us. We should have been still in ignorance of Him otherwise; for He said, "No man cometh to the Father, but by Me." He also said, "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father"; and, blessed be His holy Name, "Henceforth ye know Him, and have seen Him."

To bless us with that disclosure, however, a stoop of marvellous grace was necessary—a coming down from the glory He had along with the Father "before the world was!"—down into fallen man's circumstances! Matchless love and grace indeed it was! His great love brought Him here! He was the one Person in the glorious Godhead who came into the world as Man amongst men! And

with what ignominy and shame they treated Him. To what depths of sorrow and suffering He went; bearing sins and being made sin upon the cross, where, in love unspeakable, He bore our judgment, and made atonement. But shall all this be overlooked? That were impossible. We are told, the Father "hath committed all judgment unto the Son: that all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father which hath sent Him." God will see to it that He receives the honour due to Him. How solemn then to share in any presumptuous activity, which detracts from the honour of such an One in the slightest degree. May we rather uphold his honour in a becoming and reverent manner in every possible way; rejoicing in the wonderful love that brought Him down so low, to make us His own righteously for ever; rejoicing, too, in His present glory on high with the Father.

There is this subtle activity always energizing against the Son, as we have said. John tells us of the lying denial of the proven fact that He is "THE CHRIST"; but also of the subtle "antichrist" denial of "THE FATHER AND THE SON" (I. John 2. 22). The unction given to us from the Holy One maintains us in the truth; teaching us to "*abide in Him*" by whom the Father is made known. Good and healthful is the word already quoted—"If that ye have heard from the beginning abides in you, ye also shall abide in the Son and in the Father." As we "*abide in Him*" by whom the revelation is made, we shall abide in Him who is revealed; and this explains why the Son is named before the Father. Only by Him do

we come to the Father. "I am in My Father and ye in Me," He said.

He received honour from the excellent glory upon the holy mount from *God the Father*. He is glorified by *the Holy Spirit* now, He has ascended as Man to His Father and our Father, His God and our God. ALL are to honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. Praise God, the earth-rejected One is honoured in heaven, and we may well sing—

"O God, Thou now hast glorified
Thy holy, blest, ETERNAL SON ;
The Nazarene, the crucified,
Now sits exalted on Thy Throne !"

Who would have it otherwise? In the creation "the Son of the Father's love" has the Firstborn's pre-eminence "because by Him all things were created" (Col. 1. 16). The salvation of the world is in His hands, for "the Father has sent the Son as Saviour of

the world" (John 4. 14). Eternal life is the portion of each one that believes on THE SON, for John 3. 36 tells us, "*He that believes on THE SON has LIFE ETERNAL*" (N.T.). And that life is ours in Him, who is Himself made known as "the eternal life." How great are the grace and love that have brought us even now into that which is "ETERNAL!" by the effectual work of "THE ETERNAL SPIRIT." "The anointing which ye have received of Him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, *ye shall abide in Him*. And now little children ABIDE IN HIM" (1 John 2. 27, 28). In faith and affection, along with deepened spiritual understanding, we shall thus "continue in the Son and in the Father."

"THERE IS FORGIVENESS WITH THEE."

THE fear of the Lord . . . is that to which the knowledge of His grace, where real, will surely lead. "There is forgiveness with Thee, that Thou mayest be feared." We might imagine, perhaps, that it would be rather said "*loved*"; but we may be assured that there is no mistake. The intimacy to which grace leads—the knowledge of God thus acquired by one brought to Him—dispels of course, not produces, *slavish* fear. And so it is written: "There is no fear in love: but perfect love casteth out fear, because fear hath torment: he that feareth is not made perfect in love" (1 John 4. 18)—he is like a scholar with an ill-learned lesson, not perfect in that which God in the gospel has been teaching us earnestly.

On the other hand, the light and flippant carelessness by which some would show us their intimacy with

God, their knowledge of His grace, proves to absolute demonstration their ignorance of what they profess. He who has seen the Alps but at a distance, may think but little of their majestic height. The nearer we approach, the more they put on grandeur; at their very foot, they tower up in masses which scale the heavens, and make us realize our utter insignificance. How much more, then, will the awful majesty of God be felt by one who has stood in His presence! The little reverence shown to-day, even by Christians, the freedom of their bold speculations, their critical proficiency in sacred things, the prominence assigned to the "human element" everywhere, reveal plainly enough the citizen of the world's cities, rather than the one who in the stillness of the desert or the mountain top has drawn near to God.

THE EPHESIAN EPISTLE.

(JAMES BOYD).

Chapter 4. 17-5. 18.

(Continued from page 204).

THEREFORE these Gentile believers are exhorted not to walk as the other Gentiles walk—"in the vanity of their mind, having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart: who being past feeling have given themselves over to lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness. But ye have not so learned Christ."

This is the truth as regards man, whoever and wherever he may be. The light of Christianity may exercise a restraining influence upon him, so that only in secret does he appear in his true character; but all that is attributed to the Gentiles is true of the whole Christless world, whatever may be professed.

Man is said to be alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in the whole fallen world, because of the blindness of their heart. Natural man is in as deep darkness as anyone blind can be. He has no knowledge of God at all. If he is a religious man he may pride himself in not being an infidel. But his heart is as dark as the heart of the greatest infidel's could be. The life of God, where he may see it in the children of God, is to him utterly obnoxious. He is in opposition to it wherever it appears in his presence. He may do his best to hide his abhorrence of it, but the enmity is there, though covered up.

In this Epistle, life is viewed as in God only. He quickened us when we were dead in our sins, and it is in that life that we are made to live to Him. The true characteristics of this life

were exhibited in Jesus, and only perfectly in Him. And as Christ is our Teacher, the truth as it is in Jesus into which we have been instructed, involves for us our having put off the old man, corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; and being renewed in the spirit of our mind; and our having put on the new man, which according to God is created in truthful righteousness and holiness, a creation which is according to God. This is the new man which we have put on, having rejected and cast off the old man, which is corrupt, that we may be able to receive unhindered the teaching of Christ, who turns our attention to the life of Jesus here upon earth.

Therefore truth is to characterize us. Lying is natural to us all. Men are said to go astray from the womb, speaking lies (Ps. 58. 3). And even saints are ready to forget when they prevaricate that they are only following the devil, who abode not in the truth, and who became the originator of falsehood (John 8. 44). And as we are members one of another, what place is there for lying amongst us? Not that we should lie to anyone; but when we are all members of one body, how horrible it is to bring in deception, and thus be guilty of bringing corruption into the body of Christ.

And if we are to be angry we require to be on our guard lest we harbour vengeful feelings, allowing the flesh to come into the trouble, and room to be given to the devil, thy brother then becoming vile in thy sight (Deut. 25. 3), and hatred usurp the place in thy heart where love should reign. Thus would everything be left in the hands of the devil. Therefore let not the sun go down upon our wrath, lest we also

give place to the devil, who will not be slow to take advantage of our folly.

The thief is to steal no more, rather to labour with his hands, not only for his personal necessities, but to relieve the necessities of others. Thus, where an ugly defect of a fallen race was evidenced, a beautiful character of Christ is exhibited.

Instead of the mouth giving forth corrupt communication, its outflow is to be good and edifying, that it may minister grace to the hearer. The law speaks of that which issues out of the mouth of the unregenerate sinner, and we shudder at its faithful testimony: "Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips." Now the law speaks to the man under it, in order that his mouth may be stopped. A gateway open for such a welter of wickedness as this had better be shut up for ever. But if the heart is purified by faith, and grace is poured into the lips, the outflow shall be a delight to the heart of the hearer and refreshing to the weary among God's pilgrims on their way to glory.

All those lovely graces are sure to manifest themselves where the Spirit of God in ungrieved. He is the power by which the beautiful graces of Christ are in us reproduced. He is the power of the life which we have in the Son, and if He is unhindered that life is certain to be expressed in our ways as we pass through this world. By His Holy Spirit we are sealed until the day of the redemption of the possession purchased by the blood of Christ, and which is ours in Him. When He takes it by power, we shall come into possession along with Him.

Bitterness, wrath, anger, clamour, and evil-speaking, are to be put away from us, along with all malice; and kind-

ness, tender-heartedness, forgiveness of one another, even as God for Christ's sake has forgiven us, are to take their place. We are viewed in this Epistle, as we have seen, quickened by the life that is in God, and therefore the beautiful features, as they have been set before us in Christ and which are the characteristics of that life, are to be exhibited in us. We are never asked to practice any spiritual grace that has not first of all been exhibited by God in the life of Jesus down here. If we are partakers of the divine nature, let us endeavour to exhibit the lineaments of that life and nature while here in this scene of contrariety.

"Imitators of God as beloved children!" What a great and glorious privilege ours is! To keep the law would have been to come out here morally transcriptive of Adam as God made Him, but grace calls us to be morally transcriptive of God. We never were children of unfallen Adam. Of that *fallen* parent only we were. But no child of Adam could be called to be transcriptive of him. We were in our sinful condition, for we were all born of him. But we now are born of God, partakers of His life and nature, children of God. Therefore our privilege is to be imitators of God. What a triumph of God over the whole power of the enemy! How fully the Word of God has been verified: "*Dust shall be the serpent's meat*" (Isa. 65. 25). The proudest creature in the universe must be brought to suffer the deepest degradation. No creature can triumph in his opposition to God.

"And walk in love," according to the example set before us by Christ, for it is "as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given Himself for us, an offering and sacrifice to God, for a sweet-smelling savour." The death of Christ was a propitiatory offering, and

we cannot follow Him in that, but we can imitate Him in the love that would lead us to lay down our lives for the brethren (1 John 3. 16). Paul mentions two saints of God who for his life laid down their own necks. If one risks his life for another, it is equivalent to laying it down.

The evils that the flesh delights to revel in are not to have any mention among the saints. Those who practise such things have no inheritance in the Kingdom of Christ and God; for because of them the wrath of God cometh upon the sons of disobedience. We must, therefore, be careful not to be partakers with them; for we were once darkness, but now are we light in the Lord, and we are to walk as children of light.

The world is in darkness—that is, it is without the knowledge of God—and in that darkness the devil rules, and he rules by means of the darkness. In his kingdom there is not one ray of light. Believers are here as luminaries in the world; that is, they set forth God in His true character by means of their walk and ways. Jesus said: “As long as I am in the world, I am the Light of the World.” He faithfully represented God before the eyes of men who knew Him not. It could not be otherwise, for He was God manifest in flesh. He says “He that seeth Me seeth Him that sent Me.” Once were we darkness, but now are we light in the Lord, and if we walk as children of light we prove what is agreeable to the Lord. We are to have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but we are rather to reprove them, not necessarily by our words, but by manifesting the nature and character of God. If we walk according to His will we make manifest the deeds of those who walk in darkness, and thus are they exposed, for that which makes

everything manifest is light. “Wherefore He saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall shine upon thee.” To Israel it will be said one day, “Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee” (Isa. 60. 1). We anticipate that day; the glory of the exalted Saviour has risen upon us, and in the light of that glory His people shine throughout this world’s dark night.

Our walk is to be with carefulness, having the flesh under complete control; neither intoxicated with the delights of mere nature, which result in spiritual poverty, nor oppressed with the drowsiness that clothes a man with the rags of a lifeless morality. Neither let us behave as fools, but as wise men; watchful to lay hold of opportunities to turn the flying moments to good account, so that not one shall be wasted but all used up in the service of the Master.

This cannot be done unless we have some true understanding of what the will of the Lord is. He alone can give us the understanding by which we shall be able to serve Him, and He is sure to do it if we earnestly seek it.

But this cannot be without our being filled with His Spirit. Not like the babbling fool who is intoxicated with wine, but speaking to ourselves in psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in our hearts to the Lord. Kept in a sense of the love of God, and of Christ in whom that love was fully manifested, our souls shall pour forth uninterruptedly a stream of praise and thanksgiving to God the Father in the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ, and that with a lowliness that causes us to esteem each other better than ourselves, so that we submit ourselves to one another in the fear of God.

FOUR PEAKS OF THE MOUNTAIN RANGE OF TRUTH.

(T. OLIVER.)

Read John 17. verses 4, 5, 22-24; 1 Timothy 3. 16.

IN the middle of last century there was much uncertainty as to which of four peaks in the Himalayan mountain range was the highest and consequently the highest mountain in the world. Surveying apparatus and procedure were not sufficiently precise to answer the question. The four great peaks in the mountain range of the truth of God which must necessarily relate to Christ are: (1) His Life, (2) His Death, (3) His Resurrection, (4) His Exaltation. With the best of intentions some theologians have sought to compare the altitude of these peaks, but we have no means of measurement of these transcendent entities, and even if we had, we have no zero plane from which to measure the relative attributes of the glory of Christ. Yet we may behold the grandeur of them, and wonder and adore.

The passage in John 17. 5 speaks of "the glory which the Son had with the Father before the world was." That is beyond the range of our survey, that precipitous descent from infinity is beyond our knowledge, nor shall we ever know. "But then shall I know even as also I am known" (1 Cor. 13. 12), is a Scriptural dictum. But one must apply Scripture with reference to its context. In that case it is relative to love, "the way of surpassing excellence." We shall yet know vastly better than we do know now, but we shall still be finite. God cannot make us infinite, and only the infinite can comprehend God.

Although we have no means of relative estimation of the afore-mentioned peaks, they are presented in Scripture for our contemplation. The apostle's desire in Ephesians 3. was

that we may know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, or quantitative estimation. The power, or may we say, speaking with great reverence, the telescope by which we view the mountain range presented in Scripture is the Holy Spirit. He will (a) guide us into all truth, (b) show us things to come, (c) glorify Christ by taking of His things and showing them unto us (John 16.).

The main features of these peaks which emerge from our survey are:—

1. Manhood was beautified when Christ was here on earth, because He was the second Man, the Lord from heaven. In essential characteristics He was another kind of man than the man of friable or chalky consistency whose origin was the earth (1 Cor. 15. 47). In the prophetic Scriptures we read that the national perception was expressed in the words, "There was no beauty that we should desire Him" (Isa. 53. 2). Nevertheless there were those who had the immense privilege of being the companions of Christ in His lowly pathway, and they could say, "We beheld His glory, the glory as of the Only Begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth" (John 1. 14). The four Gospels present in an unmistakable fashion that God was fully glorified in man while Christ was here. "I have glorified Thee on the earth" (John 17. 4).

2. In the death of Christ, God was glorified in man in the putting away of sin by the sacrifice of Himself. In the very essence of things in the Levitical economy the victim was distinct from the offerer, but in the fulfilment of the type it was essential that they should be combined in one person, since

obviously no other sacrifice but Christ would suffice to meet the holy eye of God. Similarly He could not be offered by anyone but Himself. In no other person could the love of God be declared. On the great day of atonement the high priest entered into the holiest with the blood of others every year. He had to present the blood of a bullock for himself and his house, and also the blood of a goat was sprinkled on and before the mercy-seat on behalf of the people. But the necessary accompaniment of his entrance was that he should be covered in the presence of the glory of God by a cloud of sweet incense beaten small, which had been put on the fire before the Lord. Typically the offerer was concealed in the fragrant preciousness of Christ to God. To have sought approach to God otherwise would have meant instant death. The high priest represented his own house and Israel, but both as being under death.

3. In the resurrection of Christ we see man's acceptance by God. There could not be a greater contrast between the Levitical type and the entering in of Christ. "I have finished the work that Thou hast given me to do" (John 17. 4). Consequent on the perfect accomplishment of the work, he entered in once to the Holy Place, having obtained eternal redemption. In the resurrection of Christ there is testimony to the accomplishment of righteousness. There was no need, as in Aaron's case, that He should be covered with incense, nor for the sprinkling of blood, for He carried in His own Person the testimony of the perfection of His offering. So long as blood had to be carried in, the way into the holiest could not be made manifest, for no resurrection from the dead had occurred. "But by Christ came the resurrection from the dead." So the

peak of the truth is not the apprehension of a literal blood-sprinkled mercy-seat, but of Christ risen and entered in when all the work of offering was done, sin put away, and the judgment of God under which man lay removed.

4. Consequent upon not only the satisfaction of the righteous requirements of God, but the complete vindication of every divine attribute, Christ is not only raised from the dead, but is exalted to the right hand of God, and there we see by faith what Stephen saw—the glorified Man in the glory of God. He is there not as the culminating fact of a brilliant theory, but is the object of our faith to be the glory or boast and joy of the Christian's heart. In Him we are blessed with all spiritual blessings in the heavenlies (Eph. 1. 3). Moreover, we are made to sit together in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus (Eph. 2. 6). Only one man had the privilege to enter heaven and to come back again. In 2 Cor. 12. the apostle speaks of a man in Christ—whether in or out of the body is irrelevant, because the body is connected with responsibility, and a man in Christ is beyond that sphere. Such a man was caught up to heaven, and on his returning he had no medium of communicating his experience. The "unspeakable" words were not "illegal," but untransmittable in human language. Scientists tell us that the human ear can appreciate eleven octaves of sound pitch, and that there are vibrations of shorter wave-length than the grasshopper's click which the ear cannot detect. But even these inaudible minute tremors in the air would not be a suitable medium of communication. But although the apostle could not communicate his experience, he could safely make his boast of a "man in Christ." As to himself, in the sphere

of responsibility he could not boast, save in his infirmities, which found their climax in a "thorn in the flesh," as an intelligible counterbalance to the abundance of the revelation.

Therefore "the glorified man in the glory of God" is a living bright reality to the soul of the Christian and, as a consequence, of such apprehension, he is strong in the grace which is in Christ Jesus, and in some little measure he is able to hold fast the truth which God commits to his care. No mere natural bulldog pertinacity will enable him to maintain the truth. The only possible way is by his own soul being in the blessed realization of it. The essence of the truth is that Christ at the right hand of God is the boast and delight of the Christian, and the results will be that the characteristics of the heavenly Man who is heavenly in origin and constitution will be reproduced in measure through the Christian, because Christ is presented as the absorbing object of the Christian's heart.

Parallel with this display of character as royal priests, there will be no less exercise of the functions of the holy

priesthood in the offering up of spiritual sacrifices. The Holiest is where God alone is adored, and we have perfect liberty of access to the spiritual fulfilment of the type which admitted of only the access of the high priest in a representative capacity once a year. But the practical appreciation of this privilege is dependent on attachment to the person of Christ.

Aaron's sons had a very perfunctory attachment to Aaron, and hence harmony could not be continuously maintained. But "the glory which Thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one" (John 17. 22). That glory is consummated in the Holy Spirit's taking up residence in us and with us, and the tendency of His operation is that absolute unity may be manifested, which will convince the world of the reality of Christianity. Like the apostle, we shall be driven irresistibly to the conclusion that not one of the disintegrating agencies in the physical and in the psychical spheres can separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

A Prayer.

PRECIOUS Saviour! teach us to walk in Thy heavenly footsteps! Give us to drink more into Thy spirit! This, truly, is what we need. We are so sadly prone to self-seeking and self-pleasing, even when apparently doing right things, and ostensibly engaging in the Lord's work. We run hither and thither, do this and that, travel, and preach and write; and all the while we may be pleasing ourselves, and not really seeking to do the will of God, and promote His glory. May we study more profoundly our divine Exemplar! May He be ever before our hearts as the One to whom we

are predestinated to be conformed.

Thank God for the sweet and soul-sustaining assurance that we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. It is but a little while and we shall be done for ever with all that now hinders our progress, and interrupts our communion. Till then may the blessed Spirit work in our hearts, and keep us so occupied with Christ, so feeding by faith on His preciousness, that our practical ways may be a more living expression of Himself, and that we may bring forth more abundantly the fruits of righteousness which are by Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.

SPIRITUAL BLESSINGS. Ephesians 1. 3.

(L. R.)

[F our kind Editor will give his permission, this shall be a very simple paper; we might call it a little "Bible Class" lesson, written for the younger readers of SCRIPTURE TRUTH, praying that it may help such, and asking the older readers, who know it all so much better, to forgive the space being used for this, and to add their prayers for the Lord's blessing on His beloved young saints.

We will put it in the form of question and answer.

1. What are spiritual blessings?
2. For whom are they?
3. How may they be enjoyed?
4. Will it make any difference?
5. Are there any hindrances?

To answer the first question, it might be said, would need all the Epistle to the Ephesians, but that would prolong our study beyond the limits of these pages; so we will consider the three that are first mentioned. We must read Ephesians 1. carefully, and note that "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ" (verse 3) is followed by the word "according," thus linking what has gone before with what follows—"according as He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love" (verse 4). Now we know well we are, in ourselves, very far from being holy and without blame, but the Scripture says "chosen us *in Him*," and if we ask, is our Lord Jesus Christ holy and without blame? there is only one answer; and so in Him, in heavenly places we are now before God in love, holy and without blame.

The next is, "Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children (sonship) by Jesus Christ unto Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will" (verse 5). Not only are we the children of God, as we read in the Gospel and Epistle of John (N.T.), but we have the status or standing of *sons*, we are made sons in the Son, given a son's place, crying "Abba Father," the very words of the Lord Jesus. Sons have come into the light of "Thou hast loved them as Thou hast loved Me." Commentators say that the word used for a babe or young child signifies one who does not speak, but the word for son is, one who speaks. Writing to the Galatians, St. Paul says, "Ye are all the sons of God by faith in Christ Jesus" (Gal. 3. 26, N.T.).

We read on, "To the praise of the glory of His grace, wherein He hath made us accepted in the Beloved" (verse 6). This is a step further, not only holy and without blame, not only predestinated unto sonship, but accepted in the Beloved One whom the Father contemplates with unceasing delight, and loved as He is loved in those heavenly places where He now dwells. How our hearts should overflow with praise! All fears, all doubts gone for ever, because nothing can ever alter God's delight in His own well-beloved Son, and consequently nothing can ever alter our acceptance in Him, and the following words lay the foundation for it all, "In whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace" (verse 7).

We may well ask—For whom are these blessings? Can they be for us?

We must go back to verse 1 and see to whom the Epistle was written.

"To the saints which are at Ephesus, and to the faithful in Christ Jesus." We must always distinguish between what is true *of* the believer, and what is true *in* him. All believers are saints by the call of God, but all are not walking as holy people in the world. Those saints at Ephesus would be well known as holy people; not that they were like the men Isaiah knew, who said, "Stand by thyself . . . for I am holier than thou"; but you remember the Ephesians were idolaters who worshipped "the great goddess Diana, and the image that fell down from Jupiter" (Acts 19. 35), and as the Christians moved among them it would be seen that they were different, and were indeed saints, or holy people. Again it says, "the faithful, or the believing ones in Christ Jesus"; not simply that they said they believed, but they were characterized by their faith, a very different thing. Moreover their faith was in "Christ Jesus." Christ the Anointed and Jesus His personal Name, telling us of Him as coming to do the will of God, and coming to bring to fruition and to establish every counsel and purpose of God. We may be, and are very feeble in our understanding of these things, but unless there is real desire, and, at least, some exercise, there will not be much apprehension of spiritual blessings.

How then may they be enjoyed?

Chapter 1. 19, 20 answers this question. The apostle prays the first of his wonderful prayers for them that the eyes of their understanding being enlightened, they may know what is the exceeding greatness of His power, according to the working of His mighty power, which He wrought in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places" (verses

18-20). You will note it is again Christ and the heavenly places; all our blessing is in Him and comes from Him, and may be enjoyed by us because of the mighty power on our behalf. See also Ephesians 3. 20, "according to the power that worketh in us."

The words "heavenly places" need a little explanation. The margin of our Bibles renders them "heavenly things," the N. T. "the heavenlies," it is argued that the underlying idea is condition, not location, but for those of us who cannot go very deeply into things, the quite satisfying explanation is that they are "where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God."

In chapter 2. 5, 8 we find further that it is "by grace" and "through faith." Then verse 6, "He hath raised us up together"—that is Jew and Gentile, "and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus."

A Christian lady reading this verse said, "I do not know what it is to be seated with Christ in heavenly places." This was repeated to a well-known servant of the Lord, and he answered "Ask her to read the verse again; it says, "seated in heavenly places *in* Christ Jesus." He is there now, at God's right hand, and we in Him, He represents us there and would have us dwell there even now in spirit, and by the Spirit; at home and at rest because in Him, or in relation to Him, under His headship. Presently we shall be seated *with* Him there.

What difference will it make? We shall see that the apprehension and enjoyment of these great things will make a very great difference. We have been "created in Christ Jesus unto good works" (chapter 2. 10); we are to be "strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man; that Christ may dwell in our hearts by faith" (chapter 3. 16, 17); we are to be

“renewed in the spirit of our mind” (chapter 4. 23); we are to be “filled with the Spirit” (chapter 5. 18). Since we are seated in Christ in the heavenly places, and blessed with all spiritual blessings in Him there, God our Father wills for us, and has provided the means whereby what He has made true of us there in Him, may in some measure be true in us even now. And as Christ dwells in our hearts, we shall develop a Christian character, and all our relationships will be suitable to this. Read Ephesians 5. and 6. 1-9; there are no wives, no husbands, no children, no parents, no servants, no masters on such a high level as in these chapters. Compare Colossians 3. 19-25 and 4. 1; 1 Tim 2. 8-15, 5. 4, 6. 1, 2; Titus 2. 1-10, and 1 Peter 2. 18; 3. 1-7. There will indeed be a difference, and so the enemy of our souls sets himself to hinder our entering into our heavenly portion, and we wrestle, not as we get elsewhere, in conflict for the gospel, nor for the faith once delivered to the saints but with “wicked spirits in heavenly places” (chapter 6. 12, N.T.) and the mention of heavenly places here is the key to the understanding of the conflict for which we need the whole armour of God, that we may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. Thus we come to our last question, Will there be hindrances?

Hindrances will come to different saints in different ways. They may come as persecution and hardship, or in the more subtle suggestions of flattery and ease, and alas! we are so soon turned aside by such small things that we do not recognize them as among the wiles of the devil.

There are six parts in the armour, and then the seventh which completes it is “Praying always.”

1. “Loins girt about with truth”

(chapter 6. 14), that is, the truth allowed to govern all our affections, and an answering truthfulness and integrity in us.

2. “Having on the breastplate of righteousness” (verse 14), not only righteous before God, but having a good conscience and living here in practical righteousness.

3. “Feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace” (verse 15). Resting in Him who has made peace, we walk in peace, without fret or worry or disquiet, for the preparedness of the gospel of peace can keep us calm in all circumstances and in all places.

4. “Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one” (verse 16). God has spoken, His word stands sure, so we may dismiss all unbelieving thoughts with the words, “It is written.” What we cannot understand may well wait until God’s good time of interpretation, and meantime we have faith in God.

5. “And take the helmet of salvation” (verse 17). Not only do we rest in a past salvation, not only do we look on to final salvation, but we are kept in the power of the present everyday salvation of Him who saves to the uttermost (Heb. 7. 25).

6. “And the sword of the Spirit which is the word of God” (verse 17), the sword which the Holy Ghost wields; the sword with which men of God have ever done exploits. It is a sharp, two-edged sword, it turns one edge on ourselves, on unsuspected thoughts and intents of the heart and lays them bare, and the other edge is turned on the foe without, a sword of victory that cannot be defeated.

The parts of the armour give us an indication of the enemy’s points of attack. If we are not governed by

truth and formed accordingly, if we are unrighteous in the common ways of life, if we do not learn to rest in the Lord for the pilgrim path, if we listen to infidel and unbelieving teaching and allow it a place in our minds, if we are not in the good of present salvation, if we neglect the Word of God and prayer, any or all of these will hinder our enjoyment of spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ. Indeed were it not for the Lord on high for us, and "the power that worketh in us," we should soon be like the King of Israel who, smitten between the joints of his armour, had to cry, "Carry me out of the host for I am wounded." But we are warned to take unto us the whole armour of God, and as we do this we shall be able to add a thankful amen to the doxology of chapter 3. 21, saying gladly, "Unto Him be glory."

7. And lastly, "Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto, with all perseverance and supplication for all saints" (verse 18). Here is the secret of victory, patient, unremitting, persevering prayer for ourselves, for others, for the work of the gospel, but especially for all saints. Our hearts are so narrow and so prone to be wholly engaged with our own concerns but the circle of prayer is to include all saints.

Then how affecting are the first words of verse 19, "And for me." The great apostle, so far above and beyond any of them, bespeaks their prayers,

and often in the Epistles we find this, and may learn that the Lord's messengers, going forth in His Name, may be helped by the prayers of humble saints.

These are great themes, and there is only One who can lead us into the knowledge of them; it is as we know Him and are taught of Him that we learn them; as the Captain of the Lord's host came, as we read in Joshua 5. 13, 14, to lead them into the promised land, so the Lord Jesus leads His people now into the apprehension of their spiritual inheritance.

It may be said that what is herein set forth is rather the Christian teaching and experience of earlier days, and that it is not suited to our own strenuous times; but let us be fully persuaded that what is of God is for all times. If our attitude Godward is at fault, our life manward will be a failure. We do well to labour. In face of the darkness and the sorrow lying on humanity who would not work for its salvation? But the harder our toil, the more we give ourselves to bearing the burdens pressing on so many, the more we need to retreat in spirit into those heavenly places where our Lord Jesus Christ dwells, and where we may learn more of His great love for the solace and refreshment of our hearts.

Shall we not turn to Him that it may be thus with each one; so shall we be here for His praise, so shall we find in Him fulness of joy even now, and pleasures for evermore.

Guidance.

TAKE the Word as guiding: how generally—almost universally—is it too accepted just as interpreted by the people among whom we are: how few venture to differ from the fashion in which it is read by these! And the *personal* guidance day by day as to the details of life, how little, it is to be feared, is this found by "watching daily at the gates" of infinite Wisdom, "waiting at the posts of her doors" (Prov. 8. 34). Yet of such is it said that the man is "blessed." For each of us there is individual guidance; God loving to have us thus apart for Himself: to each one of us the Lord says, "Follow thou Me!" Real communion with the Lord involves this necessarily.

(F. W. G.)

TRUSTING IN THE LORD.

(H. A. WOOLLEY)

ONE of the things the Apostle Paul urged the young man Timothy to "follow" was faith. And how we all need the exhortation to-day! For faith is vital to the Christian life. We start with it. Faith puts our feet on the King's highway and all along the journey, on sunlit mountain or in darksome valley, "we walk by faith" until that glad day when faith will be lost in sight; for then we shall see Him whom our soul loveth, face to face, and be with Him for ever.

But what is faith? Without overlooking Hebrews 11. 1, so full of precious meaning, we may regard faith as being the soul's trust in God. Or as another has said, faith is a confidential relationship between two persons.

It is interesting to discover that the word faith so largely used in the New Testament is rarely found in the Old Testament. The latter, however, does say very much about trusting, for obviously to trust in a person we must have faith in that person. Alas! how often is our trust directed into wrong channels. To trust in our own heart is the height of folly (Prov. 28. 26). It is always better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in man or princes (Ps. 118. 8, 9). If some trust in chariots and horses let us see to it that we remember the name of the Lord, for only so shall we be enabled to "stand upright" (Ps. 20. 7, 8). Shame and woe were the portion of men of old time who trusted in images or mountains (Isa. 42. 17; Amos 6. 1).

Now shall we look very briefly at some of the things which come to those who make the Lord their trust.

First, deliverance. "Our fathers trusted in Thee: they trusted, and Thou didst deliver them. They cried unto Thee, and were delivered: they trusted in Thee, and were not con-

founded" (Ps. 22. 4, 5). "But I . . ." One single, solitary exception. In deep gratitude and humility we remember that He, the spotless One, was forsaken that we might never be forsaken; that all trusting ones might be delivered in a very real sense, saved with a great salvation, cleansed from every stain in the blood of the Lamb.

Then trusting brings succour and produces song, as many a tried saint can testify, and David among them (Ps. 28. 7). Passing to Psalm 32. 10 we learn that "he that trusteth in the Lord, mercy shall compass him about"—a forceful reminder of what Elisha's servant saw when the Lord opened his eyes (2 Kings 6. 17). Happiness follows trusting, this being stated in at least three places: Psalm 34. 8; 84. 12; Proverbs 16. 20. Again, trusting brings a fixed heart—"his heart is fixed, trusting in the Lord" (Ps. 112. 7). Stability is the portion of those who trust in the Lord (Ps. 125. 1). Finally, turning to Isaiah 26., we have (1) perfect peace (verse 3)—notice the "because"; and (2) everlasting strength, or the Rock of ages (verse 4—pause at the "for"). The reason for all lies in the word "trust."

These verses teach clearly that God's glorious promises are realised by faith. *If we trust Him certain results are bound to follow*. For what God has said He will certainly perform. "I the Lord have spoken it, and I will do it." Remember the unfailing law "According to your faith be it unto you." Faith in God Almighty, the Omnipotent God, is never in vain.

How true it is that faith honours God and God honours faith. Because of the old believing nature within, the life of faith is not easy. Yet every Christian is called to walk by faith, which means that like Abraham we are

to live in a sphere of spiritual promise with nothing but God's bare word to go upon. To take God at His word, to trust Him in child-like simplicity, to venture *all* on His gracious promises, such as those we have been considering—this is to tread the God-pleasing path, for without faith it is impossible to please Him.

Human aid frequently fails. Man, frail and mortal, finds that much of the good he would fain do is far beyond his power. But nothing is impossible with God. And the abiding lesson, so hard to learn and yet so fruitful when mastered, is that all things are possible

to him that believeth, to those who ceasing from man put their whole trust in the Lord of heaven and earth. In every danger, difficulty, and distress the message comes: Have faith in God. Hold on to the faithfulness of God. Pray in faith. Obey in faith. Work in faith.

May it be ours to trust in the Lord more fully, to be strong in faith, giving glory to God, believing with all our heart that everything He promises He is well able to perform—and *will perform*, despite all appearances to the contrary. For He is faithful that promised.

EMMANUEL—GOD WITH US.

WE ask the question: if God, who is absolutely holy, comes into the midst of men, who are altogether sinful, what will the result be? Will not men be inevitably destroyed? There is a wonderful story in Exodus 3. Moses was watching the flocks of his father-in-law in the backside of the desert, when he saw a strange sight. He saw a bush, and that bush burned with fire. That was nothing strange in that sun-parched desert, but what was strange about this bush was, that though it burned with fire it was not consumed, and Moses looking upon it said, "I will now turn aside and see this great sight," and as he drew near to that burning bush he heard a voice from out of it saying, "Take off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place on which thou standest is holy ground." And Moses found that he was in the presence of God: of God come down to deliver His people and not to destroy them. That bush shall speak to us of fallen humanity, of you and of me, and of all our fellow-men. Poor dried with-

ered humanity! No fruit, no freshness, no life, no love for God! Nothing but sin, and hatred of His holy will! a dried, withered, sun-parched desert bush! The fire shall speak to us of God, for "our God is a consuming fire." But if God who is a consuming fire comes into the midst of mankind, so dried and withered and fruitless, what must be the result? Surely we say there can be but one result, mankind will be consumed with the just judgment of God. That is the natural thought; but when we come to the first chapter of Matthew we find that our natural thoughts are wrong. God comes into the midst of men, and He does not come to destroy them, but to dwell among them, full of grace and truth; for "God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved." And so Emmanuel has another name, and that name is JESUS, and Jesus means Saviour. "Thou shalt call His name JESUS, for He shall save His people from their sins."

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

“Baptised for the dead.” 1 Corinthians 15, 29.

“I am writing to ask help to the understanding of 1 Corinthians 15, especially verse 29. What bearing has it on the preceding part of the chapter? There is an interpretation to the effect that one can be baptized for another in the case of illness or death. Does the word *for* mean *in place of*?”—**ABERDEEN.**

[I]t will help in the understanding of this passage if it is seen that verses 20–28 are a parenthesis, verse 29 follows verse 19. The argument is that if there is no resurrection from the dead those who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished, and why should anyone fill the gaps that their death had made in the Christian ranks, it would be a foolish thing to do if death ends all. The Christian company is viewed in the passage as an army in the line of battle, the enemy’s fire was trained upon it and men were falling daily, suffering martyrdom; but others were eagerly taking their places, and standing up in the public confession of Christ, with the prospect of hatred and probably martyrdom from their former associates, as had fallen to the lot of their predecessors; they stood in jeopardy every hour (verse 30); it was the hope of resurrection that made them do it and carried them through.

Baptism is the ordinance by which a person is outwardly identified with the Christian profession, and everyone is baptized for himself and not for

another. There is no thought in this passage of one being baptized *instead* of another, but rather to *take the place of*, as recruits would fill up the ranks of an army in place of those who had fallen in battle.

We are not called to suffer martyrdom in these favoured lands, yet for us there is a deep meaning in the words, for by baptism we have been identified with the death of Christ. “Know ye not that so many of us as were baptized unto Christ were baptized unto His death” (Rom. 6. 3)), and that means death to sin and the world and selfish ambitions and self-gratification. What gain would there be to us in that if the dead rise not? for if the dead rise not, then is Christ not risen and we have identified ourselves with One who has perished by an ignominious death without any prospect beyond it. It is because we know that He who was dead has been raised up, and that we shall be raised up also to share this triumph that we can not only submit to baptism, but be true to it.

Faith and Baptism.

“Why is baptism coupled with belief in Mark 16. 16 and absent in John 3. 16; 5. 24 and other texts? I have never seen a satisfactory explanation of Mark 16. 16. Please give the matter a little consideration and answer in **SCRIPTURE TRUTH.**”—**CORK.**

[I]n Mark 16. the Lord was sending out His disciples into the world which at that time was divided into two parts, Jew and Gentile; there was nothing else then, and they were to carry the gospel to both Jew and Gentile—“to every creature.” Their

mission would form another body—the Christian company—i.e., all those who stood identified with the Name of Christ, and by that ceased to be either Jew or Gentile. But identification with the name of Christ outwardly is by baptism, and if a man believed the

message of the apostles, was convinced of its truth, but refused to be baptized, he would remain what he was before, either a Jew or Gentile, and could not be called a Christian, and there was no salvation in Judaism nor in heathendom; it is only found in the Name of Christ. He that believed and identified himself by baptism with the Name of the One in whom he believed was saved. If a Jew, he saved himself from the untoward "generation" to which he belonged (Acts 2 40); if a Gentile, he came out of the dense darkness of the devil's kingdom into the Kingdom of God.

The commission in Mark was to the Twelve; they were to inaugurate the Kingdom of God in the world, and they did it, as the last verse of Mark's Gospel tells us, the Lord working with them, and this is the way they did. We do not preach Mark 16. 16 now, nor do we take our commission from Mark's Gospel but from Luke's and John's, where baptism is not mentioned, or more definitely, we follow in Paul's line, who was commissioned from the

glory and was not sent to baptize but to preach the gospel. Yet baptism has its place and teaching most surely. It is not a necessity in regard to our soul's relation with God and heaven, faith in the Saviour settles that and nothing else is needed, but it is necessary in regard to our living in the world. The thief at Calvary did not need baptism because he was going to die and go out of the world; the Ethiopian eunuch did need it, for he was going to live and abide in the world. For us it is committal to the death of Christ, and if we are true to it we live in the world as those who are dead to it (Col. 2.) and to sin (Rom. 6.).

For a Jew or a heathen, Mark 16. 16 would still apply, he could not be reckoned a Christian if he refused to be baptized unto the Lord. I do not say that his soul would not be saved and he go to be with Christ if he died, he certainly would if he believed, but he could not be accepted as a saved person, he would remain outwardly and by profession a Jew or a heathen

The Destruction of Government.

"Some were disturbed by what is said on page 233 of October SCRIPTURE TRUTH on 'the destruction of government' It is 'HE' not simply 'that' which goes when the Lord comes. Government still remains but in a persecuting form. I expect D R means pure government as divinely set up, but his words rather set aside the One we know as 'greater is He that is in you than he that is in the world'."—NEWCASTLE

THE author of the address in question was speaking on what he terms "the divinely ordained institution of government." Against this the spirit of the coming apostacy is working, and this government will most surely have ceased when the man of sin is revealed in all his lawlessness. His authority will not be from God as is that of "the powers that be" now (Rom. 13.) but from the devil (Rev. 13. 4) and will be in no sense government as we know it through the

mercy of God. In the passage in question (2 Thess. 2.) there are evidently two forces restraining and hindering the revelation of the man of sin. "What withholdeth," in verse 6, does seem to be divinely ordered government, which is for the restraint of evil, as the Scriptures teach. A remark on the subject by J. N. Darby is interesting. "At present the hindrance is still the existence of the governments established by God in the world; and God will maintain

them as long as there is here below the gathering of His Church. Viewed in this light, the hindrance is at the bottom, the presence of the church and of the Holy Spirit on the earth." There can be little doubt that verse 7 refers to the Holy Spirit. "He who will let until He be taken out of the way." So that whatever means are used of God to hinder the full revelation of evil, the cause is the church in which the Holy Ghost dwells. The speaker in his address suggested the Holy Spirit as the hindrance, but laid stress upon government as ordained and maintained by God; as the Christian's attitude towards these was his subject, we decided to leave the words as spoken, and hoped they would cause

our readers to think and search, and our correspondent's welcome criticism will probably stir them up to do so.

We might add that two sinister persons appear in 2 Thess. 2. "The man of sin, the son of perdition" verse 3, and "that wicked" or the lawless one, verse 8. The former is, we believe, the first beast of Rev. 13.—the blasphemous head of the revived Roman Empire, to be, and the second is the second beast of that chapter, the false prophet who is antichrist. It ought not to be difficult to understand how divinely ordered government holds back the manifestation of the first, and the presence of the Holy Ghost prevents the appearance of the second.

I'VE seen Thee, Lord, in death for me,
 And in Thy life have liberty;
 But who shall tell the cost to Thee?

Thou gav'st Thyself—God's holy One—
 His spotless Lamb, His blessed Son.
 O love, what wonders Thou hast done!

"All the paths of the Lord are mercy and truth unto such as keep His covenant and His testimonies. For Thy Name's sake O Lord, pardon mine iniquity; for it is great."—Psalm 25. 10, 11.

WHATEVER the darkness, the faith that clings to God makes no mistake, nor can He be wanting to it. And so this verse itself declares. "Mercy" is pledged to, as it is needed by, those who in their hearts "observe Jehovah's covenant and His testimonies." Holiness is thoroughly maintained while grace is manifested. "Mercy" leads to and introduces "truth"; and "all the paths of Jehovah" declare these things unitedly. "Mercy and truth" thus "met together," "righteousness and peace" will "kiss each other." The eighty-fifth Psalm shows this accomplished.

It is in confidence then that the prayer is uttered: "for Thy name's sake O Lord, pardon mine iniquity; for it is great." Great sin is great need: great sin pardoned is great grace; consciousness of great sin pardoned makes the heart love much. All this the Lord has Himself shown out in the case of the sinful woman in the Pharisee's house. The fullest gospel we thus find to be the holiest gospel. *Grace* we see to be the effectual conqueror of sin. Thus, even, the Lord makes known and glorifies His Name in its forgiveness.