

# SCRIPTURE TRUTH

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

John xvii.

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“I CHARGE YOU BY THE LORD THAT THIS EPISTLE BE READ UNTO ALL THE HOLY BRETHERN.” 1 Thess. 5. 27.

EVERYBODY that loves the Word of God and desires to obey it must have experienced the force with which it often enters the soul. An unexpected sentence in a perhaps neglected part of it will challenge and arrest the heart and conscience and refuse to be ignored. We had an experience of this sort when reading the First Epistle to the Thessalonians recently. We had come to the last chapter and were greatly encouraged by verse 24: “*Faithful is He who calleth you who also will do it.*” Do what? Sanctify us wholly; and preserve our whole spirit, soul and body blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. A thing surely impossible for any man to bring about either for himself or his brother! Yet we may rely upon the faithfulness of God who calls us to His glory. His children are the objects of His deepest solicitude, and we may with confidence pray for them and for ourselves, that this great thing may be done in us and for us, that we may greet our Lord Jesus Christ with joy at His coming.

There for us the epistle had usually ended, but not so this time of reading it. Verse 27 rang out as a clear challenge; it made itself felt as an imperative command, a solemn charge. Verse 24 assured us that GOD IS FAITHFUL, who also will do what He has promised; verse 27 asked, ARE YOU FAITHFUL, and will you do what you are commanded? There were those in the assembly at Thessalonica who

were responsible before the Lord for the well-being of all the holy brethren there. And the word that Paul had written to them was absolutely necessary to their practical sanctification, for it is by the word, the truth, that God sanctifies His children. If any of them, then, failed to hear this word, they would miss the sanctifying power and blessing of it, and so lack in conformity to God’s will expressed in it, and consequently would be a blot on the assembly. Not one could be left out of this, *all the holy brethren* had to hear it, so intimately one were they by the indwelling Spirit who had united them to Christ their Head, and so necessary was everyone of them for the fulfilment of God’s will for them. And because of this the Apostle abjured those who watched for their souls by the Lord to see to it that his inspired epistle was read to them all. Not one was to be overlooked.

It would be comparatively easy to reach all the holy brethren in that city, for they were a people separated and separate from their former idolatrous associations. They were manifestly “*the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.*” Serving the living and true God and waiting for His Son from heaven, apart from the world and united to one another, they were men known and wondered at, and we are sure when they heard that a letter from Paul had arrived they would gather together eagerly and with expectation. It is different

now, "the holy brethren" are divided and scattered, they are no longer of one mind and heart, striving together for the faith of the gospel; unholy sectarianism has done its work well and has put many of them in antagonistic camps, and some of them would refuse to listen to the word from any but their chosen teachers. Others are involved in worldly associations, which have dulled their ears and spoilt their appetites for the truth so that they seem to have no desire for it.

Then has this charge lapsed? Was it meant only for those who were responsible for their brethren's welfare at Thessalonica and not for us, or for days when it was easy to gather the brethren together? We could not admit it; it came with too great power to us, the charge abides in all its force. It might be said that it is impossible now to know "all the holy brethren," and how then can we reach them with the word? We do not argue the point, it is probably true, but that does not relieve us of the responsibility of having them all as our outlook. Those who know and love the truth cannot limit their outlook; they cannot concentrate their thoughts and efforts on a few—"the one flock," "all the saints," "all the holy brethren," "the church": these are the objects of the love of Christ, these are His chief interests on earth, for these He died, to gather them together in one, for them He gave Himself that they might be His own glorious church for ever—His own exclusive and peculiar treasure.

We hold then that it is our responsibility, and the responsibility of all who know the truth in any measure, to communicate it to all the holy brethren as far as in us lies.

This solemn charge does not permit of any escape from this obligation, it rebukes all sectarianism, it forbids all working merely for a party within the church, which after all may arise from carnal rivalry and not from the love that embraces all the saints. We are abjured by it to think of all the holy brethren, for every one is necessary to Christ, and the complete sanctification of every one is the will of God. *This then is our outlook and our aim in continuing the monthly publication of 'Scripture Truth'* We are very conscious that our capacity is small and our efforts feeble, nevertheless this is our desire and aim, and because it is so we believe we can still count upon the support of the Lord, and the prayers of all who love Him and have His interests at heart.

And this will be our answer to a correspondent who signs himself "A Regular Reader" "I have read *Scripture Truth* from its commencement twenty-three years ago. I remember it was issued then for the help of *all the children of God*, for His glory, as grace and wisdom were granted from the Lord. Is this still its aim? God's beloved children need to be furnished with the truth, to be strengthened and encouraged by it, and so much the more in these days of departure from what is revealed."

Our Bible begins with, "In the beginning GOD," and it ends with, "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with ALL THE SAINTS" (N T). And we are sure that if we begin with God we shall have all His children in our affections, and we shall "know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren, and he that loveth not his brother abideth in death" (1 John 3 14)

# THE LIFE OF FAITH.

David Ross.

A New Year's Meditation. Heb. xi 8-16, 24-29, 33-38.

"THE Just shall live by his Faith."

Sung first of all by the Hebrew poet and prophet six centuries before Christ, reiterated with deepened emphasis at the dawn of the Christian era, re-echoed with emancipating power at the Reformation, these words have still a living message for all who live in this year of grace, 1932. But what is Faith? and what this Life of Faith? Faith is described, rather than defined, as "the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen."

## A VENTURE.

(1) The Life of Faith is first of all a Venture upon God. Even the ordinary work-a-day life of every man is a venture, for must we not continually exercise faith in persons and things, sometimes, alas! only to find ourselves bitterly deceived. One of life's greatest venturers was Cardinal Wolsey, who, while professing to be a servant of God, had as his object his own self-aggrandisement, and to achieve this devoted his brilliant talents to the service of his King, only to finish his life a disillusioned man. He says,

"I have ventured,  
Like little wanton boys that swim on  
bladders  
This many summers in a sea of glory;  
But far beyond my depth: my high-  
blown pride  
At length broke under me, and now has  
left me  
Weary and old with service, to the  
mercy  
Of a rude stream, that must for ever  
hide me."

Another year has opened for us. Shall we venture upon it in self-confidence, or trusting to the promises of persons or things which must surely fail us? Rather let us emulate Abraham, who, "when he

was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and went out not knowing whither he went." None of us knows what lies ahead, how much better then to venture all on the command of Him who knows the end from the beginning, and whose promises can never fail. Then shall there be no lament like that of the broken-hearted Wolsey.

"Had I but served my God with half  
the zeal  
I served my king, he would not in  
mine age  
Have left me naked to mine enemies."

The recent excavations made at Ur of the Chaldees have revealed something of the glories of that city, but the God of glory was more to Abraham than these and he went forth. Moses was also a venturer for he forsook Egypt where his position had seemed so secure and his fame was so great. By faith he left the ranks of the powerful to take sides with the despised (and in some respects despicable) people of God and found himself apparently destined to be an obscure shepherd in the backside of the desert. And this record speaks of a host of unnamed venturers, men and women, who through faith endured torture, destitution, affliction and death, and whose epitaph, "Of whom the world was not worthy," has been written by the God on whose faithfulness they relied.

## A VISION.

(2) But faith is not a blind venture. It is a *Vision*, and only those who have vision can look on things as they really are. "Faith is the conviction of things not seen." It was strong conviction that sus-

tained the great venturer Columbus, even when his calculations were proving wrong. His sailors, mostly jail-birds pressed into service, cried and sobbed like children when the land disappeared from view and their leader had to keep two log-books, one for himself with the truth, and one with false reckonings for those who had not shared his vision. His conviction amounted to certainty, so that he could say, "It was no guess work, I was certain of my goal." So too, a great scientist, whose memory the modern world has recently been honouring, Michael Faraday, could say on his death bed when asked what his speculations were, "I have none. I am resting on certainties, for I know *whom* I have believed."

Doubtless among Abraham's company were pressed men who would gladly have returned to security in Mesopotamia, but the patriarch looked for a city whose builder and maker is God, and though he and his fellow-pilgrims had opportunity to go back, yet faith's keen vision sustained them in the path of God's will. With all of us there occur opportunities to return to the world from which we have been called. Every change of circumstance, of residence, of situation, of company, is such an opportunity, but for those who are not ashamed to do His will, God is not ashamed to be called their God, for He has prepared them a city.

Moses endured because he saw Him who is invisible, and those, who in the agony of torture refused to accept the deliverance which was offered them, were sustained by the vision of the resurrection.

#### A VALUATION.

(3) Again faith gives the power for true *Valuation*. Ur of the

Chaldees was a great city, but its glory has for centuries been buried beneath the sand of the desert. Faith, however, knew of a *better* country, a more glorious city, with unshakeable foundations and chose the better part. How vast and wonderful Egypt's treasures were; perhaps few knew better than Moses who could have had all the honour due to the son of Pharaoh's daughter, and yet the glories of the Christ whose coming kingdom faith foresaw were so superior, that he valued the reproach and dishonour connected with the Messiah as greater riches than the wealth and honour of the Egyptian Empire.

Had we been more guided by faith's valuation, how much bitter disillusionment we should have been spared. How many have been like the gallant Jacques Cartier, explorer of the St. Lawrence, who, discovering what he believed to be diamonds, forgot all the tasks his king had set him, and hastened back to France, only to find that his "Canadian diamonds" were worthless stones and he himself the laughing stock of Europe. Faith penetrates into the sanctuary of God (Ps. 73. 17) and understands, for there the measures of the Almighty appraise things as they really are. Death as it met the faithful confessors by fire, sword, stoning, wild beasts and sawing asunder, terrible though it was, became glorious in the light of a *better* resurrection. Faith's reckoning is that the sufferings of this present time are not to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.

#### A VICTORY.

(4) But faith is also a *Victory*, for whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world, and this is the victory that overcometh the world

even our faith Who is he that overcometh the world but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?

It was the faithful Abraham separate from Sodom's corruptions and rejoicing to see Christ's day, who won a glorious victory over the confederation of kings, and delivered his worldly-minded, short-sighted nephew Lot, who had succumbed to the seductions of the well watered plains, and consequently shared the captivity of their inhabitants

*Unbelief* weakens the knees of the Israelitish multitude pursued by the Egyptian host and confronted by the waters of the Red Sea, and they cry, 'Hast thou taken us away to die in the desert?' *Presumption* in the person of Pharaoh boasts,

I will pursue, I will overtake, I will divide the spoil," and he "as says" to pass over the Red Sea, only to perish miserably, but the victorious *faith* of Moses enables him to say, 'Stand still and see the salvation of the Lord, for the Lord shall fight for you,' and so he and his followers "passed through as by dry land"

Then what a paean of victory do we hear as, like the roll of the stirring drums and the trumpet that speaks of fame, the story of faith's victories is sounded forth, 'Who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens'

All these died in faith, having only seen the promises afar off, but now the venturers of faith look off unto Jesus, the Captain and completer of faith whose victorious endurance has gained for Him the throne of power Shall we not then, filled with the *vision* of His glory, which enables us to *value* all else as loss, *venture* our all on Him and know that whatever lies hid for us in the bosom of the coming year, even though it be death itself we shall have the *Victory* through our Lord Jesus Christ?

Thou hast the words of endless life,  
Thou givest victory in the strife,  
Thou only art the changeless Friend,  
On whom for aye we may depend  
In life, in death, alike we flee,  
O Saviour of the world, to Thee

## Humiliation and Glory.

WHENEVER in the life of our Lord Jesus Christ any incident indicates more emphatically than usual the lowliness of His humiliation, there by the side of it you get something that indicates the majesty of His glory He is born a weak Infant, but angels herald His birth, He lies in a manger, but a star hangs over the royal city, to lead sages from afar to offer to Him their gold, frankincense and myrrh He sits wearied on the well stone and craves for water from a peasant woman, but He gives her the water of life He lies down and sleeps, from pure exhaustion, in the stern of a fishing boat, but He awakes to command the storm and it is still He weeps beside a grave in deep sympathy with His friends, but He flings His voice into its inmost recesses, and the sheeted dead comes forth

# THE CHURCH, WHAT IS IT?

J. T. Mawson

Are we interested in this great subject?

A young Christian said to me, "It does not appeal to me at all, I am sorry, but it is a side of things I don't understand." That same day another young Christian said, "I hope you will speak to us about the church." "Why?" I asked. "I listened to an address on it recently, and realized that it was very precious to the Lord Jesus, and since then I have wanted to learn all I could about it," she answered. The first of my young friends had really not got beyond the self-centred stage. What the Saviour could do for him and what he could do for the Saviour was the full range of his interest; the other had awakened to the fact that there was something on earth for Christ, something that was indeed everything to Him. It was Christ's interests instead of her own that had begun to affect her. If we love Him with an unselfish love we shall like her rejoice that our Saviour has got something that is very precious to Him, and we shall want to learn all we can about it.

THE first allusion to the church, or as the word should be, the assembly, in the New Testament, is in Matthew 13 45, 46, for *the one pearl of great price* can be nothing else than the church. The merchant-man who had set his heart on this precious thing is the Lord, and no price was too great for Him to pay for it. The figure used is very impressive, three things it teaches. The indivisibility of the church, it is one; its purity and beauty, it is a pearl; and its exceeding preciousness, it is of great price. This is what it is in the eyes of the Lord, and that He has a great cost to Himself secured it for Himself ought to stir the heart of every one who loves Him.

It is definitely named by the Lord in Matt 16 "Upon this Rock will I build My church," said He, and it is evident from the way that He spoke, that at that time it had no existence except in the purpose of God. The idea that the saints of Old Testament days are included in it is false. They had and will yet have a place of great blessedness, for God was not ashamed to be called their God, but their place will never be equal to that of the church.

Then it was to be His own work, and if His, then perfect in every way, also, that He would build it upon what He was Himself. It would not depend for its stability upon any quality that the children of a fallen Adam possessed or could produce, but upon what He was—the Christ, the Son of the living God. Further, the material of which it would be built would be of Himself, for Peter means a stone, and a stone is of the same order of material as the rock. This is plainly taught in the words, "He that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one." It may not be easy for us to understand this at this point in our study, but we cannot but feel that this new structure was to be very wonderful in its stability and character.

There are two other important things in relation to it that the Lord's words teach us. First, it was to be His own exclusive and peculiar treasure, for He says, "I will build MY church" and we must lay the emphasis upon the possessive pronoun. Second because it was to be Christ's own possession it would be assailed by all the powers of hell.

Let us not suppose that Satan would quietly tolerate anything in this world that was specially for Christ, he would most surely hate it as he hates Christ Himself, but the Son of the living God would preserve it in every assault and in Him it would be impregnable, "the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."

In Acts 2 we have the record of its actual coming into being. The work of the cross was finished and Christ was risen and glorified, then when Pentecost had fully come the Holy Spirit came forth from the Father, sent by the enthroned Lord Jesus Christ—for the Divine Trinity is deeply interested in it; each Person in the Godhead has His part in the formation and completion of the church—and having come He filled all the house where the disciples were gathered, and filled each one of them, not one was excluded. Having come He took control of that congregation and formed it into one body, "for by one Spirit ye are all baptised into one body," and from that time those disciples could not view themselves as mere units who could please themselves and live their lives regardless of one another, for the members of the body "should have the same care one for another" (1 Cor. 12).

Other important features of the church now emerge. It was one body formed and held together by the Holy Spirit of God; He was to be from that time in every individual member of this body. "What, know ye not that your bodies are the temple of the Holy Ghost?" (1 Cor. 6), but He was also there when they were assembled together to maintain the rights of Christ in their midst, and to carry on the work of God in them and through them. The church could

have had no existence apart from the Holy Spirit, nor could it have had any light or guidance or life or power. The Holy Spirit is indispensable to it, as the Lord taught in John 14. 15, 16, and the Acts of the Apostles are the confirmation of the Lord's words. That part of the New Testament might well have been called the Acts of the Holy Ghost, as has often been said, but the blessed thing about it is that He did not act apart from the church that He formed and filled, and the servants of the Lord whom He energised; it and they became the vessels of His power and wisdom. He had come from heaven bringing heavenly light and heavenly power to earth, and had entered into an indissoluble identification with the church that His coming had formed, and what began at Pentecost and was manifested in its full unhindered power then abides to this day in all that is vital. The Holy Spirit is not weary of His labours nor is His power exhausted.

The next step in the unfolding of the truth comes out in a startling way in Acts 9. The fiercest persecutor that the church has ever known, a veritable captain in the devil's forces, was riding proudly to Damascus to crush and destroy the church there, when a great light from heaven burst upon him, and he was felled to the earth, a blinded and a bewildered man. As he lay there he heard a voice saying to him, "*Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me?*" What a revelation that challenge from the glory was to his soul! Jesus whom he had hated to exceeding madness was enthroned in heaven and the despised and unresisting men and women whom he persecuted and slew were members of that risen and exalted Man! He

did not say, they are Mine, but, **THEY ARE ME.** He identified them with and as Himself. The body formed by the Holy Spirit on earth had a Head in heaven. Christ is the Head and His church is His body.

We must not confound these words of the Lord to Paul with those other words of His: "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto Me." This is a more intimate relationship than that. Indeed the word relationship does not seem to truly describe it; for relationship two are required, but here it is one. The Head in heaven and the members on earth are one. "For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is the Christ" (1 Cor. iv.). "There is one body" (Eph. 4). This is "the mystery of the Christ, which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto His holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit" (Eph. 3).

The revelation of this mystery transformed the ardent pharisee; he arose from the dust another man, and of all the unsearchable riches of Christ that he was honoured by God to preach, none had a more important place than this, "that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God" (Eph. 3). In the Colossian epistle we see the working out of this in practical life. There we learn the great fact that the life of the Head who is in heaven is in His body which is on earth; that His body is complete in Him, in whom dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily. And that now, in the

very world where Christ was crucified, where Satan stirred up men to destroy the temple of His body, so that those heavenly graces which are the very character of God, and which shone in all their perfection in Jesus, might be banished from the earth for ever, in this very world, dark, sinful, and devil-ruled as it is, Christ has His body in which His very life is maintained and manifested. It is an indestructible life, fragrant and pure to God. Its features are, "bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye. And above all things put on charity [love], which is the bond of perfectness, and let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful" (Col. 3). The life of which these are the features is the life of the glorified Christ, His members on earth derive it from Him in heaven, it is maintained by the power of the Holy Ghost, and as it breaks out in those who are called "elect of God, holy and beloved," the angels of God learn His manifold wisdom. Who would not be filled with wonder and awe and fullest thanksgiving at the grace that has called us to have a share in this great secret of the heart of God now revealed to us?

We pass in our brief study to one other wonderful aspect of this great truth; it comes out in Ephesians 5. "*Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for it, that He might sanctify and cleanse it by the washing of water by the word, that He might present it to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing.*" No

other statement brings out the immeasurable love that Christ has for His church, and no other figure than that of the marriage relationship can adequately set forth what it is to Him. He loved it and gave Himself for it; He loves it with a never-wearied love and serves it with that great day in view when His love shall be satisfied and He shall present it to Himself, entirely suited to Himself in His glory and with nothing in it to cause His heart a pang of grief. What a glorious church it must be when neither in His own secret thoughts or before the hosts of heaven will He be ashamed of His church, which will then be the bride, the Lamb's wife. The 19th and 21st chapters of the Revelation shew it in its final and everlasting beauty, for it will never lose its lustre or decline in the affections of Christ, and when Time has ceased to be, when all its

changes are over and an eternal and unchanging state of things has been ushered in, it is there, "as a bride adorned for her husband." It is to be for Himself for ever, for Himself alone and yet the eternal habitation of God (ch. 21. 2, 3). Not a single desire of the Lord's heart in regard to it but shall be realized. In His joy in her He will see of the travail of His soul and be satisfied. He will judge in that day that the prize is worth the price.

We surely cannot be indifferent to this which means so much to Christ, and so much to the Father who purposed this joy for Him, and so much to the Holy Spirit who labours unceasing for its completion and perfection, and so much to us too, for every redeemed and Spirit-sealed soul in this day of God's grace forms part of the church, which is now the body of Christ and is soon to be His wife.

## Questions.

**CERTAIN** questions arise in the mind from the foregoing which will be answered, if the Lord will, in our next issue.

1. How can the church be called indivisible when it is apparently in fragments?
2. How can it be said to be impregnable when apparently it is a complete failure?
3. If all that was vital at Pentecost remains why are things apparently so feeble and is there any hope of recovery?
4. Explain further in what sense we are members of the body of Christ and how may we experience this unity with Him?
5. How can the church be finally without spot, when it has been so unfaithful to Christ, and those who form it so often defiled by the world and sin and so carnal in their ways?

Our readers are invited to send us answers to these questions.

*"Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for it."* Eph. 5. 28.

**NEARNESS** to Christ would keep us from sectarianism, the most natural weed of the human heart, and would give us a feeling as to, and an interest in the whole church of God, for Christ can love nothing less. (J. N. D.)

## STUDIES IN THE LIFE OF JOSEPH, No. 1. R. McCallum.

THE touching and exquisite story which we are about to consider has been through all ages a choice pleasure ground for young and old; for the simple and the sage. It is a story told with admirable simplicity and directness and full of a pathos such as the sacred pen alone can record, which affects every human heart in which feeling dwells. But the supreme value of the narrative does not lie in the simple style, the tender pathos or the amazing sequence of events, issuing ultimately in the rightful exaltation of Joseph. It lies in the spiritual lessons which may be gathered from the history of this man, in many respects the most remarkable in Old Testament history, and one of the two merely human characters presented to us in the Bible without a flaw.

Of the early life of Joseph nothing is recorded. He was, we know, the elder son of Rachael and the child of Jacob's old age, and could not have been more than five or six years of age when his father left Mesopotamia. His mother died when he was yet young and a double care of him consequently devolved upon the father, a care which made for good, for Jacob had meantime been the subject of that wonderful transformation from "supplanter" to "a prince with God." There can be little doubt that the duplicity of the parents, the jealousy, bickering and scheming in Haran at the home of Laban, had made permanent and injurious impressions on the elder sons of Jacob, who had grown up to be utterly unfit companions for their younger brother. Nor are such impressions and influences to be found in the pages of Scripture alone, but we are all familiar with

the havoc that has been played in many a professing Christian household by the inconsistencies of the parents in the home circle. It is just here that what a man or woman is finds most scope for expression, and we may be very sure that if our private life belies our public utterances and conduct we have placed a formidable stumbling stone in the path of our little ones. Our own influence will be reflected in theirs, and few influences can be more detrimental than that of an older brother of bad character over a younger.

The evil conduct of his half brothers, the sons of Bilhah and the sons of Zilpah, had come as "a painful surprise to the pure and tender-hearted Joseph," "and Joseph brought unto his father their evil report." Mere tale-bearing is always despicable, but there are times when it is a duty to speak; when only a mistaken idea of honour, or cowardice, can account for silence. Regard for the good name of his father extracted this evil report which was made without exaggeration and without malice, so that far from being blameworthy his action was necessary and wholly praiseworthy: the outcome of his ingenuous simplicity and an indication of the integrity of his character. The rebuke which his life administered to them but added fuel to the hatred and jealousy which was the result of the ill-concealed partiality of his father. One may be inclined to judge the special favour shown by Jacob as imprudent, but it is easily understood. Here was the child of his beloved Rachael, the son of his old age, one who early showed an appreciation for the truth of God and with whom

alone of all his sons Jacob could discourse concerning the promises made to the fathers. Reuben by his gross sin had forfeited the birthright, and the coat of many colours was the indication that what was Reuben's by natural right had passed to Joseph, the beloved of the father.

"Now the sons of Reuben the firstborn of Israel," (for he was the firstborn, but forasmuch as he defiled his father's bed, his birthright was given unto the sons of Joseph the son of Israel: and the genealogy is not to be reckoned after the birthright. For Judah prevailed above his brethren and of him came the chief ruler, but the birthright was Joseph's) (1 Chron. 5. 1, 2). The coat was a long sleeved coat such as was worn in Eastern countries by those of rank and designated the wearer as one who did not require to do ordinary work. A mere stripling of 17 years had become heir to property, possessions and privileges and had been set over his brethren! No wonder that, being what they were, "they hated him and could not speak peaceably unto him."

And yet another factor contributed to their hatred. This younger brother had been vouchsafed dreams by God—dreams of coming greatness, doubtless given him now to sustain him in days of trial and sorrows to come, and these he narrated to his brethren. The import was most clearly that they should bow down to serve him. In the second dream given to confirm the first, not only did his eleven brethren but his father and mother (Leah) also did obeisance. And although his father deemed it right to rebuke him, he "observed the saying" but "his brethren envied him."

The story of the betrayal of Joseph while portraying so graphically the abysmal depravity of the unregenerate human heart, is from another viewpoint a glorious demonstration of the overruling by God of the wrath and malice of men for the accomplishment of His purposes of mercy and of grace. In the performance of their duties as shepherds the sons of Jacob had moved to Shechem for pasturage. It is one of those valuable undesigned coincidences of Scripture that their stay there should have caused anxiety to Israel. When we remember how the name of Jacob had been made to stink there as the result of the cruelty of Simeon and Levi (see ch. 34), it is not surprising that the old man feared reprisals and sent Joseph to see whether it was well with his brethren and their flocks and to bring word again. The promptness of the son's response to the father's plan was characteristic of his filial obedience, as he said, "Here am I"; while his wholehearted earnestness to bring the mission to a successful issue was demonstrated in the fact that although they were not to be found at Shechem he pressed on to Dothan in his search for them. His brethren espied him while he was yet a long way off. His dress was remarkable and the practised eye of the shepherd—keen as that of the mariner—soon picked up across the Eastern plain the familiar figure of the 'dreamer.' "And they said one to another, Behold the dreamer cometh, come now therefore and let us slay him."

It is well to note the comparative magnanimity of Reuben. He it was who, as we have seen, was most intimately affected by the place given to Joseph, yet he rescued him from an immediate death by having him

consigned to an empty pit, the relic of a fruitless search for water. His intention it would seem was to rescue Joseph from his brethren and to deliver him to his father again, but it was marked by that fatal weakness and instability which marred his character. While the proposal was so far good it was in fact merely a modification of the crime, and his action remains a beacon against the folly of temporising with evil instead of stoutly resisting it. The chance to effect the proposed deliverance never came to Reuben: the deferred good intention became a lost opportunity over which he was left to mourn; and "they stript Joseph of his coat, his coat of many colours that was on him: and they took him and cast him into a pit . . . and they sat down to eat bread." That an affecting scene was witnessed as they bound him to put him into the pit as to which Scripture is here silent, is revealed on the occasion of their first visit to Egypt. The conviction of their guilt forcing itself upon them they said one to another, "We are verily guilty concerning our brother, in that we saw the anguish of his soul when he besought us and we would not hear." And as Joseph then took Simeon and bound him before their eyes, it seems not improbable that that "instrument of cruelty" played a leading part in the binding of his young brother. But as they partook of their meal an incident occurred which entirely altered their plans. "They lifted up their eyes and looked and behold a company of Ishmaelites came from Gilead with their camels, bearing spicery and myrrh going to carry it down to Egypt."

Let us not overlook the fact that the details of this incident—a per-

fectly natural one and yet a stroke of genius were these Old Testament stories mere fabrications of the human mind—ring true to life. There was no need for the writer to specify the *loading* of the camels, but what we know of Egypt and Egyptian customs at that time confirms that these were just such commodities as would find an ample market there. When the apparent trivialities of a story bear the hall-mark of truth and show the writer to be conversant with the facts, we can depend upon it that the larger issues of the history have been accurately reported by him. The eagerness of the merchants to obtain Syrian slaves for the Egyptian market was well known to Joseph's brethren, and Judah's suggestion that they should sell him was promptly adopted and acted upon. Opportunity may favour the deeds of evil men just as plainly as those of good, so that favourable circumstances in themselves are not an indication of what is according to the divine will. "And they drew and lifted up Joseph out of the pit and sold Joseph to the Ishmaelites for twenty pieces of silver; and they brought Joseph to Egypt." The crowded programme of their sinful acts sprang from envy as James says, "Where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work."

What thoughts must have crowded upon the mind of Joseph as he found himself a fettered slave bound for exile in a foreign land. Was God indeed true to the promises afforded to him in dreams? Little did he imagine that in days to come surveying the past he would realize most clearly that "God moves in a mysterious way, His wonders to perform," and that the dastardly deeds of his brothers were but links

in the chain of loving providence. True it is that God "makes the wrath of man to praise Him; and the remainder of wrath will He restrain." The day was coming when in the light of God's will accomplished, he would be able to say, "As for you, ye thought evil against me, but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass as it is this day, to save much people alive." As for Joseph, "The Midianites sold him into Egypt unto Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh's and Captain of the Guard"; as for Jacob, his affection for his son made him quick to believe the suggestion conveyed by the garment dipped in blood, "And he knew it and said, it is my son's coat; an evil beast hath devoured him; Joseph is without doubt rent in pieces." Utterly disconsolate, smitten with grief, he refused to be comforted. The shock of bereavement, it would appear, had for the time deprived him of the consolation of resource to God for in this sore trial there is no mention of Jehovah. Nor is the sorrowing one referred to as Israel. How like him we are! So overwhelmed by our bitter experiences, and perhaps inwardly so aggrieved that they should have been permitted to come upon us that we lose the succour and sustenance that can only be had by recourse 'to God.

It will be well as we proceed to view Joseph as a type of Christ. Although it is nowhere asserted in Scripture that he was a type of Him who was to come, the reverent student of Scripture can hardly fail to draw comparisons and see analogies. Joseph was Jacob's well beloved son, for we read "Israel loved Joseph, more than all his children." Jesus was the "beloved Son" of God. By Jordan's waters

the heavens were opened upon Him and the voice of the Father from heaven declared, "This is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased." The coat of many colours marked Joseph out as heir, and declared that to him was given the place of headship and lordship. And is not Christ declared to be "Heir of all things," while God hath decreed that He will yet be universally owned as Lord. The kernel of all prophecy is the declaration that Christ Jesus shall yet rule and reign over His brethren according to the flesh. But the Jews have acted precisely as the brethren of Joseph did; they have declared emphatically "we will not have this Man to reign over us." The counsel taken by his brethren to slay him was characteristic of the guilty conduct of the Jews in the days of our Lord. In Matthew 27, v. 1 we read "When the morning was come the chief priests and elders of the people took counsel against Jesus to put Him to death."

The ready response of Joseph to the call of the father is but a faint prediction of the willingness of the Eternal Son of God to do the Father's will. "Then said I, Lo I come (in the volume of the book it is written of Me) to do Thy will, O God." Joseph was sent to seek his brethren and He who was the Antitype came first to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. Joseph was mocked and set at naught by his brethren. "They conspired against him to slay him, and they said Behold the dreamer cometh." And Herod with his men of war set Christ at naught and mocked Him. Joseph was sold for 20 pieces of silver—and the brethren of Christ covenanted with Judas for thirty pieces. The anguish of Joseph's

comparatively pure soul reminds us of the strong crying and tears wrung from the Saviour, as the Spotless One—"holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners"—anticipated all that lay before Him at the cross. But Joseph's sufferings stopped short of death—although doubtless the pit wherein was no water, typifies Hades; Christ tasted death. We have seen in anticipation that the betrayal of Joseph accomplished the purposes of God, the wicked hands of the crucifiers of Christ but fulfilled the determinate counsel of God's grace for a sinful world.

It is just when we see Christ set forth typically that we appreciate the opening of this Chapter of

Genesis. We read in verse 2 "These are the generations of *Jacob*," and curiously there immediately follows the story of *Joseph*. This section is the last one in the book but is it not fitting that the book which opens with the promise of Christ—the seed of the woman—should conclude with a prophetic intimation of Him and His coming and of what that coming will mean for Israel and the world?

"The story of the generations of *Jacob*"—the ultimate outcome of his existence, is the revelation of him who sets forth the well beloved Son of God. Happy they who have bowed the knee to Him and drawn from the fulness of His supplies!

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I THIRST but not as once I did,  
 The vain delights of earth to share,  
 Thy wounds Emmanuel all forbid,  
 That I should find my pleasure there.

It was the sight of Thy dear Cross,  
 First weaned my heart from earthly things,  
 And taught me to esteem as dross,  
 The mirth of fools, the might of kings.

I want the grace that springs from Thee,  
 That quickens all things where it flows,  
 And makes a wretched thorn like me,  
 Bloom as the myrtle or the rose.

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God has an absolute title to be supreme in the lives of His creatures, and He expresses His authority immediately by His Word. Therein we are instructed as to the rule and measure of our responsibility, and as to the grace of Christ, and the power of the Spirit by which alone we can fulfil every relationship in which He has placed us.

Our first and all-ruling relationship is with God by the Word. It has precedence of all others, and claims absolute and immediate subjection. "*We ought to obey God rather than men*" is the absolute claim of God, who has revealed Himself fully and reveals Himself immediately to us by the Word.

## ABOUNDING GRACE.

Mirza Saeed, Persia.

"THIS morning my private reading was Acts 23, and what a blessing I got out of verse 11. 'And the night following the Lord stood by him and said, Be of good cheer, Paul.' 'Following' what? Following the apparent failure of the vessel of the testimony before the Council, when he cursed 'the whited wall' and had to confess 'I wist not.'" After creating discord between Sadducee and Pharisee, yes, after much failure the blessed Lord, who knew the heart of His failing and perhaps despairing servant, saying, 'Be of good cheer.'

"What a vista the Spirit of God opened up to me, and what a powerful bi-concave reflecting mirror in which I viewed the fifty-one years that have passed since He found me and washed me and gave me life. No tongue can tell, no pen describe what passed between Him who loveth my soul and me. He brought back to my memory so vividly the account of Abraham in Genesis 17), which I consider the zenith of Abraham's walk with God, a much brighter day and hour than the moment when he raised the knife to slay his beloved and only son. What an hour! "*And Abraham fell on his face and God talked with him.*" After the mixture of faith and unbelief, when he left Mesopotamia, calling on his wife to help him and God, by a lie; after going down to Egypt for want of faith, with its sad results to Lot; after Hagar, and her sad tale, the effects of which abide to this day; yes, after all the failure, what a suited position and attitude for him to be in, on his face in the dust, listening to the voice of the Almighty God, El Shaddai, the mighty One,

who is the nourisher and satisfier of His own who trust Him, as a mother satisfies her babe at her breast. To hear that voice saying to Him, 'I will make' and 'I will give.'

"It brought back to my mind how David the king 'sat before the Lord,' saying, 'Who am I, O Lord God, and what can David say more unto Thee, for Thou, Lord God, knowest Thy servant.' Yes, God knew Him, and knew all about his behaviour when he feigned madness, spitting on his own beard before the king of Gath; He knew of his conduct and lies in the Ziklag days, 'yet,' said David, 'Thou hast spoken of Thy servant's house, and is this the manner of men, O Lord God?'"

"Oh, how good the Lord is, help me to praise His holy Name. My soul is like that of Jacob's when he worshipped leaning on the top of his staff, his staff upon which he leaned when all his power for planning and cunning devices was gone. So much for the past, and the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ that has never failed me, and as I look forward to the future and think of His coming to take me, and all His own into the Father's house—the home of my heart already—to be conformed to the image of God's dear Son, my heart upheaps within me. What a story in the glory the church shall repeat; it will be the story of the riches of His grace. My soul bows down to the dust and I worship at His feet—my true Boaz, who knows and speaks of my whole pathway, as Boaz did to Ruth, and reveals to me, not the God of Israel, but the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and how much that Name unfolds—under whose wings I have come to trust."

# THE COMING ONE

James Turnbull.

Rev. 22. 20.

IT is not without significance, that the last words of our Lord Jesus Christ as recorded in Holy Scripture are the promise of His coming again. It is fitting indeed that that portion of Scripture which should complete the inspired Volume, should end with such a word, a word well calculated to awaken our hearts, and keep us in expectancy until we hear that great assembling shout of our Lord which will terminate our pilgrimage on earth, and sweep us into His glorious Presence (1 Thess. 4).

The first recorded utterance of our blessed Saviour, in connection with His pathway here, is found in Luke 2. 49. "Wist ye not that I must be about My Father's business?" There we behold Him down here as the vessel of God's grace for men, and the importance of these words which God has preserved for us, indicate that the Lord was entirely governed and absorbed with His mission, His Father's business. That great mission has been accomplished; His Father's business was carried out and fulfilled to His entire satisfaction at His first coming, and now He thinks of us, His beloved church, His bride, that pearl of flawless perfection for which He laid down His life upon the cross, and hence, at the close of the Scriptures, we learn another mission fills His thoughts, He is coming again for us.

How blessed indeed to know Him as the coming One. No wonder that when He says, "Surely, I come quickly," the hearts of the saints reply, "Even so, come Lord Jesus."

I can well remember when first I heard about the Lord's coming again. My eyes had been open to behold

the Lamb of God and to follow Him, and I associated myself with a few Christians who rejoiced in the Lord's words and proved how true they were: "Where two or three are gathered together in My Name, there am I in the midst of them." What a joy it was to me to know that He was coming!

I had been brought up to look for the end of the world, and to have a vague uncertainty of being found among the sheep or the goats of that day (Matt. 25. 31-36). It was a joy to know that He was coming to take His own out of the world to be for ever with Him, and no uncertainty about it at all. It was surely something worth talking about, and no matter where I went among my brethren the one great theme of conversation was the soon return of our Lord Jesus Christ, and events connected with it. Whenever an address was given to the saints, the coming of the Lord did not fail to find its way into it, as it was also a solemn ground of appeal in the preaching of the gospel; in a word, there existed ample evidence that the people of God had a very deep sense in their souls that the hope of the church was soon to be fulfilled, and that the Lord would come quickly.

It would appear however, that the *waiting* has tested us, and the bright expectation of the Lord's return seems to have grown dim in the hearts of many of His beloved saints, for it is not the theme of our talk as once it was. How easy it is to harbour in our hearts, the thought, if not the very words that "My Lord delayeth His coming" (Matt. 24. 48), and, just as in that Scripture

the lost sense of the imminent return of the Lord led to loose associations, so it may be that the present state of worldiness among the people of God is the direct result of the waning expectation of the Lord's return.

Surely, beloved brethren, there is a *cause* for every *effect*, and it will be well indeed if we get back in our affections to Christ, "the coming One." Depend upon it, the truth that was intended to govern the saints, and span the interval between our Lord's ascension to heaven and His coming for us, was that He should be known affectionately in our hearts as a living Person in heaven *Who was ready to come for us*. There are two great truths that stamp their character on all the New Testament writings; one is that the Lord Jesus Christ *has been here*, the other is that He *is coming again*. What was accomplished at His first coming has saved the believer's soul for ever, but if his heart is to be *satisfied* His coming again is necessary.

Let us notice that the Lord says "Behold, I come quickly," in verse 7, when it is a question of cherishing the prophetic words of this wonderful Book, and again in verse 12,

where it is the question of reward for diligent labour for Him, He says, "Behold, I come quickly," but in verse 20, it seems as if the Lord anticipated that His soon return would be questioned or challenged, and hence, in order to emphasise the divine certainty of it says, "*Surely I come quickly.*"

Oh! what tenderness marks our Lord's words here. He knows how feeble and fickle our hearts are, and He addresses Himself to us accordingly, and what gives these words an inexpressible sweetness, is the fact that they are *His last words to us*.

What do they mean to us, dear reader? Have we learnt the secret of the Lord's heart in them, that He would impress upon us the thought that *we are indispensable to His own happiness*, and that *our happiness must be to share His*. Surely His joy could not be complete until *He has His beloved saints with Him*, and our joy will be full when "we shall see Him as He is" (1 John 3. 2). May the Lord graciously revive the thought of His soon return in the hearts of His own, and thus secure that response which only can delight His heart, "Even so, come Lord Jesus."

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## Prayer.

If a care is too small to be turned into a prayer it is too small to be made into a burden.

If a wish is not fit to be prayed about, it is not fit to be cherished.

We have a plea to urge in our prayers that is mighty and persuasive; it is, "for Christ's sake."

Breath spent in sighs is wasted, breath spent in prayer will swell our sails in the voyage of life and keep us out of the doldrums of depression and anxious care.

Let us turn all our wants into petitions and spread out everything that annoys us before God.

Wishes that are not turned into prayers irritate, disturb, unsettle. Wishes that are turned into prayers are cleansed, sanctified and blessed.

God's promises are sunbeams flung down upon us. True prayer catches them on its mirror, and signals them back to God.

## GOD'S CHILDREN.

H. J. Vine.

**"GOD IS LOVE."** Only in one chapter in the Bible do these glorious words occur, but twice are they given there (1 John 4. 8. 16). Love is the nature of the eternal God. This has been declared and manifested in the fact that He sent His only-begotten Son into the world. "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 Holy Spirit of God, who has been given to all who have believed on the Son of God, makes this great truth an experimental and practical fact to them, for "the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost that is given to us." Infinite in holiness, power, wisdom, righteousness and majesty—God is love, and love must have those upon whom it can pour its its blessedness and its priceless treasures, hence we learn that God has children in the world who are begotten of Himself.

**CHILDREN OF GOD.** They are first named in John 1. 12, where "sons of God" should read "children of God." The difference is important, "sons" sometimes simply denotes character or position, but "children of God" means they are born of God, as verse 13 declares. They are vitally in relationship with God, by the Father's love, the prerogative of the Son and the work of the Holy Spirit. There is nothing like the Word of God for comfort, assurance and joy. Let us see what it has to say about this threefold work. (1) Of the Father it is said, "Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called *the children of God*" John 1. 12. (2) Of

the Son it is said, "To as many as received Him to them gave He power to become *the children of God*" John 1. 12. (3) Of the Holy Spirit it is said, "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirits, that we are *the children of God*" Romans 8. 16.

**GOD IS ONE.** "There is one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we for Him; and one Lord Jesus Christ by whom are all things and we by Him" 1 Cor. 8. 6. The cattle on a thousand hills are His, and all the wealth of the earth and the glories of the heavens. He created the countless stars and calleth them all by name. "The invisible things of Him from the foundation of the world are clearly seen—being understood by the things that are made—even His eternal power and divinity" Romans 1. 20. But His children are nearer and dearer to Him than the works of His hands. They have been begotten by His word and are partakers of the divine nature (2 Peter 1. 4). They are in the world but not of it. The millions of people on earth belong to God. "The nations" and Israel, His chosen people, and the assemblies of Christendom, that profess His Name, all are His, and are responsible to Him, but His children are on the earth also, and they stand in this most wonderful relationship with Him, they "were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God" John 1. 13. "I ascend," said the risen Son of God, to My Father and your Father, to My God and your God."

**GOD'S CHILDREN ARE NOT KNOWN BY THE WORLD.** The

children of God are in the world but there has also appeared a great worldly Christendom. The tares have been sown among the wheat, as the Lord foretold (Matt. 13). "The children of the devil" are there as well as "the children of God." The children of God are not known by the world, they are travelling incognito through the world, and it does not yet appear what they shall be, though they know their destiny—they are to be like Christ. Their place is prepared for them in the Father's house by their great Leader and Forerunner, who only had a right to that home, as the Son. Meanwhile they need to be preserved from the world's snare, and particularly from the anti-Christian doctrines that pervade Christendom, and please well the children of the devil in it. We read, "Let that therefore abide in you, which ye have heard from the beginning. If that which ye have heard from the beginning remain in you, ye also shall continue in the Son and in the Father, and this is the promise which He has promised us, even eternal life" (1 John. 24, 25).

It is important to let the blessedness of the Word dwell richly in our hearts. It says, "Beloved, now are we the children of God." We are born of God; the world, religious or otherwise, is incapable of knowing us in this divinely given nature and relationship. Yet we bear marks that distinguish us from the children of the evil one. Those that are born of God do not practice sin (1 John 3. 9). "Sin is lawlessness," and God's children are 'children of obedience'; they practice righteousness and love one another.

**THE CHILDREN OF GOD ARE ONE FAMILY.** When the only

begotten Son of God came into the world it did not know Him, and Israel who ought to have known Him, for Moses had written of Him for them, would not receive Him, but a most remarkable prophecy was uttered by the Christ-rejecting high priest. He said in the Jewish Council, "Ye know nothing at all, nor consider that it is expedient for us, that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not." In uttering those words he was speaking beyond his own knowledge and intuition; the spirit of prophecy had come upon him, though he was a dark and godless man, and "he prophesied that Jesus should die for that nation; and not for that nation only, but that also He should gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad" (John 11. 49, 50). Yes, the death of Jesus is the righteous and divinely appointed way and basis of all the blessing into which the children of God shall come. It is the ground of their present relationship and future glory with Himself. He has secured all by His atoning death and He will gather all together in one in the predestined glory very soon. But are the children of God to expect to remain scattered abroad until then? Must they leave the blessedness of thus being gathered in one until the future? Is it not the intercession of His heart to the Father, that we all may be one even now, before the bright day of glory? Are not they all indwelt by the one Holy Spirit? And do not all cry, Abba, Father?

It is true that He, for whom we look, will bring all God's children home to His Father's house of eternal love; our hearts thrill at His words, "Surely I come quickly," and

not one shall be missing then. But He died: He knew the loneliness and sorrow of the night of forsakenness and blood shedding for us first—

HE DIED THAT HE MIGHT GATHER TOGETHER IN ONE NOW AND FOR EVER THE CHILDREN OF GOD THAT ARE SCATTERED ABROAD.

## “He is thy Lord.”

“*He is thy Lord, and worship thou Him*” (Ps. 45).

The beggar maid, that in the old ballad, was married by the king, mingled reverence continual with her love, and we who were ragged and filthy souls, whom the Lord Jesus stoops to save and sanctify and unite with Himself as His body and His bride, must never forget that He is our Lord, and will for ever be. In the highest rapture of our joy, and in the communion to which He welcomes us, we must ever be deeply reverent before Him and ever remember that He has given us commandments and the measure of our love to Him is how we keep them.

There are types of emotional and sentimental religion that have a great deal more to say about love than obedience; that are full of unwholesome apostrophes to a “*dear Lord*” and almost forget the *Lord* in the emphasis they lay upon the *dear*. I want to press this, and it is needed especially in some quarters to-day that the test of the reality of Christian love is first obedience, then lowliness. All that which indulges in emotion and forgets obedience and practical service is rotten and spurious; it is not of the Holy Spirit but of the flesh.

## Memory and Hope.

Memory and hope both have their place at the beginning of a new year, and memory is really the mother of hope. We express this when we sing,

“We'll praise Him for all that is past,  
And trust Him for all that's to come.”

We ought to paint the future with the hues of the past, for God's past with us is the prophecy of God's future, and our past with God, if we rightly understand it, ought to rebuke every fear and calm all anxious thought. We who trust in the living, inexhaustible God, can

only say rightly, “*To-morrow shall be as this day, but more abundant.*”

Our trustful prayer may be, “*Thou hast been my help (experience and memory): leave me not, neither forsake me, O God of my salvation,*” and His answer will most certainly be, “*I will not leave thee, until I have done unto thee that which I have spoken to thee of*” (here is our hope). So we cheerfully, peacefully and with confidence face the future in the light of the known and experienced past.

The saint who wears heaven's brightest crown  
In deepest adoration bends;  
His weight of glory bends him down  
Then most when most his soul ascends:  
Nearest the throne of God must be  
The footstool of humility.

## THE EPHESIAN EPISTLE, (Continued.)

James Boyd.

## Christ and His Church. (Chapter 5)

**WIVES** are enjoined to submit themselves to their own husbands as unto the Lord. While these relationships belong to the old creation, and not "in Christ," yet the new and eternal relationships are brought in to bear upon, and to regulate the old: for "the husband is head of the wife, even as Christ is Head of the church, and He is the Saviour of the body." This is always true of the head. Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything.

The church is to be the pattern for the wives, so is the Head to be the pattern for the husbands. They are to love their wives as Christ loved the church, and gave Himself for it. His great desire for such a companion is witnessed in the sorrows which He passed through in order to have her as His very own. In the vision of God He beheld her, when as yet she had no actual existence. She has been the eternal object of His heart. Ere the ages of time He saw her adorned with the graces that characterised Himself, the brightest, the most glorious thing that shone where the splendour of redeemed creation blazed with the glory of eternal love. He loved her as He contemplated her, clothed with the beauty that He Himself had put upon her; and when the time came for Him to lay down the price that would secure her for Himself, He gave all He had for her redemption—He gave Himself for her!

And on this mighty manifestation of His love our souls delight to dwell. How weak and worthless

when tested was the love of the first Adam for his bride, if we compare it with the love of the last Adam! Cowardly Adam blamed his transgression on his erring companion, Christ takes the blame of His bride upon Himself. He by the sacrifice of Himself frees her from the whole dreadful condition in which she lay in the fallen race, sanctifying her, purifying her by the washing of water by the word, that He might present her to Himself glorious, having no spot, or wrinkle, or any such things; that she might be holy and blameless. So ought men to love their own wives as their own bodies; he that loves his own wife loves himself. No one hates his own flesh, and husband and wife are one flesh, and he is to nourish and care for her. He is to cherish her as Christ does the Church; for we are members of His flesh and of His bones. Because of this a man will leave his father and mother, and shall be united with his wife, and the twain shall be one flesh.

Like Eve who was taken out of Adam, the church is taken out of Christ, only in a more perfect way. It is not only a bone that is taken out of the husband, but it is Himself, His life, His nature, His moral perfections, the fullness that resides in Himself, the spiritual nourishment that she receives; of all that is in Him is she built up. She derives her whole spiritual being from Him. Everything for the growth and health of the body is derived from the Head; the nourishing and cherishing are from Him imparted, so that the Head and the body are **THE CHRIST**. I have already referred to Psalm 139. 15, 16, and would

refer the reader's attention to the passage once more. He says, "My substance (bones or framework) was not hid from Thee when I was made in secret, curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth. Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being unperfect, and in Thy book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them."

That this mystery was hid in God, and not made known to the sons of men in former ages, is plainly stated in the epistle we are now considering. But the fact did not hinder its leaking out in type, shadow and dark saying, which as far as the mystery itself is concerned are only valuable to us, though others at the time of types and shadows no doubt found them valuable instruction in the ways of God. When I speak of its leaking out I do not suggest any inability on the part of God to keep His cherished secret inviolable, even if it were made public. But in His dealings with His creature man, as under responsibility to gain life and blessing by the fulfilment of his obligations, it was not His mind to mix this up with a revelation of His counsels; but now that His dealings with His creature as under probation are over, none of His dealings with man are upset by the revelation of His eternal purposes. Now that His saints are in the light of it, it is exceedingly interesting and instructive to see that from the beginning of His ways it was the thought uppermost in His mind, so that the language found in His word that is often felt to have a deeper meaning than that which lies on the surface is, as I have said, the leaking out of the deeper thoughts that were to have their revelation and fulfilment

when the time of man's probation should have come to an end. Until that time in language unintelligible to His people it sometimes looked out of its secrecy. And the beloved apostle, to whom its administration was committed is so filled by the grandeur and the glory of it that he contemplates it even in the marriage relations of human life.

And is such an obsession a thing to be despised? With what unutterable joy our hearts leap within us, as we dwell for even a brief moment on the glorious fact that we are members of the body of Christ, joined to Himself by inseverable bonds, part of Him who is the beloved object of the Father's heart; everything of the old order gone as completely as though it never had existed, and what we are we are as deriving from Him. Old things have passed away, and all things have become new; not a vestige of the flesh left; all things earthly for ever at an end: nothing remaining but that which is heavenly and of Christ. Oh the joy, the delight of knowing that we are His—His body, His bride. Destined to be the eternal companions of Him whose love for us took Him into the darkness of Golgotha, the deep waters of judgment against sin, the forsaking of God, death and the grave. And all for us—for us, poor unworthy objects. That He might righteously possess us as His own, His very own; that He might have an incontestable and eternal right to us. How we shall praise Him when we see Him face to face. Lord, hasten that day.

But we wait not that day for our praise  
to ascend  
To Him who in infinite love  
Bore unspeakable sorrows our sorrows  
to end  
And to bring us as brethren above.

Even now let our voices be heard in  
His praise,  
With gladness and grace let us sing,  
Till the slumbering echoes around us  
we raise  
And make this wide universe ring.

Of our worship and praise He is worthy  
of all,  
And feeble at best is our song;  
But with heart and with soul we shall  
JESUS extol  
In the midst of His glorified throng.

The various relations of life are now taken up, and come in with relation to the Lord. There are no such relations in Christ, but belong to the order of flesh and blood. In Christ they do not exist, for in Him

there is not Jew and Greek, bond and free, male and female. We are all one in Christ (Gal. 3. 28). But as long as we are on earth in flesh and blood we are in these relationships, and here we get instructions as to how we should walk in them. And the instructions as to the conduct of each are of the utmost importance. They are placed before us in order that we may know how we should behave in connection with an order of things that shall end for His own when He comes to receive us to Himself.

## Reliance on the Lord.

THERE is a story in 2 Chronicles 20. of what must stand out as one of the most singular and decisive battles on record. A great army came up against Judah and Jerusalem and Jehoshaphat the King was greatly dismayed for he knew that he was no match for these determined foes. But he gathered his people together, not his soldiers only, but all his people, *with their little ones*. And that is a beautiful touch, for the little ones would be greatly affected by the result of the coming fight, and what an impression the proceeding would make on them. The men of Judah stood and their wives and children, and the king prayed unto the Lord, "Our God . . . we have no might against this great company, neither know we what to do: but our eyes are unto Thee." And having prayed to God he preached to the people, and said, "Hear me, O Judah: Believe in the Lord your God, so shall ye be established, believe His prophets, so shall ye prosper." Then he appointed singers, priests and Levites, to go before the army and to sing, "Praise the Lord; for His mercy endureth for ever."

How the godless Ammonites would laugh as they saw these white robed priests chanting their praise to God, and leading the army, but they do not always laugh the longest who laugh the first, for God answers the prayer of faith, and the king of Judah did not need to strike a blow, his God did the fighting for him.

These things are written for our learning. When we recognise our helplessness God becomes our strength; if we know ourselves to be impotent Omnipotence takes up our cause, and God becomes the strength of our hearts and our portion for ever.

Judah got great substance out of the experience; it took them three days to gather the spoil, and on the fourth day they gathered themselves together in the valley in Berachah, which means the valley of blessing, and there they blessed the Name of the Lord who had given them victory over their foes. The chapter is worth reading, and the lesson of reliance on the living God which it teaches is worth learning.

# ABIDING IN THE DOCTRINE.

James Boyd.

## CORRESPONDENCE.

"THE evil, of which we are warned in 2 John, seemed to be in going *forward*; that is, adding to the revealed thoughts of God things that are not plainly in the text. This would set forth a Christ, not the Christ of God, but a Christ after the mind and heart of man. The Christ of God is One who has come in flesh, a real man in flesh and blood, otherwise He could not have made propitiation for our sins. But apart altogether from what we might deduce from the denial of this holy and all important truth the Word of God is plain and definite (John 1. 14; Heb. 2. 14). The man who does not confess this great truth of the incarnation has not God. But he who abides in the doctrine hath both the Father and the Son.

"Anyone if even a little acquainted with the Word is not likely to deny

body, soul and spirit to our blessed Lord. But supposing this were denied it would be easy to turn to Luke 23. 46: "And when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, He said, Father, into Thy hands I commit My spirit: and having said this He gave up the spirit." In Matt. 26. 38 He says: "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death." In Hebrews 10. 5 He says: "A body hast Thou prepared Me."

"But out of this another question is raised, and that is, Was His body the same as any other human being? To this question the Scriptural answer is, No; His was holy. Another important truth to keep in mind is that He was begotten of God. He was God's Son. Even if He could be viewed as Man only, which I should deny, He still was Son of God. Nothing of this was true of any other man."

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## The shadow of His Wings.

"*The shadow of Thy wings.*" Ps. 36. 7.

HOW great is the rest that comes from the consciousness of being under the shelter of the wings of our God, not merely as sheltering us from what is outside, but still more assuring us of what His love is. The *strong quills* preserve us from outside dangers, but the nearer we are to Him the more we enjoy the soft down. This is the home—the place of rest for those who are so dearly loved.

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Faith begins as experiment and ends as experience. ' It begins with confidence and ends with thanksgiving.

True love has four features. It thinks of its object. It seeks the company of its object. It is ready to suffer for its object. It exalts its object.

Put your cares into God's hands and He will put His peace into your heart.

# GREAT CONTRASTS IN THE REVELATION, No. 1.

The Lamb Slain and the Four Horses of Chapter 6. J. T. Mawson.

NONE but an inspired pen could have portrayed the scenes revealed to us in chapters 5 and 6 of the Revelation. How tremendous is the contrast between them! In the former a great joy and the thunders of a song that rolls triumphantly to the uttermost bounds of the universe; in the latter the wail of an anguished fear and the unrelieved despair of men from whom all hope has fled away. We must consider these great scenes, this with rapture, that with awe, and hear and learn the truths that they teach, for they are God's given for our instruction and the safety of our souls.

*"And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; and hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign over the earth . . .*

*"And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever" (Rev. 5).*

*"And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bond man, and every free man, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains; and said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide*

*us from the face of Him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: for the great day of His wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand" (Chap. 6).*

The joy of chapter 5 is the result of the work of the Lamb that was slain; the woe of chapter 6 is the result of the efforts of men for their own safety and glorification. Let us transport ourselves in thought into these scenes. Chapter 4 opens "the things that shall be hereafter" section of the Book (see ch. 1. 19). The true church—blood-redeemed and Holy Ghost sealed—has been caught up to heaven. The day of salvation for Christendom has closed and the hour of judgment has struck. Note the ascription of praise that rises from the prostrate worshippers before the throne in heaven. "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" (ch. 4. 11). That is the key to the whole of this section of the Book; and if we miss the meaning of that we shall understand nothing that follows. The power and rights of God are acknowledged in heaven but not on earth. And it is because men have refused to acknowledge God's rights and have lived for their own pleasure and not for God's that His judgments are to pour themselves out upon them.

For near two thousand years there has risen to heaven the prayer, "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven"; and that prayer must be answered, and the time for it is about to come. But first the determined opposition of men to the will

of God must be fully exposed; it must come to its climax, and it speedily will, as shewn to us here. God's will can only be established on the earth by judgment. Infinite love manifested in Jesus failed to melt the hardened hearts of men: they hated Him more and more and killed Him because of His goodness. The most incredible grace from heaven has not changed the world, though it continues from the time that the Lord Jesus went on high to the going up of the church. The acceptable year has now closed in these chapters and the lurid dawn of the day of judgment reddens the sky, but men are unchanged in their enmity to God. What a vain dream is that which has been so popular, that the world would be converted by the preaching of the gospel. The end of chapter 6 alone proves its falsity. Would the Lamb be wrath with a converted world? and would a converted world cower in abject terror in the caves and holes of the mountains from His face?

We must consider chapter 6. It is the first of the series of judgments, if judgments the opening of the seals can be called. It appears to me that under these seals we see men doing what they imagine to be the best for themselves without God, and the results of this. The church has gone, the restraining influence has been removed, and God has cast the reins upon the necks of the swift steeds of man's desire. He leaves them for a while to their own devices that the universe may see and own that His judgments on the world are just.

"Self-preservation is the first law of nature" is an ancient proverb, and "safety first" is a modern slogan; but men cannot save themselves; God is the only Saviour.

He is the Saviour-God; to reject Him is to be lost; apart from Him, men can only destroy themselves, and be the victims of the devil's malice. The four horses of chapter 6 would teach us this great lesson if we have not yet learnt it.

A WHITE HORSE and its rider appears when the first seal is opened. It signifies some pretentious scheme for peace and prosperity, something most promising. What this scheme may be we cannot exactly tell. It may be power centralised in a league of Nations which will police the world. Whatever it will be it will be man's effort without God to take care of himself. Great will be the hopes; he will imagine that he has at last reached Utopia. "Peace and safety" they will say, and the noise of their rejoicing will deafen their ears to the sudden destruction that is thundering at the door. How swiftly the white horse passes and THE RED HORSE and its rider appears. Peace is taken from the earth. There is a great sword in the hand of the rider on this horse. Human life is no longer sacred. They kill one another. Blood lust burns like a furnace. A frenzied "French revolution" at least Europe wide, shatters all hopes of world peace, and good will turns to gall and bitterness, for how could men who hate God, love one another?

The beginning of that time when they shall forge their ploughshares into swords has come, and agriculture has given place to war, and the neglected fields yield thorns instead of wheat, and the BLACK HORSE of famine with its rider swiftly follows the red horse of war. Woe to the poor of the earth. If they have escaped the sword they will not escape the famine. The necessities of life, the wheat and the barley, are strictly

rationed, while the luxuries of life are unaffected. And strange as that may seem it is man's way. Oh that the poor of our day would hear and understand it and turn from their trusted leaders to God. He is the friend of the poor, the God of the fatherless and the widow, as we learn from the life of Jesus on earth. But men are selfish and grasping and apart from the influence of the gospel are indifferent to the sufferings of their fellows, so long as they can secure good things for themselves. There will be no gospel influence in these awful days, and the black horse of famine will be a more terrible oppression than the red horse of war. The PALE HORSE shall follow in quick procession, and the name of his rider is DEATH, and HELL follows with him. The sword and hunger and death and the beasts of the field do their fell work on the bodies of men and Hell claims their souls. What a descent, from the white horse and its rider to the depths of hell!

Let no one suppose that I am throwing the colours upon the canvas with too lavish a hand; human words are feeble and faint when it comes to the portraying of these scenes. And let no one think that these conditions, described in this chapter, are a recent development, or a state of mind at which men shall arrive suddenly and only when the time arrives for these events to happen. It would have been so from the beginning but for God's restraining mercy. Think of Adam in the Garden. He was made in the image and likeness of God, and set in dominion over this lower creation, to subdue and to cultivate it. No creature more noble ever came from the hand of the Creator. In him we see a white horse and his rider, full

of promise of peace and perfection, but not for long did he ride prosperously. He was soon deceived by his own ambition, and distrust of God, and by that old serpent, which is the devil, and he lost his place of supremacy, and the bright promise was lost in a sickening fear. The white horse gave place to the red horse, for not many years had passed by, when the startled earth drank for the first time the blood of a man. And that man was not slain by a wild beast from the forest, or by a demon from the lower regions, but by his own mother's son, his elder brother, who should have been his keeper and protector.

Many times would the race have destroyed itself since that first murder, but God has restrained men in His mercy. Yet they are unchanged in character, their tendency is always away from God and consequently downwards. The idea that the race is making progress and climbing upwards upon the right road to final righteousness is a delusion. The Word of God and the history of the world disprove the idea of progress and evolution of better things utterly, and would dispel the delusion for all who have eyes to read and ears to hear.

But there will be in this day that we are considering a more terrible thing, which reveals the root, the cause of man's inhumanity to man, his subservience to the Devil, and his blind self-destruction. "When He had opened the fifth seal," says John, "I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the Word of God." In their schemes for making the world as they would have it, they give the destruction of everything that is for God a leading place. Let a man speak for God and

his life will be the price of his courage. The Word of God will not be tolerated and those who love it must die. The result of it all is the terror and despair of the closing verses of the chapter.

Why should these things be revealed to us in the Word? They are warnings of love to the world, but they are written chiefly for the servants of the Lord, that, seeing what the schemes of men are in their development, they may beware of them now, and not be deceived by what is so pretentious, plausible, and promising. Cursed is he that trusteth in man, and maketh the arm of flesh his stay. We are taught by them that man's efforts to improve his world must fail, for God and Christ have no place in them. If we have learnt this lesson we shall stand in separation from these schemes and efforts, and devote our time and energies to that which must prevail. The great contrast is shewn to us in chapter 5.

The will of God must be done on earth as it is in heaven, and God's creation must yield glory and pleasure to Him. If it failed finally in this, the reason of its creation, the Devil would triumph and God would be defeated. Moreover, it can never be at rest until God has His rightful place as God in it.

But who can bring about this great thing? Who is able and worthy to open the book of God's will and bring to pass God's intentions for the earth? A strong angel with a loud voice issues the challenge and the records are searched. Great men and mighty there have been since Adam's day. They lived and wrought their prodigious deeds, coercing their fellows with imperious will, regard-

less of God's will, but they have passed away leaving nothing behind them but empty names and decaying monuments. Death prevailed over them all; they were not able, they were not worthy. Even heaven is searched in vain. Enoch, Joseph, Moses, David, Daniel—there is not one of them able and worthy. They are not even in heaven because of their worthiness, but through the rich merits of redeeming blood. They all broke down in the day of testing, and the one who is to establish God's will on earth must be without failure. He must have been absolutely obedient to that will Himself.

John wept, and wept much, and no wonder. History is dismal reading when rightly read. The record of the failure of Adam's race to deliver itself from sin and death and to glorify God gives no cause for exultation, but much cause for grief, and we might well mingle our tears with John's, if we did not know that that was revealed to him here. We know it, thank God, and we weep not. "WEEP NOT," said one of the elders. "Behold, the Lion of the tribe of Juda, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book and to loose the seven seals thereof." THE LION OF THE TRIBE OF JUDA is a glorious title. It signifies untarnished human majesty, and Royalty that is truly royal. In it is the wisdom that stoops to conquer, and the power that subdues all enemies and lifts those who love righteousness out of all oppression and depression. The Old Testament Scriptures are full of the glories that are involved in this title, and creation has waited and groaned for the coming of the One who could bear it. But He to whom it belongs is the ROOT OF DAVID. No fickle man

could bear on his shoulders the weight of glory that the title involves, for the sceptre of this kingdom must be a right sceptre, swayed by a hand of unwavering integrity. "He that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God, and He shall be as the light of the morning, when the sun riseth, even a morning without clouds." The Root of David only can do these great things. The One from whom all the promises made to David sprang, He only can banish the night of fear and failure, disperse the clouds of distrust and doubt and bring in the cloudless day of God's will done on earth. He is the great I AM.

Our hearts thrill at the recital of these titles as John's must have thrilled, and our eyes look eagerly as John's must have looked to see who it is that bears them, and who is great enough to open this great book and accomplish what is written therein. And lo, in the midst of the throne, and all the glorious beings that surround it, stood A LAMB AS IT HAD BEEN SLAIN. "He came and took the book out of the right hand of Him that sat upon the throne." IT IS JESUS. . . . And here the writer must lay down his pen, and here the reader must turn from the printed page and fall down before Him, and in concert with the heavenly hosts, worship Him. . . . His glories cannot be described; but what we know we may sing, and what we sing is heaven's song begun on earth. It is a new song, because it will never grow old and the singers will never weary of it. "*Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation,*

*and hast made us unto our God, kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth.*"

Now let us be impressed with the contrast between the Lamb that was slain and that which we have considered, in chapter 6. There we see men, blinded by their frenzied endeavours at self-glorification, going down to hell and destruction at a headlong gallop. Here we see the One who made Himself of no reputation exalted to the highest place. How blessed it is to turn from them to Him, to cease from men and consider Him who became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. He is the Lamb—the little diminutive Lamb. He was of no account in men's estimation. Though He was the joy of heaven, and the delight of His Father's heart, He was ridiculed and hated and execrated by them. "They that sat in the gates spoke against Him, and He was the song of the drunkard" (Ps. 69). The highest grades of society to its lowest dregs, condemned and despised and rejected Him. What could He do for others who could not save Himself? Thus they jeered and mocked, and His apparent weakness became the jest of Jerusalem—"Himself He cannot save." But that lowly, lonely Man, crucified in weakness, the Lamb slain, is the Arm of the Lord by whom redemption from all bondage is accomplished, righteousness established on earth, and the Name of God glorified.

We may see in future papers something of what this means, if the Lord will, but here we see at least this great truth declared, "He that exalteth himself shall be abased, and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted."

## THE WONDERFUL "ME."

F. L. French.

For Salvation: "Come unto ME" (Matt. 11. 28).

For Sanctification: "Follow ME" (John 21. 19).

For Service: "Abide in ME" (John 15. 4).

For Satisfaction: "Be with ME" (John 17. 24).

OUR dear friend Samuel Ridout used often to say, "Christ was the centre of all God's thoughts and purposes from eternity," and this witness is true. Our faith does not consist in a code of ethics, a system of moral philosophy, or a series of prohibitions like other religions; it is a Person; it is Christ our Lord; it is Jesus our Saviour. It begins with Christ and Christ is its object and end; it is all Christ, for He is the Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last. The Christian—I speak of the man who is truly vitally one—has been given to Christ (John 10. 29), has been redeemed by Christ (Rev. 5. 9), belongs to Christ, for does not the Scripture say, "Ye are Christ's" (1 Cor. 3. 23)?

A Christian is simply a "Christ's one." It is the disciples of Christ who are called Christians (Acts 11. 26); and Christ is the Christian's life. Paul said, "For me to live is Christ" (Phil. 1. 21); "I live; yet not I, but Christ" (Gal. 2. 20). "Christ who is our life" (Col. 3. 4). When on earth, our Lord set Himself continually before the heart and mind of His disciples, and since our Lord has gone back to heaven, the Spirit of God has come to take of the things of Christ and shew them to us, and to bear witness of Him (John 15. 26; 16. 14). The Lord Jesus is the only One for us, whether for *Salvation*, for *Sanctification* or for *Service* or *Satisfaction*.

## Salvation.

In John 10. 9, we read, "I am the Door; by ME if any man enter in, he shall be saved."

Here we see both the *inclusiveness* and the *exclusiveness* of the gospel. It is inclusive, for it is "any man." Again, in John 7. 37, "If any man thirst, let him come unto ME and drink." Moral and religious Nicodemus, Nathaniel or Cornelius; or, blasphemer like Saul of Tarsus, a sinner of the city like the woman in the seventh of Luke, or, the thief expiring on the cross: the invitation is the same, "If any man thirst, let him come unto ME." And Christ has promised, "Him that cometh unto ME I will in no wise cast out" (John 6. 37). But mark it well: the Lord says, "let him come unto ME"; and herein is the *exclusiveness* of the gospel, for there is no salvation in any one except the Lord Jesus Himself. "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved" (Acts 4. 12). Jesus said, "I am the Bread of Life: he that cometh to ME shall never hunger; and he that believeth on ME shall never thirst" (John 6. 35).

Again He says, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth MY word, and believeth on Him that sent ME, hath everlasting life" (John 5. 24). And how many have obtained rest and peace for their soul, by responding to the gracious

invitation of Matthew 11. 28, "Come unto *ME*, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest"?

How blessed and how safe is the soul that trusts in the Lord Jesus Christ alone for salvation!

The devil deceives men by setting the wrong "me" before them. How many self-satisfied people, full of their own goodness, say, as they see the grace of God to souls which have been sunk in degradation and sin, and have become alive by this grace through Christ received into the heart. "Lo, these many years do I serve Thee, neither transgressed I at any time Thy commandment: and yet Thou never gavest me a kid, that I might make merry with my friends" (Luke 15. 29). There can be no blessing for any soul when the wrong "me" is before the heart and mind; nor is there any kid or fatted calf for that soul to feed upon, who refuses Christ.

### Sanctification.

As the Lord Jesus is the only One before God for our *salvation*, so is He likewise the One upon Whom God would have us fix our eyes for *sanctification*.

For our sanctification to God and separation from an evil world, we have the plain, simple words of the Lord Jesus, "Follow *ME*" (John 21. 19). As we follow Him, and *only* as we follow Him, can we keep our garments unspotted by the world. The great word to Peter upon his restoration, after he had denied his Lord, was "Follow *ME*" (John 21. 19, 22). Our Lord gives us a mark of His sheep, "They follow *ME*" (John 10. 27). Nor is this some dreamy, mystical transcendentalism, in which one goes along with his

head in the clouds, and his feet—he does not know where. But following Christ will work out in practical holiness and righteousness of life. "He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake" (Psalm 23. 3). "He that saith he abideth in Him ought himself also so to walk, even as He walked" (1 John 2. 6). "Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow His steps" (1 Pet. 2. 21).

The path of our blessed Lord as a Man here on earth was marked by holiness, humility and faithfulness to God. Those who follow in His steps will endeavour to have in their daily life the precious fruit of the Holy Spirit which are characteristic of our blessed Lord—"Love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness and self-control" (Gal. 5. 22). The things of this earth will not hold the one who is obeying our Lord's word "follow *ME*." When Jesus called to Levi, "Follow *ME*," we read, "he left all, rose up, and followed Him" (Luke 5. 28). Money and position are as nothing to one who hears that call; he, whose heart has been reached by that voice of supreme sweetness and authority will "deny himself, take up his cross daily, and follow *ME*" (Luke 9. 23). Oh, for more readiness on the part of the saints of God to have the Lord Jesus ever before them! to know Him as the one desire of the heart and life!

In the first four verses of the third chapter of the Song of Solomon, there is four times repeated the one phrase, HIM WHOM MY SOUL LOVETH! We do not have such repetition in the Word by the Holy Spirit, unless He wishes to emphasize what is repeated. How impor-

tant this must be that it is four times repeated in four verses! "*Him Whom my soul loveth*"! Can I speak of Jesus like that? Do I go through each day with Him before Me? Is it Himself I love above everything else in the world? Do I desire to please Him before all else? If so, then there will be true heart and life separation to Him.

### Service.

In service, as in all else connected with our Christian life, the Lord Jesus is the spring and source of that which is pleasing to God. A true-hearted Christian longs to bear fruit for Him. The Lord tells us in John 15. 4, 5, "Abide in *ME* and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in *ME*. He that abideth in *ME*, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit, for without *ME* ye can do nothing." And would he have it otherwise?

Where Christ is before the heart for service, we shall indeed be able to serve God truly, and we need no ordination of man for this purpose. "I have chosen you, and ordained you, that you should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain" (John 15. 16).

After our Lord rose from the dead, He commissioned His disciples for Christian service—very simply—very plainly. "Ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto *ME*, . . . unto the uttermost part of the earth" (Acts 1. 8). This is true Christian service—witnesses to the Lord Jesus Christ.

At Paul's commission, whose service for God was pre-eminent in the Church, Ananias was told, "He is a chosen vessel unto *ME*, to carry *MY* name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel: for I will show him how great things he must suffer for *MY* name's sake" (Acts 9. 15, 16).

To the early disciples, first called, the Lord said, "Follow *ME*, and I will make you fishers of men" (Matt. 4. 19). One may be active in "church work," and very earnest in "religious things," but the true test of all service is just one thing, have "ye done it unto *ME*?" (Matt. 25. 40).

There will be trial and sorrow and care if one is faithful to the Lord Jesus, but "we look beyond the long dark night, and hail the coming day," the day in which our heart will rest in Christ in

### Supreme Satisfaction.

In our Lord's prayer in John 17, He prays (v. 24), "Father, I will that they also whom Thou hast given *ME*, be with *ME* where I am; that they may behold *MY* glory." And we shall share His glory then even as now we share in the glorious relationship to His Father who is our Father, "and the glory which Thou gavest *ME* I have given them." Oh, the joy, the bliss and happiness, awaiting the children of God, saved, sanctified and able to serve through Christ Jesus! We look forward to that glorious day when they shall be with Him to Who they owe all. "Be with *ME*." What a comfort to the soul, no matter what the pathway on earth may be. "I have Christ, what want I more?"

We shall be with Him and like Him, and the heart entirely satisfied

in the presence of "Him Whom my soul loveth."

When I survey the wondrous throne,  
And there behold the Lamb once slain,  
Who bore our bitter loss alone,  
Who shares with us His richest gain.

I glory then as ne'er I did  
When this vain world could charm  
me most,

Nor does my Lord the boast forbid,  
For He Himself is all my boast.  
See Head and Side, see Hands and  
Feet,

What wondrous beauties all adorn,  
For only love and glory meet,  
Where pierced the Nail, the Spear,  
the Thorn.

The love has made the glory mine—  
Oh, prostrate at His feet I'd fall!  
And e'en the glory I'd resign  
To have the love alone, my all.

In view of all we have had before us one question—a paramount question—comes to each child of God. LOVEST THOU ME? (John 21. 15). No natural earthly tie and relationship must come between our soul and love to Christ (Matt. 10. 37, 38). But our love to Him will be shewn day by day in keeping His Word (John 14. 15, 21, 23).

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Be not of careless or of anxious mind,  
But let God's gracious peace thy spirit fill  
With quiet diligence to seek and find  
Just time to do His will.

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## The Word in the Beginning.

F. W. Grant.

JOHN begins "in the beginning"—he carries us back to the most remote that can be imagined. Whenever anything else began, then "the Word was"—not began. The Word had no beginning.

By the fact of this eternity of existence He is necessarily God: God only is the "Eternal"; but the apostle will not leave us to such an inference: "the Word was with God," he says, "and the Word was God,"—a distinct Person in the unity of the Godhead.

"With God" here is literally "toward God"; and this affirms, along with distinctness of Person, the adherence of regard and affection to Him of this Being whose designation as the "Word" points Him out as giving expression to the mind of God. And this Personality and relationship are eternal likewise: the Word was not a development from

God, even though a pre-creation one: for "He was in the beginning with God."

Thus a glimpse is permitted us into what is involved in a plurality of Persons in the Godhead. "God is love": and are we to think of Him before creation as dwelling in a blank and utter solitude, alone, with no one for His love? no object towards which it *could* flow out? even now with no sufficient object worthy of Himself? And He, the Father, was He no Father then? and have His creatures alone given Him the reality of such a title? Nay, there was in the Godhead as such, as this passage shows, an activity, a reception, an intercourse of love: "the Word was with God," toward God. The only begotten Son was then in the bosom of the Father. That "bosom of the Father" is not a development, but a glorious, everlasting reality.

## STUDIES IN THE LIFE OF JOSEPH, No. 2. R. McCallum. (Genesis 37 and 39).

THE abrupt change from Chapter xxvii. to that which succeeds it arouses profound curiosity and demands an explanation if that be possible.

We have been following with keen interest the simple but powerful story of the rejection of Joseph and having witnessed him carried down to Egypt expect to have unfolded to us the account of his fortunes in that land of antiquity and mystery. But lo! instead, we have an interpolation; an unsavoury record of the sins of Judah and his offspring, forming an unwarranted and unpleasant interruption in the narrative if this compilation be no more than human. The very candour of this chapter, however, in recording the depravity of Judah, the human ancestor of the Messiah, bears testimony that the Book is of God. And if we marvel at the corruption so graphically exposed, let us be astounded at the grace of God that permitted the descent of our blessed Redeemer, not merely from Judah but also from Tamar. Certain it is that man would never have used such sorry instruments for the fulfilment of his designs even if he could. Divine grace and power alone can take up the children of men sunk in the mire of degradation and through them accomplish purposes of blessing for the world. This chapter brings vividly before our notice the force of corruption to which the family chosen of God, for the blessing of mankind, was exposed in Canaan. It was with a view to the segregation of the chosen people that God permitted Joseph to be led into Egypt. It was necessary that Israel should "come out and be separate"

and their separation was secured by their transfer to that land where they dwelt amongst a people notorious for their "rigid exclusiveness." Moreover, after the fall of the Northern Kingdom and the captivity of the ten tribes, Judah became identified with the Israelitish people as a whole, so that they were spoken of everywhere as "the people of the Jews." Judah seems to be specially selected here as the representative of the rejecters of Joseph—type of Christ. He it was, as we found recorded in the previous chapter, who proposed and effected the sale of God's chosen saviour; this is the sin which specifically characterised his descendants in the day of the anti-type, when the Jews of Jerusalem rejected the Christ of God.

Chapter 39 takes up the story of Joseph in Egypt. So far as he is concerned, the story has already been the revelation of a character unique in patience and in power. Apart from the intimation of injustice made to the butler and the allusion twenty years later to the "anguish of his soul," not a word suggestive of reproach escaped his youthful lips. The sudden transfer from the attentions of an over indulgent father, to the hardships of the lot of slavery in the house of Potiphar, only served to reveal his virility, industry, and talent. These were rewarded by promotion in the house of Potiphar until all that his Master most treasured, was committed to his care. Two things explain his success. Firstly, God was with him, "And the Lord was with Joseph and he was a prosperous man." Here is how John Wycliffe rendered the words in 1738, "he was a luckie

fellowe." A complete stranger in a foreign land, snatched from home and friends, with nothing to call his own, sold into slavery, being thus deprived of freedom, we would scarcely describe him as dogged by good fortune. Yet was he truly prosperous, since the Lord was with him. Prosperity is not due to mere outward circumstances but to inward character, and this depends upon our fidelity to God. Instead of complaining that God had been unmindful of him, and had given him an intolerable burden to bear in life, he performed the duties assigned to him with all his might, and herein lies the second secret of his success. It is not, however, unrelated to the first, for his ambitions and energies were not exercised for personal promotion but whatever he was given to do, he did as to the Lord. His personal relationship with God was to him the most important thing in life, and just because that was so, God was with him, His presence cheering him in his loneliness, His power prospering him in all his labours, so that even Potiphar could not help recognising it, "and Joseph found grace in his sight," and to him was given the oversight of all that Potiphar had. But days of prosperity are days of peril, and Joseph was soon to pass through a time of peculiar temptation. He was a young man of good appearance, physically attractive, for we read, "Joseph was a goodly person and well favoured," and this was the occasion of the fierce temptation which assailed him. But thank God, this young man of God, chose the better part, and through the record of the temptation there has been preserved to all ages the words which all who are struggling against the powers of Satan and of the flesh may wield as the sword of the

Spirit, "How can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?" "He refused," and behind this refusal there was the integrity which considered what was due to the trust and confidence reposed in him by his Master, but beyond this there was the supreme sense of what was due to God. Thus was Joseph victorious. Her rank did not flatter him, her repeated temptations did not seduce him, for his sense of the reality of God made him willing rather to endure a woman's hate and all its consequences, than the judgment of God. Well may we for whom Christ died say, "How can I do this great wickedness?" It may seem in the eyes of others to affect men only, but we know that in reality it is sin against the holy God. "Discretion," it is said, "is the better part of valour," and Joseph is to be commended in escaping as he did. Better to lose his coat than to lose his good conscience.

The silence of Joseph is again remarkable. The falsehood of this wicked woman is effective just because Joseph's lips were sealed against exposing her infamy and so overwhelming his Master with shame and sorrow. But his silence and quiet endurance of a great wrong shut him in with God and permitted Him to have His perfect work. Again Joseph is thrown into circumstances which were calculated to make the iron enter his soul. From the heights of prosperity, through the surges of peril, he emerged the victim of slander in an Egyptian prison. His absence of self-defence gave scope to the world to believe the worst; the absence of divine intervention gave opportunity for faithlessness to disbelieve the divine intentions declared in dreams to him. But Joseph was no cynic, and in

prison, as in prosperity, he cast himself on God. "He was there in prison,"—numbered with malefactors, a sufferer for righteousness' sake, "But the Lord was with Joseph, and shewed him mercy." There was repeated in prison the experience of service in Potiphar's household for "the Keeper of the prison committed to Joseph's hand, all the prisoners that were in prison and whatsoever they did there, he was the doer of it. The keeper of the prison looked not to anything that was under his hand; because the Lord was with him and that which he did, the Lord made it to prosper." How evident in Joseph's case that God honours those who honour Him. If God tests us it is that we might be attested, and under the yoke of slavery, suspicion, slander, imprisonment, Joseph displays, faithfulness, integrity, and true nobility of character. Nor had God forgotten him as we have seen. Yea, the very events suggestive of forgetfulness were but rungs in the ladder of exaltation. And so in our pathway if we but remain true to Him, the troubles that assail and affright, though they appear like overwhelming us, will ultimately prove to be blessings in disguise.

Now there were cast into prison with Joseph two notable prisoners, the chief butler and baker of Pharaoh's household. It would appear that an attempt to poison the King had been made and doubt remaining in the mind of Pharaoh as to whether it had been administered in the food or wines, both these servants were suspected and put in ward. Attendance upon them was the lot of Joseph, and this special duty seems to have been entrusted to him by none other than Potiphar himself. An instructive lesson for us in this

phase of Joseph's experience is not merely his devotion to duty, but his watchfulness. "And Joseph came in unto them in the morning, and looked upon them, and behold they were sad." How many there are in this sad world to-day who are bowed under a load of sorrow and care and are peculiarly susceptible, on that account, to a word of encouragement which will bear testimony to the ways and goodness of God. Let such as have grace and fitness from God to do it, in the spirit of the compassions of the Master, ever be on the alert to ask like Joseph, "Wherefore look ye so sadly to-day?" "And they said unto him, we have dreamed a dream and there is no interpreter of it." Again there is brought prominently to notice the simple but unbounded confidence of Joseph in his God. He too, had had dreams, and had he been soured by the experiences of life he could in the cynical spirit to which we are all prone have poured scathing ridicule upon the value of dreams. But God is to him the great reality in life and he bears testimony to the ability of his God to interpret, and invites them to tell their dreams. To the butler there is announced restoration to the king's favour within three days, and before him Joseph now breaks the silence and exposes the lot of injustice that has fallen to him, showing as the Psalmist reveals that "the iron entered into his soul." To him Joseph makes a calm, sober appeal to use his influence to secure his release. How free from venom and passion are the memorable words, "But think of me when it shall be well with thee, and shew kindness unto me, I pray thee, and make mention of me unto Pharaoh and bring me out of this house. For indeed I was stolen away out of the

land of the Hebrews, and here also have I done nothing that they should put me into the dungeon." How remarkable the entire absence of recrimination—"stolen away"—there is no mention of the guilt of his brothers—"nothing" that they should put me into the dungeon," there is no rehearsal of the evil conduct and vile plot of the wicked woman whose lie had encompassed his imprisonment. Note too, that no desire for benefits can move Joseph from the path of faithfulness and courage, and to the baker he makes known without the slightest deviation from strictest truth what is to be his sad fate. According to the interpretations, so it came to pass, and although there is no mention of promises made by the butler in the Scriptural narrative, it is no great strain on the imagination to believe that when the prison doors were opened and he was liberated to return to his responsible duties, he would bid farewell to the interpreter of his dream with an encouraging look and the assurance that he would not be forgotten. "Yet did not the chief butler remember Joseph but forgot him." Two years pass without the slightest token of gratitude on the part of the butler, and during this time there was opportunity for hope to give place to utter despair, for "Hope deferred maketh the heart sick." Joseph had learned that to do the will of God is far more satisfying than the recognition of man, and we do not learn that there was during this period any expression of bitterness or of discontentment. Doubtless the experience was unpleasant as we have already remarked. How could it be otherwise? No chastening seemeth pleasant but grievous, yet in the retrospect of life we realize if we let patience have her perfect work

that the discipline has been for our good and that God's ways and God's time are best, and that in all the circumstances of life God's grace is sufficient. In prosperity and in adversity, in slavery and in prison Jehovah was with Joseph and in that blessed fellowship he was able to triumph over circumstances.

After the lapse of two years Pharaoh himself dreamed a dream, and in spite of the fact that the colouring of the dream was peculiarly Egyptian, none of his magicians or wise men could declare the interpretation thereof. Suddenly there sprang into the mind of the butler the recollection of his prison experience, and thereupon he confessed the fault of his forgetfulness and recounted to Pharaoh the story concerning the young Hebrew. How simple and natural the association of ideas which God uses here for the fulfilment of His purposes. Pharaoh immediately sent for him, and as he stood before that earthly monarch, unmindful of none of the claims of propriety and deference, shaved and changed in raiment, he did not make use of the opportunity to magnify himself but boldly proclaimed his dependence upon God. In answer to Pharaoh's statement that it has come to his knowledge that Joseph can understand a dream to interpret it, he replied, "It is not in me; God shall give Pharaoh an answer of peace." Having heard the dreams, Joseph fearlessly declared the meaning of them, adding to his interpretation that the King should appoint officers to conserve the abundance of the seven years of plenty to supply the need of the seven years of famine. Pharaoh recognised that he had spoken under the power of God, "And Pharaoh said unto his servants, Can we find

such an one as this, a man in whom the Spirit of God is?" This recognition was immediately followed by the appointment of Joseph to the first place of power in the Kingdom and to him were given the insignia of office, the signet ring placed upon the hand of Joseph, the vestures of fine linen given to him, the golden chain put around his neck, the second chariot made his, while the courtiers caused the people to bow the knee to Joseph. "Only on the throne," said Pharaoh, "shall I be greater than thou"; that is, Pharaoh would only take precedence over this heaven-sent dictator on state occasions. Thus when thirty years of age Joseph was the man of supreme power in Egypt—prime minister—engaged in a masterly administration of affairs which resulted not only in benefits to Egypt alone but in succouring a needy world. Pharaoh conferred upon him the name Zaphnath-paaneah which means either "Revealer of secrets" or "Supporter of life," and gave him to wife Asenath, daughter of an Egyptian priest in On.

In the typical teaching we see Christ not merely rejected by the

Jews and cast into the pit of death, but rejected in resurrection. In his exaltation to the throne we see the rejected one, on the throne of Power. To-day our Lord Jesus Christ shares the throne of the Father, as Joseph shared the throne of Pharaoh. While on that throne Joseph got a Gentile wife, and surely here we find an indication of the great truth declared by Simeon in Acts 15, "God at the first did visit the Gentiles to take out of them a people for His name." He is calling out this body of Gentiles to bring them into living union with himself, as the mystical bride, His wife. This is the meaning of Christ's rejection by His brethren according to the flesh even to this hour, and meantime He is the distributor of the bounty of God to a needy world. Joseph could open all the storehouses of Egypt to meet human need in limited measure, but God in grace administers through Christ the inexhaustible fulness of heaven. Of this thank God we have received, and know our association with Him, the risen Head in whom all the fulness of the Godhead resides.

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## The Power of God.

*"I can do all things through Christ who gives me power."*

**WITH** Christ the weight of a mountain is light as a feather; without Him the weight of a feather is overwhelming.

Where the Holy Ghost is working one man is as good as a hundred; where He is not working a hundred are no better than one. With Him one man can do all, endure all, sustain all. Without Him one hundred men can do nothing.

God will not force people to abide in a place of service to Him if they cannot trust Him to sustain them there.

When we think of the Father, the Incarnate Son, the ever-blessed Spirit, who shall venture to hint a limit to our trust in God? Who shall accuse us of folly for confiding in the divine Trinity?

# THE WORLD'S MAKER, ISRAEL'S KING AND GOD'S CHILDREN.

H. J. Vine.

THE One who made the world came into it as a Man, but the world did not know Him. He was the rightful King of Israel, but His own nation did not receive Him. There were those who did, however, and there are those to-day who believe on His Name of divine and royal worth. He Himself gives to such *the right*, without question, to take the place of God's children, for their faith shows they are born of God. The Spirit of God guided John to write thus concerning Jesus, the Christ, the True Light,—“*He was in the world, and the world was made by Him, and the world knew Him not. He came unto His own, and His own received Him not. But as many as received Him, to them gave He power (right) to become the children of God, even to them that believe on His Name*” (John 1. 9=12).

“THE WORLD WAS MADE BY HIM.” When such an One gives a right to any, who could question that right? He is the eternal Word, who was with God, and was God. All things received being through Him. Nothing came forth without Him. But He Himself came into the world. He became flesh; and His personal glory was (we are told by those who saw Him), “as of an only-begotten with a father” (John 1. 14, N.T.). There was a measure of light granted before, but His coming into the world brought “the true Light” for all; not for favoured *Israel* only. He could not be less than “the Light of *the world*” when He came. To have Him is to have “the true Light” (1. 9). Men seek hither and thither for “new light,” “more light,” or “fresh light.”

Elsewhere we read once of “the true light” as that which “already shines” (1 John 2. 8). To be lured by false light is to be led into darkness. John the Baptist bore witness of the true Light, who,—though He came “after” John in time,—was preferred before him in honour, for He was “before” John (15). Yes, through Him the world was made, therefore He was necessarily “before” John, yet coming in grace He was born six months “after” John. And as to honour, who else could have the pre-eminence in this world, save the world's Maker, should He graciously come into it? Colossians 1 shows that *the Son* is pre-eminent in creation because by Him all things were created, and He is “before all.”

“HE CAME TO HIS OWN” (neuter), and “His own (masc.) received Him not.” But there were those who did, and He Himself gave the *right* to such to be children of God. They believed on His Name, having received in faith the truth of who and what the world's Maker and Israel's King is. They were “born of God” (13). A new family thus appears. The Lord had brought Israel out of the fierce furnace of Egyptian bondage. But when tested under law, they proved themselves a perverse generation, rebellious children, and when their rightful Ruler came to His own rights, He was refused them. Then He uses His divine and royal prerogative, to grant to those who receive Him in faith, the unquestionable “RIGHT” to take the place of God's children. To-day these have the witness of the Spirit, and the love of the Father assuring them of that relationship, being born of God,

yet "*the right*" granted sovereignly by the Son adds boldness to our divinely assured faith. How vastly important and encouraging is this Word. The MAKER OF THE WORLD, ISRAEL'S KING, JESUS, the Son of God, unknown by the world, and refused His own crown and kingdom by Israel, has given to those who receive Him, the right to take this honoured place of relationship and blessedness,—THE PLACE OF THE CHILDREN OF GOD. How great and glorious is the One who grants this right! How rich is the right granted to those who believe on such an One! What holy confidence is thus imparted! Everlasting praise be His. The world was made through Him! Israel's throne belongs to Him! God's children are abidingly blessed by Him.

He is the Word, who was with God, and was God, through Whom all things came forth. He says, "I was set up (anointed) from eternity, from the beginning, before the earth was" (Prov. 8. 23). Again we read, "By the Word of the Lord were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of His mouth. He gathered the waters of the sea together . . . Let all the earth fear the Lord" (Psa. 33. 6, 8). "This is hidden from men through their own wilfulness" (2 Peter 3, 5). "By the Word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth." But by faith "we apprehend that the worlds were framed by the Word of God" (Heb. 11. 3). And God has spoken to us fully and finally in the Son (or Sonwise), "by Whom He made the worlds" (1. 1, 2). And the apostle wrote of Him as our "one Lord, Jesus Christ, by Whom are all things, and we by Him" (1 Cor. 8. 6). This is the One on whose holy Name we have believed, who

gives us divinely the right which is ours.

After He had raised Lazarus from death and corruption, many of the Jews believed on Him; and "on the morrow a great crowd" took branches of palms, and cried, "*Hosanna, BLESSED IS THE KING OF ISRAEL that cometh in the Name of the Lord*" (John 12. 13); and fulfilling the Scripture long before written of Him, He "found a young ass, and sat thereon": as it is said, "Fear not, daughter of Sion: behold, *THY KING* cometh, sitting on an ass's colt" (15). Come of chosen David's royal line *legally* through Joseph and Solomon (Matt. 1), and Mary by *the Holy Spirit* through Nathan (Luke 3), He came "out of Bethlehem" as was foretold. And they said, "This is the Heir; come, let us kill Him." Indeed, they proposed in their council to "put Lazarus also to death. Because that by reason of Him many of the Jews went away and believed on Jesus" (10). Pilate enquired of Him in the judgment hall, "Art Thou a King then?" Jesus answered, "Thou sayest that I am a King. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth. Everyone that is of the truth heareth My voice" (John 18. 37). When, however, the Roman governor sought to release Him, the Jews cried out, "If thou let this Man go, thou art not Cæsar's friend: whosoever maketh himself a king, speaketh against Cæsar." And they cried aloud, "Away with Him, away with Him, crucify Him." And the chief priest answered Pilate, when he asked, "Shall I crucify your King?" "We have no king but Cæsar." But when He was crucified, over the cross "Pilate wrote a title"—"JESUS,

THE NAZAREAN, THE KING OF THE JEWS." That was true; and God has raised Him from the grave; He sits enthroned on high now, at His right hand. The day is hastening, when repentant Israel will be converted, saved, and ruled over by Him as their rightful King and Lord. Isaiah has foretold this: "The government shall be upon His shoulder: and His Name shall be called WONDERFUL, COUNSELLOR, THE MIGHTY GOD, THE EVERLASTING FATHER, THE PRINCE OF PEACE . . . upon the throne of His father David" (9. 6, 7). And this is the divinely royal One who has given us "the right to take the place of the children of God!" Do we cherish that right with intelligence and affection? Do we loyally value the right now, as those who are born of God, before Israel's day of repentance and restoration comes?

"Israel's race shall soon behold Him,  
Full of grace and majesty;  
Though they set at nought and sold  
Him,  
Pierced and nailed Him to the tree;  
Now in glory  
Shall their great Messiah see."

Nearer still is the day when He will come to the air, and call up in power those He has called out in grace; raising the sleeping, changing the living, to bring us all to His Father's house before He shines forth in glorious splendour.

Truly, all "thrones" are His, not only Israel's. Yea, all "dominions, principalities and powers" too. All were "created by Him and for Him"—all things were created by the Son, as we are told, "the visible and invisible" (Col. 1. 16). Moreover, this glorious "SON" is "BEFORE ALL THINGS," and on the ground of the peace made by "the blood of His cross" (20), all positions of honour and glory will be righteously reconciled to the fulness which dwells in Him, "the Son of the Father's love," the Christ, the risen and exalted Head of His body, the assembly. How great and glorious is our Saviour, Lord and Head! Eternal praise and blessing be His.

God's children have His own sovereign prerogative for happily taking the place He gives us. Not carelessly, but with joy and reverent thankfulness, we may well do so. Not lightly, but with deep appreciation of the glory and love of the One who hath thus favoured us; and gratitude to God who has brought us to faith in His glorious Name; for, as we have seen, He died not for Israel only, but that He might "gather together into one the children of God who are scattered abroad." Great are our precious Saviour's glory and love truly! And He is ten thousand times more worthy of united thanksgivings and praise and worship than we have ever yet given Him!

The stronghold of the Anakim became the possession and habitation of Caleb (Joshua 15. 13). The point of peril was the place of possession. It is where special foes are encountered but met in the courage of faith that the mightiest victories are won; our foes become our food; our dread is changed to our bread.

It was meet that they should make merry and be glad: the son was dead and is alive again, he was lost and is found, and they began to be merry. And the Father's joy was greater than the son's. (Luke 15).

## THE EPHESIAN EPISTLE, (Continued.)

James Boyd.

## Christ and His Church. (Chapter 6)

NOW we come to the warfare. All our blessings are in the heavenly places in Christ; and as Satan and his angels are not yet dislodged, we have to do battle for every bit of ground we possess, as God said to the tribes of Israel: "Every place whereon the soles of your feet shall tread shall be yours" (Deut. 11. 24). As it was with Israel and their inheritance so is it with us. The whole land of promise was given to them by God, from the wilderness to Lebanon; from the river, the river Euphrates, even unto the uttermost sea shall be your coast. But they had to fight for every inch of it in order to possess it practically. So the heavenly places are ours, but how much have we laid hold of? The foe is not quite like the Canaanites; they were flesh and blood, but we have to make war against the wicked spirits who are established in the heavenly places; and their weapons are subtle wiles and fiery darts. Against these we have to put on the whole panoply of God.

But first of all we are exhorted to be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might. Our own wisdom is but folly, and our own strength but weakness. If we are in the sense of our own feebleness as compared with those principalities and powers, we are not likely to enter into the conflict without the support of the Lord, before whom they are less than nothing. But if He is on our side—and of this we are well assured—we need fear no evil.

As we saw earlier in the epistle we are in the land. We are set

down in the heavenlies in Christ. We crossed the Red Sea which buried in its mighty depths the whole power of Pharaoh. He could not keep Israel in Egypt, and the seven nations could not keep them out of Canaan. It has been so with us: Satan has not been able to keep us in his stronghold of darkness, nor has he been able to keep us out of the heavenlies. But not is there any glory to ourselves; God has quickened us even when we were dead in sins, and has raised us up, and set us down in the heavenlies in Christ. Now we are in a position to lay hold of the inheritance as given us of God.

But there is a panoply which is of His workmanship, and that can resist every weapon that has been forged against us by the craft of the enemy. Nothing in this armour is like anything that has been forged to resist carnal weapons, and which can be purchased in an armoury, and put on, as one might put on coat or hat. It is all fashioned in the soul, and is of a spiritual nature, and no weapon of the enemy can pierce any part of it.

The first part of this armour is "*Truth*," by which the loins of the mind are girt about. Our minds are not to be wandering after the fantastic notions of the leaders of this world, or in occupation with the things of the world at all, but engaged with the revelation God has been pleased to give us concerning the things that shall be our occupation when the world has passed away. And if this is so with us we shall find heart and conscience well protected by the "*Breastplate*

of Righteousness," our thoughts filled with the love of God, and our feet shod with "The Preparation of the gospel of Peace", for these pieces of the panoply are of the work of the Spirit in our souls, and the one helps the other in its formation. Then there is "The Shield of Faith," the consciousness that God is for us, what Israel never seems to have had in the wilderness. Fear will blanch no face that has the assurance that God is always on our side, and that He will never fail us. The coward heart can win no battle. He is no coward who puts his trust in God. The word to us is "Be of good courage, and He shall strengthen your heart, all ye that hope in the Lord" (Ps 31 24). "Be not dismayed at their faces, lest I confound

thee before them" (Jer 1 7). Then there is "The Helmet of Salvation," a salvation present and eternal, in the deep blessed sense of invulnerability. Next, there is "The sword of the Spirit," which is the Word of God. It is enough for us, and too much for the devil.

Then our attitude is to be "Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance, and supplication for all saints, and for me (the faithful servant of the Lord), that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the Gospel, for which I am an ambassador in bonds, that therein I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak. Grace be with all who love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity"

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## A Fountain of Water

THE way to increase your enjoyment of Christ is to be in continued deference to Him. If you live in the Spirit, walk in the Spirit. If there was a room in your house where you would have untold joys, but because of your business you could not always be in that room, yet whenever you had a spare moment, I am sure you would go there. Well, how much more should you walk in the Spirit, so that you should never thirst, for there is in you "a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life". You may have business and many duties, but the more thoroughly you do your duty, the more constantly you will be revived and invigorated by the Spirit in you who fills your cup. You have not to go outside yourself. You sometimes hear it said. Such an one is not a man of re-

sources. A Christian is a man of resources; he "shall never thirst", he is in a region of satisfied desire.

I could not exaggerate this grace. It is surely marvellous that God has not only effected the greatest work, the work of our salvation, but He has given you the greatest gift which you are to enjoy now on earth. If we were more cast upon the Lord as indispensable to us, we should receive more. You should ever be able to say, "Thou anointest my head with oil, my cup runneth over." We are very often counting up our mercies, the different ways in which God deals with us, and we say, Well, we are happy. There is a great deal more for us. "Thou hast put gladness in my heart, more than in the time that their corn and their wine increased"

## NOTES ON DANIEL. Chapter 4.

J. B.

"BUT at the last" (verse 8). "BUT thou art able" (verse 18). "God speaketh once, yea twice, yet man perceiveth it not." Read Job 33. 14-30.

**G**OD spoke by a vision to the king Nebuchadnezzar in chap. 2, and by a mighty act in chap. 3. On both occasions he had been obliged to confess himself worsted in his controversy with God; but he had not yet learned what was in his heart. Now, he is given twelve months' warning of a third and stronger "voice from heaven," which will, by God's grace, work such a change in him that, from being "the basest of men" with "a beast's heart," he will be "lifted up from the earth, where he had acted as an unclean bird of prey, and stand upright as a man to "praise and honour the God of heaven." See chap. 7. 4.

Nebuchadnezzar wished to solve the mysteries of his life in his own way; he did not want God's interpreter, and would never have brought him in, if he had not been shut up to him. All other wisdom and resource failed, *but, at the last*, Daniel came into the scene of perplexity and showed that no secrets or "knots" (mar.) troubled him. How often God's people have had to thank Him for bringing them to a standstill by some knot in the skein of their lives that they have been obliged to bring in His Interpreter, and He has told them all their "hard questions." Pharaoh's tyranny put the butler and baker into the prison, but *there they met Joseph*, another type of the Lord Jesus.

Every man must meet God's Interpreter; all men must honour the Son, either as their Saviour or their Judge. "He is gracious" when

we bring Him into the perplexities and the heart-breaking knots in our lives, for He understands them all, and "when He is come, He will tell us all things." He will show us that the dreaded knots, which seem so hard and unjust, when looked at in His presence, are His way of drawing us and keeping us *near to Himself*. He sees that, like a bird, we should be back to our native woods again, if He did not put us in just that cage. And then we shall know His tender sympathy and understanding which binds up broken hearts as no other can, and we shall exclaim, "So foolish was I and ignorant, I was as a beast before Thee." Then we shall find, too, that He does not despise us for our foolish doubts, and we shall be able to say, "Nevertheless I am continually with Thee; Thou hast holden me by my right hand." Nebuchadnezzar had his "nevertheless" in the fact that his roots were to be "left with a band of iron and brass" to show that his kingdom should be sure to him after he had learned the interpretation. Rough winds deepen the roots of faith; and afterwards comes the "added glory" and the "twice as much" which Nebuchadnezzar and Job found.

The king found God's Interpreter, and He was gracious unto him, and brought back his soul from the pit, to be enlightened with the light of the living. Now, instead of the impious words, "Who is that God that shall deliver you out of my hands?" he said, "Who doeth according to His will . . . and none can stay His hand, or say unto Him,

what doest Thou?" "Now, I Nebuchadnezzar, praise and honour the King of heaven, all whose works are truth and His words judgment."

How foolish we are to try every other way, and every other person,

and only bring God's Interpreter into our hopeless and painful "knots" "at the last"! Yet He will show us that, in contrast with all who have gone before, "*He is able.*"

## ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

### The Bible Class.

"Is a Bible Class led by one brother Scriptural in the face of 1 Cor. 14. 26, 29?"

"Is it right for a sister to ask questions in such a class in face of 1 Cor. 14. 34, 35?"

"Would it be wrong in such a class to read extracts from reliable writings that would throw light on the Scripture under consideration?"—KINGSTON, JAMAICA.

A BIBLE class is a very different thing from "the whole church come together in one place" (1 Cor. 14. 23). There it is a church, or assembly, gathering, and very definite instructions are given in this 14th chapter of 1 Corinthians for the guidance of those who have part in it. The Lord must be supreme there, and if one man took control of such a gathering and presumed to lead it, he would be displacing the Lord and quenching the Spirit. It is in such gatherings that the women are enjoined to be silent and to keep their questions until they get home. And to bring any book to read from but the Bible would be incompatible with the character of such a gathering. While it is impossible because of the many divisions and sects among Christians to gather the whole church together now as it was in A.D. '60, yet even "two or three" abandoning their sectarianism and gathering unto the Lord's Name may carry out "these commandments of the Lord" (verse 37) in dependence on the Lord and without pretension to be anything but what they are—a few

lowly-minded members of Christ, holding to Him who is the Head of the one body, and shewing forth His death until He comes (1 Cor. 11. 26).

But a Bible class is not a gathering of an assembly character, it is the special and individual service to the Lord of the one who convenes it. And a very useful service it is, for never did Christians, and especially the lambs of the flock, need instructing in the Word more than they do to-day. The one who undertakes this service does so to impart to others that which he has learnt of the truth of God from the Word, and Romans 12 would be a good chapter for him to study for his own sake. In this service as in all service, he is responsible to the Lord alone, and so must conduct his class before the Lord, and as having to give an account unto Him.

If the class is of an informal character and not large and public, we know of no reason why sisters should not ask questions, but if it is a public gathering to which all and sundry are invited, it would be more

seemly if they left the questions to the men, in our judgment. We believe that nature as well as the truth of God teaches this. "The incorruptible ornament of a meek and quiet spirit is in the sight of God of great price" (1 Peter 3:4).

If the leader of the Bible class feels that he can best instruct his

hearers by reading to them what other reliable expositors have said on the Scripture under consideration, let him do so, he is responsible for his own service and the way he does it, not to men but to the Lord, only let him keep in the mind that whatever he does must be done unto the Lord.

## The Lord's Second Coming and the Tribulation.

"There is a subject that I should like to bring to your notice. It is the Lord's Second Coming. I have had talks with people who know all the references relating to it, but argue that Scripture does not state definitely that Christians will escape the great tribulation. Is the coming of the Lord for all His own essentially the blessed hope of the church? I shall be grateful if you can give me proof of the secret rapture teaching from the Bible"—CALCUTTA

THE reason why there is so much confusion in the minds of many as to the Second Coming of the Lord Jesus is, they do not distinguish between the two parts of it. They do not see that He is coming *for* His saints and He is coming *with* them. The tribulation occurs between these two events. Another reason is, they do not see the unique and heavenly calling and place of the church; it is confounded in their minds with the Kingdom. The great tribulation (Matthew 24:21), or, "Jacob's trouble" (Jer 30:7), is "the hour of temptation which shall come upon all the world to try them that dwell upon the earth" (Rev 3:10). But the church in its true character, as the body of Christ, and soon to be His wife, is not an earth-dweller, it belongs to heaven where its Head is. As to the earth, His saints are "strangers and pilgrims" (1 Peter 1:11). And the Lord's promise to them is, "I will keep thee out of the hour of temptation" (N.T.), for what He says to Philadelphia can only be applicable to His true church in its indivisible unity. The words, "I have loved thee" are enough to prove this (Rev 3).

This great tribulation is the time of wrath that is to come, which will increase in its intensity until it culminates in the righteous judgments of God upon rebellious men. But the church of God is waiting "for His Son from heaven, even Jesus, our Deliverer from the wrath to come" (1 Thess 1:10, N.T.), and He will be our Deliverer from this wrath by taking us out of it before it comes. Again, "God hath not appointed us unto wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Thess 5:9).

The only passage in the Gospels that has reference to the Lord's coming *for* His own is John 14:1-3. All the rest speak of His coming *with* His saints in His great power and glory, when He will bring to an end the great tribulation and deliver the remnant of His people the Jews from their Gentile oppressors. The truth of the Lord's coming *for* His saints was not revealed until the church was actually formed by the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Paul, who was the great minister of the truth of the church, received it by special revelation from the Lord (1 Thess 4). The great change that will take place then was

a mystery, i e., a hidden thing, until Paul was inspired to make it known (1 Cor 15 51-57) Having these Scriptures we can understand the Lord's words spoken for the comfort of His disciples in view of His departure from them, in John 14

Another Scripture that shews that the church, and every true believer is part of it, is not what is called in the Revelation, "a dweller upon the earth," that the tribulation will try, is Philippians 3 21. "*Our conversation [citizenship] is in heaven,* from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall change our vile bodies, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to the working by which He is able to subdue all things unto Himself" The church is not looking for the tribulation, its blessed hope is the coming of the Lord, to present it to Himself a glorious church, not

having spot or wrinkle or any such thing (Eph 5 25-27)

The Scripture does not actually say that the catching away of His saints will be secret, i e., that the world will not know about it. they certainly will know when the event has taken place Yet we have no Scripture that says the world will see Him then, we believe that we are right in concluding that it will not It will see Him when He returns *with* His saints, as Revelation 1 7 and other passages distinctly state But the first stage of the coming will have nothing to do with the world except to bring its day of salvation to a close, it will be entirely for them "that are Christ's" (1 Cor 15 23) There will be nothing to herald it, it will not be in a blaze of manifest glory The translation of Enoch in the Old Testament was, we believe, a pattern of it

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## The "Heathen:" who are they? and Baptism?

"In your Dec 1931 issue Answers to Correspondents, "Faith and Baptism," you make some reference to the heathen, and appear to apply the word to non-christian people, other than the Jews In looking up my Dictionary, I find that the meaning is, 'an unenlightened person,' Now are not the unsaved multitudes in these lands as ignorant of Christ as those called heathen, and ought not the word to apply to them? What is the difference between them, and how can baptism make a difference?"—EDINBURGH

**AS** to the word heathen, like that of 'pagan,' it did originally describe the unenlightened people who lived on the heaths, or in the villages, in contrast to those who lived in the cities, which were the seats of learning In Trench's "Study of Words," there are some interesting remarks as to how the two words came to be applied to those who were outside the faith of Christ. "The Christian church fixed itself first in the seats and centres of intelligence, in the towns and cities

of the Roman Empire, and in them its first triumphs were won; while long after these had accepted the truth, superstitions and idolatries lingered in the obscure hamlets and villages of the country, so that 'pagans,' or villagers, came to be applied to all the remaining votaries of the old and decaying superstitions The word 'heathen' acquired its meaning from exactly the same fact, namely, that at the introduction of Christianity into Germany, the wild dwellers on the heaths longest

resisted the truth." The word is now generally given to all who are not Christians, Jews or Mohammedans by profession.

Now while as to any true knowledge of God and Christ there are multitudes in these lands who are "as dark as heathen," for their minds are blinded by the god of this world lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ should shine unto them (2 Cor. 4. 4), yet they are not heathen and they stand in an entirely different position. The majority of them have probably been baptised—christened, and by this rite they have been set outwardly and by profession in identification with the Name of Christ, and even those who have not been baptised have been born in a professedly 'Christian' land, where the light is shining, the effect of which is seen on every hand, and hence their responsibility is far greater than that of those who

have been born and belong to regions where nothing but idolatry is known. They are those who know their Lord's will and do it not, who shall be beaten with many stripes (Luke 12. 47).

Baptism cannot do more for any person than make him outwardly and by profession a 'Christian.' The true Christian, who is one in heart, may learn the inner meaning of it as given in Romans 6 and Col. 2, and so be true to its meaning in his life, but the rite itself is entirely an external one.

But what shall we do in regard to those who remain in darkness in spite of the light that is shining, and who perhaps are trusting to rites and ritual and dead works, instead of a living Saviour? There can be only one answer to that question. We must shine as lights in the world; holding forth the word of life (Phil. 2. 15, 16).

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Don't worry about your feelings about God: what you need to know is His feelings about you. The prodigal in the parable turned to his father because he would have perished if he had stayed away, and what did he discover? When he was a great way off his father saw him and he ran and fell on his neck and covered him with kisses. I defy anyone to describe it. There the prodigal learned his father's feelings towards him. It is a picture of God's love, of God's interest in sinners who have ruined themselves, of the way He greets them. It is the Gospel.

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**T**HE grace of God has two parts: one is it brings you out of your misery, and the other is it sets you up in a new condition in the spot where your misery was. Not when you go to heaven, but here and at this moment. Of course your blessing will be complete when you go to heaven, but God has given you His Spirit that your joy may be full now.

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ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS on the Church held over.

*ERROR.* On page 1, January issue, 2nd column, line 22, and page 2, 2nd column, line 8, for "abjured" read "adjured."

## ENCOURAGEMENT.

J. T. Mawson.

THE Hebrew epistle shews up for us the path of faith; it shews us how to tread that path, and pours its comfort and encouragement into our heart as we do it; and all this comfort and encouragement seems to be gathered up and concentrated in the glorious benediction at its close. Perplexed and troubled pilgrim to the eternal inheritance, consider it for a while. Let us go over it together. It is all for you.

### Peace.

*"Now the God of peace."*

The God of peace is invoked on your behalf. The road that faith travels is often rough, dangers and foes beset the pilgrim's way; conflict abounds in it and often suffering. Truly it is no flower-strewn way. But the God of peace is your God, and He it is who has said, *"I will never leave thee nor forsake thee. So that we may boldly say, the Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me."* That means, that the Friend is greater than the foe, that whatever they may do to me I will fear no evil, and however the storm may rage without me, I'll have peace in my heart. It means that the supplies are greater than the demand, for is it not written, "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on Thee, because he trusted in Thee." And again, if you do but carry your wants and woes to God, has He not pledged His word for it that "the peace of God shall keep your heart and mind through Christ Jesus"? The God of peace is our God, and He is with us. Let us rejoice and be glad.

### Power.

*"Now the God of peace which brought again from the dead."*

Our God is also a God of power and His power has been demonstrated by His triumph over death. Death is the strongest and the greatest enemy; the king of terrors, it has been justly called. It held men in continual bondage through the fear of it, but it has been conquered; its power has been annulled by our God. We can always rely more upon a friend who has great power than upon a friend who has none, for the willingness to help, however we may appreciate it, does not avail much when there is no ability. Our God is almighty, the greatest foe is now a defeated foe and we need fear no other.

### Preservation.

*"Our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep."*

How wonderfully God has provided for His sheep, and you are one of them. Every sheep and lamb of His has been given by Him to His beloved Son, and you among the rest. That may seem very wonderful, and it is, but it is true, for it is stated in so many words in John 10. 29. And that the sheep may be preserved from every danger and brought safely home to God, the great Shepherd of the sheep has been brought again from the dead. How great this Shepherd is! He is great in His love. He saw the wolf coming, but did not flee, for He is no hireling, but the Shepherd of the sheep; and to save the sheep, to deliver them from the power of death and lead them as one flock to God, He gave His life. Such was His love; He is great in His

unwearying power and majesty. "Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary?" "Who hath measured the waters in the hollow of His hand, and meted out the heavens with a span, and weighed the mountains in the scales, and the hills in a balance?" What is the answer? Who is this great and all-powerful Being? He is the great Shepherd of the sheep that "shall feed His flock like a shepherd: that shall gather the lambs with His arm, and carry them in His bosom" (Isa. 40). His power is immeasurable, but His tenderness is equal to His power; it is infinite. By His hand He created and controls His creation, that is His power; in His bosom carries His lambs, that is His love. How safe all His sheep must be; "they shall never perish." He will hold them in everlasting security, and none can pluck them from His hand. It is the hand that broke the power of death that shall preserve the sheep from every foe and in this a greater power is seen than that that created the worlds.

### Propitiation

*"Through the blood of the everlasting covenant."*

Our Lord Jesus lives in the power of an endless life, but it is by virtue of the blood of the everlasting covenant. Whatever God has done for Him in raising Him from the dead, or will do for us through Him, is based upon the precious blood. Every claim of divine holiness and of the throne of God has been met by it. Propitiation has been made. Every attribute of God is in perfect harmony and His love flows out without restraint or limit, and it is all in virtue of the blood of the

everlasting covenant. The consciences of His beloved saints are *purged* also; God will remember their sins and iniquities no more; they can be in the presence of God with boldness and in the full assurance of faith, for no one can lay anything to their charge.

### Perpetuity.

*"The everlasting covenant."*

His blood is the blood of the everlasting covenant, a covenant that can never break down or be annulled, for it is not based upon our obedience as was that of Sinai, but upon the absolute expiation of all our disobedience that was made at Calvary. It is God's immutable counsel which found its expression in His infallible promises, made certain by the blood that has established His glory and answered every challenge to His righteousness in fulfilling His counsels for our blessing. This covenant stands for ever as unchanging and sure as the Word and throne of God. It is what He is and not what we are, though we have our part in it. We are the legatees, the heirs of an eternal inheritance.

### Perfection.

*"Make you perfect in every good work to do His will."*

While the everlasting covenant does not depend upon our works for its stability, it is a covenant that produces works in us, and indeed it can be satisfied with nothing less than our perfection and every good work. We are made perfect as to our inner motives, our aim in life, and the object that controls us, by the displacing of our wills for God's. To do His will in the great thing. And His will is never against us, it is always on our behalf. In our ignorance and self will we have sometimes thought that God's will

was against us, that His intention was to thwart us and to take from us things that we prized, and to spoil our happiness. But that was the old lie of the old serpent, and the fact that the God of peace has brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, has exposed this lie. God's will means our weal and not our woe; it is all for our blessing and is only against those things that would do us harm.

It is when we are *adjusted* to the will of God, when we are in articulation with that will, not in dislocation to it, that we are perfect, for this is the meaning of the word perfect here. Then how good the works will be that we do, works that will abide, the answer from us to all that God has done for us and all that Christ is to us.

### Pleasurable to God.

*"Working in you that which is well-pleasing in His sight."*

Truly the favour in which we are set, and the blessings of the faith are unspeakable. I confess that words fail me to express the fulness of the dignity that is ours and the immensity of the grace that has blessed us and changed us. We were once children of disobedience, having our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind and were by nature children of wrath, but now we may be well-pleasing in God's sight. The life of Jesus is here brought to mind, and the words with which the Father saluted Him from the excellent glory—"Thou art My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." And can it be that we are set in His place, to be to God in our measure what He was? Nothing less. Does not the thought of it move the soul,

and fill us with desires that it may be so? I feel that we ought to take up the language of Mary, rightly called "blessed" in this respect. "Behold the servant of the Lord; be it unto me according to Thy word." But here human effort fails. If we are to be pleasurable to God, we can only be so as Christ's life is reproduced in us, it can only be as God works in us.

Who can describe the joy which a sense of God's approval gives the heart? This was the Lord's own joy on earth. "Herein is My Father glorified that ye bear much fruit," said He; then He added, "These things have I spoken unto you, that MY JOY MIGHT REMAIN IN YOU," and it will as we are well-pleasing in God's sight. Let every word have its full value with us—it is IN HIS SIGHT. He is watching with deepest interest. His eyes are ever on us.

"A holy Father's constant care  
Keeps watch with an unwearying  
eye,—  
To see what fruits His children bear,  
Fruits that may suit their calling  
high."

### Praise.

*"Through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen."*

God would have been without glory and we should have been without blessing but for Jesus Christ. I am not exaggerating when I say that God owes everything to Jesus Christ and that we should have been bankrupt and lost for ever without Him. He is the great Mediator through whom God's blessing reaches us and by whom we reach God, and because this is so we must give Him praise. God has glorified Him. He has brought Him back from the dead and set Him at His right hand on high, and our hearts rejoice, for we know and feel that that is right, and that glory must be His for ever and ever.

## THE GRACE OF GOD IN TRUTH.

Jas. A. Davidson.

Read:—Mark 12. 41-44.

Luke 21. 1-6.

2 Cor. 9. 6-7.

Mark 13. 1 and 2.

2 Cor. 8. 1-9.

Phil. iv. 15-20.

I BRING these Scriptures before you, with the definite object of raising a matter that has given me much exercise for some time, in the hope that you may be aroused to a sense of "the grace of God in truth" (Col. 1-6). What I refer to is the gracious privilege of "DIS-  
TRIBUTING TO THE NECES-  
SITY OF SAINTS" (Romans 12).

I would draw your careful and prayerful attention to the action of this honoured but nameless widow, so highly commended by our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ (Mark 12. 43-44) when He said:—

*"Verily I say unto you, that this poor widow hath cast in more than all they which have cast into the treasury; for all they did cast in of their abundance; but she of her want did cast in all that she had, even all her living."*

Magnificent tribute from Him, "Who seeth not as man seeth, for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart" (1 Samuel 16. 7). Not only did the Lord see "the rich casting their gifts into the treasury" (Luke 21), but He saw also this act of self-sacrificing love on her part, when "she threw in two mites, which make a farthing"—*all her living*. Her whole soul was devoted to God's interests here—'twas *this* that moved her to this noble act. Christ's standard of giving is not "of their abundance": what they had to spare, but what cost some real sacrifice. 2 Corinthians 8. 1-3:—

*"And as He went out of the temple, one of His disciples saith*

*unto Him, Master, see what manner of stones and what buildings are here" (Mark 13. 1).*

Our Lord's reply is solemn indeed:—

*"There shall not be left one stone upon another that shall not be thrown down" (verse 2).*

This prophetic word was fulfilled at the destruction of Jerusalem. How prone we are to be occupied with what is conspicuous and great, like these disciples, and *miss what honours Him—what is of Himself*. Note the words! "As He went out of the temple," or as Matthew 4. 1 puts it, "Jesus went out, and departed from the temple." By this act of solemn withdrawal, for He never entered its portals again, He confirmed His words, and it only awaited judgment. And at this point His public ministry came to an end. It is obvious that this poor widow acted for God *at the right moment*. "SEE THAT YE RECEIVE NOT THE GRACE OF GOD IN VAIN" (2 Cor. 6. 1). The Apostle's earnest desire for the saints expressed in these words—being that the grace of God might be operative in them, so that "*fruit might abound to their account*." To-day, brethren, is the only time given us to turn the grace of God to account, and if we know the "grace of God in truth," we shall not be straightened in our affections. As Paul says:—

*"But for an answering recompense, I speak as to children, let your heart expand itself" (2 Cor. 6. 13).*

Turn to chapter 8. 1-3:—

*"But we make known to you, brethren, the grace of God bestowed*

in the assemblies of Macedonia, that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty has abounded to the riches of their free-hearted liberality. For according to their power, I bear witness, and beyond their power they were willing of their own accord" (N. T.).

Not only is this magnificent and striking display of the "grace of God in truth" brought before the saints at Corinth, but before us here to-day. This example of self-sacrificing love on the part of these dear saints, was the spontaneous outcome of their "first giving themselves to the Lord"—voluntary consecration. "First" not only in point of time, but, above all else in importance. The Apostle took occasion by the willingness of these dear saints "to prove the sincerity (genuineness) of their (Corinthian saints) love (2 Cor. 8. 8), and no less, dear brethren, of ours to-day. May we face this test.

And now we are confronted with the most soul-moving incentive to self-sacrificing liberality in these inspiring words (verse 9).

"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."

With such a glorious example before us, what can we do but bow in reverential contemplation, and adoring worship? "And give Him the glory, the honour that's meet," and in result:—

"Walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling savour" (Ephesians 5. 2).

Paul—as taught of God—places the willing and self-sacrificing giving of these saints at its true elevation when he says in Phil. 4. 10-18:—

"Not because I desire a gift: but I desire fruit that may abound to your account."

He describes their love-gifts as

"An odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well pleasing to God."

God will not be any man's debtor, hence the beloved Apostle says:—

"But my God shall supply all your need, according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus. Now unto God and our Father be glory for ever and ever. Amen."

Yes! Not according to the measure of their giving, but the immeasurable wealth of glory which is His from all eternity will He compensate.

"And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment . . . that ye may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ; being filled with the fruits of righteousness . . . unto the glory and praise of God" (Philippians 1. 9-11).

Bear with me, beloved, when I pray you by the grace of God, by the compassions of Christ, to consider the pressing need of saints of God, your brethren, who are passing through times of stress and privation, serious I assure you, also for the Lord's beloved servants, who minister to us "in spiritual things," surely, it is our privilege,—nay! our duty—also to minister unto them in carnal things (Romans 15. 27). The moment has come for "great plainness of speech," and the Apostle pointedly and powerfully by the Holy Spirit declares:—

"But this I say, he which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly: and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully. Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudg-

ingly, or of necessity; **FOR GOD LOVETH A CHEERFUL GIVER**" (2 Cor. 9. 6-7).

"And God is able to make all grace abound toward you, that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work . . . Being enriched in every thing to all bountifulness, which causeth through us thanksgiving to God. For the administration of this

service not only supplieth the want of the saints, but is abundant also by many thanksgivings unto God" (2 Cor. 9. 8-12).

By full quotations I have sought to let the Holy Scripture make its own appeal, and I am sure, dear brethren, it will not be "in vain." Surely not! For:—

**"Love that transcends our highest powers,  
Demands our soul, our life, our all.**

## God's Love and Power.

IT is right that what a Christian receives in the way of blessing from the Word he should pass on to others, and so I must tell you of a word that helped and blessed me. The speaker had two texts from JEREMIAH. (1) "*I have loved thee with an everlasting love; therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee*" (ch. 31. 3), (2) "*I am the Lord, the God of all flesh: is there any thing too hard for Me?*" (ch. 32. 27). He shewed how Jeremiah describes the backsliding and sin of Israel; and indeed there is no book in the Bible that shews the iniquity of the human heart so truly and darkly as that of the weeping prophet. But fickle, vacillating unfaithful Israel were objects of God's love, and it was not fickle, it was everlasting and unchanging, for in Him there is no variableness, neither shadow of turning. This is a great lesson for us to learn; our failure does not change God's love. It is the knowledge of this that will keep us faithful more than anything else.

The second great saying was uttered when Jerusalem was sur-

rounded by a fierce foe, and when by the word of the Lord it was doomed to fall and be destroyed. Yet the same Lord had instructed the prophet to invest his money in a field to shew that God had not given up the land, and it would still be His people's possession according to His promise, but how could this be when the foe strengthened himself against the people, the land and the city? The answer is. There is nothing too hard for the Lord.

Is it a question of the failure of His beloved saints? His love is unchanging and will yet satisfy itself in drawing them by strong cords to Himself and binding them to Him in everlasting faithfulness. Is it a question of the fierce foe, who would stamp them out of existence because they are loved by God, or at least overthrow their faith?—His power is enough to vanquish the foe, and even to turn his attacks upon the saints to their blessing. God's love and God's power are alike on the side of His own. Let us take courage and rejoice and give thanks unto Him.

## THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD.

J. C. Trench.

THE Righteousness of God as presented in the Epistle to the Romans opens up a very important line of truth, as forming the basis upon which the blessed God could in full keeping with the requirements of His holy nature, quicken, justify and save the blackest sinner who repents and believes the gospel.

In Romans 10 the Apostle asserts that Israel "*being ignorant of the righteousness of God, and going about to establish their own righteousness, had not submitted themselves to the righteousness of God*"—for "*Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone that believeth.*" And it may be added that not many of the children of God have learned the truth that Israel was ignorant of. So it were well to turn back to the beginning of the Epistle and see what he has to teach on the subject.

As the apostle Paul had not been to Rome at the time he wrote the epistle, it was natural that in writing to the saints there, he should set forth in a formal way—more like an essay than a letter—the gospel of God as he had learned it, and for this we may all be very thankful. And so he opens the subject by saying, "I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth, to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the *righteousness of God* revealed from faith to faith"—that is on the principle of faith, instead of works, to faith in the individual—"as it is written, the just shall live by faith."

Notice that he does not say that in the gospel the *love of God* is revealed though it is a gospel of

love, as comes out later in chap. v., but that *God's righteousness* is there in revealed—for *love* cannot reach the sinner until *righteousness* has had its way—and in it "the wrath of God is revealed against all ungodliness, and unrighteousness of men who hold the truth in unrighteousness." Before love can reach any one of us, righteousness must express itself in wrath against all mankind, and the rest of chap. i., chap. ii. and chap. iii. 1-20 is a most solemn and very powerful description of how *mankind* appears under the revelation of God come out in righteousness, whether he be a barbaric heathen (ch. i. 26-32), a cultured heathen (ch. ii. 1-16), or a Jew (ch. ii. 17-iii. 1-20).

The steps downward of the race were terrible indeed:—

1. When they knew God—"glorified Him *not* as God" (ver. 21).
2. "Changed the glory of God into an image" (ver. 23).
3. "Changed the truth of God into a lie" (ver. 25).
4. "Did not like to retain God in their knowledge" (ver. 28).
5. "Became haters of God" (ver. 30).
6. Knowing the judgment of God, continued in sin and had *pleasure* in them that do so (ver. 32).

"Therefore thou art inexcusable, O man! whosoever thou art that judgest"; and then follows a description of the educated heathen who judged and condemned evil yet practised it himself—imagining he merited some reward for moralising about it, although practising the sin he exposed (verses 1-16 of chap. ii.).

Then comes the Jew, a still higher class of man (from ver. 17 of ch. ii.

iii. 8) who had the law, the covenant, making his boast of God, knowing His will, etc., etc., who preached the law, but broke it himself—against whom the apostle asks: “Is God unrighteous who taketh vengeance? God forbid: for then how shall God judge the world?” and then he asks, “Are we (Jews) better than they (Gentiles)?” No, in no wise, for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles that they are all under sin. As it is written, “There is none righteous, no not one,” and “none that doeth good.” “Throat,” “lips,” “mouth,” “feet,” “ways,” “eyes,” are looked at—all found corrupt—and law, instead of affording a ladder to climb out of the mass of ungodliness, is the very instrument that “stops every mouth, and brings in all the world as guilty before God” or strictly “subject to the judgment of God.” This then is the result of the revelation of the righteousness of God—all the human race are found to be lost, and subject to the judgment of God.

But in the 21st verse of ch. iii., a glorious change breaks upon our view, and the righteousness of God is presented in a new and astonishing aspect. God’s claim on man for righteousness had ended in catastrophe! So instead of demanding righteousness from man, He determines to supply Him with righteousness which is His own. But how could this be done in consistency with what was just, and in correspondence with God’s holy nature? Answer—“But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, even righteousness of God by faith of Jesus Christ unto all, and upon all them that believe, for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God. Being justifi-

ed freely by His grace, through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus, Whom God has set forth, a mercy seat, through faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness for the passing over of the sins that had taken place before” (that is the passing over for the time being, in view of the cross (not remitting), the sins committed by the Old Testament saints), “to declare at this time” (now that Christ has died) “His (God’s) righteousness: that He might be just, and the Justifier of him who believeth in Jesus. . . . Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without deeds of law.”

God, in fact, has placed His own dear Son, in the position of the sinner, making Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, and placing all the believer’s sins upon Him, poured out all His righteous wrath and judgment on the spotless Victim, and now every claim is satisfied, and God’s holy nature glorified, and His throne vindicated in the fullest way. None but Jesus could have carried this through, for only a divine and infinite Person could meet the claims of God.

In result we read ch. v. 1: “Therefore being justified by faith we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by Whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand and rejoice in hope of the glory of God . . . The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us; for God commendeth His love toward us in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him . . . and not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ,

*by Whom we now have received the reconciliation."*

What an amazing change has the atoning death of our Lord Jesus Christ brought about, resulting in the *righteousness of God* now becoming our *strongest fortification against damnation*, which without the cross of Christ would have secured our irretrievable doom. In other words God's righteousness is pledged to our eternal salvation, because His Son has borne sin's penalty, and if a single believer were lost it would be tantamount to ignoring the atoning death of our Lord, and casting a slur upon it all!

To imagine that such a miscarriage of justice could take place would be to imagine it possible for God to depreciate the work and Person of His Son and to falsify

His own word! We may add that not only is the believer forgiven, justified and saved in strict *justice*, but 2 Cor. v. 21 tells us that God has *made the believer "the righteousness of God in Christ."* Glory be to His blessed Name!

And so returning to Romans x. where we began, we find "the righteousness of faith speaketh on this wise—'*The word is nigh thee even in thy heart, that is the word of faith which we preach, that if thou shalt confess with thy mouth Jesus as Lord, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved: for with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation, for the Scripture saith, whosoever believeth on Him shall not be ashamed.*'"

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AND many a rolling anthem  
That fills the Father's home,  
Sobbed out its first rehearsal  
In the shade of a darkened room."

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"MANY a rapturous minstrel  
Among the sons of light,  
Will say of his sweetest music,  
I learned it in the night.

---

"LESS than HIMSELF will not suffice  
Our comfort to restore—  
More than HIMSELF we cannot crave  
And He can give no more."

---

"FOR Thou hast been a strength to the poor, a strength to the needy in his distress, a refuge from the storm, a shadow from the heat, when the blast of the terrible ones is as a storm against the wall." Isa. 25.

# THE WILL OF GOD.

T. Oliver

**A**LGERNON Swinburne, the greatest master of metre in English literature, once wrote:—

“Space is thought’s, and the wonders thereof, and the secret of space; Is thought not more than the thunders and lightnings? shall thought give place?”

When he wrote these words, he was doubtless thinking what a great and wonderful being he was. “Thought” was akin to his thought. That his words would ever be a poetical expression of scientific ideas as to created things was not very far from his mind. Yet the new theory of Relativity has revolutionised the conceptions of scientists. Matter and energy, the “foundation stones of the universe,” according to the picturesque language of the nineteenth century materialists, are no longer esteemed as real entities. Everything is cradled in thought. ‘But whose thought?’ is a legitimate question to ask. Certainly not Swinburne’s, and just as surely not that of any other man; but as certainly that of God. The thought or will of God is the only real entity in the universe.

So well might the poet break forth in a pæan of praise:—

O God! the thought was Thine!  
(Thine only it could be)  
Fruit of the wisdom, love divine,  
Peculiar unto Thee;

The poet had specially in mind, the origin of the sphere of spiritual bliss, but the lines apply with equal emphasis to the origin of material things.

Constancy and consistency are essential features in the will of God. So the writer of the Hebrews speaks of the “immutability of His counsel” (Heb. 6. 17). The apostle

James refers to “the Father of lights with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning” (Jas. i. 17). The apostle Paul writes of “the purpose of Him who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will” (Eph. 1. 11).

Immutability or unchangeableness is in contrast to “change which marks the flow of time,” and to “changeableness” which marks the character of mankind. The lusts or desires of man are wrapped up in change or the fashions of the world. In the physical sphere, the form of creation is subject to slow change. So that there is sober truth in the apparently fanciful expression of the poet:—

“The hills are shadows.”

Ultimately when the firmament itself will have served its purpose, it will pass away. “The heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together” (Rev. 6. 14) are the words of prophetic vision.

As to consistency, only “God is faithful” (1 Cor. 1. 9). It is a matter of commonplace observation that man in his best estate is unreliable. So that vows are essentially made to be broken. Expediency dominates everything. In the fulfilment of collective responsibility, even Christians have rendered invalid the most pretentious claims. Finding themselves in untenable positions, they did not scruple to extricate themselves from the positions at the expense of consistency. Only God could “confirm by an oath: that by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie” (Heb. 6. 18). There is one course impossible to God, and that is His actions should belie His character.

The will of God and the will of man are two great principles in the moral sphere and they are diametrically opposed to each other. We read of Christ that He loved righteousness (i.e., what is according to the former principle), and hated lawlessness (i.e., what is according to the latter principle). In the volume of God's purpose it was written of Him, "Lo, I come to do Thy will, O God" (Heb. 10. 9). The sequel to His coming was a path of unvarying and perfect obedience to the will of God. The prophetic Scripture could speak of Him as "setting His face like a flint" (Isa. 50. 7). So in conformity to His Father's will He steadfastly set His face to go up to Jerusalem (Luke 9. 51). No ulterior consideration could turn Him aside. Even Peter's well-meant remonstrance to turn Him aside from that straight course brought His drastic denunciation as proceeding from Satan (Matt. 16).

In the days immediately following the Flood, man's self-will culminated in the erection of the tower of Babel whose top should reach unto heaven. Their idea was not only to render themselves safe from any future flood, but to tap the resources of heaven and so render them independent of God and to establish the name of man in opposition to the name of God. The inception of a process or principle always presents the features of subsequent development. So the features of Babel are essentially the features evinced by the modern age. How aptly and tersely is every modern tendency foretold and summarised in Scripture:—"Nothing will be restrained from them which they have imagined to do" (Gen. 11. 6). Man's will is unrestrained. However, as in the plains of Shinar, so

nowadays, man's effort to render himself independent of God will come to nothing. When the Lord comes, all that man has built will be tumbled over just like a four and a half inch brick wall erected without mortar would do when pushed.

These two principles thus control everything. We must either be here for the lusts or desires of men or for the will or good pleasure of God. We are saved that we may be for the will of God. Grace has come into action that we may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God (Rom. 12. 2). It is impossible to receive the grace of God and to lack the desire to see the character of God shining out in Christians while sojourning in this world.

But the will of man is not quiescent and moreover is impelled by all the forces of evil emanating from a common centre in Satan, "the prince of the power of the air." Hence all who are in the line of God's will must meet opposition and thus suffer. In this connection, the apostle Peter opens up a beautiful train of thought in the following passage:—"For it is better, if the will of God be so (lit. 'wills') that ye suffer for well-doing than for evil doing" (1 Pet. 3. 17). In support of this course, the apostle adduces the best evidence viz.:—"For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the Just for the unjust." If the only Just one suffered for the unjust, then there is an excellent precedent why we should suffer for well-doing without remonstrance if that procedure happens to be in the will of God.

"Christ having suffered for us in flesh, arm yourselves with the same mind for he that has suffered in

flesh has done with sin, no longer to live the rest of his time in flesh to men's lusts, but to God's will" (1 Pet. 4. 1, 2, New Translation). Christ took flesh (the "body prepared" of Heb. 10) in which to suffer. Notwithstanding the perfection and holiness of that body, Scripture is explicit in description and His whole pathway in flesh was marked by suffering. He was indeed the "Man of Sorrows"! We should be careful to distinguish the usages of the term "flesh." Clearly in the above connection the term refers to the material structure

of the body and not to the moral principle opposed to the Spirit as set forth in Romans 8. 4.

Suffering is the antithesis of self-gratification. We should suffer instead of allowing self-indulgence. We are exhorted to arm ourselves with the same mind as Christ who did not His own will, but gave a perfect transcription of the will of God. Through grace we are on that line and our superlative privilege is to give a practical demonstration of the will of God. That should be the governing principle of our lives.

## NOTES ON DANIEL. Chapter 3.

J. B.

### "But if not."

IN chapter 2, Nebuchadnezzar fell on his face before the wisdom of God's servant, as Dagon of old before the Ark of the Lord; and as they set Dagon up again, so the king set himself up in a more impious way than ever before, when the momentary impression was over. He had been told "Thou art a king of kings," and "Thou art this head of gold," and the pride of his heart came out. He would not only control all people in body and estate, but he would have authority over their souls also! He would be the supreme object and centre of the world-empire religiously as well as politically. He would display his position as "king of kings" in this way before all peoples and languages, and to this end he gathered them together to see his greatness and his absolute power.

This image was a terrible foreshadowing of a worse day that is yet to come, spoken of in Rev. 13. Here the image is 60 by 6; the

number of the name of *the* beast will be 666. The meaning of the number 6 in Scripture appears to be work—good or bad. Truly, the work of fallen man reached a great height in the plain of Dura; but its climax will be reached in the beast of Rev. 13.

The king had everything ready for his moment of triumph; and lest any should dare to oppose him, he had a terrible penalty ready for them. The promotion of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego had evidently been a matter of jealousy on the part of others, and this was the longed for opportunity for their enemies. They had been walking in the fear of God, and this fear had produced its seasonable fruit of subjection to Nebuchadnezzar's yoke, as that which their God had appointed as a just judgment upon the sin of their nation. Apparently, the king could hardly believe that they would be the ones to oppose his commandment; but God had never put Him

self under Nebuchadnezzar's authority, *and this was the limit* to the subjection of His servants.

God gave power to man to be held from Him, and for Him; and for the benefit of those in subjection to it. The king used the power and the secret of God to exalt himself, to make a unity of which *he* was the centre, and to oppress those under his yoke. He gathered all peoples to see his glory. Compare Genesis 11, where the same attempt was made in the plain of Shinar, in the early days of Babylon. Man was intended to be a channel of blessing, but never a centre until the Man of God's counsels, the Lord Jesus Christ, will be the Centre and Lord of all the earth, and every knee shall bow to Him (Zechariah 14; Phil. 2). This Man will hold the power from God, and for God, and for the blessing of the whole creation; He will then, when He has brought all things into subjection, "deliver up the kingdom, that God may be all in all" (1 Cor. 15. 21-28). What a blessed contrast to the plains of Shinar and Dura!

Truly, the king was "disobedient to the heavenly vision"! But his plan for idolatrous unity was destined to have a humiliating fall, as had that of Shinar; for, in the midst of this impious scene, before all the peoples gathered together, *faith said*, "We will not bow"; "Our God is able"; "*But if not.*" How precious in the sight of the Lord were those three young servants of His at that moment! It is interesting to compare Isaiah 43 with this chapter, for we see there that the Lord had anticipated this "walking through the fire" many years before, and had given the promise of His presence in the fire and His deliverance

from it. It is probable that the Spirit of God brought that precious Scripture to the remembrance of God's suffering children when they said, "Our God is able—and He will." "The hairs of your head are all numbered" were the words of the Son of God when here upon earth; and here, this great gathering in the plain of Dura, assembled to see the supreme power of Nebuchadnezzar, "saw these men upon whose bodies the fire had no power, nor was an hair of their head singed." God's young servants could then find another Scripture in Psalm 66 to express their feelings in their moment of triumph: "We went through fire . . . but Thou broughtest us out into a wealthy place." God was glorified, His people were delivered and honoured and the king was humbled before all nations and languages!

Man in his true place "is the image and glory of God"; but in a position of honour without understanding he is "like the beasts that perish." "So, Lord, when Thou awakest, Thou wilt despise their image."

Shadrach, Meschach and Abednego were prepared to go to the fullest test, namely, that of *not* being delivered; but their God did not require it of them. At a much later date, one of the greatest of His servants, John the Baptist, quailed before this supreme test. He heard of wonderful interventions on behalf of others, and he, himself, was left to languish in unjust imprisonment, as if unappreciated and forgotten.

Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego had a wonderful and precious deliverance; John had the message: "Blessed is he whosoever shall not be offended in Me," and he *did not send again!* "*But if not.*"

# THE HOLY SPIRIT'S WITNESS AND GOD'S CHILDREN.

H. J. Vine.

WE have previously seen that the right to take the place of the children of God has been given to us by THE SON. To those who are born of God and have believed on His Name, He has given this right. THE HOLY SPIRIT too bears witness that this same relationship is ours. And we are invited to behold how THE FATHER has loved us, in granting to us this hallowed favour of being God's children. All three Persons of the glorious Godhead are deeply concerned as to our entering into this relationship, in the joy of faith and love.

Speaking of the Holy Spirit's witness, we read in Romans 8. 15, "*Ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, ABBA, FATHER. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God.*"

This gives us guidance in regard to the activities of the Spirit, and of the spiritual experience of believers, but we have not the ground of peace and salvation here. The great question of our sins, and a divinely acceptable settlement of them, needs to be perfectly answered before the soul is at liberty to rejoice in the holy freedom of God's children. That perfect answer to the question has been given. The perfect settlement has been accepted by God; His Son who made the settlement is seated now at His right hand; and the Spirit has given us witness; therefore we happily have peace and liberty.

The Holy Spirit's witness for this is found in Hebrews 10. 12-18.

The former witness is IN us; but this is TO us. The former as to our relationship with God is "*with our spirit,*" but this as to the question of our sins being eternally settled is "*to us.*" The former reads "*Beareth witness WITH our spirit,*" but this says, "*Is a witness to us.*"

When that absolutely reliable witness is received, the believer is thankfully at peace; and he is free to be led on in liberty by the Spirit to enjoy the blessedness of what God has for those that love Him. True peace and rest before Him however are entirely unknown apart from the righteous putting away of our sins by Christ's sacrifice. We are told, "But this Man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever sat down on the right hand of God . . . By one offering He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified." What a complete, everlasting and triumphant clearance is here! So complete, that the One who has settled all is seated at God's right hand! So perfect, that the sanctified (set apart) believer is perfected in perpetuity before God as to this. All is done; done abidingly and we read, "Whereof the Holy Ghost also is a WITNESS TO US." Nothing more is needed. God says, "Their sins and iniquities will I remember no more" (17). And the sure word is added, "Now where remission of these is, there is no more offering for sin." Jesus has settled all! He is seated! God is satisfied! The believer is at peace, and free!

The work of the Spirit does not cease with this priceless peace-giving witness to us. The sacrificial work

of the Son is finished. On the ground of that the work of the Spirit goes on. He is spoken of in Hebrews 9. 14 as the *eternal* Spirit by whom Christ made His spotless offering to God.

Yes, be it earnestly and reverently noted, "THE ETERNAL SPIRIT." In Matthew 28. 19, we read of "the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." All three Persons of the Godhead are there named together. The Spirit as we have seen is "*eternal*." This single mention is sufficient for us. We need no repetition. It is enough. He is the "*eternal*" Spirit. Then who can rightly question that the Father and the Son are also "*eternal*"? The new covenant, since the Son came, is called in God's Word, "the eternal covenant"; the redemption He secured, "the eternal redemption"; the inheritance, "the eternal inheritance"; and the salvation of which He is the Author is "eternal salvation" (Heb. 5. 9). Since the Son's coming has put such a stamp upon these, He must Himself be eternal. We read in John 5. 12, "*He that hath THE SON hath life,*" and that life is "eternal life" (John 3. 36), and THE SON HIMSELF on whom he believes must be "eternal"? Does not Colossians 1. 17 say, "*He is before all*"?

He that believes on the Son has been the subject of the Spirit's operations. He has been "born of water and of the Spirit"; and "that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." The Word of God (the water) and the Spirit have effectually done their work in the believer; and, as we have seen, the Spirit's witness to us has given peace and liberty. The Holy Spirit has sealed the believer, and He gives the cry of relationship

in his heart, "ABBA, FATHER." He is the Spirit of Truth, the Comforter, the Unction, by Whom the truth is made known to us, and by whom we draw near with others to the Father. While the Son intercedes with the Father for us on high, the Spirit gives present help in our weakness, and intercedes for us here below: bringing home to our hearts that all things are working together for our good, giving us a taste beforehand of the joys that await us; for He is "the Earnest of our inheritance, and is called "the Holy Spirit of promise." There is doubtless a great adversary power in the world, through which we are passing, to the glory set before us; but the word is true, "Greater is He that is in you than he that is in the world" (1 John 4. 4). The Spirit of God has been given to us, and He dwells in us. May we not grieve Him individually or quench Him collectively, but gratefully prove His power as we journey homeward.

He witnesseth "with our spirit that we are the children of God" (Rom. 8. 15); not that we ought to be, but that we ARE God's children. At peace and free through His witness to us, we rejoice in this new and changeless relationship of which He is the witness in us. Great and glorious things are inseparably joined to this, though a thorny pathway may lead to the full fruition. Therefore we read, "If children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified together. For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed to us" (Rom. 8. 17, 18). The joy of God's children is ours as we tread onward through trials, and the joy

without the trials will be ours in fadeless glory for ever.

Meanwhile there are certain things which should mark us "as" God's beloved children. After being told not to grieve "the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption" (Eph. 4. 30), we read, "Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice." Such painful disorders and discords should disappear. Grace with harmony should prevail, seeing that God has so graciously blessed us by His Son. So it is added, "And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ has forgiven you. Be ye therefore imitators of God AS BELOVED CHILDREN; and walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given Himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling savour." The power of the Spirit is sufficient for this.

Again in Philippians 2. 13, 14, we learn that God works *in* us in view of our working *out* that which is pleasurable to Him. So we read, "Do all things without murmurings and disputings: that ye may be blameless, THE CHILDREN OF GOD, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine AS LIGHTS in the world; holding forth the WORD OF LIFE." Irreproachable behaviour before others shines like a calm luminary across a troubled sea, and the *Word of life* held out is like a welcome lifeboat to the shipwrecked mariner. Such divinely blessed activities may well be encouraged. Brought into holy nearness and rejoicing in the Son and in the Father,

in the freedom and unction of the Spirit, well may God's children seek that the outshining of the light and the forthgoing of life's message should prosper. A world of darkness needs it! A world of death needs it! Those who abide rightly in light and life and love have what is needed in communion with God.

Finally, there is a wonderful word for us in Romans 8. 21:—"THE LIBERTY OF THE GLORY OF THE CHILDREN OF GOD," for so it should read. The present time of creature bondage and corruption is to pass! First, the Lord Himself will come, and take His own up to be with Him in glory. God's children, who are God's heirs and Christ's joint heirs, will share together with Him in the appointed inheritance. The exalted blessedness of that glory shall be theirs with Christ, the pre-eminent One. Its surpassing splendour and magnificence theirs along with Him. There is the glory; and there is "*the liberty*" of that glory also. Meanwhile, "we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now" (22). But the outshining of "the glory of the children of God," will mean blessed liberty for the creature, through God's salvation. It may not quite be said that the glory of God's children will be theirs; but, freed from bondage then, they rejoice in *the liberty* of that glory. Blessed be *the glory* which is ours with Jesus! Blessed be *the liberty* of that glory for creation! Blessed be the grace and power of the Holy Spirit, who gives God's children a foretaste of its blessedness even now, before that longed-for glorious coming day. Thanks be to God for that Word—"The liberty of the glory of the children of God."

## ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

## The Unity of the Spirit.

Would you please give help on the following questions, in "Scripture Truth", which have been suggested to my mind through reading "The Church: What is it?" in the January issue.

What do we understand from Eph. 4. 3. "Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace"?

What is the unity of the Spirit? **Ephesians 4. 3.**

Can it be annulled or broken?

How can we keep it especially in these days of so much confusion, strife and divisions and when because of associations and mixed principles we cannot walk with all believers, although all are baptized by one Spirit into one body?  
—CO. DURHAM.

WE should say that the unity of the Spirit is described in Ephesians 2. The 3rd chapter is a parenthesis; chapter 4 joins on to end of chapter 2. In chapter 2 we learn that Jew and Gentile have been made nigh to God by the blood of Christ, and that He being raised from the dead has become the peace between them, making in Himself of the twain *one new man*: that both have been reconciled to God in *one body* by the cross, by which the enmity between them was slain, and that both have access to the Father now by *one Spirit*. This was a great achievement and nothing else but the blood and cross of Christ could have accomplished it, for not only had the distance which separated men—and specially the Gentiles in this Scripture—from God to be dealt with, but there existed this inveterate and incurable enmity between Jew and Gentile. The blood of Christ removed the distance, for it declared to all the love of God, preached peace to all, and expiated the sins of all who believed. The cross slew the enmity between the Jew and the Gentile, for when Christ died Jew and Gentile died also; whatever standing they had in the flesh came to an end then, that those who lived might live in one body before God. The one

body was brought into being by the coming of the Holy Spirit. By His indwelling believers, He has united them—whether Jew or Greek—to Christ the living Head, and now the truth is—"*There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling.*" This is a unity in which there is neither Jew nor Gentile and the Spirit gives character to it and is the power of it. What the Spirit did at the beginning abides to this day, for the one Spirit has not changed into a hundred Spirits—there is still one body and one Spirit; the unity of the Spirit still exists. And when this fact is a fact to our faith it will help us in our endeavour to keep the unity of the Spirit; indeed apart from this we shall care nothing for it.

The unity of the Spirit cannot be annulled, but it may be *practically* broken, or perhaps we ought to say we may fail to keep it in our practice, and it is set before us here in relation to our *practice*. For instance, when Peter went back to his Jewish practices at Antioch, and withdrew from eating with the Gentile believers, he revived the distinctions that the cross of Christ and the coming of the Spirit had obliterated and did not keep the

unity of the Spirit, and if Paul had not withstood him to the face, a deplorable and irreparable breach would have been made among the saints, for dissimulation instead of love began to spread among them. That is an outstanding case, but whenever we are governed by fleshly prejudices, or moved by party feelings, or press our own opinions we are sinning in this respect. The church at Corinth was a sad example of this failure, for there was among them envyings, strife and division, and these things were evidence of their carnality, and the flesh cannot keep the unity of the Spirit, it is only as we walk in the Spirit that we can do this. We may be zealous in maintaining what we believe to be the truth, and yet be breaking this unity all the time, for if we do not maintain love to all the saints we are not keeping it. Zeal without love, legality, a censorious spirit, criticism of others, indifference to the claims of Christ, or to the consciences of weak brethren are ways in which we may spoil practically the unity of the Spirit.

We shall keep the unity of the Spirit by holding fast to the whole truth of God which has been revealed by the Spirit, if we hold it "with all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love" (v. 2). It is not enough to speak the truth, it must

be spoken in love (v. 15), and it must be held and spoken for the whole body (v. 16), for if we confine the truth or our interest to any circle or company less than the whole body we have lost the sense of what the unity of the Spirit is. In endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit we shall seek the edification of the whole body; all the members of it as we meet them will be objects of our interest and love and their blessing and edification and our communion with them will be our aim. In keeping this unity, when we meet a fellow member we shall not raise questions that would separate us, but seek the things that would help and refresh, for the unity of the Spirit is not kept by controversy but in the bond of peace. Nevertheless, we cannot compromise the truth, or go on with what is evil, and since these are days of indifference to the truth and to evil associations on every hand, we need watchfulness and care, and dependence on the Lord. The Ephesian church to which these words were addressed kept externally right in every respect, but they did not keep the unity of the Spirit, for they departed from first love (Rev. 2. 1-7), and it is only as the Lord is paramount in our affections that we shall love all the saints. It is only as we walk in the Spirit that we can keep the Spirit's unity.

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## Guilty of the Body and Blood of the Lord.

"I do want if possible to get some light on 1 Cor. 11. 27. What is it to be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. It seems to be a question about which a number of saints are mystified, and I should be grateful if it could be explained for us.—UXBRIDGE.

**T**HOSE who were eating and drinking the Lord's supper in an unworthy way were guilty of

the body and blood of the Lord. They were treating it as a common meal. The bread and wine of the

Lord's supper has been compared to a portrait of a man's mother, and a good comparison it is. I might point to a portrait and say, "That is my mother." To someone else it may be only an indifferent painting, or mere canvas and paint. But to me as I look at it, my mother fills my thoughts. I remember her gentleness, her patience, her self-denying love. So it is with the bread and the wine.

The Lord said, "This is My body given for you. This is My blood which is shed for you." And if our hearts are right He fills our thoughts; we look beyond the emblems and remember Him in the greatness of His love that led Him into death for us. The bread and the wine are only bread and wine, but they are to us, to use our illustration, His portrait, telling us powerfully as we partake of them of the price that He paid to make us His own.

Suppose someone threw dirt at my mother's picture, or treated it with disdain, he would be guilty in my eyes, not of disrespect to a mere painting, but to my mother, and I should greatly resent it. Now some in the church at Corinth were doing what was analagous to that; they were treating the Lord's supper as a common meal or worse. They did not recognise its sacred character, sacred for two reasons, because of what it represented, and because the Lord Himself instituted it for a remembrance of Himself in death. They were each gratifying his own appetite and behaving in a way that would have disgraced their own houses, as this chapter shews, and by their conduct they were guilty of gross disrespect in regard to the

body and blood of the Lord, in which He is set before us in the most moving way in which we can think of Him, even as dead for us.

We cannot imagine such conduct as theirs was taking place now, for the Lord's supper is eaten now in an orderly way and with more or less reverence. God grant that it may be with more reverence and greater reality. But has the passage no application to us? We believe it has. If a man who partook of the supper were going on in an unjudged sinful course, indifferent to the fact that the Lord died for the very sins he is committing with such lightness, it would shew that he was insensible to the reason of that death, that he cared little for its deep meaning, that the bread and wine were to him like the canvas and paint of the portrait. It would shew that he did not discern the Lord's body, that he did not see in the death of the Lord the judgment of the evil that he was committing or the love that led the Lord to bear that judgment, though by eating the supper he professed to see both. Such a one would be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord and would have no need to be surprised if he were judged of the Lord for his indifference to what is due to the Lord.

But mark verse 28. He is not told to cease to eat the supper, which would mean that he chose to go on with the sin and abandon that which speaks of the judgment of it, but that he should judge himself, that he should discern the evil of his ways and turn from them with repentance and go on with the supper.

## The Lord's Supper and the Lord's Table.

"Has the Lord's table (1 Cor 10. 21) anything to do with the Lord's supper? Explain what the Lord's table means? Is it right to use such expressions as 'gathered round the Lord's table?' Is it not the emblems, the bread and wine, that are important, for they speak of the death of the Lord? Has the shewbread (Lev. 24. 5) any relation to the Lord's supper?"—ABERDEENSHIRE.

**THE** Lord's table and the Lord's supper cannot be separated, and those who do not bless the cup and break the bread (verse 16) cannot be called "partakers of the Lord's table" (verse 21). Yet the truth presented in 1 Cor. 10. is not that of ch. 11, or rather the two chapters present different sides of the same truth. Chapter 10 does not give the actual partaking of the Lord's supper, but shews the position and responsibility of those who do partake of it. They are one body, for they are all partakers of that one bread. Just as those who partook of the Jewish altar were Jews, and those who sacrificed to idols were idolators and devil worshippers, so those who partook of the one loaf were Christians; they were committed to the Lord and to Christian fellowship. It was a new fellowship, and the partaking of the one loaf was the bond and sign of it.

This new fellowship could not be mixed with those that had existed before it. The Christians could not be partakers of the Jewish altar, for they were not Jews, nor of the table of demons, for they were not Gentiles any more; they had been delivered from the dead works and ineffectual sacrifices of the one, and from the horrible iniquity and darkness of the other by the death of Christ. This they acknowledged by partaking of the one loaf—which speaks of the dead body of the Lord, and by doing this they were committed by a solemn pledge to Him, and this seems to be the

meaning of *the Lord's table* in this passage, which is the only place in the New Testament where the expression occurs. To join in idolatrous festivals would be to have fellowship with devils (verse 20), and how could anyone have fellowship with devils and the Lord at the same time? The attempt would be an act of treachery to the Lord, and would provoke Him to jealousy.

It is **THE LORD'S TABLE**, and this emphasises the authority of the Lord; He has rights in regard to those who are partakers of His table. It is not a material table, and so we should not speak of being "at" it, or "*gathering round*" it." It would be more correct to speak of *being in the fellowship of it*. It is not where we are but what we eat; it is not an ecclesiastical standing in which we can boast, but a solemn obligation that is laid upon us. The question that ought to exercise us is not where it is but what it is. Every person who eats the one loaf of the supper is professedly a partaker of the Lord's table with all its obligations and responsibilities.

Nor would we speak of "*gathering round the emblems*" as some do; they are important, for they bring the Lord in His death before us: but if we gather together according to the Word it is unto His Name, and He is there; we are gathered to Christ, He is our Centre.

The shew bread, like all the material types, foreshadowed a spiritual reality. It does not speak of the supper, but of those that partake

of it: for we being many are one *bread*. And as the frankincense was put upon the shew bread—speaking of the fragrance of Christ to God—so do His saints as they gather to-

gether appear before Him in the fragrance and beauty of Christ—"to the praise of the glory of His grace, wherein He hath made us accepted in the Beloved"

## Prayer and a Sin unto Death.

"I am anxious to know the meaning of 1 John 5. 16. will you kindly explain it?"—DENNISTOUN.

**T**HIS difficult passage occurs in relation to our access to God in prayer. He has given us such assurance of His love for us, that we can go to Him as children, freely and without fear. And our going to Him is not an empty performance, but we know that when we pray according to His will He hears and answers our prayer. This is an amazing privilege and the question is, how shall we use it? Not in praying selfishly and wholly for ourselves surely, though we may make all our requests known unto God, with thanksgiving, but in praying for our brethren, for we cannot be near to God without realizing that everyone of His children is an object of His love and care. We are to watch our brethren for their good, and care for them, and be the exact opposite to Cain, who was of the wicked one and slew his brother and said, Am I my brother's keeper? (ch 3. 12)

There are certain things in relation to our brethren that do not call for prayer, for instance, "*Whoso seeth his brother have need,*" is not told to pray but to act, for if he has this world's goods, he is able to relieve the necessity himself (ch 3 17). But, "if a man see his brother sin, it is another matter entirely, and about it he can only turn to God.

The passage does not say, If any man seeth his brother sick, but sinning, though sickness which may even end in death may be the result of his sinning, as in 1 Cor 11 30, where we read, "For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep." In that case it was the Lord's judgment or scourging of His children because of their outrageous, unchristian behaviour, and it would, we believe, illustrate this passage.

All who have believed are children of God and have eternal life and can never perish, but God is deeply concerned in their conduct because they are His children. He has made known His will for them and His will means their blessing. Everything that is not according to His will is sin, and His must scourge His children when they ignore His will and do their own. He must do this for their good as well as for His glory. He often does this by sickness, but He always does it in love. His grace has not set aside His government, and in the exercise of His government He may have to remove by death one who has sinned grievously against light and warning. Ananias and Saphira his wife are the solemn and outstanding examples of a sin unto death in the New Testament.

It would seem from this passage that those who are near enough to God to know His will would realize when prayer for the recovery of a sinning brother would be unavailing, but while they might not pray for his recovery, they certainly could pray that he might be restored in his soul to communion with God, and subject to His will in the matter

But for the rest who are suffering under God's chastening, but who have not sinned so determinedly, prayer is the resource, and God will hear and answer, and the life of the brother will be spared, and doubtless his soul restored to the Lord. In such a case also, the prayer would be discerning, intelligent prayer, as well as fervent and effectual (see James 5 16)

We must not conclude that all

sickness is scourging for a sinful course. That would be a serious mistake to make. The cases of Epaphroditus, who was sick unto death in his zeal in the Lord's service (Phil 2), and Timothy who had probably inherited a weak body (1 Timothy 5 23), the man born blind (John 9) and many others would forbid such a thought. We know of many who are weak and sick from natural causes, or over work or old age, who are serenely happy in the favour of the Lord and sustained by His grace in their confidence in Him. Their faith is tried but stands the test, they are not under correction, but under the Father's culture that they may yield more fruit for Him. In such tribulation as this they may well glory, and we may rejoice in their faith and imitate it.

## “His Own Blood.” Acts 20. 28.

With reference to Acts 20 28 “The church of God which He hath purchased with His own blood” I heard this passage quoted recently to support the idea that God died. The statement did not ring true to me at all. Scripture invariably, so it seems to me, attributes the work of the cross to Christ. I know that our Lord Jesus Christ is God—co-eternal with the Father. Yet is it not better to maintain in our thoughts and words the distinctions that the Scriptures make? The only passage in Scripture that would appear to lend support to the above notion is Acts 20 28, and I had thought that this should be translated, “the blood of His own.” The expression—“the death of God”—seems to me to be out of tone with Scripture. If you would take up the question in the next issue of “Scripture Truth” I should be glad—HANWELL

**T**O talk of “the death of God” is most certainly contrary to the truth, as revealed in the Word. God is Father, Son and Holy Ghost, eternal and immortal. He only hath immortality and therefore cannot die. Yet our Lord Jesus Christ was, is, and ever will be God in His eternal being—the Son in the Godhead. But when death was necessary He had to become a Man. “Since then the children partake of blood and flesh, He also, in like manner, took part in the same, that through death He

might annul him who has the might of death, that is the devil” (Heb 2 14, NT). As Man He lived among men and died for them, and poured forth His blood, and rose again from the dead. His incarnation was a necessity, apart from this He could not have been a Substitute for sinful men. He could not have borne their sins as the Lamb of God, or made atonement for them, for He could not have died. Yet He never ceased to be God the Son. He became Man to die, but what He

was as the Son gave value to His death. It would not be right and Scriptural to say, God died, but He who was God died, "the Son of God loved me and gave Himself for for," for He who is the "one Mediator between God and man, the Man Christ Jesus, Who gave Himself a ransom for all," is the One whom Thomas rightly worshipped as, "MY LORD AND MY GOD." This may be darkness to the intellect that would investigate all mysteries, but it is sunshine to the heart that believes.

As to the text in question, it has been stated, that no text has been more discussed or tampered with, but it would appear that "the blood

of His own" is the meaning of it. This would certainly conform with the rest of Scripture. Of it J. N. Darby wrote, "God purchased the church with that which was His own, nearest and dearest to Himself: a thought as apt and beautiful as possible here. No expression would be more appropriate, hardly any it seems to me, so strong. The force of the sentence is in the word *idios*—"His own proper," which is to me a deeply touching expression. For my own part I am perfectly satisfied that 'by the blood of His own,'—that is more than our words of 'near' and 'dear' can possibly convey, it was God's own dear and beloved Son—is the true translation.

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AS the sunflower ever turning  
 To the mighty sun  
 With the faithfulness of fealty,  
 Following only one—  
 So make me, Lord, to Thee.

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OH, use me, Lord, use even me,  
 Just as Thou wilt, and how, and where,  
 Until Thy blessed face I see,  
 Thy rest, Thy joy, Thy glory share.

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## Responsibility.

THE man who shrinks from responsibility on the ground of his own feebleness is in great danger of calling into question the fulness and sufficiency of God's resources.

If a man, in the vanity of his mind, thrust himself forward and takes a burden upon his shoulders which God never intended him to bear, and therefore never fitted him to bear, we may expect to see him crushed under it; but if God lays it upon him, He will qualify and strengthen him to carry it.

It is never the fruit of humility to depart from a divinely appointed post. On the contrary, the deepest humility will express itself by remaining there in simple dependence upon God.

It is a sure evidence of being occupied with *self* when we shrink from service on the ground of inability. God does not call us unto service on the ground of our own ability, but of His own.

## ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS.

### The Church: What is it? (January issue.)

1. How can the church be called indivisible when it is apparently in fragments?
2. How can it be said to be impregnable when apparently it is a complete failure?

WHEN the *outward and visible* Church, or ought we to say Churches, had ceased to be a unity, and was already falling to pieces, John was inspired by the Holy Spirit to write his Gospel and Epistles. In them the wonderful truth of the Father and the family is revealed—one Father, one family. We need this truth greatly; we need to be led more deeply into the Father's love and into family affections. Suppose a family of children quarrelled and divided into groups, two here, two on the opposite side of the room, and again another two refusing to speak to or share their games with the others, if the father came into that room and saw his children in this unhappy quarrelsome condition, would he say, "I have, alas, no longer one family, but three"? Certainly not, they are still one family to him, and that very fact makes their divisions among themselves all the more grievous, and that fact, and the father's impartial love would be the greatest factors in breaking down the barriers they had erected against each other, and in making them own their oneness as a family and share with each other their pleasures and joys.

It is even so with the church, it is made up of *the brethren of Christ*. In Hebrews 2. 12, these relationships are brought together. There is one one church, one family. The Father sees only one family, and every child in it is equally loved; and Christ sees only one Church for which He gave Himself, so greatly did He love it; and the Holy Spirit sees only one body, in which He dwells and

which He unites in one indivisible unity to Christ its Head, and for which He labours "till we all come in 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."

The fact that the church is still here is a proof of its impregnability. During its history on earth it has often appeared as though it had been utterly defeated, but it has never been so. It has been said that the "annals of the church are the annals of hell." But the church of the historian is not the church of God. The church of God has suffered the fiercest persecution from that which blatantly claims that name, for the false hates the true, and the darkness hates the light. But the true has been maintained by the power of the Holy Spirit, and the blood of the martyrs has often been the seed of the church. We believe that we are right in saying that there are more true saints of God on earth to-day than ever in the history of the church, and in view of the near return of the Lord, we look for an increasing devotion of heart to Himself, which the prevailing worldliness and false teaching of the professing body will not spoil; for is it not written, "The Spirit and the *Bride* say, Come"? and does not this indicate heart longing for Christ? The devil cannot prevail against this. The final triumph will be, when Christ presents the church to Himself, a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing.

(To be continued).

## MORE THAN CONQUERORS.

J. T. Mawson.

THERE have been many conquerors in the world's history; Alexander, Julius Ceasar, Napoleon, for instance, were conquerors; they might even be called great conquerors, but not "more than conquerors." This is language that we could not find in mere human literature. How could any man be *more* than a conqueror? People might say, there's no sense in such a phrase it is a mere hyperbole. Yet here it is in God's Word, and there's no exaggeration in that Book of truth. Let us see where it occurs and seek to learn what it means. "As it is written, For Thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us" (Romans 28. 36, 37).

The conquerors whose names stand high in the world's temple of fame gained their great *place by killing*; they strode through seas of blood to the goal of their ambition. God's children become more than conquerors *by being killed* and killed all the day long. "We are accounted as sheep for the slaughter." The time was in the history of the church when the Christians seemed only to exist to be slaughtered. Those who slew them did so for their own pleasure—"to make a holiday for Romans," or to stamp out of the world a hated Name—for it was for Jesus' Name's sake that these suffered—but they did not know that they were crowning their victims with crowns imperishable, and that these unresisting martyrs were more than conquerors. But so it was.

Those were great days for God's saints, but they have passed, and Christians are not slaughtered now

for His Name's sake; then what of this remarkable phrase? Is it obsolete, and can there not be those who are more than conquerors now?

Yes, there may be, and there will be if we keep in mind the words "for His Name's sake." What would not those who know His love, and what His love has made Him do for them, do and suffer for His Name's sake, for the sake of the Name of Jesus! Well, they must begin by denying self, by setting self aside, by sacrificing self, but since this is for His Name's sake it should not be hard to do. To suffer reproach, to be misunderstood, to be thrust aside, not to be wanted—in all these things we may be more than conquerors, if it is all for Christ's sake, and in these things He left us an example that we should walk in His steps. His love is the great compensation, and from His love no suffering can separate. Nay: suffering gives Him the opportunity for making His love a living, bright reality. So must His martyred saints have found it when they rejoiced to suffer affliction for His Name's sake, and so may we find it to-day.

The monuments that men have raised to their heroes will all crumble to dust, and every great name in history will perish, but none who have suffered for Christ's sake will be forgotten; their names are in the archives of the golden city, they shall shine as the stars for ever and ever. And He has said, "Whosoever shall confess Me before men, him will I confess before My Father and all the holy angels. These are the "more than conquerors" whose names shall live for ever.

# THE FATHER'S LOVE AND GOD'S CHILDREN.

H. J. Vine.

WE have already seen that all who have been born of God and have believed on the Name of the SON, have been given the right by Him to take their place as children of God, and that the HOLY SPIRIT witnesses with their spirits that they are the children of God. We must now consider them in relation to the FATHER'S love. Four times in his Epistle John speaks of them in this way. John always speaks of "children," not "sons," as sometimes translated in the Authorised Version, for he dwells on the relationship itself.

We read, "*Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the children of God; therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew Him not. Beloved, now are we the children of God. . . Whosoever is born of God doth not commit (practice) sin. . . In this are manifest the children of God, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother. . . By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep His commandments.*" The love bestowed upon us by THE FATHER, the right given to us by THE SON, and the witness of THE SPIRIT, unite in granting a threefold assurance to God's children, before they reach their prepared home in the Father's house, where Jesus already is. So it says, "Beloved, NOW are we the children of God."

When our Lord Jesus Christ was here on earth, He told His own of the Father's love. He knew it well. They heard Him say to the Father,

"Thou lovedst Me before the foundation of the world." In that eternal love of the Father for the Son He continued while passing through the bitter trials of time. In its changeless blessedness He dwells; as He said, "I have kept My Father's commandments, and *abide* in His love." The world did not know its Maker. Israel did not know its sovereign Lord and King, but He knew the Father's holy love. Nothing moved Him from it. He abode in it at all times. There He rested amidst the world's restless surging. His coming brought the Father's eternal love for the Son here. It still remains. We are invited to "behold it," and to abide in it also. The Son was the Object of it before the world was; and He was the Object of it when in the world; He is still the Object of it on high with His Father. But His atoning sufferings and death have secured others to share in this love. He drank the cup which the Father gave Him to drink, and that He might fill our cup now with the love He knows so well. His going away did not take the Father's love away. The Father now has others who know His love as they pass through the world to where Jesus is. For our comfort, cheer and instruction it is said, "*Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the children of God; therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew Him not.*"

"The Father's love, the source of all,  
Sweeter than all it gives,  
Shines on us now without recall,  
And lasts while Jesus lives."

From His present place on high with the Father, Jesus brings home to our hearts the knowledge of what

the Father is, giving us to know His Name, that His eternal love might be in us. Not only upon us; but dwelling richly in us. The world did not know its Maker; and the world does not know God's children. They may be known in business and other relationships; but not as the children of God by the world. God's children carry the secret of this relationship, and of the Father's love with them, unknown by the world. This spring of joy is theirs and they may enjoy it constantly. The Scripture we have quoted, reads as if the world did not know the Father. That is right, for Jesus said, "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father." In Him the Father was expressed; therefore He also said, "They have both seen and hated both Me and My Father" (John 15. 24). But He has won many out of the world to rejoice with Him in the Father's love; and the world does not know them, for they are God's children.

We have spoken of the activities of the three Persons of the God-head. In regard to THE SON, we repeat, it is said, "He was in the world, and the world was made by Him, and the world knew Him not," although He was "the True Light." Of THE HOLY SPIRIT, the Comforter, the Spirit of Truth, we read, "Whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth Him not, neither knoweth Him." And of THE FATHER, Jesus said, 'O RIGHTEOUS FATHER, the world hath not known Thee; but I have known Thee, and these have known that Thou hast sent Me.' Again Jesus said, "Ye neither know Me, nor My Father: if ye had known Me, ye should have known My Father also." These words help us to understand better the hallowed nearness given to the children of

God; for we read also, "Therefore the world knoweth us not, *because it knew HIM not.*"

We are likewise helped by them to understand the Spirit's use in 1 John of the endearing "HIM"; for to those who know the Father expressed in the Son, the Unction received from Him, delights in filling their hearts with *Himself* through whom God is known. So we are told, the same Unction teaches us, just as it hath taught them,—"*Ye shall abide in HIM.*" It continues, "And now, little children, ABIDE IN HIM" (1 John 2. 27, 28); having also previously said, ye shall "*continue in THE SON, and in THE FATHER*" (24). THE SON is here instructively placed first, for it is by Him and in Him we come to, and know the Father.

In these days of declension; when the lying denial that Jesus is the Christ, the Messiah of Israel still obtains; when the seductive teaching is spreading, which denies the Father and the Son, we do well to "*abide in Him,*" and thus have our confiding hearts well nourished and garrisoned in the knowledge of the Father's love. John also says assuredly, "He who confesses THE SON has THE FATHER also" (2. 23). It is not put the opposite way. And to the elect lady he writes, "He that abides in the doctrine of the Christ, he hath both THE FATHER and THE SON" (2 John 9). To advance beyond that is to be without God. We see then the immense importance of that oft repeated Word,—"*Abide in Him.*" May we do so in faith and affection, growing intelligently in the divine unfoldings which are there; responding in the power of the Spirit to the known love of the Father, which has given us to be God's children. Blessed

be His holy Name for such wonderful love.

Father, we worship, blessed in Thy love  
so true,—

The love that Jesus ever knew :  
From every danger be our shield,—  
Thyself our joy,—Thyself revealed.

Wonderful too is the hope connected with the relationship, which the Father's love has granted to us. It cheers our souls as we abide in the present home of our faith; esteeming with deepening joy the divinely given right to be there. What a dwelling for the children of God on their way to be with Jesus for ever,—the Father's changeless love! What a sure and certain hope is ours,—to be like the One, and see the One, who has made known that eternal love, and brought us into it! "BELOVED, now are we the children of God . . . We shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is." Blessed is that "now" of love and relationship! Bright and glorious the hope to be "like Him" and to "see Him,"—our present "hope in Him," which soon shall be ours actually, along with Himself in glory! To see Him "as He is" will bless our adoring gaze truly! To see Him as He will be—"King of kings and Lord of lords"—will call forth glad songs of victorious rejoicing and loud hosannas; but to behold Him "as He is" with the Father, in the deep love and blessedness of His Father's house,—where we shall be like Him and dwell with Him—where the eternal love of the Father for the Son is ours too through Him—where our God and Father shall rest and rejoice in His love—where the designs of His heart of eternal love shall display their beauty and blessedness—where the cup is full—where JESUS, who suffered and once died for us, is supreme in radiant glory—to be with Him and like Him there—to see Him as He

is—will move every heart to overflowing, worship and adoration.

The present effects of such hope in Him must be great and powerful! And indeed they are. The practical results are healthful and far reaching. Even the ultra violet rays of the Solar centre, reaching us through this earth's murky atmosphere, impart health-giving benefits. Much more so the sunshine of our sure hope in the Son. Therefore we read, "And every one that hath this hope in Him purifies himself even as He is pure." That does not mean we should set about trying to be purer than we are. Such self-centred efforts are useless. This sweet purifying goes on as the hope shines in—the hope which God's children have in the Son.

Love, too, for one another will increase; for we read, "Everyone that loveth Him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of Him" (1 John 5. 1). Hatred marks the children of the devil; love marks the children of God. Nor are we left to wonder if we really love them. Divine assurance is given to us in the Word as to this: "By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep His commandments." Purity, love and obedience prosper here. "His commandments are not grievous," we are told (5. 3). Grief does not mark this pathway; for John wrote, "that your joy may be full." The "true light" shines here; the Son, "the eternal life," is known here; the Father's love and the liberty of the children of God are here; for the Holy Spirit gives the loving cry in the heart, "ABBA, FATHER."

"Father, we Thy children bless Thee  
For such love on us bestowed,  
Source of blessing! we confess Thee  
Now our Father and our God."

## CAPACITY.

*"What moved Thee to impart Thy Spirit from above,  
 Therewith to fill our hearts with heavenly peace and love?  
 'Twas love unbounded, love to us,  
 Moved Thee to give Thy Spirit thus."*

I HAVE heard of the parents of an only son, who had great ambitions for him. It was their intention to send him to a public school and from thence to Oxford, and after that they hoped for him a brilliant public career. The family doctor who had known the boy from his birth urged that they would not attempt anything of the sort, and when pressed for his reason, said frankly, "He has not got the capacity."

The capacity for a career or sphere is essential as anyone can see. Christian, a capacity has been given to you for a Christian career on earth, with all that that means of entrance into the things of God and witness for Christ. The man who has not the Spirit of God has not this capacity; for "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." But that same Word also says, "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him; but God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God . . . Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God" (1 Cor. 3).

Since we have this capacity, through the infinite grace of our God, to enter into and enjoy God's deep things, let us, with deepest

gratitude and wonder for so great a gift, make use of it. We may grieve and quench the Spirit, un- speakably sad it is when we do, and we may neglect to use this God-given capacity, and so be miserably poor in our knowledge of experience in these great divine realities, but God does not withdraw the Gift. "The Father . . . shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you for ever" (John 14. 16). Said the Lord Jesus, and we are also told, "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." My prayer is that the saints of God may be stirred up with renewed spiritual energy to love the truth and develop their souls in it and walk in it. The Holy Spirit is the capacity for this.

"Strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man; that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God. Now unto him that is able to do exceedingly 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" (Eph. 3. 16-21).

## TREASURE IN HEAVEN.

L. R.

VERY tender and beautiful are these words which fell from the lips of the Lord Jesus; there is music in them as in none other. Twice the Lord spoke them; once to the disciples, bidding them sell their possessions and give alms, so should they have treasure in heaven, adding that where their treasure was there would their hearts be. We can understand a little how very difficult this must have seemed to them. Reared in the Jewish faith that the blessing of the God of Israel would rest upon them in the guise of material prosperity, it was a new and most disturbing doctrine that bade them let things here go, to find them in a way they could not comprehend, changed into heavenly treasure, awaiting them in the, to them far distant kingdom. Even we to whom these words have been familiar since our childhood, find ourselves strangely searched by them. The Lord taught very plainly (Matt. 6. 16-21) that prayer, fasting, almsgiving would be transformed, we might perhaps say, from the lesser metal of this life into the pure gold of the kingdom of heaven.

In the light of this, all these things become of great importance; there is room and need for all; the lisping of a little child and the prayer of an apostle; the quiet denial of self in the daily round, and the actual fasting of him who has grace to fast and pray as Cornelius; the widow's mite and the abundance of the rich man each has its place in the giving of alms. But we live in testing times, everything in the world which we have considered stable gives evidence of being shaken to its foundation, and we are being tested by this. Perhaps we have

too easily concluded that we have treasure in heaven, if so may God awaken us before it is too late. The day draws near when the secrets of all hearts will be judged (Rom. 2. 16).

Now if we turn to the other occasion on which the Lord used these words we shall see, with His enabling, how they may be made good.

The young man who came to the Lord, so sure of his ability to keep the law, was sorrowful when in one pregnant sentence the Lord disclosed to him the state of his heart, showing him that his treasure was in his possessions. How like ourselves, beloved! how little we know our own hearts! Our comfort is, we belong to the One Who knows just how to put His finger on the sore spot, and discover us to ourselves. And when this point is reached, how wonderful to hear Him say, "Thou shalt have treasure in heaven; come, take up the cross and follow Me" (Mark 10. 21).

A well-known servant of the Lord has written—

"'Tis the treasure I've found in His love  
That has made me a pilgrim below,  
And 'tis there when I reach Him above,  
As I'm known, all His fulness I'll  
know."

This little verse explains it for us very sweetly and simply. The Lord offers us the privilege of His company, of sharing in His cross, and of following Him, and it is of learning more and more of Him who has gone on before, that what we know of Him here becomes treasure in heaven because He is there. It is the only way, we cannot school our hearts to say our treasure is in

heaven. Alas! we know well how earth-bound they are; but we can, if we have grace to do so, accept the loving invitation to come after Him, we may learn to deny ourselves and take up the cross daily and follow Him, and as we do this and prove His fulness as Saviour and Lord, as Shepherd and Teacher, as Head of His body the church, as the soon coming Bridegroom of our hopes, yea, as He becomes the well-Beloved of our hearts we shall have treasure in heaven.

We may well remind ourselves that it is quite possible to have a good knowledge of the letter of Scripture, quite possible to study it as one studies science or mathematics, quite possible to be a zealous worker very full of good deeds and yet to have no treasure in heaven. Only as we contemplate the Lord in His glory, only as we walk in living, abiding communion with Him, only as all we are and have are held

at His disposal can we prove that where our treasure is, there will our heart be also.

The beloved writer of the hymn we have quoted, was in his own career, an example for us. Early brought to the Lord, he left all to follow Him, labouring first among the poorest of the poor, and later in a world-wide ministry; almost his last recorded words were to the attendant who cared for him in his weakness, on abiding in Christ.

May it be ours to tread the same blessed pathway, for our Lord's pleasure and glory, and for our everlasting joy.

"Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also. Let your loins be girded about and your lights burning; and ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their Lord, when He will return from the wedding; that when He cometh and knocketh, they may open unto Him immediately" (Luke 12. 35, 36).

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## They All Slumbered and Slept

'Tis deepening night; and slumbering there  
Unmindful of *His sleepless care*,  
Forgetful of His parting prayer,  
She sleeps, who once shone wondrous fair—  
The Church—His Bride.

'Tis midnight; hark! a cry is heard—  
"Behold the Bridegroom!" At that word  
Affections kindle, hearts are stirred;  
And rising now in haste to meet  
And be the first her Lord to greet,  
Goes forth attir'd in raiment meet—  
His own—the Bride.

And may God grant it for Christ's Name's sake.

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It is no good to look for strength before obedience. Strength is only found in the path of obedience.

## GREAT CONTRASTS IN THE REVELATION, No. 2.

The Man Child and the great red Dragon. Ch. 12 J. T. Mawson.

THE sceptre of the whole earth must finally rest either in the hand of the great red dragon or the Man Child. Who the great red dragon really is is clearly stated in verse 9 of our chapter and his complete fourfold character and activities exposed. He is:

the great Dragon = the destroyer  
 that old serpent = the deceiver  
 the Devil = the accuser  
 and Satan = the adversary.

The Man Child is Christ, and He stands out in absolute contrast to the dragon. The grace of God has taught us that He is

The Saviour            Matthew 1. 21.  
 The Truth.             John 14. 6.  
 The Advocate.        1 John 2. 1.  
 The Friend.            Luke 7. 34.

The Devil was not always evil, but now there is not an element of good in him. We believe we are right in accepting the view that in Ezekiel 28 and Isaiah 14 there is given in arresting language a description of his greatness and beauty as he was when in the beginning God created him. In rebuking the King of Tyre the prophet by the Spirit breaks out into the description of a being that can be none other than the Devil. "Thou sealest up the sum, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty . . . Thou art the anointed Cherub that covereth and I have set thee so. Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee . . . thou hast sinned: therefore I will cast thee as profane out of the mountain of God: and I will destroy thee, O covering Cherub, from the midst of the stones of fire. Thine heart was lifted up because

of thy beauty; thou hast corrupted thy wisdom by reason of thy brightness."

"How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground . . . For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds: I will be like the most High. Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit." The beginning of his sin was pride, and out of that sprang the determination to be independent of God, and to be as God, ruling a kingdom of his own, a kingdom of darkness, from which the knowledge of God should be utterly excluded. This kingdom bears the character of its founder and must in all things be opposed to God and His kingdom by its very nature. There can be no compromise between light and darkness, no league between good and evil; though with consummate audacity Satan proposed such a compromise to Jesus in the wilderness, when he offered to Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. Did he think that as he had beguiled the woman in Eden so he could beguile the Woman's Seed in the wilderness? If so what a surprise, what a check he got! The lie was detected and resisted and the deceiver was defeated. There can be no fellowship between Christ and Belial, the fight must be fought to the finish; it must end in the final and complete overthrow of one or the other.

In his fall from his exalted place the wisdom of this great being was corrupted into devilish subtlety, and he is first introduced in Holy Scripture as the serpent, the deceiver (Genesis 3). It was by his subtlety that Satan beguiled Eve and turned the man and the woman into sinners against God, and by that same subtlety he is blinding men and women to-day and making them deny the truth of Genesis 3, in which indispensable chapter of the Bible he is exposed as the deceiver and adversary, and his defeat foretold. It does not suit his plans that his ways should be exposed, indeed it suits him well when he can induce men to believe that he does not exist at all, but certain it is that no man was ever of any use to God and an overcomer who did not believe in the existence of a personal Devil.

As we read that chapter we are made to feel that the Lord God had a great compassion for the fallen man and his wife, for He talked with them and drew from them the story of their guilt. But He asked no question of the Devil; his triumph was short lived; and swiftly upon his crime followed his condemnation and sentence. "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." From that time "the old serpent" became the dragon in regard to the woman's Seed. He was on the lookout for It, and determined to destroy It if he could. Cain slew Abel because he was of that wicked one (1 John 3. 12). It was the devil's first effort to destroy the woman's seed. He was behind the edict of the Egyptian King that all the male children born to the Israelites should be slain (Exodus). But what a wound was

inflicted on him by the Arm of the Lord when Israel marched dry shod through the Red Sea (Isa. 51. 10). He put it into the heart of the wicked Athaliah to destroy all the seed royal of the house of Judah to bring to naught the Word of God, but his purpose was thwarted under God's hand by a compassionate princess, who saved the child Joash from the general massacre.

The Devil has no foreknowledge, that is an attribute of God, but we may be sure that he judges shrewdly as to the times, and the stir that was made throughout the hill country of Judea by the miraculous birth of John, and the expectation and talk about their coming Lord among such as Simeon and Anna, and all that looked for redemption in Israel must have filled him with suspicion and prepared him to meet the long-promised event, the greatest event in the history of time. (Luke 1. 2).

The due time then had come; the Woman was to bring forth the Man Child and the great red dragon stood before her to devour her Child as soon as it was born. The woman is Israel, "of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God, blessed for ever." The great sign in heaven does not describe her as she was when her Child was born, but what she is in the thoughts and purposes of God, which thoughts and purposes will all be infallibly established. She is seen clothed with the sun; Christ is to be her glory; she did not own Him when He appeared in lowliness and grace, then "His own received Him not," but she will own Him when He arises as the Sun of Righteousness with healing in His wings; and so great will be her glory then through Him that, "as a consequence her glory of old, before the day dawned, the reflected

light of her typical system, is like the moon under her feet. Upon her head the crown of twelve stars speaks of the twelve tribes, planets around the centre Sun" (Grant). But the due time was the time of her travail, she was in sore bondage under a foreign yoke—the power of the Roman empire, which was and is yet to be the special vessel and instrument of the Devil's power, as is indicated by the seven heads and ten horns. The very fact of Joseph being compelled by the edict of the Imperial Ceasar to take Mary his espoused wife to Bethlehem was a proof of Israel's bondage, but even this turned out to the fulfilment of this great event, just as and where God's holy Word had foretold it.

God is never behind His time; the Devil always is when it is a question of overthrowing God's counsels. So we read that Mary brought forth her firstborn Son: and he called His Name JESUS. And when the soldiers of Herod arrived to carry out the will of the great red dragon and slay all the children in Bethlehem under two years, Jesus was not there, "for the angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream, saying, Arise, and take the young Child and His mother and flee unto Egypt, for Herod will seek the young Child to destroy Him." "And he arose and took the young Child and His mother by night, and departed into Egypt: and was there until the death of Herod: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Out of Egypt have I called My Son." Thus was the great red dragon foiled in his effort to destroy the Man Child and in subsequent efforts also, for even when he succeeded in lashing men to a fury of hatred against Christ, so that they crucified Him, yet God

raised Him from the dead, and caught Him up to heaven, and the great events from incarnation to ascension, which are compressed into one brief verse in our chapter, passed into history. "She brought forth a Man Child who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron: and her Child was caught up unto God, and to His throne."

Our chapter contains both history and prophecy; it also teaches deeply important moral lessons as does the whole of the Revelation. Why should Jesus be spoken of here as the Man Child? We believe it is to bring out His character in complete contrast to the great red dragon's. The Man Child seems to speak of His utter dependence upon God. The language of the Man Child is: "Thou art He that took Me out of the womb: Thou didst make Me to hope when I was upon My mother's breast. I was cast upon Thee from the womb; Thou art My God from My mother's belly" (Psa. 22). As the Man Child He never moved from the place of dependence upon God; He did not exercise an independent will, His life was one unbroken obedience.

In the wilderness He did not resist the Tempter by any act or word of divine power, but simply quoted the word of God, for by that word He lived. It was as the Man Child that He said, "The Lord God hath given Me the tongue of the learned (instructed), that I should know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary. He wakeneth morning by morning, He wakeneth mine ear to hear as the learned. The Lord God hath opened Mine ear and I was not rebellious. I turned not back. I gave My back to the smiters, and My cheeks to them that plucked off the hair: I hid not My

face from shame and spitting" (Isa. 50. 4). What could be the answer to that life of child-like obedience to God, and dependence upon Him? There could be but one answer, *The Man Child is caught up unto God and to His throne*. The highest place in the universe is accorded to Him who made Himself of no reputation; He must sway a universal sceptre who lived in absolute obedience, and God claims Him who could neither be diverted nor driven from the path of perfect, unwavering trust. On the other hand, the Dragon has been and is yet to be cast down. When first his heart has lifted up with pride and he asserted 'his independent and disobedient will, he was cast out of the mountain of God: from our chapter we learn that he is to be cast out of the heavens, where he has the seat of his power, for he is the prince of the power of the air, ruling the children of disobedience from thence; in Revelation 20 we learn that he is to be chained in the bottomless pit for a thousand years, and in that same chapter his final and irretrievable doom is described. "And the devil . . . was cast into the lake of fire . . . and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever." Thus shall his kingdom of darkness be brought to an utter end and his power over men and devils cease for ever. He that humbleth himself shall be exalted, and he that exalteth himself shall be abased.

The question may arise, Why did not God destroy the devil by His almighty power in the beginning of his sin? The answer is that God does not use His power in an arbitrary way. He will by His almighty power cast the Devil into the lake of fire, when all his works are finished; but those works must

be finished first, that none may charge the Judge of all with injustice when He judges; but the victories that He gains over evil are moral victories. He will fill the heavens and the earth with the beauty of those moral qualities that have proceeded from Himself, but the beauty and perfection of them could only be disclosed in their triumph over evil. "The Son of God was manifested that He might undo the works of the Devil," and if we would learn how He did it we must read the Gospels: He was meek and lowly in heart, "Who did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth: who, when He was reviled, reviled not again; when He suffered, He threatened not; but committed Himself to Him that judgeth righteously: who His own self bore our sins in His own body on the tree" (1 Peter 2. 22-24). The prince of this world came, but had nothing in Him; He was the Overcomer, and He Who overcame in apparent weakness, and through unparalleled sorrows, shall shepherd the nations with a rod of iron. The sceptre of the whole earth shall be held in His hand, for He loved righteousness and hated iniquity, and He is Lord of lords and King of kings.

And now we come to an astonishing thing. The Man Child who has been caught up unto God and His throne, has brethren who are also overcomers (verse 10). They are called "*our brethren*" by the loud voice that sounds in heaven, but we know from other Scriptures that, "HE is not ashamed to call them brethren." They are born of God, and "whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world," and "he that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not" (1 John 5). Again John writes

to the young men of God's family, "Ye have overcome the wicked one." We learn from our chapter how this was done. "And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night.

AND THEY OVERCAME HIM BY THE BLOOD OF THE LAMB, AND BY THE WORD OF THEIR TESTIMONY; AND THEY LOVED NOT THEIR LIVES UNTO THE DEATH." The brethren of the tribulation period, "the remnant of the woman's seed," had still to face the fury of the dragon (verse 17), but the warfare was over for these for whom this burst of glad exultation breaks out; they are all those who have followed in the steps of the Man Child, who left them an example; they are the suffering but beloved brotherhood, who through much tribulation have entered the Kingdom; they are the family of God. Satan accused them before God ceaselessly, persistently, in the vain hope it may be of turning God against them, or of proving that they were not one whit worthy of the favour in which they stood before Him, or to gratify his own spite against them since he could no longer oppose them to God by his power or beguile them from Him by his wiles. But if he accused them before God, he also attacked them by false accusations against God; the first weapon in his armoury is always to make them doubt the Word of God and to question His love, but they overcame him.

**"By the blood of the Lamb."**

This is a plea and a weapon that Satan cannot withstand. If he declares that one of these beloved ones of the Lord is too great a sinner to

be saved; the blood of the Lamb is the answer: it cleanseth from all sin. If he claims that he has a right to keep that one in bondage, for he is his lawful captive, the blood of the Lamb is the answer: by it we are redeemed. If he declares that God must punish sin and cannot possibly love the sinner: the blood of the Lamb is the answer, for it tells of the great sacrifice that has for ever glorified God's inflexible justice and is the pledge and token of His great love. When Satan made his great attack on Martin Luther in his Watburg prison, pressing his many sins upon him, he was put to flight by the intrepid reformer by these words, "The blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, cleanseth ME from all sin."

**"By the Word of their testimony."**

What they believed became their testimony, and what they believed and testified is the truth in contrast to the lie. "We have seen and do testify," cried the apostle, "that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world." "We also believe, and therefore speak." The lie in Eden that turned Eve and Adam from God, was that He did not love them as much as He seemed to do, that He was keeping something from them that would be good for them, and if they would but hearken to Satan and follow him and turn away from God they would do well for themselves. And they believed the lie, and the foul poison of it has passed down from generation to generation. It changed the very nature of the primal pair and all their progeny have come into the world in distrust and dread of God. But *God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son*, and the life of the one who believes that is no longer darkened by the Devil's lie;

he is in the light, and the light is in him; it has shined in his heart "to give the light of the knowledge of God in the face of Jesus." He knows the truth, and the truth has set him free, and he shines as a light in the world, holding forth the word of life. The man with the light in his heart and the truth upon his lips is an overcomer; the devil is powerless against him.

"They loved not their lives to the death."

The ancient book of Job reveals some wonderful things to us. We learn from it that Satan taunted God with the fact that His creature man loved himself more than he loved his God. "Skin for skin," he cried, "all that a man hath will he give for his life; put forth Thine hand and touch his flesh, and he will curse Thee to Thy face." But these who overcame Satan loved not their lives unto the death. For God's sake they were killed all the day long. Rather than give up their God and their faith in Him they would go to the stake, and did with joy in their hearts and songs on their lips. Thus were they tried, and Satan was permitted to do it that his lie might be exposed and that he might be defeated by the lowly followers of Jesus whom he despised. He has changed his tactics in these days, and he works now by his wiles in the endeavour to make the children of God put themselves first and live

for self instead of God. The conflict is not less real and the issue not less glorious, and he who bears his cross and says, No, to self and follows Jesus, is an overcomer. He shews and declares the fact that God and Christ are more to him than self and his own life. "And he that overcometh and keepeth My works to the end, to him will I give power over the nations, and he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received from My Father." Such is the Lord's own promise, and the meaning of it is, that those who overcome shall share His glory and power, who is the great Overcomer.

Thus in spite of Satan's great efforts to overthrow and bring to naught the purposes of God, the Edenic sentence upon him shall manifestly be executed, and the whole universe shall see that the woman's Seed has indeed bruised his head and annulled his power, and that at the very time and in the very conflict in which he hoped to destroy Him. And while Christ shall stand forth as the supreme Victor, he will not stand alone, for "the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly" (Romans 16. 20). Such is the promise to the whole family of God. Thus we see the way of victory and how we may be more than conquerors through Him who has conquered and who has loved us.

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Peter gained strength by learning that he had none at all. When he trusted himself he sank, when he relied wholly on the Lord Jesus he stood firm.

The will of God is as the force of a great river. To sail with it is strength; to strive against it is weakness.

## STUDIES IN THE LIFE OF JOSEPH, No. 3. R. McCallum.

IT has been said that the true statesman is the man who foresees the direction in which God is moving and becomes a co-operator with Him in the realization of the divine intentions. So clearly had Joseph divined the purpose of God that Pharaoh immediately recognised him as "A man in whom the Spirit of God is" and declared, "For as much as God hath showed thee all this, there is none so discreet and wise as thou art. Thou shalt be over my house and according unto thy word shall my people be ruled: only on the throne will I be greater than thou. And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, See, I have set thee over all the land of Egypt." This confidence was completely justified. His discreet administration of affairs during the seven years of plenty, when he appointed officers to take up one fifth part of the land of Egypt, the food of the fields which was around a city being laid up in the same, showed his capacity for delegating work. The answer of the King to those who cried for bread when all the land was famished "Go unto Joseph; what he saith to you do" showed how completely he had personal control of the situation. Again let it be emphasized that the secret of Joseph's success was something much deeper than a forceful character or a magnetic personality. How often do we see men of a blustering, bullying, driving, unlovable disposition becoming organisers in the affairs of the world. But behind Joseph's greatness there was that character which found its explanation in his relationship to God, so that in circumstances that would have gone to the head of most men like strong wine, he maintained a spirit of humility, amiability and ten-

der affection as the sequel shows. May we covet such greatness and in all that our hands find to do may there be the stamp of consecrated ability!

Before the years of famine came, two sons were born to Joseph. The firstborn was named Manasseh "For God," said he, "hath made me forget all my toil and all my father's house." The second, he named Ephraim, "For God hath caused me to be fruitful in the land of my affliction."

The reason for the choice of name of his firstborn has been a difficulty to some. Joseph, we have asserted, was the embodiment of filial piety, and that he should rejoice in banishing all thought of his father's house seems at utter variance with his disposition. But clearly, the name of his firstborn reveals that his thoughts had in the past ever gravitated to the old home. The conjuring up of the family circle had however been inevitably accompanied by the pain of severance and absence, and now in his new found joy the sense of loss is swallowed up, and in his new activities administrative and domestic, he rejoices that the sore of past years will find healing. Moreover, there is a predictive aspect which is illuminating and comforting for those who love their Lord. The birth of the Church may be taken as typically set forth in the birth of Manasseh, and in the joy of this, the sorrows of rejection by His brethren, degradation and deepest suffering endured at the hands of those He came to save, have been forgotten. There will, however, be a second birth when the Lord will bring to pass the words of Jeremiah the prophet, "Is Ephraim my dear

son? Is he a pleasant child? for since I spake against him, I do earnestly remember him still; therefore my bowels are troubled for him. I will surely have mercy upon him, saith the Lord." Then will be fulfilled the prophecy contained in the name Ephraim "double fruit," and the Lord will rejoice over His earthly heritage and with His whole heart will He bring upon them all the good that He has promised them.

God's time for fulfilling the promises given to Joseph by dreams was fast drawing near; for in saving Egypt his predicted greatness among his brethren was to be achieved. The famine was affecting other lands, indeed it "was over all the face of the earth" and "waxed sore" in the land of Canaan. "Now when Jacob saw that there was corn in Egypt, Jacob said unto his sons, why do ye look one upon another?" and here we enter upon one of the most interesting and affecting scenes in the Old Testament Scriptures.

Joseph's brethren came down at the first visit and when they entered the presence of the Governor seeking bread "they bowed down themselves before him with their faces to the earth." How vividly must his early dreams have come to Joseph's mind at that moment. Some may wonder how it was that Joseph should immediately recognise his brethren and yet he should be unknown to them. Two explanations suffice. They were of such an age at the time of separation from Joseph as not to be greatly altered in appearance by the intervening lapse of years: he had been a mere stripling of 17, and we know what a change can take place between 17 years and 37. Moreover, they were appearing in the character in which he had

always known them, that of shepherds. On his part the shepherd boy had become Prime Minister of Egypt. The feelings of Joseph at this time are not revealed upon the surface of the narrative. Careful reading will show however, that an inquiry preceded his apparently harsh treatment of his brethren in which he elicited that their father was still alive and during which they made mention of their younger brother. His subsequent conduct is to test their attitude to Benjamin, and unless this is seen Joseph will be completely misunderstood. He charges them with being spies come to spy the nakedness of the land. Egypt was always exposed to invasion from the East, and during the prevailing famine the comparative immunity of Egypt from its dire effects made it more than ever a desirable object of attack. By way of substantiating the purity of their intentions they declare that they are twelve brethren, "One is not, and one is this day with our father," and Joseph immediately proposes a test of their honesty. They must bring down their younger brother. In reality he is anxious to assure himself that Benjamin has not been the victim of foul play and to ensure the success of his scheme he arranges that one shall be bound and cast into prison to await their return. This harsh and apparently unjustifiable treatment had the effect of reaching their consciences, for it brought to mind their own guilty past. "And they said one to another, we are verily guilty concerning our brother, in that we saw the anguish of his soul when he besought us and we would not hear: therefore is this distress come upon us." As Joseph had spoken to them through an interpreter, they assumed that he did not understand them.

The true attitude of Joseph towards them is revealed in the verse, "And he turned himself about from them, and wept." But turning to them again, he took Simeon, who, as we have already suggested, in all probability bound Joseph when he was put into the pit, and bound him before their eyes. And so the nine departed with their sacks full and their money restored in their sacks, while Simeon was held in ward to ensure their return with Benjamin. "And it came to pass, as they emptied their sacks, that behold every man's bundle of money was in his sack; and when both they and their father saw the bundles of money, they were afraid." "And Jacob their father said unto them, Me have ye bereaved of my children. Joseph is not, and Simeon is not, and ye will take Benjamin away; all these things are against me." There seems to be the strong suspicion on Jacob's part that his sons had accomplished Joseph's death in spite of all they had told him. Here again we have an exhibition of the faithlessness of Jacob. "All these things are against me." God's providence was at work for his greatest good—Joseph was not dead, Simeon was safe, Benjamin would be preserved and he himself would yet see God's goodness and praise Him for it.

When Jacob proposes that they should go again to Egypt he is reminded that no good purpose can be served by such a visit unless the conditions laid down by the Governor be observed, "Ye shall not see my face except your brother be with you," had been his emphatic declaration. Like a flash there beams forth the old Jacob in his character of deceiver, "Wherefore dealt ye so ill with me as to tell the man

whether ye had yet a brother?" Driven by necessity, however, Jacob is at last compelled to let them go a second time to Egypt. He pays little heed to the offers of Judah to stand surety for Benjamin, but again, true to his nature as revealed throughout his whole life-story, he relies upon his own devices and advises them to take double money in their hand in addition to the money restored in their sacks, and gifts of fruit, balm, honey, spices, myrrh, nuts and almonds to placate the Governor. "And the men took that present, and went down to Egypt and stood before Joseph. And when Joseph saw Benjamin with them, he said to the ruler of his house, Bring these men home and slay and make ready; for these men shall dine with me at noon." Again they did obeisance, presenting to him the gifts which they had brought, and they bowed themselves to the earth. Joseph's intense personal interest is disguised by his kindly solicitude in their affairs as he enquires, "Is your father well, the old man of whom ye spake? Is he yet alive? His emotion as he looked upon his younger brother was too strong to suppress: "His bowels did yearn upon his brother, and he sought where to weep, and entered into his chamber and wept there." Coming before them again, master of himself, he orders bread to be set before them. The Egyptians present dine by themselves, Joseph by himself and his brethren, every man according to his age, "the eldest according to his birthright, "the youngest according to his youth," so that the men marvelled. As a mark of special favour Benjamin was given five times as much as the others, and as the others, doubtless received liberal portions, Benjamin's ration appears not merely disconcerting but

positively alarming. The prodigality of food bestowed upon the individual thus signally honoured was with a view to the distribution to his friends, and the motive behind it in this case was not merely special love for Benjamin, but it provided a test as to how the ten were disposed to their youngest brother to whom the preference had been shown. It would appear that they passed this test but Joseph had a more severe one awaiting them. As soon as morning light broke they departed for home, their asses being laden with corn. But before they had proceeded far from the city a steward pursued them, and having overtaken them accused them of having stolen the divining cup with which his master divined. Justly repudiating such a charge and indignant that such base ingratitude for the kindnesses received could have been believed of them, they agree that whoever is guilty—if guilt be substantiated—should die, and that justly. To their horror the cup was found in Benjamin's sack. They could not doubt their eyes and apparently they believed that Benjamin was guilty, for Judah said to Joseph, "What shall we say unto my lord? What shall we speak? or how shall we clear ourselves? God hath found out the iniquity of thy servants." The offer is made to them to return in peace. Benjamin will not be killed but retained as a servant. If they do not acquiesce in this proposal they are changed indeed. How changed they are is seen by Judah's noble offer to remain a bondsman instead of Benjamin. In pleading for his young brother Judah unwittingly touches the tenderest string in Joseph's heart, "My lord asked his servants, saying, *Have ye a father or a brother?* And we said unto my lord, *we have a father, an old*

man, and a child of his old age . . . and *his father loveth him.*" "We said unto my lord, The lad cannot leave *his father*, for if he should *his father* would die."

At the oft repeated mention of his father in such affectionate terms Joseph could no longer refrain himself. Every other having gone out of their presence Joseph made himself known unto his brethren, and wept aloud so that the Egyptians and the house of Pharaoh heard. Again he enquires after his father, "Doth *my father* yet live?" Now for the first time their crime is mentioned, but it is to themselves alone and in the hearing of none others "Now therefore, be not grieved nor angry with yourselves that ye sold me thither, for God did send me before you to preserve life." Not one word had he said to others. This is made clear by the glad reception that was given to his brethren by the Egyptians when they said, "Joseph's brethren are come." He had so completely overcome all feeling of hatred or desire for revenge that he manifested only pure love towards them and saw in all that had transpired the working of Almighty God, not merely for his own good but also for theirs.

Typically this section shows us Christ upon the throne, the Giver of bread to a needy world. The despised and rejected One is the passport to favour and He who was set at nought by His brethren is the only Saviour for a starving world. The narrative discloses a universal misery with one and only one competent to remove the affliction. There is bread enough and to spare, and there is heavenly manna for the soul, but Jesus alone is the dispenser thereof. The granaries of Egypt might be exhausted

of their supplies, but in Christ the resources are inexhaustible. The Egyptians had to buy; we receive all without money and without price. Those who perish, starve because they will not take.

Notice too that it is after the Gentile bride becomes associated with Joseph on the throne of power that Joseph's brethren begin to experience their trials. The tribulation for Israel will come in after the Church has been exalted on high.

When our Lord comes the second time His ancient people will know and own Him, "And they shall look upon Him whom they pierced." We have seen how tender was the interview when Joseph revealed himself to them upon the occasion of their second visit, and we know that repentant Judah shall bow with tears upon the cheeks before Him who was crucified. Then shall they be moan the crime and folly of the Cross; then shall He comfort them and assure them of His love.

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## The Evangelist.

**T**HERE are vacancies in the heart of Christ, and the evangelist is gifted by Christ to go out and seek the lost ones to fill them. He starts from the heart of Christ and brings the lost pieces to where the rest are. He knows what a shelter the heart of Christ is, how it loves and cares for them; he knows what that heart is, and goes out and seeks the lost, because the Lord came to seek the lost. He searches through all the dust here looking for the silver pieces, but where does he put them? Surely he knows the place he comes from, and knows the delight there will be in heaven as the lost are found. Not merely the delight in the lost one's soul, but delight in the heart of Christ and the heart of God and before the angels.

If I am occupied with the heart of Christ, I am occupied with the circle of interests in which that heart works.

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## The Word for To-day.

Hearken, ye who love the Lord,  
 Hearken to His wondrous word;  
     Light for the darkest day;  
 Behold the gathered two or three  
 Shall have their centre sure in Me,  
     Strength for the weariest way!

Faith doth My presence still command,  
 Among the gathered I will stand,  
     To lighten all the way;  
 Where two or three are gathered, there  
 My joy will be the place to share  
     Until my own full day!

## THE FELLOWSHIP OF GOD'S SON.

James Green.

*"God is faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of His Son Christ Jesus our Lord"* (1 Cor. 1. 9).

THIS oft-quoted word might well be printed in capital letters for it is to it that the following rebukes and exhortations are related. "God is faithful by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of His Son Jesus Christ our Lord." The first word turns our thoughts to One who changes not, the source of all good and who will infallibly accomplish the good pleasure of His will. Man may prove unfaithful, he may and does depart from the divine ideal set before him, he needs to be recalled to this again and again, but the faithfulness of God ever remains the resource of those who desire only His will. In Ezekiel's day when things were at their darkest and the people in captivity for their sins, the prophet was bidden to show the house of Jehovah's design to the people, that in the consideration of this, they might be ashamed of their iniquities. This was the first step towards their restoration, which being taken they might then have a clearer vision of that which God had never lost sight of, and might keep the whole form of the house, and all the ordinances thereof and do them, Ezek. 43. 10, 11. They were called to walk in the law of holiness, which finds its measure in the altar, which for us is the cross and all it implies. Hence in view of the Corinthian state, Paul determined to know nothing among them save Jesus Christ and Him crucified.

The Corinthians had forgotten that the cross is the expression of death and judgment upon the whole state and condition of man in flesh, hence they were allowing the flesh in its tendency to segregate into

party factions, around those who took the lead in schools of opinion. The action of the Spirit of God being superseded in this way by the human mind, see ch. 2; doctrines subversive to the truth were introduced, ch. 3; a place was sought in the world, ch. 4; and a low moral condition resulted, which alas did not become a cause for mourning, ch. 5. Added to this strife and contention amongst brethren, became a public scandal before the world, ch. 6. If such a state was to be remedied it could only be by a return to the cross, on which is based the call of God, both of which necessarily separate from that which is inconsistent therewith. But if God calls, it is that the purpose of His will shall be followed, and for the Christian this is expressed by "Called unto the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord." What then exactly is meant by this? Certainly it does not mean following self-constituted leaders, or the formation of sects and parties around such, even with the high sounding boast of being "Of Christ," for all this is surely carnal. But it is known by the recognition of the circle of love which the Holy Spirit has formed in the midst of a world of hate, an association of those who "Love out of a pure heart, and a good conscience and faith unfeigned" (1 Tim. 1. 5).

This circle exists in order to be a counterpart of the glory of Christ on high, a sphere where the Spirit should be free to draw hearts to the one supreme object of delight, the Son of the Father. It is the fellowship of the Father and the

Son, and in this joy is filled full. No one who sees the wonder and uniqueness of such a holy fellowship, could ever use the term for anything less than the whole circle of love composed of those who walk in the light as God is in the light, are cleansed from all sin by the blood of Jesus Christ His Son, and have fellowship one with another in the revelation and redemption that are in Him. Thus at once are swept away all sectarian thoughts and party zeal which have been so potent a weapon in the hands of Satan to frustrate the free action of the Spirit of God in knitting the saints together in the same love wherewith they have all been loved by Him who died for them. Parties and sects are perpetuated by names, and it is for this reason that the Apostle transfers as in a figure to himself and Apollos, the Corinthian divisions, which he will not title, ch. 4. 6. As the children of Israel were commanded in Deut. 12. 3, he wishes not only to hew down the works of men, but to destroy the names of them out of their place.

The fellowship of God's Son is not defined by a circumference like a fold; it stands related to a centre, unto which its individual component parts are held by the power of attraction. Therefore the nearer each is to the centre, the closer will be the nearness to each other. It is the fellowship of God's Son, hence therein is known all the revelation of Divine love and counsel, which find in the Son their purpose, object and end. Such a fellowship excludes all human thoughts and world principles, such as philosophy, the product of man's mind; ritualism, which has its spring in the desire to find something in which the flesh can boast before God; and the attempts

of the intellect of man to intrude into the realm of the unseen, which provides occasion for Satanic agents to exercise their evil and pernicious control. This fellowship on the contrary provides a sphere where the moral characteristics of Jesus are developed. It is His Spirit who maintains its unity, producing the fruit so marvellously manifest in His life, the perfect moral excellence of the Son of God, becoming the pattern and desire of those in whom His Spirit dwells. Further, this fellowship is a sphere which though formed on earth, is in contact and harmony with heaven, for it gives the place of honour and glory to Jesus the Christ. We enter but feebly into the majesty of this title. Regarding earthly dominion there is no greater name than Messiah which is called Christ, but what must be the supreme glory attaching to it in the heavenlies, in connection with Him who is made both Lord and Christ? All titles of angels, principalities and powers, emperors and kings, Pharaohs and Caesars, pale in presence of a majesty so transcendent. Above every name shines forth the glory of "The Christ." Surely our thoughts of the 'fellowship' will be greatly enhanced as we consider Him who condescends to make His presence known in the midst of His disciples on earth, before He is revealed from heaven in the glory of His power.

My reader, as you think of this you may be saying, Yes, how beautiful is such an ideal, but where can I find some concrete expression of a fellowship like this? Where can my soul find its rest, its joy in His presence where the blessedness of His banqueting house is known, and His saints sit down under His shadow with great delight. The

reply to such a question is found in His own words, "Where two or three are gathered together in My Name, there am I in the midst of them" (Matt. 18. 20). It is the practical recognition of the name of His Lordship, that abides as a gathering centre, in a day when all seek their own and not the things of Jesus Christ. The fellowship is where the Lord alone has place. It was by the living confession of the Lord that we found salvation, and it is by the marks of heart allegiance to Him as such, that those amongst whom He manifests Himself may be known. Not merely those who say 'Lord, Lord,' but with those who do His commandments. The Lordship of Christ is that for which we should be prepared to stand, cost what it may. Submission to any other authority in individual service or in the Christian circle is disloyalty to Himself, and to the Holy Scriptures which are given that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works (2 Tim. 3. 16, 17).

Such a course will run contrary to human ideas; it will involve reproach, but it will deliver from the world in its utmost guise. Calling on the name of the Lord out of a pure heart in the spiritual reality of a conscience that abides in the light, will ensure His support, and bring those who so seek Him into all the wealth of Divine grace which His presence affords. Such may be few in number, despised, and partakers of His rejection by a boastful profession, but they will be rich in the

faith that gives glory to God. Such will not be found in self assertion, or in the upholding of some select circle, but they will welcome all who call upon the Lord out of a pure heart, a heart that seeks the Lord alone, and they will receive one another not to the breaking of bread, the Supper of the Lord, for such reception is unknown in Scripture, but they will receive one another in Christian fellowship and holy intercourse to the glory of God. They will extend welcome to their hearts and homes to those who go forth from all else unto His name. To partake of the Supper together will then necessarily follow as the result of such happy communion, for that holy feast in remembrance of Him who died that He should gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad, is the privilege of those who have already received one another in His Name. The all important matter is to follow the Lord in love, with a good conscience, and faith unfeigned, with those who seek the same end. Fellowship in the truth with those who love the truth, is the thing upon which the Scriptures insist, of which fellowship the Supper then becomes the united expression, "For we being many are one bread, one body, for we are all partakers of that one bread" (1 Cor. 10. 17). Thus may we give joy to Him who has no greater joy than that His children walk in truth, and love one another as He gave us commandment. This is the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

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It is not our work that God wants first, but our wills. He can dispense with our work, but not with our wills. When we yield our wills to Him we yield all; when we withhold them we give nothing.

## ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS.

### The Church: What is it? (January issue.)

1. How can the church be called indivisible when it is apparently in fragments?
2. How can it be said to be impregnable when apparently it is a complete failure?
3. If all that was vital at Pentecost remains why are things apparently so feeble and is there any hope of recovery?
4. Explain further in what sense we are members of the body of Christ and how may we experience this unity with Him?
5. How can the church be finally without spot, when it has been so unfaithful to Christ, and those who form it so often defiled by the world and sin and so carnal in their ways?

Question 1.

Answer.

ONCE the deep significance of two expressions are understood, the perplexity of the oneness of the church, and the disunited condition of Christians, becomes less. In Matt. 16. 18, Christ said, "I WILL BUILD MY CHURCH." In 1 Cor. 3. 12 read, "IF ANY MAN BUILD." In each there is the foundation—"for other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ." The living stones *built up* a spiritual house—is that aspect of building done by our Lord alone—against it the gates of hades cannot prevail. Gates tell us of the authority and power of the unseen world of spiritual wickedness, and although for long centuries Satanic energies and ingenuity have sought to destroy the church, we are assured by the Lord Himself that He shall have it with Himself, 'a glorious church,' without spot or blemish! It is Thy work, Lord Jesus—blessed, divine, perfect!

The church, however, has another aspect, clearly defined in Scripture. As an organization, a divine organization, on earth, those who "Name the name of Christ," make a profession of Christ (either real or assumed). He holds responsible for the administration of the affairs of His society of Christians, the brotherhood (1 Peter 2. 17). To this end

two long letters of instructions were given by the Lord, First and Second Corinthians, outlining every detail, both of the constitution of His assembly, and giving instructions how the holy and happy exercises of all matters relating to collective service and worship should be fulfilled in the energy of the Holy Spirit, under His Headship, and in love. This is wherein *failure* has been written largely over the whole association of Christians on earth. Christ gives us His moral estimate of it all from the time when, although still with a united and fair exterior, the church left her first love, down through the ages until now, in pitiful complacent pride the association of professing Christians on earth say to their Lord:—"We are rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing"! In this wretched moral condition, the church as an organization exists to-day, in disunited and fragmentary denominations and parties, the spirit of which had commenced long ago. "It hath been declared . . . that there are contentions among you . . . for ye are yet carnal . . . there is among you envyings, and strife, and factions" (1 Cor. 1. 11-3. 3).

Question 2.

Answer.

AN answer to this is largely embodied in answering the first. There is a "twofoldness" in divine

truth, which runs in parallel lines, never crossing, never diverging, relating to almost every vital theme revealed in Scripture. God's Sovereignty and man's responsibility, for example. So with the church. As builded by Christ, it is indeed impregnable. She is, as such, the foundation and support—or pillar and ground—of the truth (1 Tim. 3. 15). But as witness to God in the sense of "keeping that which is committed unto thee," she has proved a failure indeed. So that in her last declined state Christ rejects utterly her profession of His Name, without the divine reality" (Rev. 3. 16). while every true saint of God will be presented faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy (Jude 24); that He might be seen outstanding above all the failure of the church as the Faithful and True Witness.

In spite of all the waywardness and failure of those men whom our Lord choose to be with Him withersoever He would go on earth, how blessed and encouraging it is to find Him giving them the credit of faithfulness in the end: "Ye are they who have continued with Me in My temptations, and I appoint unto you a kingdom, as My Father hath appointed unto Me" (Luke 22. 28). Even so with us to-day who are Christ's own—"kept by the power of God through faith unto deliverance, ready to be revealed in the last time" (1 Peter 1. 5).

Question 3.

Answer.

ALL that was vital in the beginning still remains. "God and the word of His grace" have not changed. God is eternally abiding, an ever present Help in every need. Christ's love abides and He loves

His church until the end. The Holy Spirit abides in and with each saint of God until all shall be safe in glory, and the church be found in her place in that "general assemblage" disclosed to us in Heb. 12. 22, 23, 24, with Christ the Centre of that throng!

The church on earth is composed of individual Christians, and unto each is given "gifts according to the measure of grace," but who has administered the same "as good stewards of the manifold grace of God"? (1 Peter 4. 10). "Without Me ye can do nothing" Christ told His own long ago, and it is just as true to-day, so that only as "abiding in Him" can we fulfil in any measure those wondrous graces manifested in the so-called "primitive church."

The resources of wisdom from on high have not become depleted, but we do not avail ourselves of them. Our dull ears are so slow to hear Christ's pleading appeal of these our times:—"Be zealous therefore, and repent." Such is His love in exercise toward us that He must reprove and chasten us in our unfaithfulness.

There is no hope for a *recovery unto the practices* of "the early days" as outlined in the Acts of the apostles. The last view we have of the church, as an association upon earth, ere Christ comes and takes out of the hour of the testing, is that of Rev. 3. 14 to the close. The next view we have of the same association, now deprived of "the salt and the light" of true saints, is that of Rev. 17 and 18. Ours is now the humble part to "endeavour to keep the unity of the Spirit in the uniting bond of peace (or peaceableness). It is not our Unity—it is divine, the Unity of the

Spirit—ours the part to live it out practically. Separation from evil—the accepted evils attached to the Name of Christ so abundant in Christendom to-day—being one of God's ways of keeping the Spirit's Unity—the "foundation" of God abiding secure, and our departing from iniquity are parallel lines of truth (2 Timothy 2. 19).

Answer.

Question 5.

THIS, too, is answered largely in the foregoing. Turning again to Ephesians 5, we read: "Christ also loved the church, and gave Himself for it; that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word." Positionally we are "In the heavenlies in Christ" (Eph. 2. 6); there are our Citizen interests (Phil. 3. 20); there is our Home (John 17. 24; 14. 1, 2, 3). We have been predestined to be conformed unto the image

(likeness in moral traits) of His Son. The sanctifying process now is a work of God, in spite of our unfaithfulness, defilement, and carnal ways. "The very God of peace, *sanctify you wholly*, and your whole spirit, soul and body *be preserved blameless* unto the Coming of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Thess. 5. 23).

"Though with a scornful wonder,  
Men see her sore opprest,  
By schisms rent asunder,  
By heresies distrest,  
Yet saints their watch are keeping,  
Their cry goes up—"How long?"  
And soon the night of weeping  
Shall be the morn of song.  
Mid toil and tribulation,  
And tumult of her war,  
She waits the consummation  
Of peace for evermore;  
Till with the vision glorious  
Her longing eyes are blest,  
And the great church victorious  
Shall be The Church at Rest!"

I am, through sovereign grace,  
your brother in Christ,

W. Hamilton.

I AM waiting in the midnight,  
In the storm and on the wave,  
Not for light, nor calm, nor haven,  
Though the winds and waters rave.  
'Tis for Thee, I wait, Lord Jesus!  
Light and port art Thou to me;  
Thou wondrous Sun of Glory,  
I wait—I wait for Thee.

I am waiting in the midnight,  
But my heart is in the light,  
Until faith's most wondrous secret  
Be unfolded into sight.  
What more? Thyself, for ever,  
This heart's repose to be!  
MY LORD—MY GOD—MY SAVIOUR!  
I WAIT—I WAIT FOR THEE.

Obedience goes a great deal further than following written directions. Christ kept the word indeed, but He kept the mind also, and we are responsible to keep both.

## THE SON OF GOD IS COME.

J. T. Mawson.

*It is our earnest desire that our readers, the young as well as the old, for we write for both, should be stimulated in their affections towards the Lord, and react to His great love in decided and intelligent devotion to Him and in the recognition of His desires and His rights. Too many who owe their hope of eternal glory to Him are sadly indifferent to His thoughts and to the PRESENT results of His coming into the world. This should not be so. Our prayer is that there may be a definite and widespread recovery to the truth that we endeavour to present in this paper.*

WE know that the Son of God is come." And no event in the history of mankind can move us like this; it commands our deepest interest, for *He came for us* and gave Himself for us, so great was His love. Our present peace of heart and our hope of eternal glory are the result to us of His coming. He would be a strange and self-centred Christian who could be indifferent as to how He came and the reception He received at His coming, and what He has gained for Himself by His coming. We have often turned with great delight to the opening chapter of John's Gospel, where in relation to His coming His many glories are declared. His glory had no beginning, for in Being He is eternal, and in the beginning He was there, the Word, by Whom all things were made. But He, the Supreme, the Creator, came into this world that He had made. Let the fact of who He is who came impress itself afresh on our souls. He came to dwell among men and reveal to them what God's feelings and desires for them were, and apart from Him God cannot be known, and let us consider well this great fact also. And so the first chapter of John reveals His many glories; it is an epitome of the whole Gospel and closes with the heavens open and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man.

We have exulted in that side of the chapter and will exult in it more and more as we see greater things in it than we have hitherto seen, but there is another side to it, and solemn statements occur in it, which when they strike us in their full force grieve and shock us. We are told in verse 10 that "*the world knew Him not,*" though He had made it; in verse 26, "*the Jews knew Him not,*" though He stood in their midst, the Messiah and King of that long-favoured people. And even John the Baptist had to confess, "*And I knew Him not*" (verse 31), and again, "*I knew Him not*" (verse 33). When the Son of God came, He was not welcomed by the world. He was unknown and a stranger in it. The world that owed its existence to Him did not know Him; the religionists who boasted in their knowledge of God did not know Him, and even John could not by any natural power that he possessed perceive who He was. He needed a revelation from heaven to enlighten him. These are solemn and searching facts.

This is an exposure indeed, and it explains verse 5 of our chapter. "*The light shineth in darkness, and the darkness comprehended it not.*" But if the light shone long enough and bright enough, would not the darkness yield to it and men recognise their God come down to them

full of grace and truth? Well, let us see; we pass on to chapter 3. 19 and read, "*And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.*" It is not said yet, they hated the light, though that was to come, but, they loved the darkness; they wanted God to remain far from them, for the knowledge of Him and their evil ways could not exist together; they felt this and they would not have God for they were determined to pursue their evil ways. But the light continued to shine in the uncomprehending darkness in all the words and works of Jesus. Take as an instance the case of the man at the Pool of Bethesda, who for 38 years had looked and longed for a man to help him, but had looked and longed in vain, for there was not one among all the multitude of priests and pharisees that paid any heed to his need—him the Lord raised up from his impotence on the Sabbath day to shew them in the city of their sanctuary and solemnities that there could be no sabbath, no day of rest, for His Father or for Him in the world where sin and suffering were; and again, in distant Galilee, when He fed the multitude with bread and fish, He desired them to understand that the compassions of God reached out to the utmost limits of the land, and that the poor and the hungry were His care.

What activities of grace were these in which God Himself was revealed! Did they move the world and its leaders? Yes; they moved them, but it was to anger and the determination to quench the light and to kill Him in whom it shone. They said, "Thou art a Samaritan, and hast a devil" (ch. 8. 48). They

took up stones to stone Him and said, "Thou blasphemest" (ch. 10), and they "took counsel together for to put Him to death" (ch. 11. 53). They hated the light. But as long as He was in the world He was the light of the world, and He continued to work the works of Him that sent Him while it was day, but the night was surely coming. So in chapter 12 He spoke His last words to the world and urged them to believe in the light while they had the light, that they might be the children of light, but it was all in vain, for though He had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not on Him, and He had to say—with what sorrow of heart who shall tell—"Now is the judgment of this world." It had been fully tested and it had shewn its disposition and temper under the test; it did not know the light; it could not appreciate it; it hated it, and was determined to be rid of it. There was no further hope for the world as the world; it loved the darkness, and its doom was sealed.

From chapter 13 to 17 He was alone with "His own" for a few brief hours, and when Judas, the traitor, had gone out into the night to join the forces of darkness that were combining to crush Him, He was able to disclose to them the deepest feelings of His heart, but that little while soon passed, and in chapter 18 His seclusion in the garden beyond the brook Cedron was broken upon by a band led by Judas and officers from the chief priest, who bound Him and led Him away to trial and suffering and death. Jew and Gentile, priests and rabble, Herod and Pilate, the whole world, Hebrew, Greek and Latin, were united at last; one purpose controlled them, and that purpose

was to cast the Son of God out of the world. And God withdrew His restraint and let them have their way, and "They took Jesus, and led Him away. And He bearing His cross, went forth into a place called the place of a skull; which is called in the Hebrew, Golgotha: where they crucified Him. . . And He said, It is finished: and He bowed His head and gave up the ghost. . . And he that saw it bare record, and his record is true.' What did he see? The Son of God dead upon a malefactor's cross! The Light of the world cast out! The One who had a right to every thing cut off with nothing! It was a triumph for the darkness that pervaded the world; and the prince of it tightened his shackles upon it; he was its god, and the whole world lay in his power. I am not forgetting the divine side of the cross, or the way that God gains His great victories, but that is not my subject now. Said Peter to the Jews, "Him . . . ye have taken, and with wicked hands have crucified and slain." Stephen said, "Ye have been the betrayers and murderers of the Just One," and Paul said, "The princes of this world . . . have crucified the Lord of glory." And these three men spake by the Holy Ghost. These are facts that none who would be faithful in Christ Jesus can ignore.

Consider the position. The Son of God lay in a tomb, and His few scattered followers wept and lamented, while the world that hated the light rejoiced. He, before whom every knee ought to have bowed, had been refused all His rights, His Name had been struck from the Royal pedigree and written upon the criminal roll of Jerusalem—and "who shall declare His generation"

—"for He was numbered with the transgressors." The world did not know that by that act, it had signed its own judgment warrant, and that as the world there could be nothing for it but judgment to come; but that was the fact, a fact that abides to-day in all its force, even though the long-suffering of God holds back the judgment, while He gathers out of the world a people for His Name.

But what of Him whom the world had rejected? Was He to have nothing as a result of His coming into it? Let us see. Of course death could not hold Him; "it was not possible that He should be holden of it." His disciples ought to have known that; it was strange that they did not, for the Scriptures foretold it. God would not suffer His Holy One to see corruption. He raised Him up, having loosed the pains of death. And then a marvellous work began. The Lord did not manifest Himself to the wicked and jubilant leaders of the people, and vindicate His Name and glory by their destruction; He revealed Himself to Mary, out of whom He had cast seven devils; He sought out Simon Peter, who had denied Him with oaths and curses; He went after two people of no account, who had lost all their faith and hope in Him, and decided that the best thing they could do was to return to the life they had lived before they met Him. And these labours of His on that resurrection day brought together ten men—there may have been more—and as they talked of Him, He stood in the midst of them, and shewed them His hands and His side. "THEN WERE THE DISCIPLES GLAD WHEN THEY SAW THE LORD."

Consider that group of men in that upper room; they were not great, or influential, or courageous, but the LORD stood in the midst of them, and they were glad to see Him and to have Him there. He was LORD indeed to them; they owned His rights and with joy yielded to Him the place of authority. There He had a circle which was "His own," in which His will was supreme; it was His assembly, in which His love could flow out upon His loved ones and find a response of gratitude and love in them. This then He had gained by His coming into the world: a company drawn out of it, and bound to Himself, not by any legal bonds as might obtain between a master and his servants, but by cords of love: "for having loved His own which were in the world, He loved them unto the end," and the wounds in His hands and side, which He showed them, were the ineffaceable evidence of that love which had suffered and survived even the death of the cross for them.

How great was the contrast between that company of men and the world outside that had utterly rejected their Lord! And here comes a question that should test us all. If we had been in Jerusalem that day, what company would we have chosen? Would we have been with the Christ-hating priests in the Temple, or with the careless multitude that would not have the light in the popular haunts, or with those disciples who were glad when they saw the Lord in that upper room? Surely every Christian heart will answer, with the disciples in the upper room, where Christ was welcomed, loved, adored. It should be a joy to all who would answer thus to know that they do belong to that

very company, and may even now be made glad by the presence of their Lord, for He has said, "Where two or three are gathered together unto My Name, there am I in the midst of them." But greater than their own joy should be the thought of His joy and the fact that in the world where He is still the rejected Christ, and where His rights are still refused, He may still find "His own" gathered together, gladly acknowledging His supremacy and yielding to Him His place as Lord.

Let us consider further the contrast between that company of disciples, who were the beginning of the Christian company, and the world as John's Gospel reveals it. We fear that it is very little understood and in consequence the Lord is robbed of His place and rights, and His own miss the joy and peace that a full and faithful yielding to Him gives. The Lord said to them concerning the world, "They have both seen and hated both Me and My Father" (15. 24); but of them He said, "The Father Himself loveth you because ye have loved Me" (ch. 16. 27). He told them that the world could not receive the Comforter, the Spirit of truth, but that He should be with them and dwell in them (ch. 14. 17). He told them that if they had been of the world the world would love them, but that they were not of the world, for He had chosen them **OUT OF THE WORLD**, therefore the world would hate them (ch. 15. 19). They heard Him in prayer to His Father speak of them as "the men which Thou gavest Me **OUT OF THE WORLD**" (ch. 17. 6), and "They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world" (verse 16). It is this "out of the world" character of the Christian

company that is so little appreciated and the result is a very feeble testimony to the world. Would to God that we understood the meaning of it better, and realized that we are in the world but not of it, to be kept from the evil that is in it, while we bear witness of Christ to it, and endeavour by the gospel to gather out of it souls for Him. It is a condemned world; the presence of the Holy Spirit demonstrates the fact that sin dominates it, for Christ has been cast out of it, and that the judgment of it is certain, that it must share the judgment of its prince, which is the devil (ch. 16. 8-11).

The Christian "you" stands out in contrast to "the world" in its preciousness to Christ. He calls them "My sheep" (ch. 10. 27), "My friends" (ch. 15. 14), "My brethren" (ch. 20. 17). And the wonderful epithets are for all who love Him; they may gather together in the joy of what they mean. They may lay the emphasis upon the possessive pronoun, that the Lord uses with such affection. They may go further and take up His words to His Father about them. "I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which Thou hast given Me, for they are Thine. And all Mine are Thine, and Thine are Mine; and I am glorified in them" (17. 9, 10). If any man love the world the love of the Father is not in him, but these are loved by the Father and the Son, and they are indwelt by the Holy Ghost. The Christian assembly gathered together

in the truth is where Father, Son and Holy Ghost delight to be, for it is where Christ, the beloved Son, is magnified and loved; it is the place of His joy. There are words full of typical meaning in Genesis 24. "And Isaac took Rebekah and she became his wife; and he loved her; and *Isaac was comforted after his mother's death.*" The Lord has found His comfort in His assembly. Unknown by the world, rejected by Israel, cast out and crucified, He, as the risen Isaac, has found a full compensation in His assembly. The prize is worth the price. But how much do we minister to His joy?

One further consideration. The company that welcomed the Lord on that resurrection day was a new company, indeed they were a new creation, for as God breathed into the nostrils of Adam in the beginning and he became a living soul, so did the Lord in His sovereign right breathe upon that company and impart it to His own life. And this new life, and His presence, and His undisputed will, and His everlasting, knowledge-surpassing love gave a character to that group of men, and invested them with a dignity that none had possessed since the beginning. This abides for us. It is maintained by Christ Himself, and by the Holy Ghost, and this is the truth to which the saints of God need to be recovered, and as they are recovered to it they will with one heart and one mouth glorify God, and take up the words of Thomas as they bow in the presence of the Lord, owning Him to be **THEIR LORD AND THEIR GOD.**

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"Who then is that faithful and wise steward, whom his Lord shall make ruler over His household, to give them their portion of meat in due season? Blessed is that servant, whom the Lord when He cometh shall find so doing."

## THE SON'S RIGHTS IN CREATION.

H. J. Vine.

*"Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son: in Whom we have redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins: Who is the image of the invisible God, the Firstborn of every creature: for by Him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by Him, and for Him"* (Colossians 1. 12-16).

**T**HOSE who have redemption in the Son, are enabled by the Spirit, to appreciate something of the greatness of His rights. The Father has set us free from the authority of darkness, and translated us into the kingdom of THE SON OF HIS LOVE (see, N. Trans. and Scofield's Marg.), having made us meet to partake of the portion of the saints in light. Both redemption and the forgiveness of sins are ours in the Son of the Father's love, and it is our joy and privilege to behold the glory and the rights of Him in whom we are so richly blessed.

It should be noted carefully that the right reading in verse 14 very arrestingly omits His atoning work. It fixes our gladdened gaze upon the Son Himself alone. So it reads, "IN WHOM we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins" (N. T.). "through His blood" is not there; as it is in Ephesians 1. thus here the personal glory of THE SON shines resplendent, lighting up this whole passage. From eternity to eternity it is THE SON who fills the vision. He is seen to be the Creator, therefore the rights of pre-eminence in creation are His; and He will take them as Man according to divine counsels. They are His, however, because He, the Son, is the Creator. Meanwhile He is the Revealer as

well as the Redeemer; He is the risen Head also of the assembly and the Reconciler; but it is the Son Himself who thus embraces all. "He is before all"; and all is gloriously filled by Him; and all is brought to subsist together by Him. How immense it all is! How great and glorious is the Son of the Father's love!

The comments of J. N. Darby in *The Synopsis* have helped much, and we give them here for the help of others. This truth had so impressed the writer, that it will be observed he leaves his usual way of writing, and expresses his own deep appreciation of this "*admirable truth.*"

He writes, "Thus the Creator, when He takes a place in creation, is necessarily its Head. He has not yet made good His rights, because in grace He would accomplish redemption. We are speaking of His rights—rights which faith recognizes.

"He is then the image of the invisible God, and, when He takes His place in it, the Firstborn of all creation. The reason of this is worthy of our attention—simple, yet marvellous: He created it. It was in the Person of the Son that God acted, when by His power He created all things, whether in heaven

or in earth, visible and invisible. All that is great and exalted is but the work of His hand; all has been created by Him (the Son) and for Him. Thus when He takes possession of it, He takes it as His inheritance by right. Wonderful truth, that He who has redeemed us, who made Himself man, one of us as to nature, in order to do so, is the Creator. But such is the truth.

"In connection with this admirable truth, it was a part of God's counsels that man should have dominion over all the works of His hands. Thus Christ, as Man, has it by right, and will take possession of it in fact. This part of the truth of which we are speaking is treated in Hebrews 2. . . I introduce it here merely that we may understand the circumstances under which the Son takes possession. The Spirit speaks of the One who is Man, but the One who is at the same time Creator of all things, the Son of God. They were created by Him, they were necessarily then created for Him.

"The Son is here presented to us as Creator, not to the exclusion of the Father's power, nor of the operation of the Spirit. They are one, but it is the Son who is here set before us. In John 1. it is under the name of Son, that He, who is also the Word, is revealed to us. . . He is also the Son of God; and, in particular, the Son of the Father. . . Inasmuch as born in this world by the operation of God through the Holy Ghost, He is the Son of God. But this is in time, when creation is already the scene of the manifestation of the ways and counsels of God. But *the Son is also the name of the proper relationship of His glorious Person to the Father before the world was*

(italics ours). It is in this character that He created all things. The Son is to be glorified even as the Father. . . .

"In the Epistle to the Colossians that which is set before us is the proper glory of His Person as Son before the world was. HE IS THE CREATOR AS SON (caps ours). It is important to observe this" (p. 15).

The rights of "Firstborn of all creation," of pre-eminence in all things, cannot therefore be questioned as belonging to Him. Both rightly and eternally those rights belong to the Son.

He took part however in time's history; and was "seen and heard." Our present lessons are to be learned here. "Hear Him," said God the Father. "Learn of Me" He Himself said. Psalm 2. speaks of Him "begotten" in time in *Israel*; also as "THE SON" to *Gentiles*. This is the one mention of that Name—"the Son"—in the Old Testament. It reads, "And now, O Kings, be wise, be admonished, ye judges of the earth. Serve Jehovah with fear, and rejoice with trembling. KISS THE SON, lest He be angry, and ye perish from the way, though His anger burn but a little. Blessed are all who have put their trust in Him" (N.T.). Mark, this is said to *Gentiles*, where the riches of the mystery have been shown (Col. 1. 27). Coming in time—to *Israel*—we read in verse 7, "Jehovah hath said unto Me, Thou art My Son; this day have I begotten Thee." Acts 13, Heb. 1 and 5, 5 show that salvation, kingship and priesthood were in view specially.

Now we are told, "He that believes on THE SON has life eternal, and he that is not subject to THE SON shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him" (John 3. 36, N.T.). True are the words, "*Blessed are all who have put their trust in Him.*"

who "created all" and is "before all"; and to learn of Him who came here in lowly grace; to rejoice in Him who is now the exalted Head of the body, the assembly; knowing that the "first place"—"the pre-eminence"—"in all things" is His; while we reverently recognize His glorious rights in creation.

We do well to rejoice in Him

## Alone with the Lord.

**M**ANY a Christian's activity is the grave of his spiritual life.

It was the man that was busy here and there that lost what had been entrusted to his keeping (1 Kings 20. 44). And if we are to keep any good gift that has been committed to us, and cherish it and develop it, it must be done in secret with the Lord who has given it to us.

What use can hands be that are full of work if the heart is empty of the Master's love and words? It is in secret with Him that the heart is filled; then the mouth will speak and the hands work.

Our bodies could better thrive without nourishment than we could grow strong and keep fresh in our service for the Lord apart from secret intercourse with Him.

No number of meetings, no fellowship with Christian friends, no amount of activity will sustain us; we must find our spiritual support by direct dealings with God in secret.

## Waiting on the Lord.

It is *they that wait upon the Lord*, that change their strength; *they mount up with wings as eagles*, i.e., they rise by faith into the enjoyment of their heavenly blessings; *they run and are not weary*, i.e., they joyfully carry their Master's messages to whomsoever He may send them: *they walk and do not faint*, i.e., they tread with endurance their pilgrim way that ends in glory.

Don't aim at what is spectacular, better by far relinquish some of the activities of life that lose the tone and temper of heart which come from sitting at the Saviour's feet and holding communion with Him.

Luther used to say, when he had an exceptionally full day before him, "I must spend more time in waiting on the Lord." He was too wise a man and too busy to hurry. Yes, hurry and worry are first cousins, but waiting on the Lord and power go together.

## RICHES IN GLORY.

T. Oliver.

THE term "glory" has a varying significance in Scripture according to the context in which it is found. For example, the apostle gloried in his infirmities, i.e., he tested their value, and as a consequence made his boast in them, and thus rejoiced; and similarly, in the summary of the "Pilgrim's Progress" in the 5th chapter of Romans, he associates himself with others who glory or rejoice in tribulations. Then there is the glory of man, which denotes all the pomp and tinsel associated with the display of the results of human achievement, and this is described in Scripture as the "flower of grass which withereth and falleth away."

The glory of God in creation is of a different order, and speaks of the distinctive character of His handiwork. Then even the glory of God has different bearings according to its context. This is a subject which transcends human comprehension, not to speak of human expression, and it is essentially the subject of the Holy Spirit's teaching. Spiritual matters are communicated by spiritual means, and they are compared by spiritual standards, but since the only vehicle of communication of human thought is by "words," so like those who feared the Lord at the close of the last dispensation, we are found speaking often one to another of our essential interests, viz. the precious things of heaven.

Since the Scriptures abound in references to God's handiwork in the material creation, we do well to pay attention to their distinctive character and magnitude. Geographers tell us of the size and wonderful physical

features of the earth, which is a spheroid of 8,000 miles diameter, containing 6,000 trillion tons of matter and we have only direct knowledge of a few miles thickness of its crust or exterior layers, and much of its surface has not been explored. It may be instructive to consider a series of magnitudes in the physical creation. A rain-drop is a sphere of about one-eighth of an inch diameter, and yet its physical characteristics are no less wonderful than those of the earth.

Physicists tell us that the ratio of sizes between the ultimate atom of its constitution and the rain-drop is similar to the ratio of size between the rain-drop and the earth. While the atom itself is no longer the hard, indivisible point conceived in the minds of 19th century scientists, but is believed to be a system analogous to the solar system in which negatively charged electrons circulate round positively charged protons in marvellous adjustment.

Again, in the ultra-megascopic sphere, the distinctive features of God's creation are no less marvellous than in the afore-mentioned ultra-microscopic spheres. The earth is a mere speck in the solar system, the outpost of which is over sixty times the distance of the earth from the sun, which, nevertheless, controls every member of its system according to an exact uniformity; but the solar system itself is also a mere speck in the immensity of space. Every star in the bespangled firmament is a sun with possibly attendant satellites.

There are about six thousand stars visible to the naked eye, but millions

have been brought into evidence by the aid of the telescope, and moreover, stars have been photographed which are beyond the power of the telescope to reveal, and the star-maps and catalogues record the existence of at least one hundred millions, and each star is separated from each other by distances of inconceivable magnitude.

The nearest star is at such a distance from the solar system that it takes light three and a half years to come therefrom, and light travels at the great velocity of 186,000 miles per second. Thus undoubtedly the more distant stars are seen as they were hundreds of years ago, because the light has been so long on the way. Someone has illustrated the magnitude by putting a speck in the midst of Madrid to represent a star, another in Oslo, in the north, and a third in Bukharest in the east. Recognising all the space between the suburbs of these cities as empty, we get some idea of the prophetic reference in the 34th chapter of Isaiah, "He shall stretch out upon it the line of confusion and the stones of emptiness." Yet the last expression is suggestive. Space is completely filled with a subtle medium which has been styled the luminiferous ether, as it has the power of transmitting light, although it differs from ordinary matter as it does not affect our senses and thus may be described as empty relative to matter which can be weighed in a balance. Yet physical discoveries would suggest that the emptiness contains the essential stuff or stones out of which the universe has been built. The things which are seen were not made of things which do appear (Heb. 11. 3). Albeit the initial framing of the universe was by the Word of God.

With such conceptions in view we understand the reference in Isaiah chapter 40, that the nations are as a drop of a bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the balance, and He has meted out heaven with the span; yet the apostle in concluding his paean of joy to the Philippians says, "My God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus" not "in creation," as might have been concluded from the foregoing recital of the magnitude of His operations therein. The acme of God's glory is in Christ Jesus. Great as the glory of God in creation undoubtedly is, it is strictly limited in scope and duration, and will ultimately be displaced by a new universe with righteousness permeating its entire fabric. Material creation cannot contain the things of the Spirit ("things of Mine" John 16. 14-16).

To the soul delivered from the thralldom of sin there is opened up a new sphere of objects, the centre and periphery of which 'is in Christ Jesus. That sphere is beyond responsibility and experience altogether. The Ephesian epistle, which deals markedly with what is in Christ Jesus, occupies us with the sphere as the result of what God planned for His own glory in eternity, before there was either responsibility or experience. "He has chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world" (Eph. 1. 4). As seen in the perfection of Christ "holy and without blame before Him in love."

According to the revelation in Ephesians, we have been brought unto both Christ's place and relationship. From the text in the foregoing paragraph we have stated how God saw us in the counsels of His own love. But the scripture goes on to say

that we have redemption also in Christ, because that provided the righteous basis for the accomplishment of God's purpose. Moreover, there is an inheritance suited to the dignity of His calling. When the dispensations of time have run their course, He will head up all things in heaven and on earth in Christ, who has been the object of all His ways in the dispensations. In Christ, we have been made heirs of the whole inheritance of glory, having been predestinated to it "according to the purpose of Him who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will."

To complete the glorious position and outlook of the Christian, he is sealed with the Holy Ghost, the Holy Spirit of promise, the earnest of our inheritance, i.e., a qualitative sample of the glory to come. So that the Holy Spirit's taking up

residence in us and with us is evidence that we are invested with an inner glory no less real although unseen and which enables us to be in the sphere of responsibility in measure as a continuation of Christ. His life was taken from the earth, but His generation is being declared in the Spirit's day. So that although the sphere "in Christ Jesus" is relative to what is outside responsibility, there is a definite reflection in our ways here, as the Holy Spirit makes progress in forming Christ in our souls. People will then take knowledge of us (as they did of the apostles in the record of Acts 4) that we have been with Jesus. The consummation of all His ways with us will be in the day of display when the redemption glory in which grace has placed us will transcend every possible glory in the realm of matter and energy.

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## For those who preach.

**I**F physical suffering moves us to the assistance of its victim, and we are willing in fire and flood to endanger our lives to save our fellows, how much more earnest should we be to save their souls which we say we believe are in danger of being lost for ever! How can any lips be cold that have to tell of the awful doom of the impenitent, and of the amazing stoop of Incarnate Love by which even the worst of sinners may be lifted up to the very home of God.

We must feel intensely and preach intensely if we are to make the truth effective in moving others, and only those who are in dead earnest will succeed.

A university may make a man a Master of Arts or Doctor of Divinity, but it cannot make him a soul winner or bestow upon him a degree for zeal; neither culture nor education can give that without which every preacher is a failure. These are the gift of Christ. They can only be gained in nearness to Him. "Come ye after Me," He said, "and I will make you fishers of men."

## STUDIES IN THE LIFE OF JOSEPH. No. 4. R. McCallum.

ACCOMPANIED by wagons and laden with gifts the brethren of Joseph returned to Canaan, commissioned to bear glad tidings to their aged father. How glorious the message (1) Joseph lives, (2) He is the exalted one, (3) He bids Jacob and all of them welcome to himself. If any should have a lurking suspicion that to leave Canaan is to renounce all, then Joseph's reassuring word is "Regard not the stuff, for the good of all the land of Egypt is yours." Ours is the privilege to proclaim like tidings of great joy. Christ *lives!* True He died, but He rose and lives the *exalted One*, a Prince and a Saviour who is willing to receive all who come to Him.

The words of Joseph addressed to his brethren as they set out may seem strange at first sight, but they are instructive, "See that ye fall not out by the way," said he. He knew them well, and the power of evil, the sluice gates of which are often opened by a word of foolish recrimination spoken at the very moment of newly realized joy and blessing. The words should come as a wholesome admonition to us to-day. At the very moment when more than ever before we should be recognising the essential unity of those who are brethren in Christ, and when commissioned to be the bearers of a gracious invitation to others, let us not be so occupied with past delinquencies in others that in the emphasis of these we shall fall out with each other in the way and our testimony to the world be marred and nullified. The secret of preserving the unity that becomes those who are brethren, clearly lies in rejoicing in the gracious manifestation of Him who once rejected by us is

now our exalted and acknowledged Lord, and in obedience to His precepts.

Their safe arrival must have gladdened the heart of Jacob. All that he had hoped for was clearly achieved. Simeon was there again and his beloved Benjamin had returned. Provisions were plentiful and he had looked for nothing more. What then must have been his surprise when he was assured "Joseph is yet alive, and is Governor over all the land of Egypt." The message itself however, in spite of its jubilant delivery, did not suffice for the aged sceptic, who had deceived and had been deceived too often in life to be marked by childlike receptivity, but who was greatly influenced by material and tangible evidences. For him seeing was believing. "And when he saw the waggons which Joseph had sent to carry him, the spirit of Jacob their father revived, and *Israel* said, "It is enough, Joseph my son is yet alive; I will go and see him before I die." The change in name is significant. Jacob again becomes *Israel*; doubt gives place to confident trust.

It demanded a virile faith to leave Canaan and to go into Egypt. This was without doubt the land which God had promised to him and to his fathers. He was now an old man, and Canaan had for him intimate and tender associations. Down to Egypt had been for Abraham and for Isaac the path of mere human resource, and had spelt disaster. On his way Jacob had halted at Beersheba and offered sacrifices to the God of his father Isaac. God revealed Himself as the *Mighty One*, the God of his father, and

gave him a fourfold promise. (1) "I will there make of thee a great nation," (2) "I will go down with thee," (3) "I will surely bring thee up again," and (4) "Joseph shall put his hand on thine eyes." Thus did God affirm that the things which Jacob had declared were all against him were under the government of God really for him. In spite of our doubts, dismay, dejection, God moves on in infinite love fulfilling His purposes, but how much anxious and devitalising care we would be spared if we learned from what has been written for our admonition the lesson of repose in God. The promise, "I will surely bring thee up again," might seem to have miscarried, but was literally fulfilled in his body being carried up and buried in the cave of the field of Machpelah. Doubtless it was actually to be interpreted more widely in the promise fulfilled in his seed.

In Egypt under Joseph's care they were guaranteed peace, protection, and plenty, and in the seclusion of Goshen, segregated from the baneful influences of Canaan, which threatened not merely the morality but the very existence of a people so few in number, God was providing the right environment for the fulfilment of His promise, "I will there make thee a great nation." Joseph's determination to emphasize that his brethren were shepherds and his insistence that they should declare themselves to have been keepers of cattle from their youth up in spite of the fact that "Every shepherd is an abomination to the Egyptians," was doubtless in God's plan for the imposition of a severe line of demarcation between His people and the Egyptians, so that genuine separation might be secured. In spite of the fact that "every shepherd is

an abomination unto the Egyptians," the Pharaoh of that day welcomed the father and brethren of Joseph. This fits in well with the generally accepted chronology which places Joseph in the reign of one of the last Shepherd-Kings of Hyksos. These kings originally entered as conquerors from Asia. They were responsible for the introduction of the horse and chariot into Egypt, and it is interesting to note that there is no mention of the horse or chariot in Biblical history until we reach the story of Joseph. Here again we have a trivial detail, the accuracy of which affords strong evidence that the record was not written up centuries later as modern critics would have us believe.

The sixty-six souls which came out of his loins accompanied Jacob into Egypt. Joseph and his two sons and Jacob himself made seventy—"the house of Jacob." Ephraim and Manasseh, the sons of Joseph, although born in Egypt, are reckoned as coming into Egypt in the loins of their father, even as Levi is said to have paid tithes to Melchisedek (Heb. 7. 9). The seventy-five mentioned in Acts 7. 14, as going down to Egypt, must be understood to include the wives of Jacob's sons who went with them. Now Judah's wife was dead (Gen. 638. 12) and we may infer that Simeon's was dead also (Gen. 46. 10). At any rate nine others remained, which added to the 66 would give a total of 75—"all his kindred." There is no discrepancy when the distinctions implied in the Scriptural language used are observed.

Joseph's observance of the sanctity of family relationship is peculiarly charming. We can well

understand that his ingenuous simplicity in introducing his bucolic brethren and his unsophisticated father to Pharaoh, was affording an opportunity to Egyptian courtiers to turn the lip of contempt at his humble origin, and to express indignant surprise that one with such unpretentious antecedents should be exercising such power in Egypt. But Joseph's love for his father and his brethren did not falter, and it is good for us all to remember that "in the maintenance and the furtherance of family life and love will be found one of the channels of blessing to the world."

The venerable Jacob standing before Pharaoh presents a picture of rare dignity. Throughout his long pilgrimage he vacillated between faith and fear, but before this great ruler he stands in the conscious sense of the exalted position he holds in the divine economy. Although receiving a great favour from this earthly monarch, he pronounced a blessing upon him, and truly the less is blessed of the greater. Yet while there is elevated dignity, there is no assumption of superiority nor arrogation of secular authority; no distasteful condescension which but genders resentment. There is that simplicity of grace however, which enabled him to function as a channel of blessing, and to accept a God-given opportunity for conferring a benediction. And such is ever the rôle of a godly people amongst an ungodly. Not the assertion of temporal authority but the bestowal of blessing in the spirit of meekness and of godly fear.

"And Joseph made it a law over the land of Egypt until this day that Pharaoh should have the fifth part." This was, as we know from

an earlier chapter, the precise fraction "taken up" in the years of plenty before the famine began. It was then an arrangement entered into with the proprietors to ensure the existence of the people, and having worked, such a contribution was now made obligatory so that an accidental failure of harvest might be provided against. It consolidated in a most notable way the powers of the king, and if to any in our day the arrangement seems harsh and overbearingly autocratic, let him remember that to the Egyptians themselves it appeared eminently reasonable. They said, "Thou hast saved our lives; let us find grace in the sight of my lord, and we will be Pharaoh's servants." Settled in Goshen the children of Israel entered upon a period of prosperity and of phenomenal numerical expansion; they "grew and multiplied exceedingly." Jacob lived in the land seventeen years before dying. In anticipating his death both the faith and fear which manifested themselves so often in life are evident again; faith inasmuch as he chose to be buried in Canaan, having the assurance in his heart that God would give the land to his seed; fear in that he made Joseph swear to observe his dying requests. "And he swear unto him. And Israel bowed himself upon the bed's head," or, as the Hebrew suggests, he turned himself in bed and knelt in the attitude of prayer. The Septuagint version followed in the Epistle to the Hebrews reads, "Israel worshipped leaning on the top of his staff." Whichever reading be adopted, the attitude is suggestive of prayerful worship, a calm and beautiful sunset to a life often overcast by dark clouds and ruffled by many a storm.

## NOTES ON DANIEL. Chapter 5.

J. B.

*"But they could not read the writing" (verse 8). "But hast lifted up thyself against the Lord of heaven" (verse 23).*

THESE two "buts" give us the positions of the two chief actors in this solemn scene. The first brings out by contrast the unique wisdom and understanding of Daniel; the second shows the enormity of Belshazzar's guilt, in that, knowing all that God had done in that city, he had not learned to honour the King of heaven, but had lifted up himself against Him in a worse way than even his grandfather had done. Daniel, though his faithful servant (ch. 8. 27), had been set at nought and forgotten, and was only called in when this miserable king had "finished his transgression," and felt himself in the presence of the God against Whom he had sinned. Daniel could not tell him as he told Nebuchadnezzar that his roots would be strengthened; he had only a word of judgment for him because of the light against which he had sinned. "The vengeance of the Lord, the vengeance of His temple" (Jer. 51. 11).

But, in order to understand fully the moral elevation of Daniel in the presence of this impious monarch, we must notice the historical order of these chapters. The "night visions" given to Daniel in chapters 7 and 8 took place *before* chapter 5. So that, when Daniel was called into the presence of the terror-stricken company in the palace, he knew the judgment which God had prepared for that empire; and not only that empire, but all the succeeding ones, down to the judgment of the devil-possessed head of the revived fourth empire, because of

whose words "the judgment shall sit." Belshazzar had shown himself to be a good forerunner of that "man of sin" who is yet to come!

Daniel was the friend of God, from whom He did not hide the things which He would do. His keen eye of faith saw the fall of everything that exalts itself against God, and the establishment of the kingdom of the Son of Man, Who has only to ask and God will give Him the heathen for His inheritance, the uttermost parts of the earth for His possession (Psalm 2). How small Daniel's night visions must have made all the glory and power of the world appear! He had been "shown their end," and he could share the Lord's despising of man's image in every form (Psalm 73). So small do the great men of the earth appear in Daniel's vision that they resemble the pawns upon the chess board; he does what he is intended to do, "he stumbles and falls, and is not found"; but the God of heaven remains and does according to His will; He sets up the Man of His counsels, and "the saints take the kingdom."

The Lord's people now are in the same position of trust, the Holy Ghost has made known to them "things to come." Yet how often they resemble the beasts in their foolish envy of the prosperity of the man of the earth, or in their doubt of the goodness of God, which withholds from them the tawdry glitter of that world which is so soon to pass away as a dream. What was the value to Daniel of

the rewards of a kingdom that in a few hours would be no more? Even while the blasphemous revelry was proceeding, Darius was turning the Euphrates preparatory to entering the doomed city. Those whose duty it was to shut the brasen gates, which had cost the lives of those who made them, were lying about in their drunken sleep, and the gates were wide open to the enemy! Read carefully: Isaiah 13; 45. 1-3; Jeremiah 51. 28-44, 57, 58; Hab. 2. 5-20. It is an historical fact that the men who were employed to make Babylon's "gates of brass" died of the heat in which they worked. "The people shall labour in the very fire, and they shall be weary. Is it not of Me, saith the

Lord."

The attitude of faith towards "the powers which are ordained of God" is also beautifully shown in Daniel. Though possessed of God's secret concerning the downfall of Babylon, and fainting and sick with his exercises before God about the things that were made known to him, yet, as long as Belshazzar's power was ordained of God, he was "king" to Daniel, and he would "do the king's business" faithfully, though ignored and despised by him. The Lord Jesus said to Pilate, "Thou couldest have no power at all against Me except it were given thee from above"; and Paul exhorted to subjection to the power, though the power at that time was *Nero*!

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"Who is among you that feareth the LORD, that obeyeth the voice of His Servant, that walketh in darkness and hath no light? Let him trust in the name of the Lord and stay upon his God" (Isa. 50. 10).

"O Lord, Thou art our Father, our Redeemer; Thy name is from everlasting."

"But now, O Lord, Thou art our Father; we are the clay, and Thou our Potter; we are all the work of Thy hands."

"To this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at My word."

"Ye that make mention of the Lord, keep not silence, and give Him no rest, till He establish, and till He make Jerusalem a praise in the earth."

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## The End of These Things

IN the West Indies there grows a beautiful and attractive flower, but on being plucked it ceases to be beautiful, and emits a most unpleasant odour. It is called by the natives "the dead horse," and this is about the best name that could be given

to it. It is like the pleasures of this world. They appear to be so pleasing and bid fair to give satisfaction; but, alas! if we are tempted to pluck them we find them most disappointing, and "the end of these things is death."

## CORRESPONDENCE.

## The Church: What is it? (January issue.)

1. How can the church be called indivisible when it is apparently in fragments?
2. How can it be said to be impregnable when it appears to be a complete failure?

Dear Mr. Editor,

“THE solution of the questions lies in the consideration of the two ways in which the church, as the body, is regarded in the New Testament, and especially so in the epistle to the Corinthians and to the Ephesians. In the first case it is seen dispensationally, filling the interval during which Christ is unseen. It is viewed as complete on earth at any given time, and held responsible to represent Christ in His absence, to faithfully deliver the message entrusted to it, and to maintain the light of His truth. It should have maintained a united front, for as the dwelling place of the one Spirit which constituted it at Pentecost, there should have been no schism in it. In all this it has completely failed. This is the Corinthian aspect of the body viewed as an organization or divine society, in that epistle seen as in danger of division and corruption by false teaching, and which now in result is broken into fragments. In this aspect it is never said to be impregnable. But within this outward form of the dispensation, there exists from the outset, that which is the workmanship of God, and this is vital, indivisible, impregnable. The church is so viewed as the body in the Ephesian epistle, not seen as an organization, but as a living organism, having its Head in heaven, to whom the members on earth are united by the Holy Ghost. This

great fact is known and experienced by the obedience of faith which recognises all Christians, not as members of churches or sectarian circles but as members of the spiritual body of Christ. In this latter aspect the church will be finally displayed without spot or blemish or any such thing, for each member is being formed by Christ, for the place each will fill in the body which will express His fulness. The dispensation, carnal in its ways and defiled by the world, will be cast away as worthless, there is no hope of recovery for this; it has not continued in the goodness of God and will be cut off. But the building of the Lord (Matt. 16. 18), fitly framed together by Divine grace, is growing unto a holy temple, and though counted as a weak and feeble thing by the world, it commands the fixed attention of principalities and powers in the heavens. The greatest thing in imperial Rome, was a poor prisoner, chained to a soldier in a hired house, for to that man had been revealed the secret of the joint body of Christ. This had been hidden from the ages and dispensations, of which it in no wise formed part, but is destined to sit together with Christ in His throne, as He overcame and is set down with His Father in His throne, abiding unchanged when all that belongs to the responsibility of the creature shall have passed away for ever.”

J. G.

## PRAYER.

W. M. Rule.

## What it is and the Necessary Conditions.

1. *Lord, teach us to pray.* Luke 11. 1.

**WHEN** the Lord Jesus answered this request of His disciples, He gave them in a succinct form, a model prayer; not one to be used in a formal way, nor as an appendage to our public prayers as is very often done; but a model to be copied as He Himself says, "After this manner pray ye" (Matt. 6. 9). Brief and to the point it is, covering the Father's glory, His interests down here, our needs, and the spirit in which we are to act towards others, so that there may be no hindrance to our prayers. Further, He illustrates it in a very simple way. A need which could not be met, a midnight call on a friend, a simple request, "Friend, lend me three loaves," and the supply is granted, not because he is his friend, but because of His importunity. Then He takes the illustration and applies it to them in a personal way, I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you: Seek, and ye shall find; Knock, and it shall be opened unto you." And further, as if to shew the universality of it He adds, "For everyone that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh, findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened." ASK, SEEK, KNOCK, are very definite terms; the voice, the eyes and feet, and the hands all engaged in the quest; and receiving, finding, and an opened door is the result. How definite the promise, and yet many true Christians are perplexed at not receiving, finding and having doors opened to them as they expect, when their needs are made known to the Father. If there is

failure in this the blame must be taken by ourselves.

How needful then that we should be taught to pray. Not that any Christian needs to be taught to bow the knee before our God and Father and express to Him his needs, for prayer is the birthright of every Christian, as we see set forth in the case of Saul of Tarsus, of whom it is said immediately after his conversion, "Behold, he prayeth" (Acts 9. 11). But we need to be taught to pray intelligently and in such a way that we may expect particular and definite answers to our prayers; an expectation without any presumption on the one hand, or lack of faith on the other. We should know and understand the terms upon which the Lord promises to hear and answer prayer, whether for temporal or spiritual things, and be able to discern when the answer comes, for it does not always come in the way we may expect it.

Scripture then should teach us, for in it there is much instruction as to prayer and records of many prayers heard and answered in a wonderful way; and moreover, the Lord Himself is set before us as an example for His own; a perfect, dependent, humble Man, breathing forth His desires in prayer to His God and Father.

Praying is not merely fulfilling a duty to please God, or to satisfy our consciences, but coming before Him burdened with a sense of need which we ourselves cannot meet, and with the assurance that we are approaching One who can. Like

Jacob at the ford Jabbok—helpless, with his thigh out of joint, yet clinging to the Man who wrestled with him until he got the blessing. We too should be Princes, having power with God and men, and prevailing (Gen. 32. 22-28).

There is no need to go into questions often raised by religious and other infidels such as, "Does prayer influence God?" or, "Can prayer alter God's plans?" or objections on the ground of altering natural laws, for I doubt not my readers will agree that God can, in answering prayer, control the whole series of causes and effects to bring about the desired result; and that as we are exhorted to "Pray without ceasing" (1 Thess. 5. 17), "Pray always" (Eph. 6. 18; Luke 18. 1), to be "instant in prayer" (Rom. 12. 12), and "to continue in prayer" (Col. 4. 2); that prayer is an important part of God's plan. They will also agree that the exercise of prayer develops the spiritual nature of the Christian, just as physical exercise develops the muscles of the body.

2. *Ye ask and receive not, because ye ask amiss* (James 4. 3).

That there may be on the part of Christians things allowed by them which may hinder God from granting them their petition, or wrong motives prompting their prayers which, if answered as expected by them, would not be for their good spiritually, is clear from various scriptures.

Asking amiss, or evilly, as the word is rendered in the N.T., would be asking in such a way as to make God the servant of our desires, and you may be sure He does not answer such prayers. If we are living in worldliness and making friendship with those in the world

which rejected Christ, we are constituting ourselves enemies of God, as verse 4 shews. We need not therefore be surprised if our asking amiss that we may consume it upon our lusts is not answered.

In approaching a holy God we should be characterised by righteousness, for it is the effectual fervent prayer of a *righteous* man availeth much (Jas. 5. 16). If Christians are going on in an unrighteous course; involving themselves in debts which they are unable to liquidate; or acting unrighteously towards others, whether Christians or not, it may mean a withholding of the answer to their prayers until these matters are judged before God and cleared up. Likewise, hatred, feuds, grudges or resentments must be judged and put away, for, "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me" (Psalm 66. 18), and again, "Your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid His face from you, that He will not hear" (Isaiah 59. 2). An unforgiving spirit also may hinder answers, for one of the petitions of the prayer the Lord taught His disciples is, "Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors," and His comment on it is, "If ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses" (Matt. 6. 15). To say as is sometimes heard, "I can forgive, but I cannot forget," will not do, for one of the terms of the New Covenant shews the greatness of the grace our God measures to His people when He said, "Their sins and their iniquities I will *remember no more*" (Heb. 8. 12); and we are exhorted to be "Kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath for-

given you" (Eph. 4. 32). This is confirmed by the Apostle Paul, who writes to Timothy, "I will therefore that men pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands, without wrath or doubting" (1 Tim. 2. 8). As this is priestly service, "lifting up holy or pious hands" would describe our personal state Godward; "without wrath," our feelings towards others; and "without doubting or reasoning," would manifest our faith in God. These things should be true of us in our approach unto God in prayer, so that there may be nothing in or about us that would warrant God withholding answers to our requests.

Prayers springing from wrong motives may be answered in such a way as to bring judgment instead of blessing to the recipient. "Give us flesh that we may eat," the children of Israel said to Moses (Numbers 11. 13); and the comment of the Spirit of God in the Psalms with regard to it is, "He gave them their request, but sent leanness into their soul" (Psalm 106. 15). They had been unsatisfied with God's provision for them, and fleshly desire, and not necessary needs prompted their request.

We do well to ask ourselves the question, does this or that request spring from the flesh within, or is it the promptings of the Spirit of God? and if in any doubt, add to our prayers, Not as I will, but as Thou wilt.

3. *And all things whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive* (Matt. 21. 22).

The Lord Jesus had just cursed a fig tree in the way, which had immediately withered. The disciples marvelled at this, and in reply to their exclamation of surprise He said

to them, "If ye have faith and doubt not, ye shall not only do this which is done to the fig tree, but also if ye shall say to this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea, it shall be done," and then added the words of our text. What a wonderful promise to His own, and how often it has been laid hold of by the saints of God as an encouragement for them to approach Him in prayer.

Notice the scope of it, "All things whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer ye shall receive." No limit set to our asking in prayer—all things whatsoever. And how definite the promise—ye shall receive. But how many of the saints of God get depressed and are led into exercise of soul when, after continued prayer, their mountain of difficulty is still there, and they begin to wonder why no answer comes to their repeated requests.

You will notice that there is no time specified as to when the request will be granted. So we are instructed in other Scriptures to "Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving" (Col. 4. 2); and that "Men ought always to pray and not to faint" (Luke 18. 1). It may be that many fail to get answers because they faint. There is a record in "Scripture Truth" of a brother who prayed for an unconverted relative for 65 years before the answer came, but it was worth waiting for. God alone can determine the right time to grant our requests.

There is a limit however to that which we may ask in order to receive. It is involved in the word "believing." The prayer must be in faith to secure an answer, and faith is always based on the Word

of God. There are certain blessings which God has definitely promised to His own. In Luke 12 food and clothing are mentioned as things for which they are not to be in anxiety, for, "Your Father knoweth that ye have need of these things." They are rather to seek the Kingdom of God and all these things shall be added unto them. We can then in needy circumstances come confidently to our Father and express to Him our needs, in the full assurance that they will immediately be met. How many myriads of the saints of God have proved His faithfulness in this way. I remember very well being in circumstances where the question was raised in my mind as to whether house rent was included in the promises of Luke 12, and it was made very clear to me that it was part of the nourishing and cherishing with which the Father cares for His own. We need shelter as well as food and raiment. There are many other such promises in Scripture which faith lays hold of in prayer, but which may not be answered so readily, the need not being so great.

There are likewise many blessings which may rightly be desired and prayed for, but which we have no distinct promise in the Word shall be granted. These may be called unpromised blessings and are based largely upon the character in which God has been pleased to reveal Himself. He is a Saviour God and it is quite right to pray for the conversion of friends and relatives, but in seeking their blessing the expectation may be something less than absolute certainty, as there is no definite promise that such and such a person will be saved. Faith of course may lay hold for itself of the promise to the Philippian

gaoler, "Thou and thy house" (Acts 16. 31), and pray expectantly for their salvation. In such cases where there is not that absolute certainty of a promise of blessing, we ought to wait upon God to discover His will in the matters that we bring before Him, and the Spirit of God who indwells His own will impress us with that which will be pleasing to Him we should pray for. He knows best what is good for us, and in seeking from Him those blessings, both temporal and spiritual, which seem needful for us.

Weighing up these things before God will save us from presumption or depression on the one hand, and greatly strengthen our faith and confidence in God on the other. If "in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving," we are to let our requests be made known unto God," we are not promised that we shall get exactly what we ask for, but we are definitely promised that "the peace of God which passeth all understanding, shall garrison our hearts and minds through Christ Jesus" (Phil. 4. 6, 7). How blessed to be able to leave our care with Him, and have our hearts and minds filled with His peace.

We are instructed to pray for all men, for Kings and all that are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty (1 Tim. 2. 1, 2); for the gospel (2 Thess. 3. 1); for all saints (Eph. 6. 18); for one another (Jas. 5. 16), and for labourers to be sent forth into the harvest field (Matt. 9. 38). Such things we can confidently bring before God in the full assurance that He hears and such requests will be answered in His own way and time.

*To be continued.*

## ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

## Feet Washing. John 13.

What is the meaning of the washing of the disciples' feet by the Lord in John 13. we are told that it has to do with defilement and not sin, but is there any defilement that is not sin?—ISOLATED, AUSTRALIA.

WE believe that the chief significance in the feet washing was the removal of the earthly hopes that the disciples had cherished in order that they might have part with Christ in the heavenly sphere, into which He was going. They were clean every whit (verse 10) by the word that He had spoken unto them (ch. 15. 3). Notice not by His blood, but by His word, for it is not here the question of their sins, but their hearts and minds and whole outlook and being. They had abandoned all that which they had formerly trusted and hoped in for Himself. As Simon Peter said on behalf of them all, "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life, and we believe and are sure that Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God" (ch. 6. 68, 69). They had none but Him; they recognised Him as the Son of the living God, and as such He was to them the Christ—the Messiah, indeed. It was His word that had brought about this change in them; they were clean every whit. But even so their hopes were earthly hopes. They thought that He would redeem Israel (Luke 24. 21), and restore again the kingdom to Israel (Acts 1. 6), and establish His Messiahship on earth. They did not know that He was going back to the Father, and that where He was there they were to be. They needed further words to lead them on to this. It had never entered into their thoughts that they were to have an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for them

(1 Peter 1. 4), and that it was His desire that they should set their affections on things above, where He was going, and not on things of the earth (Colossians 3). They had to be cleansed from the earth where their feet trod, and from their expectations from the earth, that their hearts might be in heaven where He was going, that they might have part with Him there by the Holy Ghost that He would send from heaven. And it was the word—the truth as to His new position and theirs that would do this. Christians need this service—this application of the word to them—as much to-day as those disciples did, for very few seem to realize that their portion is not here but in heaven, that their Lord and Head is in heaven and that the heavenly Spirit has come that they might be lifted above the earth and be in spirit in heaven already. So many are "minding earthly things" (Phil. 3 19).

If this is kept in mind as the chief meaning of it, we should not object to the cleansing from defilement being brought into the passage. The priests under the Mosaic law were first washed all over at their consecration (Exod. 29), but they had to wash their hands and feet at the laver of brass whenever they went into the Tabernacle. As we move about in the world we come into contact with things and influences that dull our spirits and have a defiling effect upon our minds, and we need the continual action of the Word to relieve our

minds from these things and from the influences of the world, so that we may be free in spirit and heart for communion with the Lord. These influences and things may affect us without leading us into actual sin, but if the effect is not removed actual sin will certainly result; yet even if there is actually sin and communion is definitely broken, the Lord will still be active towards us in His love to remove

the defilement of sin, but for this confession and self judgment are needed on our side (1 John 1. 9). One point of great importance in the incident is that, as He the Lord and Master washed the disciples' feet, so we ought to wash one another's feet. We must have the same tender consideration for one another's spiritual good that the Lord has for each one of His own.

## “The Gates of Hades”

“In your paper on ‘The Church’ in January ‘Scripture Truth’ you regard the expression ‘the gates of Hades’ (Matthew 16. 18., as ‘the powers of evil.’ This is, of course, the usual interpretation. But I think the Lord probably meant the entrance into the unseen world. I don’t think ‘gates’ carries the idea of power in Scripture. No earth born confraternity can pass those gates, Freemasonry, that great rival of Christianity, can only exist this side of the gates. So also every other church, Roman or Protestant, that is not Christ’s building. But the Assembly that He builds passes triumphantly through the gates of Hades—they make no difference whatever to her, they do not prevail against her: she exists on the other side of them, as truly as on this side, for Christ’s building is not merely for time but for eternity.”—VANCOUVER.

OUR correspondent is right in saying that death itself cannot prevail against the church, for the power of it was broken by Christ, the Son of the living God, who is the Builder of it, before ever He began to build. He was dead, and behold, He is alive for evermore, and has the keys of death and hades. He is the Master of death and the unseen world. But we do not think that it is right to speak of the church passing through the gates of death, even triumphantly. Of course the individual saints who compose it have been doing this from Stephen’s day to this day, but it seems to us that the church, as such, is not looked at as passing through death at all. It is here upon the earth and will be here until the coming of Christ for it, when it will pass into glory, there to be presented to Him a glorious church, without spot or wrinkle or

any such thing. Then it will be proved that, as our correspondent says, “Christ’s building is not for Time but for Eternity,” in contrast to all the buildings and combinations of men.

We further believe that the Lord meant more than an entrance into the unseen world when He spoke of “the gates of hades.” There is what issues out of those gates as well as what passes into them. Many Old Testament passages could be quoted to support the thought that the gates of a city was the place of authority and administration. When God promised Abraham that his seed should possess the gates of his enemies (Gen. 22. 17), He surely meant that they would seize the power that might be used against them and hold it in bondage. And it has been pointed out that there is a modern derivation from this idea in that the

Central Office of the Turkish Government in Constantinople before the war was called the Porte. We believe then that evil influences are continually issuing from the unseen world against men, and especially against what is of God, and that Satan administers a kingdom of darkness, the chief aim of which is to blind the minds of men to the light and to destroy in the world

all that is for God, but it is all in vain as far as the church is concerned. These powers cannot prevail against it. And each individual Christian may have this comfort, "He that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not, and we know that we are of God and the whole world lieth in the wicked One" (1 John 5. 18, 19, N.T.).

## The Work of the Evangelist.

(From a letter).

AN evangelist sent into the world to seek souls by the preaching of the gospel, should not expect his fellow Christians to have a hall ready filled for him, so that his work may be principally in the hall. "Publicly and from house to house" one would judge from Scripture to be God's order. If evangelists would carry Christ to men and women in their houses, as well as preach Him from the platform, we should hear less about little blessing. I feel as if we were only gazing across the field instead of going into it to labour. I am not pleading for a sensational work, when people's natural feelings are played upon, and scores or hundreds of conversions are counted, and a short time after comparatively nothing is left to be seen or felt except the after-damp. Evangelists who are "men of the day" will be sober men who commend Christ as God's power in every part of the work. Their aim will be to make God manifest, and they will do this, even in the way they get the people together to hear the Word. A true evangelist is an overcomer, strong in the grace which

is in Christ Jesus, continuing in God-taught things, learning nothing from a Christendom which is giving up God in any part of his work. When people complain, he is ready to show that God is just the same as ever He was, and that He (God) will not depart from His own way to accommodate anyone, and that He has not withdrawn anything He ever gave the saints as such. May God increase—greatly multiply—and send forth such men, carrying Christ as the power of God into the dwellings of men and women, and such shall find far more of God's work going on than they ever dreamt of, when they trusted so much to public meetings and the platform. And what a number of saints of God will also thus be met with who need some solid work built into their souls. I by no means underrate the public preachings, if God lays on the heart of a godly person to go to labour at a place, he goes in the light and consciousness that he has a work to do there, and he is going to do it, God being his power for it (1 Sam. 17. 45-46; Acts 16. 10)

## GREAT CONTRASTS IN THE REVELATION. No 3

J. T. Mawson.

## A Trinity of Evil, and the King of Kings.

THERE is plenty of proof in Scripture that one of the chief weapons that Satan uses in his fight against God is imitation. Jannes and Jambres, who were his ministers in Egypt, withstood Moses by imitating his miracles, until he brought lice out of the dust—life out of death, then they and their master were baffled and had to confess that that was the finger of God (Ex. 8; 2 Tim. 3). Now he transforms himself into an angel of light, and his ministers appear as ministers of righteousness (2 Cor. 11), and in this way he gains the greatest apparent triumphs, and the times are made exceedingly perilous for all who would live godly, for the form of godliness is retained and boasted in by his ministers while the power of it is denied (2 Tim. 3), and nothing could be more deadening to the conscience than that.

But Satan's audacity in this respect has not yet reached its limit; in his final effort to hold the earth against the rightful King, he will present to men a *trinity of evil* in contrast to the Divine Trinity, and so successful will he be that he will carry apostate Christendom with him and gather the kings of the whole earth together to make war with the Lamb (Rev. 17). This may seem an extraordinary thing, but we need not be surprised at it, for he once succeeded in uniting the princes of this world to crucify the Lord of glory, when He had come into the world full of grace for men's blessing; and if he was able to do that, he will have no difficulty in uniting them against Him when He comes in righteousness to judge. Moreover, because men

received not the love of the truth that they might be saved, "God shall send them strong delusion that they should believe a lie: that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness" (1 Thess. 2). God is the preserver of all men, but if they won't have Him and His mercy, and if they will fight against Him there is nothing for them but the deceptions of the devil, and damnation—the just judgment of God.

In the April number of this Magazine we noted the casting down of Satan from heaven (Rev. 12). That event will be a warning to him that his time is short, and he will make frenzied efforts to fortify the world and hold it against the woman's Seed, its rightful King, whom he hates—and he will find two men ambitious and daring enough to listen to his proposals and carry out his plans. They are described in Rev. 13 as beasts, because they will be beastly in character, as men must be who deliberately and completely apostatise from God. Our space forbids any attempt to interpret all the details by which they can be identified, but it is clear that the first of the two—called THE BEAST—will be a super-warrior-politician, by his power the old Roman Empire, under which Jesus was crucified, will be resuscitated. For a short space it will be a power to be wondered at, combining in itself all the features that made the three former powers notable in their day and yet diverse from them all (Daniel 7), but the power of it, or of the beast, the head of it, will be more than human; it will be Satanic, for we read: "And

the dragon gave him (the beast) his power, and his seat, and his authority" (Rev. 13. 2). He will exercise this authority over all kindreds and tongues and nations (verse 7), and they will believe all that he claims to be. In him man will be blasphemously defied. He will usurp the place of God in the minds and souls of men and they will worship him.

The second beast (verses 11-18) will be more subtle than the first; the first will infatuate men by his power and audacity; the second will work by deception (verse 14). He will appear as a lamb, in imitation of Christ, for he will be the anti-Christ, but when he shall speak he will reveal his true character, for he will speak as a dragon; he will be Satan's mouthpiece. What a contrast he will be to all that Christ was who spoke His Father's word and was Himself all that He said. As anti-Christ he will appeal first to the Jews, and they will receive him. Because they would not receive Christ when He came in His Father's name, they will receive this deceiver when he comes in his own name (John 5. 43). He is also spoken of as THE FALSE PROPHET; this is his special designation in the Revelation (ch. 16. 13; 19. 20; 20. 10) and as such he will deceive apostate Christendom and the whole world, by doing great wonders. He will represent himself as equal to any of the Old Testament prophets by calling fire down from heaven, and greater than any New Testament Apostle by giving life and speech to the image of the beast, and will compel all men to worship it or be slain. The seat of his power will be at Jerusalem, as the throne of the beast will be at Rome, and the rulers of the nation of the Jews will make a covenant with him (Isa. 28. 14, 15).

But a man who has cast off all fear of God will not regard any treaty with men and, in alliance with the beast, he will break the covenant and terribly oppress the nation (Daniel 9. 26, 27). It is evident that he will be a Jew, for the Jews would not be likely to receive him if he were not, but that it is said that he will disregard "the God of his fathers" confirms this. He will magnify himself above all gods, i.e., he will not permit any religion in the land that does not centre in himself, and he will abolish all God-ordained institutions too, for he will not regard "the desire of women," which is surely marriage and the home life. These two things which make life bearable and are the greatest spiritual and natural blessings—the recognition of God and family life—will be the objects of his special hatred. These two devil-empowered men are brought together in 2 Thess. 2, and they are always together in the Revelation, except in ch. 17, where the beast appears as the head of the Roman earth. The beast is "that man of sin," "the son of perdition," and the false prophet is "that wicked" or the lawless one. With Satan as their energising force they will form the trinity of evil.

The great clash between this evil alliance and the power of the Lamb will be at Armageddon, and the kings of the earth and the whole world will be gathered there by the lies that will go out of their mouths (Rev. 16. 13). These lies are likened to frogs, that are creatures of slime that croak in darkness. They are the spirits of devils that gather these kings together to the battle of the great day of God Almighty. We know well what the lie will be that will go out of the mouth of the devil: it will be the same that went

out of his mouth at the beginning, "Ye shall surely die . . . ye shall be as gods." Do not fear the judgment of God, follow me and I will exalt you. That was his ancient lie; Adam believed it, and men blinded by the devil still believe it, but in this coming day they will believe it with a great enthusiasm and follow him in his war upon God. The beast and the false prophet will supplement this lie. Out of their mouths will go the boastful and blasphemous lies of man's greatness and independence of God, that all that they will need will be "the will to power" in order not only to drive God from the earth but to "hunt Him from His heaven," and if men must worship let them worship MAN, for man, as he will be seen in the beast, is greater than God—the finished product of the race in rebellion against God. "The kings of the earth will set themselves, and the rulers will take counsel together against the Lord and against His Anointed, saying, Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us. He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision" (Psalm 2). "The kings of them shall have one mind, and shall give their power and strength to the beast. These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for He is Lord of lords and King of kings: and they that are with Him are called, and chosen and faithful" (Rev. 17. 4).

The battle is described in Rev. 19, but first there is revealed the One who will come forth from heaven in righteousness to judge and make war upon these blasphemous and wilfully deceived multitudes. What a contrast is He to these evil leaders of men and Satan who will control them. A fourfold description is

given of Him. 1. He is "THE FAITHFUL AND TRUE. 2. He has A NAME WRITTEN THAT NO MAN KNOWETH but Himself. 3. He is called THE WORD OF GOD. 4. He is KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.

All these great and glorious titles belong to Him in the counsels of God, and no power can rob Him of them. They were His when He came into the world long ago, though they were not recognised by men. He was the Faithful and True in all His life of service on earth, from the glory to the glory. He had a Name that no man knew but Himself. Even the disciples did not understand Him. They saw Him in apparent human weakness, as when asleep upon a pillow in the hinder part of their boat in the storm, and in answer to their cry of despair, they saw Him rise up in the majesty of His divine power and command the storm to silence, and they were filled with fear and said, "What manner of man is this, that even the winds and waves obey Him?" They did not know Him in the inscrutability of His divine and eternal Being, the Son in the Divine Trinity and yet a Man dwelling among them in the fulness of grace.

"The Father only His blest Name  
Of Son can comprehend."

He is the Word of God, the full declaration of what God is. He came into the world two thousand years ago to reveal God's love to men and to shew the infinite pity of His heart to them in their misery and sin. He did this fully, blessedly, completely, and He is coming again to shew just as perfectly what God's righteous judgment is, and what the fierceness of His wrath against sin. Finally, He is King of kings and Lord of lords. The wise men from

the East recognised this when they came from afar asking for the King of the Jews. They owned His wider claim, as all nations will be compelled to do, and as He Himself declared when He stood a fettered prisoner before Caiaphas: "Hereafter ye shall see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of the heavens" (Matt. 26. 64).

"And I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven, Come and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God; that ye may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty men, the flesh of horses, and of them that sit on them, and the flesh of all men, both free and bond, both small and great. And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathering together to make war against Him that sat on the horse, and against His army. And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that

worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone. And the remnant were slain with the sword of Him that sat upon the horse, which sword proceeded out of His mouth: and all the fowls were filled with their flesh" (Revelation 19).

Thus is unfolded in solemn and graphic language, the full-blown result of the old serpent's lie in Eden; we see that men who believe that lie are puffed up with pride by it and follow the devil in his rebellion against God, his willing dupes. This iniquity doth already work, and only the truth will preserve any man from it. The truth does not puff up; it humbles the man who receives it; it leads him to confess that he is a sinner indeed, and to cast himself upon the mercy of God, and Christ becomes the righteousness of all who do this, and these will be the armies of heaven who follow their Lord, when He goeth forth to victory, upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, clean and white. These are they who believe on, and love and worship the Lamb, for He is  
 KING OF KINGS AND LORD  
 OF LORDS.

## A Thanksgiving.

*"Every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving" (1 Tim. 4. 4).*

O God, Thy bounteous hand hath spread  
 With earthly food our social board;  
 And feeds our souls with sweeter bread,  
 The bread of life—we thank the Lord!  
 Thy grace in all things soars above  
 The sweetest song Thy saints can raise:  
 Yet, Lord, for this, and all Thy love,  
 Accept our weak, unworthy praise.

# THE MIND THAT WAS IN CHRIST JESUS. J. J. Anning.

Read Philippians 2. 5-8; Isaiah 42. 1. 52. 13-15, 53. 1-5; Luke 12. 34-37

*Notes of an Address.*

## THE PERFECT SERVANT.

**MAY** God in His grace bring the living power of these words that we have read from the Epistle to the Philippians afresh to our hearts. There is a danger of the living power of God's word being lost upon us. We have got used to the Word, we can quote it by heart, but that is not enough, and it may indeed be harmful to us if there is not a corresponding exercise of soul. It is with trepidation that I turn to these wonderful words.

*"Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus: who being in the form of God thought it not robbery to be equal with God."*

The apostle Paul brings the glories of that blessed One before our vision; he reminds us that He was in the very form of God, and therefore equality with God was not a thing to be aimed at, for He was God. But what follows?

*"But made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men."* He emptied Himself, He took upon Him the form of a servant and was made in the likeness of men, and having become the Servant He was obedient, even unto death, and that, the death of the cross. I turn to the prophecy of Isaiah because there is no word better that I can give you to shew our Lord in this position. There God says, "Behold My Servant." We are called upon to see that One who served God as nobody had served Him before. God had never had full obedience in this world, but He found it perfectly in Jesus, His Servant. Yea, not only obedience

outwardly and to commands given, but He had His absolute service from His innermost being. Jesus had no will of His own; His will was to do God's will and we often delight in tracing His blessed footsteps through this world, how it shews that the Father and the Son went together through all the contradiction of sinners to the hill of Calvary. There was direct communion and the direct service, not one step was taken but by the Father's word, His delight to do the Father's will.

"The Lord God hath given Me the tongue of the learned, that I should know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary: he wakeneth morning by morning, he wakeneth Mine ear to hear as the learned. The Lord God hath opened Mine ear, and I was not rebellious, neither turned away back. I gave My back to the smiters, and My cheeks to them that plucked off the hair: I hid not My face from shame and spitting" (Isaiah 50. 4, 5, 6). We know that from the glory, God said, "This is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased," yet He humbled Himself and became obedient, even unto death, and that the death of the cross. Isaiah looking onward presents Jehovah's Servant to us, His face marred more than that of any man; He was forsaken of God and smitten, the Man of Sorrows and acquainted with grief, who put obedience to God first. He took the dishonour and submitted to the deepest humiliation, but love to God took Him right through to the very end. So the apostle can look up

and say—"Wherefore God has highly exalted Him and given Him a name which is above every name," and it is that exalted Name of the once-suffering Saviour that has charmed and won our hearts.

### OUR SERVICE.

What does the apostle say? "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus." The Lord's own words to His disciples are recorded in the 12th chapter of Luke's Gospel. I read but a few verses out of that wonderful chapter, but I would like you to go through it for yourselves. If you are in trouble, are anxious about your circumstances, you can find comfort in that chapter, for the Lord it was that said, "The very hairs of your head are all numbered." It is a message of comfort, "Fear not, therefore; ye are of more value than many sparrows." Then the Lord says, "Where your treasure is, there shall your heart be also"; and surely ours is in the heavens, and if so, then "Let your loins be girded about and your lights burning." Here is described our attitude for service for Him, who has won our hearts, while we wait for His return. There is no service like the service of love; love seeketh not her own; love is bent on achieving the good of the one who is loved, and that is the way of the Lord's love. He girded Himself to serve us and now exhorts His disciples to have their loins girded and their lights burning. There is no slackness about the man whose loins are girded, he clearly means business; he is determined that nothing shall hinder him in the true service of love to Him, who became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

He is coming again, and the Scriptures not only speak to us of working for Him, but it speaks of waiting for Him and watching for Him. It says here, "*And ye yourselves like unto men who wait for their Lord.*" I do not know if the wording of that verse has ever struck you, "and ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their Lord." It evidently means that there is something very distinctive about one who waits for his Lord. It is not a question of talking, it is a question of character—"Ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their Lord," "*Blessed are those servants, whom the Lord when He cometh shall find watching.*" I was talking to a brother the other day about "watching and waiting," and he gave me what I consider a good example of the difference between the two. He told me a story of two women, the wives of fishermen, whose husbands were expected home on a particular night, and one wife sat in the house all ready waiting for her man, but the other went down to the pier-head and looked out over the waters for the home-coming boat. We must combine the two. To be waiting means "I'm ready"; to be watching means, "I'm expecting." It will be a fine day when He comes, and if we are ready for Him, and watching He will be able to say to us, "good and faithful servants." But as we look back we have to confess how unprofitable our service has been, but on the other hand how great has been His grace, His patience, His love; He is Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. His promise holds good and His grace is sufficient; He will never fail us.

So may our feeble hearts be better established in His love, that we may

work better, and wait and watch better for Him. He is still serving us, the One who served us here on earth, is serving us now as our Great High Priest in heaven, and when He comes forth in His glor-

ious kindom He says He is going to gird Himself and serve us—such a Master! Oh may we treasure better the living word of God that tells us of Him, of His glory, of His humiliation, and of His love.

## GREAT SIGHTS.

J. T. Mawson,

“*And HE THAT SAW it bare record*” (John 19. 35).

“*And HE SAW and believed*” (John 20. 8).

“*Then were the disciples glad when THEY SAW the Lord*” (John 20. 20).

“*Blessed are THEY THAT HAVE NOT SEEN and yet have believed*”

(John 20. 29).

**WHAT** was it that the disciple whom Jesus loved saw? He saw his Lord and Master *dead upon the cross*. He saw **THE GREAT SACRIFICE**. He saw it and bare record of what he saw that ye might believe.

What was it that the same disciple saw when he came first to the sepulchre in the garden? He saw the empty tomb, evidence of **THE GLORIOUS VICTORY**. He saw it and believed and bare record of what he saw that ye might believe also.

What was it that the disciples saw when Jesus stood in the midst of them and shewed them His hands and His side? They saw the living Lord in their midst, unchanged in His love for them in spite of their unfaithfulness to Him. They saw **HIS ENDURING LOVE**. And this same disciple bare record of this also that ye might believe.

The laden cross, the empty tomb, the living Lord, with wounded hands and side, what great sights were these! And who can wonder that that disciple who saw these sights and bore witness to them, should have been seen following Jesus without being told, for *Peter, turning about SEETH THE DISCIPLE whom Jesus loved following*. We should have wondered greatly if he had done anything else but follow Him, after having seen the great sacrifice, the glorious victory and the living, unchangeable Lord. And we have sometimes wished that we had been with that disciple and seen the great sights that he saw, we have thought that our faith would have been greater if we had. But we need not entertain such vain wishes and thoughts, for we who have not seen have the more blessed part, and we have our Lord's words for it, for He has said: “**BLESSED ARE THEY THAT HAVE NOT SEEN, AND YET HAVE BELIEVED.**”

# THE UNITY OF SCRIPTURE.

J. G. Bellett.

## A Reprint.

**PASSAGES** of the Old Testament cited, as they are, in all parts of the New, with many and many a glance, or tacit unexpressed reference, link all the parts of the Volume together, and give it a character of unity and completeness. The contents themselves of the Volume do the same. They also give unity and completeness to it; for they are a series of events which stretch from the beginning to the end, from the creation to the kingdom. And prophecies in the Old Testament of events in the New are as quotations in the New of passages in the Old. And thus, in the mouth of several witnesses of the highest dignity, we have the oneness and the consistency of the divine Volume from first to last fully set forth and established.

This would tell us, that it is all the breathing of one and the same Spirit. Scripture itself announces the same; and, again, the contents themselves speak also in this case. "Their self-evidencing light and power," the moral glories, in which they so brightly, so abundantly, and so variously shine, witness that God is their source. And thus the divine origin of the book, as well as its unity and consistency, is established. And we hold to these truths in the face of all the insult which is put upon them by unreasonable and wicked men. Oppositions of criticism, falsely so called, only spend themselves in vain, like angry waves upon the sea-shore. God Himself has set the bounds; and these things only return upon themselves, foaming out their own shame.

In the progress of the New Testament Scriptures, the Lord and the Holy Ghost, in their several way

and season, use the Scriptures of the Old. This is a sealing of them, if they needed that. But it is so. It is God putting His seal on them after they come forth, as it was He who breathed them before they came forth.

As to the Lord, we shall find that He uses Old Testament Scriptures in several different ways.

1. He observes them obediently, ordering His life, and forming His character, as I may speak, according to them.

2. He uses them as weapons of war, or shield of defence, when assailed by the tempter or by the world.

3. He treats them as authority, when teaching or reasoning.

4. He vows and avers their divine origin, and their indestructible character, and that too in every jot and tittle of them.

5. He fulfils them, not withdrawing Himself from His place of service and of suffering, till He could survey the whole of them (as far as that service and suffering had respect to them) as realized, verified, and accomplished.

In such ways as these, and it may be in others, the Lord honours the Scriptures. What a sight! What a precious fact! How blessed to see Him in such relationships to the Word of God, that Word which is the ground and witness of all the confidence and liberty and peace we know before God! We read Psalm 119, thus tracing a worshipper's relation to Scripture, and we find it edifying to mark the breathings of

a saint under the teachings, and drawings, and inspirings of the Holy Ghost. But it still a more affecting thing to mark and trace the relations into which the Lord Jesus puts Himself to the same Scripture.

Then, when the ministry of the Lord is over, when the Son has returned to heaven, and the Spirit comes down, He appears (as in the apostles whom He fills to write the epistles) doing the like service for us. For in all epistles we get quotations from the writings of the Old Testament.

And there is no limit to this. These quotations are found in every part of the New Testament, and are taken from every part of the Old from Genesis to Malachi—and that very largely. So that we have, in the structure of the divine Volume, nothing less than the closest, fullest, and most intricate interweaving of all parts of it together, the end too returning to the beginning, and the beginning anticipating the end. In a certain sense, we are in all parts of the Volume when we are in any part of it; though the variety of communications, in disclosing the dispensations of God, is infinite.

And surely we say, these qualities of the holy Book are in the highest sense divine; as its contents or material have in them a comprehension and display of moral glories in all unsullied excellency, which in the clearest manner speak of God unmistakably to heart and conscience.

But, further, Scripture links itself with eternity. If we have foretellings in the Old Testament of events in the New, so have we, in both Old and New, foretellings of the eternity that is to come.

If we have quotations in the New Testament of passages in the Old, so have we in both the Old and New references to the eternity that is past. Scripture passes beyond its borders, as I may say, and is in the scenes and glories of the coming eternity. Scripture also retires behind its borders, and is in the secrets and counsels of the eternity that is past, unsealing "the volume of the book," and disclosing predestinations which were formed and settled in Christ ere worlds were.

Surely it is marvellous! But the Spirit of Him who knows the end from the beginning accounts to us for it, but nothing less can. And the Book, as has been said, is a greater miracle than any which it records.

And blessed for us to know and to prove, that it prepares us for everything, for all that which surrounds us at this moment. Confusion and corruption may be infinite; but we have it all anticipated in and by the Book, to which we listen as the witness of everything to us in the name and truth of God. We need not be afraid with any amazement, since we have it. We may (if that be a holy action of the soul) "deride," and not "dread," the insolent infidelity of the day; and, if we have grace, pray for those wicked men, that God would give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth.

And I would add this, that these citations out of His own writings by God Himself, first in the person of the Son, and then in the person of the Holy Ghost, are beautiful in this character to which I before alluded—that, as He sent forth these writings as from Himself, at the beginning, being the source of them,

so after they have come forth, and been embodied in human forms, and accepted of men, as in all languages of the nations, and seated in the midst of the human family, He Himself comes to accredit them there. He has inspired them and sealed them—and we receive them thus introduced to us by Himself—and we ask no more.

And we may say of the Scriptures from beginning to end, that one part of them cannot be touched without all being affected. To use inspired language, "whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it," God has so tempered all of it together. And I may go farther in the same analogy, and say, the uncomely parts have been

given more abundant honour—as for instance, in the book of Proverbs we get as rich and blessed a witness of the Christ of God in His mysterious glories, as we find anywhere.

Yea, and I will take on me to add, if all other parts, like the members of the one body, resent trespass and wrong done to any part, so the Spirit will say of God and Scripture, as He does of God and His saints, "He that toucheth you toucheth the apple of His eye." I am sure of it. God will make the quarrel of Scripture His own quarrel. "He that rejecteth Me, and receiveth not My words," says the Lord Jesus, "hath One that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken shall judge him in the last day."

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## Ebenezer.

WHEN God is known to be on our side, we can say, "Who can be against us?" We realize that He does not forget us in our hours of need, and we can set up our remembrance of His help. Our Ebenezer is really our Lord and Saviour—the chief Corner Stone, on whom all depends. He is the exponent of the tender love of our God to us, and all the mercy that comes to us by day and by night comes through Him. When we realize that "I can do all things through Christ which strengthened me," we have the exhilarating consciousness that He is our Stone of help, and our hearts are revived and filled with gratitude and thanksgiving in remembrance of Him.

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## En-hakkore.

*"And he (Samson) was sore athirst, and called on the Lord" (Judges 15. 18.)*

GREAT services for others will not supply the soul's necessities, which can only be supplied by the Lord. However brilliant our services, our own souls will famish unless directly sustained by the Lord, for mere service never sustains. On the contrary, the greater the service, the more we shall be conscious of our own necessity and dependence on God for personal support. The greatest service will not supply one drop of relief to the weary soul. From God alone that must come. And thus, in answer to Samson's cry, God relieves him, and he calls the name of the place EN-HAKKORE, "the well of him that called." He commemorates, not his service, but his dependence on God.

## PRAYER. No. 2.

W. M. Rule.

## What it is and the necessary conditions.

4. *Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father, in My Name, He will give it you* (John 16. 23).

**I**N this Scripture, as also in John 14. 13, 14 and John 15. 16 the Lord Jesus is emphasizing; in view of His leaving His disciples, the value and power of His Name in approaching the Father and making known to Him our requests. "Hitherto have ye asked nothing in My name" (verse 24), but in that day, i.e., the present period when He is sitting at the right hand of God, and the Spirit of God is present with and in His own on earth—His promise is, "Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in My name, He will give it you." We are to be a praying and dependent people, caring for His interests during His absence, and His interests are centred in His own whether looked at as disciples, friends, servants, or brethren. It is encouraging to see how wide and embracing is the scope of our prayers—"Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father;" and how definite the promise—"He will give it you." Moreover, it has in view that our hearts should be full of joy, a joy that no man can take from us (verse 24), and there is also the fact stated that we approach One who loves us perfectly: The Father Himself loveth you, because ye have loved Me (verse 27).

But here, as in the last Scripture we considered, there is a limit to the promise for it is what is asked for "In My Name" to which the promise is attached. We may enquire then as to what is meant by the expression, "In My Name," and the use of it in Scripture. It is used

by the Apostle Peter in healing the lame man (Acts 3. 6, 16), and by the Apostle Paul in casting out a spirit of divination from a certain damsel (Acts 16. 18), as their authority for their actions, in accordance with the words of the Lord Jesus (Mark 16. 17). When the seven sons of one Sceva, a Jew, used the Name, the man in whom the evil spirit was, leaped on them and overcame them and prevailed against them (Acts 19. 13-16). They were completely beaten by this Satanic power, shewing that they were unauthorised to act "In His Name." The Sanhedrin at Jerusalem recognised the power and authority of it, when they forbade the apostles to speak or preach "In the Name" (Acts 4. 17), although they had to acknowledge that a notable miracle had been wrought by it (verse 16). The authority to exercise discipline is likewise "In the Name," as 1 Cor. 5. 4 shews.

It is clear then that asking "In His Name" is something more than making our requests for "Thy Name's Sake," as is used in the Psalms and the Prophets. The latter expression is quite right so far as it goes, but the promise in our Scripture is to those whom He is leaving behind to represent Him down here in His absence and who are acting by His authority. A merchant leaves Australia for England and gives his manager a written authority to do certain things which may be described in detail in the document, and as representing the merchant during his absence he signs cheques and does other acts in his name. The merchant is bound to ratify the manager's acts only if they are done

in accordance with the authority given.

We cannot therefore pray in His Name and go beyond the precise instructions we have in the Scriptures, as to what is His will in connection with matters which we may be occupied with. It will need spiritual discernment and if in any doubt, a waiting on Him for light and instruction, if the expectation of answers to pray "in His Name" is to be fulfilled.

The Lord Jesus speaks of Himself in the address to Philadelphia as "He that is Holy, He that is True" (Rev. 3. 7), and that church is commended because they had "Kept My word, and hast not denied My Name" (v. 8). Holiness and truth then should characterise us and subjection to His revealed mind and will, and if there be in us and about us that which suits His nature, and faithful consistency with it in our walk and ways, and at the same time a real faith in the power of His Name when we make our request to the Father, we may confidently expect that they will be granted, for His word is, "Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in My Name, He will give it you."

#### 5. *Praying in the Holy Ghost* (Jude 20).

While it is true that unconverted men may in times of stress and difficulty pray to God and receive answers to their prayers too, it could not be said of them that they were praying in the Holy Ghost. It can only be true of Christians who are indwelt by the Spirit (Rom. 8. 9), who are said to "live in the Spirit" and who are exhorted to "walk in the Spirit" (Gal. 5. 25). It is certain that if we are praying in the

Holy Ghost the promptings and desires of the flesh will have no place, but the Spirit of God will be the spring and source of our desires. As He is the Spirit of adoption whereby we cry, Abba, Father (Rom. 8. 15), our praying in the Holy Ghost will be characterised by that sweet sense of relationship and filial subjection that becomes us as children of God. We are here in a scene where our weakness and inability to overcome our difficulties is manifest, but "the Spirit helpeth our infirmities; for we know not what to pray for as we ought; but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered, and He that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit because He maketh intercession for the saints according to God" (Rom. 8. 26, 27). How blessed to know that if the need is felt and we are unintelligent as to what we should pray for to meet the need so that we can only groan before God, He understands the groan because the Spirit intercedes for us according to God. He only can teach the saints of God how and what to pray for as they ought and enable them to understand the abundant instruction given to us in the Scriptures with regard to prayer.

Jude wrote for just such a day as we live in when apostasy is making rapid strides in every section of Christendom. The way of Cain—natural religion without the blood of a sacrifice; the error of Balaam—religion for gain and the seduction of God's people; and the gainsaying of Korah—open rebellion against Christ as Priest and King, are about us on every hand. How needful then the instruction of verses 20-23, and especially "Praying in the Holy Ghost," for He alone can, amid all

the confusion, lead us to pray intelligently to God for the preservation of His own until the moment when the Lord Jesus will present us faultless before the presence of His glory, with exceeding joy (verse 24).

All this is the enemy's work and the intrusion of the will of man into the things of God, and hence when we have to meet the enemy and stand against his wiles, for he would seek in every way to neutralise the truth and spoil the testimony to our heavenly calling and citizenship, and hinder our enjoyment of all the spiritual blessings with which we have been blest, we must not only have on the whole panoply of God, and take the sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God, but we are exhorted, "Praying always with all prayer and supplication *in the Spirit*, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for

all saints;" and that the truth of the mystery of the gospel might be made known (Eph. 6. 18, 19).

If we are to be characterised by spiritual power there must be continual self-judgment. A Christian may have the Spirit and yet be in a carnal state, and if that is so the influence of this fleshly condition will hinder the promptings of the Spirit when before God in prayer. In proportion then, as we are walking in the Spirit and living in the power of the Spirit, our communion unclouded, and our joy full, so shall we find our praying in the Spirit effectual. We shall compass in our prayers "all saints" and that which is peculiarly the theme of the Ephesian epistle; the mystery of the gospel, which is the Assembly, so precious to Christ, that He loved and gave Himself for it.

*To be continued.*

## The Father's Love.

*"Thou lovedst Me before the foundation of the world." "Thou hast loved them as Thou hast loved Me" (John 17).*

**F**AR beyond the storm and tempest,  
In untroubled calm above,  
There the Son of God abideth  
Resting in the Father's love.

Loved with love beyond all measure,  
Love that knows no check or shade;  
Loved before the worlds were founded,  
Loved before the heavens were made.

Loved with all the love that dwelleth  
In the heart of God;  
Loved with all the love befitting  
Him in whom all grace abode.

Loved with all the love He claimeth,  
Who endured the cross and shame,  
Bore the wrath—now none remaineth—  
To exalt the Father's Name.

There in that unmingled gladness,  
That unmeasured endless peace  
He abideth and rejoiceth  
With a joy that cannot cease.

All that precious love our portion,  
Sharing all alike with Him;  
All our thirst for ever quenching  
In that everlasting stream.

Ever in the Father's bosom,  
There for ever come what may;  
For the love that sought and found us,  
Keepeth us by night and day.

Precious to that tender Father;  
Precious to that gracious Son;  
Precious to that Holy Spirit,  
By whom we and He are one.

Unto this His death has brought us,  
Nothing less than this He gives;  
This the secret joy and power  
Of the heart wherein He lives.

Let us praise that love for ever,  
Fall in worship at His feet;  
Lost in silent joy and wonder,  
Sinners made in Him complete.

## STUDIES IN THE LIFE OF JOSEPH. No. 6. R. McCallum.

THE interchange of names—Jacob and Israel—at the end of chapter 48 is again arresting. “One told *Jacob* and said, Behold thy son Joseph cometh unto thee, and *Israel* strengthened himself and sat upon the bed, and *Jacob* said unto Joseph . . .” Again we find him foreseeing difficulties and making plans for the retention of Joseph and his seed within the embrace of covenant blessing. There was quite clearly a danger that Joseph having married an Egyptian, and having attained such eminence and earned genuine well-merited gratitude from the highest in the land, his sons might be brought up as Egyptians. To frustrate such a calamity Jacob reminded his son of the promise of Almighty God, who appeared to him at Bethel, that he and his seed should have Canaan as an everlasting possession and claimed that the two sons of Joseph born before his arrival in Egypt were his: “As Reuben and Simeon they shall be mine.” Their incorporation among the twelve tribes is a most remarkable event, which gives us Israel’s estimate by faith of the glories of Egypt. The greatest blessing which he can confer upon the sons of Egypt’s Viceroy is a portion with the people of God. “By faith Jacob, when he was dying, blessed both the sons of Joseph.” The lads would at this time be at least twenty years of age. Their prospects were glorious, their future success assured, and the decision to identify them with the shepherds of Israel was a test to their faith and and to the faith of their father Joseph.

The presence of his beloved son brought vividly before the patri-

arch’s mind the death of his greatly loved Rachel. The touching reference to her death is not merely the recollection of a chief sorrow in his life, but is in this connection the determination that her memory shall be honoured by the inclusion of Benjamin, Ephraim and Manasseh among the tribes of Israel. In blessing the two lads Jacob clearly acted under divine guidance, just as in predicting the future of the tribes he spoke with prophetic prevision. And be it noted that while transferring the principal blessing to the younger as actuated by God, the subsequent history of the tribes shows that with God there was no caprice, but that He acted in the full light of the foreknown character of the two men. The last words to his son Joseph disclose that the pre-eminent facts in life for Israel are the reality of God’s presence and of His promise. How different would life have been for him had he but apprehended this in living as he appreciated them now in dying. Blessed are the people who can say, “I believe God that it shall be even as it was told me.”

Before departing this life Jacob gathered his sons about him and foretold their future. In some cases the allusions are difficult to follow, but in others the teaching is unmistakable and instructive. Passion uncontrolled by righteous principle leads to disaster and the forfeiture of privilege and position. Zeal for right cannot manifest itself in deeds of cruelty without evil resulting. In the midst of the survey of their future he appears to be so oppressed by their appalling weakness that he gives vent to his desire for a coming deliverer as he sighs, “I have

waited for Thy salvation, O Lord!" Immediately preceding this verse he had said, "Dan shall be a serpent by the way, an adder in the path," and this reminder of the havoc which the serpent had brought in initially would seem to have roused in his prophetic soul an appeal for the fulfilment of the primeval promise of the great Deliverer, who would bruise the serpent's head. Our chief interest lies in the blessing of Joseph, a blessing which can be summed up in the word "fruitfulness." The explanation of the fruitful nature lies in the fact that he is described as a "fruitful *bough* by a fountain," and the evidence of realization is contained in the phrase "whose branches run over the wall." He had been pre-eminently the object of hatred and persecution by his brethren; "The archers have sorely grieved him and shot at him and hated him," yet had his resource and confidence been in God, the mighty God of Jacob. Upon the head of him "that was separate from his brethren" fulness of blessing is invoked and divine blessing assured. Those who, like Joseph are ever true to God, will be fruitful Godward in their lives, abounding in the "fruits of righteousness."

"And when Jacob had made an end of commanding his sons, he gathered his feet into the bed and yielded up the ghost, and was gathered unto his people." And Joseph fell upon his father's face and wept upon him and kissed him." The identity of Joseph's character is preserved to the very end. He is still marked by his devoted love for his father. He had passed through the trials of cruelty, hardship, misrepresentation, disappointment without giving way to tears, and if tears now coursed down his

cheeks, these were the evidence of true filial affection and were worthy of a real man. The request of Jacob was fully observed. His body was embalmed, and after seven days of mourning the cortege, consisting of the house of Jacob and many Egyptians, proceeded to the threshing floor of Atad where they again mourned with a great and very sore lamentation, and after seven days Jacob was buried in the cave of the field of Machpelah. After the sepulture Joseph and his brethren returned to Egypt. Now that their father had departed this life, his brethren feared that Joseph would seek vengeance upon them for their sin. It is characteristic of weak natures to doubt the nobility of character in those who are stronger. It must have grieved him to think that they still thought him capable of seeking revenge after the lapse of many years since their reunion, yet with splendid magnanimity Joseph bade them "Fear not" and affirmed the fact that it is God who is the supreme Governor of the universe, and who moulds the events of history to accomplish His designs. "As for you, ye thought evil against me, but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass as it is this day, to save much people alive. Now therefore, fear ye not; I will nourish you and your little ones, and he comforted them, and spake kindly unto them." If living close to the Lord, we can always afford to be magnanimous to those who, while seeking to do us harm, are only carrying out God's plans for our blessing.

Joseph lived in the land of Egypt long enough to see Ephraim's children to the third generation. Conscious of his approaching end he declared to his brethren that God

would surely visit them and bring them into the land which He swore to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob. He then charged them that when they did return to Canaan they were to carry his bones up hence. Thus did he associate himself with the faith of his fathers, and disassociate himself from abiding links with Egypt.

It has often been pointed out that the book that opens with life ends with death. "In the beginning God created"—"and they embalmed him and he was put in a coffin in Egypt." Between the first and the last chapter sin had come in, sin which brings forth death. Yet were the bones in Egypt a symbol of hope, "God will surely visit you." The greatest of earth must go, but God remains, and this confidence in the unchanging God and in the abiding character of His promises keeps our hearts in blissful repose amidst all the changes around and the removal of those on whom we

have most depended. May God grant to us unswerving dependence upon Himself and His Word until our redemption complete we share in the triumph of the exodus which our Lord averred He would accomplish. Thank God all that men of faith have looked for will be accomplished! Some 200 years passed ere Moses carried up that coffin. For forty years it was carried about in the wilderness journeyings, but in the days of Joshua "the bones of Joseph, which the children of Israel brought up out of Egypt, buried they in Schechem." The name Joseph signifies *increase*, and surely *increase* is the characteristic of the coming glory of the infinite Joseph. "Of the increase of His government and peace, there shall be no end, upon the throne of David and upon his kingdom to order it, and establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this!"

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## The Heart's Desire.

**A** CHILD, when far away, may long  
For home and kindred dear;  
And I who wait my absent Lord,  
Must sigh till He appear.

I would, my Lord and Saviour know,  
That which no measure knows;  
Would search the mystery of Thy love,  
The depth of all Thy woes.

I fain would strike my harp of gold  
Before the Father's throne,  
There cast my crown of righteousness,  
And sing what grace has done.

Come, Lord, and take unto Thyself  
Thy church, that longs for home,  
To Thee our hearts, with longing, cry,  
Come, Jesus, quickly come.

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"Blessed is the man that endureth temptation, for when he is tried he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love Him" (James 1. 12).

"A crown of righteousness which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give . . . unto all them that love His appearing" (2 Tim. 4. 8).

## “THE HEAD OF THE BODY, THE ASSEMBLY.”

(Colossians 1. 18).

H. J. Vine.

THERE is much laudation of the church and its activities in Christendom, but where is heard the praise of its Head? Many voices and pens proclaim the worth and works of the churches, but where is to be discovered the Holy Spirit's grace which glorifies Him who is the Head of the body, the assembly? To exalt the church with ecclesiastical pride at the expense of our glorious Head must greatly grieve Him. “By one Spirit are we all baptized into one body” (1 Cor. 12. 13), “and the Spirit of Truth glorifies Him who is the Head of the body” (John 16. 14).

Believers on our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, are saved by grace and justified by faith. They are sealed by the Spirit and Christ is their righteousness. In Him too they stand in divine favour. In “the Beloved” their acceptance is eternal and changeless, but the righteousness of God, and not their own, is their glory and joy. Rest and peace are theirs also, through faith in the finished work of the Saviour of sinners. Blessed now within the impregnable bulwark of God's righteousness, they are at leisure to behold the beauty and perfectness of the Lord; at liberty to rejoice in the exalted Head of the assembly; to praise the One who is rejected and slighted on earth, but highly honoured in heaven—“*Heaven's beloved One.*”

THE HEAD OF THE BODY is definitely named for us in Colossians 1. 13. There “*His dear Son*” should read “*THE SON of His love.*” The connecting passage says, “*Give thanks to THE FATHER, who has made*

*us fit for sharing the portion of the saints in light, who has delivered us from the authority of darkness, and translated us into the kingdom of THE SON of His love: IN WHOM we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins*” (N. T.). This One, “THE SON,” is “THE HEAD of the body, the assembly” (verse 18). In the intervening verses great and glorious things are said concerning Him,—reaching from eternity down into time, then up into glory, and on again to eternity; but it is THE SON—so beautifully named ‘the Son of the Father's love’—who is the Head of the body. This is of immense importance.

Other names, titles, offices and distinctions are elsewhere given by the Spirit. Here, where the personal glory of the Christ is pre-eminent, THE SON, by whom and for whom all things were created, is named as the assembly's Head. He is the Head and Centre of all. Because He is Creator, He is the Firstborn in the Creation, i.e., the pre-eminent One; He is the image of Him who is invisible, because He is the Son of the Father's love, the One by whom the invisible God is made known; thanks flow to the Father, because we have been set in the kingdom of the Son of His love, and He has given us fitness to share in light and love as liberated from the authority of darkness; because the Son is to hold pre-eminence in all things, He is the glorious Head of the assembly,—the first place thus is His consequent upon His resurrection; because full reconciliation is to be brought to pass by the Son, all the fulness was pleased to dwell in Him.

The Son is the One in whom, through whom and for (unto) whom "all things were created" (16); and the holding of all things together in counselled order and blessing is by the Son, who the Spirit tells us is "BEFORE ALL" (17). Now in resurrection He holds pre-eminence in all things as the Head of the body, the assembly, having brought us already into reconciliation "in the body of His flesh through death" (22). The Son is the Head in the creation because He created; the Son is Head in the reconciliation because He is both Creator and Reconciler. And He is the Head of the body, the assembly, thus.

"GROW UP TO HIM in all things, who is the Head," are the words of Ephesians 4. 15. And we are to speak the truth in love in view of this. That the body may be edified He has given gifts from above, till "we all arrive at the unity of the faith and of *the knowledge of THE SON OF GOD*" (13). This is of great importance, for the danger is that babes in Christ become ensnared in "systematized error." The sleight and cunning of unprincipled men scheme to this end (14). Colossians 2. 8 shows too that danger lies in "philosophy and vain deceit"—in what is "*not after Christ.*" The fact is, the One who is the Head of the body is also "the Head of all principality and power." "*In Him dwells all the FULNESS OF THE GODHEAD* bodily, and in Him ye are FILLED FULL" (9). Our completeness is there! What folly then to turn elsewhere! to cease "holding fast the Head, from whom all the body, ministered to and united together by joints and bands, increases with the increase of God" (19, N.T.). Mark, "the increase of God." Through one and

another the vital supplies which are complete and perfect in Him reach us to this end. May we never be diverted from Himself! The recent revival was through saints being recovered to the truth of the Head! Declension is from that. Pompous ecclesiasticalism boasts of "one body," but the Holy Spirit glorifies the Head; and faith leads to "*holding fast the Head.*" It is thus that the vital organism, His body, is nourished. All that diverts from Him in whom all fulness resides is hurtful. To depart from the exercise of faith is not good. Organizations soon take the place of the living organism when faith is forsaken. Committees, traditions, councils, funds, unions, officials, man-made fellowships and regulations from some earthly headquarters multiply, and displace faith in the living all-sufficient Head of the body, the assembly. Things and men present to sight loom largely, and the hidden Head in heaven is forgotten. Like the school boy, who begins well when his eye is on the copy-head; but becoming pleased with his own writing, and copying that, he loses light of the headline and copies his own copy with increasingly bad results; so, with the eyes closed to the perfection and all-sufficiency of the living Head of the assembly, many are copying church copies, studying church histories for guidance, instead of progressing diligently in "the faith once delivered to the saints," "holding fast the Head." There is no need to turn elsewhere, but to speak the truth in love, as we are told, and to "GROW UP TO HIM IN ALL THINGS," not merely in some things.

"COMPLETE IN HIM" (Col. 2. 10). In Ephesians the assembly according to God's gracious purpose

is seen; but be it specially noticed, in Colossians the true Head of the assembly Himself is named. The infinite greatness of His *personal* glories are stated. The One who is the assembly's Head is made known. It is here where the eternal Spirit speaks so beautifully of Him as *THE SON of the Father's love* (1. 13, N. T.), "by whom and for whom all things were created," and states His various distinctions both from *before* and in Creation; in revelation, in resurrection, and in the reconciliation; showing us how He brings all into blessing, order and glory; for all fulness was pleased to dwell in Him in view of this. "Before all" and the Creator of all, He is the Reconciler of all, and the Head of the body, the assembly; holding the Pre-eminence in all thus, and holding all things together, as we have said. All this because of the glorious grace and greatness of the Son Himself. All is brought into reconciliation to the fulness in Him, though the irreconcilably wicked find their assigned lot in the place prepared for the devil and his angels.

It is because of the Son's personal grace and greatness that reconciliation takes place for the divine pleasure. How equitable and satisfying to see the Creator Son bringing His creation into reconciliation! What joy and praise arise as we see that the Son who does this is our glorious Head! How infinite is the fulness which is in Him. How immense are the blessed results! Glory, glory to His wondrous Name!

"Joyful shall the wide creation  
Rest in undisturbed repose."

The fulness was pleased to dwell in Him in view of this. But we also are filled full (so "*complete*," should read) in Him, in whom "the fulness of the Godhead dwells

bodily." More than satisfying to the spiritual heart and mind, this causes glad worship and blessing to flow forth.

It was Jesus who said, "No man knoweth the Son but the Father." He also said, "Learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart." What a mighty contrast to a harsh world of boastfulness and pride! In Him dwells the fulness! He is the Head of the body, the assembly! We are reconciled as we have said to the Fulness "in the body of His flesh through death!" Soon He will come again! Then we shall be glorified together with Him! Then all things will be reconciled by Him! He has laid the righteous foundation in the blood of His cross! He is over all to the assembly the glorified Head already! Soon His body will be glorified also! But the unmeasured fulness in Him is for His body now! We repeat, *in Him* is the fulness.

Growing up to Him, we better know how to appreciate that fulness. Complete in Him—filled full in Him, its all-sufficiency and blessedness are ours. To know Him, to know Himself, preserves from broken cisterns, and causes the revived heart to worship and adore, and the revived spirit to glorify His holy Name. REVIVED, the Father and the Son are honoured and magnified! The Unction from the Holy One fills the gladdened soul! Rivers of living water flow out to the thirsty! Our glorious Head fails not to sustain the vital supplies which flow forth! Our exalted Head, the Son, is all-sufficient. Exceedingly significant is God's last invitation in the inspired Volume: "*Let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the WATER OF LIFE freely.*"

## ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

## "Reckon yourselves dead to sin." Romans 6. 11.

"Would you mind giving your thought on the following statement, 'The point at issue is, whether we reckon ourselves dead because we are dead, or whether our having died really consists in the Christian in the reckoning. I do not believe that the former is the thought of Scripture.' This is a quotation from the writings of — (a well-known teacher of the Word) and has caused some thought, being contrary to what I had always understood."—BARRHEAD.

WE do not accept this statement as the truth. We believe that our only title to reckon ourselves to be dead to sin and alive unto God in Christ Jesus lies in the fact that we are dead to sin in God's account—we reckon ourselves dead because we are dead. Faith accepts God's word and thinks His thoughts and orders its ways accordingly. The whole argument of Romans 6 is based upon the God-declared fact that we are dead (verse 2). And our baptism is the ratification of this on our side, we were committed by it unto the death of Christ. And our reckoning is the practical carrying out in our daily lives what is true of us before God.

Difficulties come in perhaps, because what "sin" stands for in this chapter is not grasped. It is, first, the sphere and character of life in which men live, and second, a tyrant under which they groan. Every member of Adam's race comes into this sphere at birth, he has a nature that lives and moves and has its being in it, and in no other, for as was the disobedient head of the race so is every member of it, they all live unto themselves and do their own wills and not God's, and so condemnation and death lie upon them all; this is shewn in the latter part of chapter 5. But the Christian can say that that condemnation and death which justly lay upon him passed upon his holy Representative and Substitute when Jesus died, "for God hath made Him to

be sin for us, who knew no sin"; He "sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh." In the death of Christ our relation to the old sinful Adam race and its condemnation was severed and grace has set us *in Christ*, and given us the life and nature of the new race of which Christ risen is the Head. We could not be both in Adam and in Christ at the same time. God sees us in Christ, and we surely are where God sees us. Shall we continue in sin—the old Adam life of self-pleasing and disobedience? "God forbid, how shall we who are dead to sin live any longer therein." But suppose my experience contradicts that statement, and I feel that I am not dead to sin? Well, I have to reckon myself dead to it, and alive unto God in Christ Jesus. And "reckon" does not mean pretend something that is not a fact. It means, I take my stand on this great truth declared to me in the Word of God, that in the death of Christ I am dead to sin. I am not *in Adam* before God; his sinful life and nature are no longer mine in God's reckoning, though they are still in me, but I am *in Christ*, alive unto God in Him, with God as my object now even as He has, and God my strength also, that I might live unto Him. This is a new sphere of life, and in the joy of it, it will be no hardship, but the greatest possible relieve, to repudiate the old life of sin, to reckon myself dead to it.

Then if "sin" assumes the role of taskmaster, as in the latter part of the chapter, we are not to respond to its demand, for it has no lawful claim upon us now. The case of a slave will illustrate: The master wakens him every morning and drives him to his toil, and the poor wretch has no redress, he must obey, he can do no other, but there comes a morning when the tyrant calls and cracks his whip as before but there is no answer on the slaves part. What has happened? He is dead. This slave experience was ours, we were "sold under sin" (Romans 7); how well some of us have known it! But we are dead to sin by the death

of Christ, and that death has redeemed us from all bondage to a new life of liberty, and we are not to respond to the old tyrant any more. We have a new Master, we yield ourselves to God, who is infinitely blessed in His grace towards us, and our members are to be yielded as instruments of righteousness in practical life. But we do not gain this joyous liberty by efforts to reckon ourselves dead to sin in order to be dead to it, that is the useless struggle of ch. 7, but we accept the fact as God has stated it and act accordingly by the power of the new life which is ours in Christ Jesus.

## The Destruction of Moab.

In Isaiah xv. and xvi. the complete destruction of Moab is predicted, and it is definitely stated that it would come to pass "within three years" (chap. xvi. 14). Yet in Jeremiah xlvi. we find Jeremiah, 126 years later, also predicting the overthrow of Moab. Some of his predictions are almost word for word like those of Isaiah. Please explain. Is the prophecy of Jonah about Nineveh's destruction in 40 days a parallel? For, according to Nahum, Nineveh was not destroyed till 149 years after Jonah's day.—ALDERTON.

WE do not think that the case of Nineveh is any parallel to that of Moab, for in their case there was true repentance before God as a result of Jonah's mission, and so the judgment of their city was postponed. There was nothing of this sort in the case of Moab; instead of repentance in sackcloth and ashes, we read: "We have heard of the arrogance of Moab—he is very proud—of his pride, his arrogance, and his wrath: his prating is vain. Therefore shall Moab howl for Moab, everyone of them shall howl" (Isa. 16. 6). Hence the judgment came upon them, yet they had three years warning of it, but they evidently paid no heed to it. They had had a longer warning than that, for verse 13 reads, "This is the word that Jehovah hath spoken from of

old concerning Moab." That which He had spoken came to pass within three years of Isaiah's prediction, but though the great multitude of them were to be brought to naught, yet the verse distinctly states that there would be a remnant left: "The remnant shall be very small and feeble"—"small, few, of no account" (New. Trans.). Now suppose that remnant had not numbered, more than 200 families, it could easily have grown into a nation of 2,000,000 during the 126 years that intervened between Isaiah's day and Jeremiah's. We learn from its history and description given in the Word that the land of Moab was a rich and highly productive land, and its people were probably prolific. They must have been almost exterminated several times in their history, yet they sur-

vived and prospered again. David cast them down to the ground, and "measured them with two lines to put to death and one line to keep alive," which probably means that two thirds of them were destroyed. One hundred and fifty years afterwards the whole land was laid waste by the kings of Israel, Judah and Edom (2 Kings 3), but one hundred and seventy years later they were the proud and wealthy people that Isaiah describes in his 15th and 16th chapters.

The reason why Jeremiah's prediction as to the destruction of Moab

should be similar to that of Isaiah's surely lies in the fact that they were unchanged in their character and unrepentant for their pride and sin. This is plainly indicated in Jer. 48. 11, "Moab hath been at ease from his youth . . . his taste remained in him, and his scent is not changed." Similar sin would bring similar judgment. We do not believe, as some critics say, that Isaiah and Jeremiah both quoted from some earlier and unknown prophet; we believe they were both inspired by the Spirit of God to tell forth the Word of God, as they declared they were.

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## How will those who pierced the Lord see Him when He comes?

1. When will Caiaphas see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven? (Matt. 26, 64).
2. When Christ comes with the clouds, how will every eye, particularly those who pierced Him, see Him? Does it mean their souls in hell will behold Him? (Rev. 1. 7).—ALDERTOWN. 2.

**WE** should say that the Lord addressed Caiaphas as the head and representative of the unbelieving nation of the Jews, and those who will see Him coming in the clouds of glory will be those of that nation alive at the time of His coming. "Those that pierced Him" (Rev. 1. 7) would apply to the same people, and Zechariah 12. 10 undoubtedly refers to the nation as such, and not to the men who actually did the piercing. Indeed it was the Roman soldiers who drove the nails and the spear into His sacred body, but it was the nation of the Jews that delivered Him up, and clamoured for His crucifixion. And they stand to that deed unto this day; there has been no national repentance about it, and the guilt of it still lies at their door, and will until

they see Him when repentance will be granted to them.

Caiaphas and all those who came into contact with Him, had the opportunity of salvation through His Name, when His apostles preached this is in the Acts. If they refused this they will certainly see Him, not as souls in hell, but as raised up from the dead by His power in the last resurrection; they will stand before the great white throne (Rev. 20) when they will be judged according to their works. But they will be judged as individuals, as will all who have died in their sins, for that judgment will not be national but personal. The passages in question have to say to those who will be alive at His coming in glory, when judgment will be executed upon nations (see Matthew 25).

## Moffat's Translation and John's Gospel.

"I incline to accept Moffat's suggestion that originally chapters 15 and 16 of John's Gospel came after the opening words of ch. 13. 31 (later part) and ch. 14 were after ch. 16. So that from 13. 31 we read, 'When he (Judas) had gone out Jesus said: I am the true Vine and My Father is the Vinedresser: He cuts away any branch on Me which is not bearing fruit.' The Lord accepts the departure of Judas as the Father's cutting off; and the cleaning of the fruitful branches would also be the Father's care—not His own as in chap. 13. The Vine is for Earth, yes, but the Lord does not bring out the truth of it till the eve of His departure, and the branches were to be left here for the Father (the Vinedresser) to tend, and the Father would be glorified in their bearing 'rich' (not 'much') fruit. Chap. 14 (coming later) prepares the heart for a measure of nearer intimacy and is a fitting porch for entry into the wonder of chap. 17."—TORONTO.

WE do not like this re-arrangement of these precious chapters nor can we accept it as right. The Divine way seems to be to present the privilege and the fulness of the blessing and the supply before the responsibility and the demand. It is the way of grace, and as effectual as it is beautiful. This order comes out in these chapters in a striking way, at least so it appears to us. The Lord set before the disciples the place that they would have in the world during His absence very plainly. It was not to be an easy place and great things were expected of them and great demands would be made upon them, but He prepares them for this by first telling them of the provision that He would make for them.

Could anything be more sustaining, more comforting to hearts in sorrow and trial than the thought of His coming again for His own, that where He is there they would be? He began with that. He followed that by telling them that though<sup>fn</sup> absent from them He would not forget them, but would intercede with the Father for them, and the Father would shew His great interest in them and His love for them by sending them another Comforter, the Spirit of Truth, who would abide with them for ever. We can understand the most timid disciple

saying, I could face anything with that. If the Son intercedes for me and the Father loves me enough to send His Spirit to me, and if the Spirit dwells in me and is to abide with me for ever, I have no further need, for I am cared for by the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. But there is more. The Comforter would see to it that nothing of all that He had said to them would be lost; they would have it all for their continual guidance and joy, and as they treasured His word and kept it, they would have the abiding presence of the Father and their Lord. His peace also He would give unto them, to be theirs even as it was His, that they might be preserved from all disquiet and dismay in a peaceless world. What more could be asked for? The 14th chapter fills up the disciples' cup and they were made ready by it for the words with which it closes: "Arise, let us go hence."

That "hence" was the sorrow of Golgotha for the Lord, but for the disciples it meant the outside place of fruit-bearing and testimony. First the inside place of communion with the Lord, and of equipment and preparation, and then the outside place where the fruit and the power were to be produced and displayed. They were to take up the responsibility of fruit-bearing under the

Father's culture and to be witnesses in the world that would hate them because they belonged to Christ. But they were to take this place of vigorous Christian life as guided and enlightened by the Spirit of Truth and as being in intimate communion with the Father, who would do for them all that they asked in the Lord's Name. When the end of chapter 16 was reached the Lord could say no more to them, nor could they

have taken it in if He had, but His heart was still full, and He pours His desires for them into His Father's ear while they stood by and wondered.

Again we say we do not like Moffatt's juggling with these chapters; we believe there is Divine order in them as they stand in our Bibles, and that would be greatly spoiled by the suggested change.

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## The Spirit of God.

*"He abides with you, and shall be in you"* (John 14. 17).

**T**HERE is a new power in you if you have believed the gospel of your salvation, and that power is the Spirit of God. You could not know the things of God unless by the Spirit of God. Everything you know of God you know by the Spirit of God; and you never lose that knowledge. You may lose something you have heard, or a conception of your own mind, but you will never lose anything that the Spirit of God has imparted, it is yours; and that is your true spiritual stature before God. You may get under a cloud because of your careless ways, and lose your enjoyment of this grace, but when the cloud is gone, you are sure to come back to where you were. The Spirit's work remains.

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## The Study of Scripture.

**I**N studying any part of Scripture, endeavour to discover the object for which it was written, each book and epistle has its own special theme, which does not clash with any other, but fits in harmoniously with the whole. If you keep the object of the book before you you have power in reading it, like a retriever keeping to his game.

The word 'gospel' occurs more than sixty times from Romans to Philemon. It is the gospel that people need. None can make progress in the truth who do not know what it is, like the prodigal, to make merry with the Father.

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## The Christian's Path.

**W**HAT a blessed pathway is that which the Christian treads, we see it patterned in Paul, he began with prayer (Acts 9)—a dependent man on earth looking up to God in heaven—it ended in glory—to depart to be with Christ which is far better (Phil. 1.), and the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ was sufficient for him in every time of trial on the way (2 Cor. 12).

# THE HOLY SPIRIT IN THE EPISTLE TO THE GALATIANS.

J. T. Mawson.

## Notes on a Bible Reading.

THE Christians in Galatia had been bewitched by a perverted gospel, which is a very popular gospel to-day, but in reality is no gospel at all, for it had removed them from Him who had called them unto the grace of Christ. This false gospel was, that while, of course, Christ cannot be left out of the question, yet it is necessary that a man bring in his own works in order to be fully right with God. He may begin with Christ but he must trust to himself also and bring in the law and his keeping of its enactments. It was a mixture of grace and law, which won't mix, for if a man could be justified by the works of the law, there would be no need for grace at all, and Christ has died in vain.

In the 3rd chapter of the Epistle Paul begins his great argument by challenging them as to how they received the Holy Spirit. Was it by the works of the law or by the hearing of faith?

QUES.: *Explain the difference between the works of the law and the hearing of faith.*

By the works of the law, everything depended upon the man himself. If he succeeded in keeping the whole law he was all right, but if he didn't, the curse rested on him, "for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them" (verse 10). As no man ever did keep the law, and as the flesh nature is in deadly opposition to it, it follows that every man who goes on that line, instead

of getting the blessing is under the curse.

*The hearing of faith* brings God in. You listen to what He has to say. "Faith cometh by hearing (not by working) and hearing by the Word of God." Has He any good news for condemned and helpless sinners? Yes, He has. It is wonderful news. "Our Lord Jesus Christ, gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father" (ch. 1. 4). What a crime it is to spoil that. To hear and believe that gospel means that a man turns from his works and from himself as possessing any good, or having any hope of salvation by his own efforts, and turns to God. It is now with him a question of what God is and can do for him through Christ Jesus and not what he is himself or can do for himself and God.

QUES.: *Why does he say, "Received ye the Spirit" and not "Received ye the Saviour?"*

We believe on our Lord Jesus Christ, the Saviour, and we receive the Spirit in consequence. That seems to be the way the Scripture puts it. The gospel is concerning God's Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, and we are sealed by the Spirit when we believe the gospel (Eph. 1. 13, 14). I wonder if gospel preachers are sufficiently impressed with the fact that the present purpose of the gospel is that men might receive the Holy Spirit. That comes out in Peter's first sermon in the Acts. "Repent and be baptised

every one of you in the Name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost" (Acts 2. 38).

QUES.: *Why do you link on the Spirit to the gospel and not to church truth?*

There could not be any church, apart from the Holy Spirit, "Ye are all baptised into one body by the Holy Spirit." But that is not the side of truth presented here. Here the gift of the Holy Spirit is part of the gospel: God could not give to us a greater gift. He gave His Son for us, that is the unspeakable gift, but He gives His Spirit to us. When a man believes the gospel, God says, That man belongs to Me, and He takes possession of him by His Spirit. The Spirit seals Him as God's property. This is a great evidence of His love.

I heard a very illuminating remark made by a brother. He said, "I would not give you my spirit if I could, Why? Because you'd know too much about me if I did. But God has given His Spirit to us because He wants us to know all about Him." It is by the Spirit that we enter into the joy and peace of the new life that grace has given us in Christ Jesus, and "the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit that is given unto us."

QUES.: *The flesh and the Spirit are set in contrast in this Epistle. What is meant by the term "the flesh"?*

We must distinguish between the expression in ch. 2. 20, and the way it is used elsewhere in the Epistle. There it is the body, the life of flesh and blood, but elsewhere it is the term used for what is entirely evil. It describes the natural condition of unregenerate man, whose will is

opposed to God's. "They that are in the flesh cannot please God" (Romans 8. 8). There it is plain that it is not the body that is in question, for our bodies may be living sacrifices to God. It is that evil principle in man which makes self the centre of all his thoughts and actions instead of God. This is its very nature which cannot be changed: "it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." It was this flesh that was under trial under the law in the Old dispensation, and the law only demonstrated its badness. It should not be difficult to see what folly it was to turn from "the grace of Christ," which gave life, righteousness and power, to that which could only bring condemnation and death upon men.

QUES.: *Why were they, and why are people now, guilty of such folly?*

Well "the grace of Christ" makes nothing of us; it takes up those who are without merit, in whom dwells no good thing; it makes no demands, and asks no price. It gives its blessing to and receives into favour a brutal pagan like the Philippian jailor equally with a pharisee of the pharisees like Saul of Tarsus. To grace "there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek; for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon Him (Romans 10. 12). You may say, that surely ought to be acceptable, but it is not, people don't like it; they don't like to have no cause for boasting in themselves especially is this so with those who have built up a proud religious self. But when those who have been blest by this grace, fall from it (ch. 5. 4) and turn again to the weak and beggarly elements whereunto they desire again to be in bondage (ch. 4. 9), it is fairly certain that self

has never been eclipsed by Christ, and that true Christian liberty has been but poorly realized, if at all. So the flesh which is in us all reasserts itself in them and would take credit to itself for being religious, ritualistic, perhaps benevolent, and even separate from worldly things; but sanctified, religious flesh is a poor substitute for the glorified Christ.

*QUES.: The fact that the law has been set aside as a means of blessing, does not mean that there was any fault in it. Please say something about that and why grace has superseded it?*

No: "The law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just and good" (Romans 7. 12), but it could do nothing with the flesh, "it was weak through the flesh" (Romans 8. 3), and only proved how bad the flesh was. Let us have an illustration. You are, we will suppose, the best cabinet maker in the town and have the best of tools. I bring a piece of timber to your workshop and say, "I believe that to be a fine piece of timber and I want you to make a table of it for me." I call after a few days and say, "How are you getting on with my table?" "Not at all," you say. "Why, how is that," I ask, "I was told you were a first class workman and had the best of tools." "That's all true," you say, "no better work is turned out of any shop than mine; but your timber is rotten. Look for yourself, my saw only shewed up how rotten your timber is, I can make nothing of it. If you are to have your table you will have to get an entirely new piece of timber. Let me shew you," you say, and you take your saw and prove to me by it that my prized timber can never be turned into a table. The law has proved that no

good thing can be made of the flesh, it has only brought out its badness. Having done that it has done its work, as the saw did its work with the timber, and just as I say, Throw the rotten timber out, so we are brought, sometimes by bitter experience, to condemn the flesh in us, and sin which is its very nature, and to have done with it. We can do this, because "God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh" (Rom. 8. 3). It is here that grace is appreciated and we can rejoice that we are not in the flesh but in the Spirit. We have received the Spirit by the hearing of faith and we rejoice in that and walk in the Spirit, instead of wasting our time on the rotten timber.

*QUES.: It does not say we have received the Spirit by faith, but by THE HEARING OF FAITH. Is that important?*

It is most important, for there are some who in a mystical way claim to have been baptised by the Spirit, as they call it, apart from the Word of God altogether. No, that is false and pernicious. The truth is that we receive the Spirit on believing a testimony from God; we believe the report that He sends us, for faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God. God reveals Himself to us in the word of the gospel that He sends us, we believe that He is as good as His word; as Abraham did, we are justified in consequence, as he was, and we are sealed by the Spirit. "That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith."

*QUES.: There are two beautiful statements in ch. 4. 4-7. I will read*

them. "But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. 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." Do these verses follow on in our subject?

Yes, they do, and wonderfully comprehensive they are. They bring out the absolute sovereignty of God's love when we were without hope in ourselves. The Triune God has wrought to bring us into the relationship of sons with the Father, and to make us intelligent and happy in it. What a wonderful gospel these verses unfold. We Gentiles were never put under the law by God, but we were under the yoke of sin and as far away from God as we could be and we needed redemption from our bondage, just as much as the Jew needed it from his. But the statement includes both Gentile and Jew, for if the Son of God came of a woman, it was with man-kind in view; if He came under the law, it was that the Jew or anyone else who was under it might be delivered from it. But it was God who sent forth His Son, at the right time, when the law had done its work and there was no hope for man in it, when it was proved that man could bring nothing to God and that God's testing of him by the law only brought out the worst that was in him, then God sent forth His best—His Son. What wonderful love! And He did not send Him forth in the splendour of His eternal glory to fill us with

fear, but He came of a woman. Thus was God's first promise made in the hearing of sinful Adam and Eve fulfilled. The eternal Son became a babe, the Seed of the woman, laid in the manger and tended by His virgin mother, and He came under the law, and thus was fulfilled God's promise to Abraham. He was the Seed of Abraham—a Jew—in whom all nations were to be blest.

QUES.: *But it was not enough that He became Man. His death was necessary, wasn't it?*

Yes, and such a death. If we were to be redeemed from the curse of the law Christ had to be made a curse for us; if we were to be set free from sin, He had to be made sin for us. He hung upon the tree for us, and "cursed is everyone that hangeth on a tree" (ch. 3. 13).

And now we who were bond-slaves and far off have been received into sonship. God can do as He pleases, when He acts sovereignly. Under the Old Covenant—the law—God was limited by the conditions that men accepted but did not honour. In grace He acts according to His own desires, without any limitations. He does as He pleases. He might have made us servants and that would have been good, just as the prodigal thought that his father might have sent him into the kitchen to share the servants' bread, but that would not have satisfied his father's heart, nor would anything like that have satisfied God. He has nothing for us but the best. "Wherefore thou art no more a servant but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ."

QUES.: *Chapter 3 says that we received the Spirit by the hearing of faith, and here we learn that it*

IS BECAUSE WE ARE SONS *that God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts. Is there any difference?*

The first passage shews how the Spirit is received, and the second shews the character of the Spirit when He is received. He comes to us as the Spirit of God's Son sent forth by God from heaven. The Son was sent forth from heaven to redeem us, and the Spirit of the Son has been sent forth to indwell us and to lead us consciously and intelligently into this new relationship with God, which He in His marvellous grace had purposed for us. It is by the Spirit that we cry, "Abba, Father."

QUES.: *What is the meaning of that?*

It shews the nature and freedom of our relationship and approach to God. We are not at a distance from Him, nor are the great names by which He was known in Old Testament days the names by which we specially know Him, though they abide. To us He is Father. He has adopted us into His family, making us His sons, but if He had done that and no more, we might have felt utterly strange in such a relationship, but now having the Spirit of His Son, we are not strangers in it. We know the Father, we can enter into His thoughts and enjoy His love. The Spirit of His Son is our capacity for this, and we say, Abba, Father, to Him. The very way in which Jesus confidingly addressed Him is the way we address Him now, and the way we address Him shews the freedom we have in His presence. We are not servants to God but sons.

QUES.: *You speak of freedom, and I remember that we are told "the truth shall make you free, and the*

*Son shall make you free." Has that anything to do with this, and is it freedom from sin that is in question?*

The words you quote are in John 8, and of course freedom from sin is an absolute necessity for the enjoyment of sonship freedom. "Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin"; from such bondage only grace and truth can set us free. But "if the Son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed." He makes us free with the freedom of the house, we have access to the Father who loves us as He loves His Son, and His Son shares His own place and relationship before the Father with those upon whom His choice and favour thus rests. It is inconceivable apart from sovereign grace, but it is the revelation of God's thoughts of love towards us. If we want to know the greatness and blessedness of this freedom we must learn it as set forth in Christ, the beloved Son, but we could not know it at all apart from the Spirit of the Son. He has come into our hearts that it might not be a mere dogma but a living and blessed reality.

QUES.: *And when people go back to efforts at law-keeping and ordinances and ritual as the Galatians were doing, they go back from that blessedness?*

Yes, they give up the shadow for the substance, like the dog in the fable, that when crossing a stream with a piece of meat in its mouth saw the meat reflected in the water, and snapped at the reflection and lost the meat. Or to leave the faulty fable and turn to the perfect parable. Suppose the son in the father's house had said, My father is very good and this fare is very good, but if I am to keep my father's good

will I must go into the kitchen and live as a servant and not a son. I must speak to my father as the servants do and not as a son should. Would not that be folly? And would it not prove that the prodigal had failed altogether to appreciate the full and unconditional character of his father's grace and love? Yet Christians who stand at

a distance, and attempt to worship God by forms and ceremonies, according to the ritual of the past dispensation, and who put a priest between themselves and God, are doing this. They are not standing fast in their Christ-given liberty; they are not crying by the Spirit of sonship, "Abba, Father."

(To be continued.)

## The True Light.

W. Taylor.

**B**RIGHT Dayspring from on high,  
 Incarnate Living Word,  
 For grace that brought Thee down to die,  
 We give Thee thanks, O Lord.

Brightness of light unseen,  
 Herald of things above,  
 In Thy blest face, without a screen,  
 We read that God is love.

Earth's shadows disappear,  
 When, Lord, we turn to thee,  
 Our spirits breathe the morning air,  
 Of Heaven and liberty.

To fainting souls, Thy light,  
 Doth hope and courage give:  
 From Thee, despairing sons of night,  
 New life and strength receive.

Yes, strength to shine like Thee,  
 Some other hearts to cheer:  
 Illumined by thy love, set free  
 From selfishness and fear.

O Life of men and Light,  
 Extend thy healing ray:  
 Dispel the shades of error's night,  
 O'er all Thy sceptre sway.

Then shall the earth awake,  
 To righteousness and Thee,  
 Forget its sorrow and partake  
 Of Heaven's felicity.

Jesus, Thou hast unveiled,  
 The Mystery of love,  
 O'er death and sin, hast Thou prevailed:  
 All praise to Thee above.

## Power and Joy.

**A** BIRD never sings until it flies; its true instincts are fulfilled when it is on the wing, and if a wing be injured or broken there is no singing, no true joy until recovery. So the Christian must rise up out of worldly and earthly things—mount up on wings as eagles—before he can make melody in his heart to the Lord. How often have I discovered myself to be like a bird with a broken wing—no power, no song. Spiritual revival, and a fresh sense of the love that passes knowledge, makes all the difference; restoring grace comes from the Lord and the result of this grace is that we rise up in renewed spiritual power and joy. To be restored thus and maintained in the power must be our desire and prayer.

## The Closing days.

**I** SEE the remarkable character of the 'closing hour. The faithful have but one object, and that is Christ Himself. To me it resembles the disciples at the first, not thinking of anything to do but, of getting to Himself, and I think the end will be just like that, the saints making the Lord their one absorbing Object, not the church or anything else.

(J. B. S.)

## THE CROSS.

James Boyd.

I DO not think that anyone who has made a study of the Word of God, and who has found the knowledge of Him who is the Author of the blessed things that are therein, is likely to suppose that anything that has taken place in the whole creation was unforeseen by the Creator. He knows the end from the beginning, and all else that lies between these two extremes. When He called the worlds into existence everything that He eventually brought forth was as clearly before His mind as it shall be in the hour in which His purposes are completed.

And what a glorious hour that shall be when the last touch of the finger of Him who is infinite in wisdom, power and love shall be given to a spotless universe brilliant with the glory of redemption, and filled with the fulness of Him who is the Image of the Invisible. What unspeakable delight shall then fill the hearts of the many sons brought to glory; and what infinite satisfaction shall fill His vision, who shall see in those sons brought to glory the fruit of His sore travail, when He made His soul an offering for sin, and with what shouts of joy shall He be greeted, who bore for us the heavy burden of divine displeasure against our deeds, and to the very dregs drank that bitter cup, bitter on account of our wicked lawlessness.

And His spotless Bride, for whom He laid down His life, shall be there adorned for her husband, His fair and glorious companion unto the ages of the ages. For out of heaven a mighty voice shall be heard saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He shall dwell with them, their God, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall

be with them. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain, for the former things are passed away."

*The cross of our Lord Jesus Christ* is the basis upon which all this marvellous display of glory rests. It is the eternal centre of that bright universe of blessing, and the glory of redemption shall illuminate the whole universe, for the glory of redemption is the love of God. With this, yea, with Himself, Jesus shall fill all things. Into the lower parts of the earth He descended, and from thence went up far above all heavens, in order that He might fill all things. All that God is in love came to light in the cross, and this will fill the eternal universe.

In the cross we see what man is in reference to God. No one can be hidden. The children of Jacob, who have been set in a certain relationship with the true God were there, and those of that people who were most unreasonably active in their hostility to Christ were the leaders of that people, and the men most zealous for the traditions of their religion. But the Pagan was also there, and carelessly carrying out the will of the hierarchy of the Jewish nation. Herod the Edomite also had a large share in the humiliation of the Christ. Pilate would have saved Jesus had he not been afraid of displeasing Caesar. Herod with his men of war had set Him at naught, Pilate crucified Christ and gave to the nation the man they desired—a robber and a murderer.

In the cross man's rebellion and hatred against God were exhibited in all brutality, and this was the answer of the world to the unspeak-

able grace and love of a Saviour God. And the reason of all this insane hatred was because in Jesus God had come out in manifestation. He had displayed Himself in the most infinite compassion. And as Jesus was the one in whom God came to light the reproaches of them that reproached God fell upon him.

There was nothing about Jesus that was admirable in the eyes of the fallen child of Adam. He had no form nor comeliness. He was despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; and we hid as it were our faces from Him; He was despised, and we esteemed Him not. They regarded Him as stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted, but in a coming day those who so regarded Him shall learn that He was wounded for their transgressions, and for their iniquities was He bruised, and that it was by His stripes they were healed. What a day that will be for the Jewish nation! Lord hasten it.

Until that day comes they have got the man of their choice, the robber and murderer. They chose him, and they have had him with them in every part of the world; robbery and murder have pursued them. And deeper sorrows await them. The robber and the murderer will make one more effort to destroy them utterly. The troubles that await them are those that called forth from the heart of Christ the bitter lamentation: "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not" (Matt. 23, 37).

The demand of the nation could not be mistaken. It was: "Away

with this man, and release unto us Barabbas." And as to Jesus, they all say: "Let Him be crucified." Whatever Pilate might plead, and whatever he might advance on behalf of the Prisoner, nothing was of the least avail; their minds and hearts were bolted and barred against all compassion. He had healed their sick, He had fed their hungry, He had raised their dead, He had given sight to the blind—What had He not done to win their stubborn hearts? The answer to all this they will not for one moment consider. Their cry is: "Away with Him! Crucify Him!" Pilate now surrenders Him to their will and they lead Him away to crucifixion.

They surround His cross: they mock, they taunt, they deride Him. The chief priests, the scribes, the elders are there; and they join with the brainless multitude exulting in His apparently helpless condition. They are glad to glut their eyes upon His suffering body: they look and stare upon Him. They know nothing of the woes that beat in upon His wounded soul, while He cries to God who has forsaken Him, nor of the floods of deep waters which overflow Him. Whether before king Herod, or the rulers of the Jews, or now as He hung upon the cross, rebellion and hatred against His holy person are ruthlessly exhibited. But at the same moment there the flood-tide of divine compassion is let loose, and a way of salvation is being opened for sinners who were doing their utmost to destroy both Him and themselves.

Here we see the heart of the fallen children of men manifested in all its terrible hatred against Him who was at the same moment meeting that hatred with unfathomable love. Here we witness in the one spot both the

heart of heaven and the heart of hell. Here we have man displaying himself in the sight of the universe, not against man, but against the living God as manifest in Jesus. Could hell itself be guilty of a more dastard deed? Could a pandemonium of demons improve upon this spectacle? But it is man's opportunity, and he must avail himself of it. Such an opportunity was never his before, not from the fall of Adam until this present moment, and no other shall ever be required. The Lord says to them: "When I was daily with you in the temple, ye stretched forth no hands against Me: **BUT THIS IS YOUR HOUR, AND THE POWER OF DARKNESS**" (Luke 22. 53).

What more can be said? The heart of man, the heart of the world, the heart of the princes of this world, the heart of the educated, the refined, the wise, the prudent, the rulers, the elite; all banded together against Jehovah and His Anointed, the mad heart of a devil-deceived world laid open to the gaze of every intelligence in heaven and earth. What a cesspool of wickedness the human heart is! How terrible and loathsome is its exposure! Yet it had to be exposed if the sin that energised it was to be met by the fierce anger of a holy and righteous Judge. Sin that had reigned in the heart of fallen man from it entered this world must be allowed to declare itself in all its naked rebellion against God, and that in the sight of heaven, that its condemnation in the flesh, where it had its seat, might be understood and justified.

But the living God, the Creator, Upholder, and moral Governor of all creation has also come to light in His true character. Up till the time of the advent of Christ no one

had seen God at any time, but now the only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him. Up to the cross all that Christ said and did was the declaration of the hitherto invisible God. He was Almighty to Abraham, Jehovah to Israel, but Father as revealed in the Son. By certain individuals He was believed on. By some secretly, and by others confessedly, but as to the world, viewed as such, He was rejected utterly. Those who received Him were those who were born of God.

But not merely in His attributes is God to be known. Those who have got the knowledge of God know Him in His nature. Such can say: "We have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him" (1 John 4. 16). But to be known that love had to be revealed. And truly revealed it has been. "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). Just where man's enmity against God was revealed in all its awful insanity, there the love of God was declared in all its greatness, splendour, and glory.

In the pathway of His beloved Son through this world, and in the midst of the most privileged nation on earth, persecution unceasingly dogged His footsteps, and that increasing, until their hour came and the power of darkness ruled. Then the reins were thrown off the neck of the Jewish nation, the infernal powers were relieved of all restraint, and man was left to carry out his diabolic warfare against God, in the crucifixion of His only begotten Son. But however rebellious against God man might be, however abhorrent

to all that He is, the divine purpose in sending His Son must be accomplished. God will not deal with man as he deserves, but will retire upon what He is in His own blessed being, and therefore He so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life (John 3:16)

There was no other way for poor, lost, guilty man. It is all over with man after the flesh. That evil fleshly nature cannot be mended. It will always be rebellious, and will always hate God. What is to be done with him? He is not only a sinner, but a *lost* sinner. He must be forgiven his sins, but he must also be made anew. On what ground can God take him up in grace? He must act righteously. He cannot say to His holy angels, Sin is of no consequence. To say this He would also have to say, that the sacrifices offered in the past dispensations were without value, typical or efficacious. He cannot say that, for sin is of the utmost importance, and so He is pleased to show of what importance *man* is in giving His Son to suffer for our sins on the cross.

Christ has once suffered for sins, the Just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God (1 Peter 3:18). Him who knew no sin God has made sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him. On the cross He was made sin. He was the Sinbearer, and there He bore the judgment due to

the sinner. In the person of Christ on the cross God was dealing with sin, and as it was a cross lifted up between heaven and earth it was in the sight of every intelligence, so that all could learn the awful nature of sin, that cursed thing that had defiled and brought ruin into God's creation, and had dishonoured Him.

But His Son has borne the judgment, and has glorified God in bearing it. He has also laid a basis of righteousness upon which every counsel of God shall be fulfilled, and forgiveness preached to every sinner under heaven in the name of Jesus. To make all this possible for all, it cost the Christ more than the creature can ever know. But we know that He glorified God where we had dishonoured Him, He bore the curse that we might have the blessing, He suffered the hiding of the face of God that we might bask in the sunshine of it for all eternity. He took our place upon the cross that He might righteously give to us a place along with Himself in the Father's house on High. Who shall separate us from His love? Shall tribulation or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, WHICH IS IN CHRIST JESUS OUR LORD (Rom 8:35-39)

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## “Never Thirst.”

Who can measure the magnificence of the offer that the Lord made to the woman at Sychar's well—“It shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.” May the Lord arrest our hearts by the grandeur and suitability of this great gift.

## PRAYER. No. 3.

W. M. Rule.

## What it is and the necessary conditions.

6. *If ye abide in Me and My words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will and it shall be done unto you* (John 15. 7).

The Lord Jesus had just said to His disciples, "I am the Vine; ye are the branches," and referred to their bringing forth fruit, and also told them, "Apart from Me ye can do nothing." The illustration used is a very forcible one, for the Vine is only useful if it bears fruit, and moreover the fruit of the vine is gathered from the new branches and not from the old wood. In its spiritual application it is the grace of Christ reproduced in the saints for the eye of God the Father, Who is said to be the Husbandman. One of the necessary requisites for fruitbearing then, is that clinging dependence of the soul to Christ as illustrated by the branch abiding in the vine; drawing all its nourishment from Him and is expressed in the words, "If ye abide in Me." Here is the first condition to be observed if answers to our requests are to be granted. The spring of our desires arises from the new life we have as attached to Christ.

But there is a second condition, "And My words abide in you." The requests are produced in a heart formed by His words and according to the desires created by these words. If these two conditions obtain the answer is assured, "Ye shall ask what ye will and it shall be done unto you." How great the scope of our prayers, "Ye shall ask what ye will," and how definite the promise, "It shall be done unto you." Abiding in Him will determine what and how we shall ask, and all will be in accord with His interests down

here, and will be for the expression of Christ characteristically in the saints. "My words abiding in you" speak of a life of obedience and dependence in which sin and self have no place.

In writing his first epistle the Apostle John shews how confidence is begotten, "If our heart condemn us not then have we confidence toward God, and whatsoever we ask we receive of Him because we keep His commandments and do these things that are pleasing in His sight" (1 John 3. 21, 22). The previous verses shew that love of the brethren is in exercise, and the life of which love is the nature is being expressed in this scene in contrast with the hatred of the natural man Cain.

Further, "This is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will He heareth us; and if we know that He hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of Him" (1 John 5. 14, 15). What confidence there is both as to His hearing our requests and our having the petitions we have desired. We see then that if these conditions are observed by us our prayers will be so according to His mind and will that the answers are immediate and sure, and confidence is begotten in us so that we may increasingly be before Him in prayer. It is great gain when we know that our prayers have been heard, and it confirms and establishes our faith. We shall clearly discern the answer when it is granted.

7. *He answered her not a word* (Matt. 15. 23).

That there may be delay in answering prayer and in some cases a refusal is clear from Scripture.

In regard to delay, the case of the woman of Canaan may be taken as a sample; not that there was a long delay as to time in her case, but the Lord makes clear to her that she cannot be answered owing to the ground she takes. Her cry was, "Have mercy on me, O Lord, Son of David," and for a Canaanite to get blessing on that ground was impossible. The disciples pestered by her cries besought Him to send her away, but He will not do that but explains why He cannot grant her request; He was not sent but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. When she takes her true place, a needy soul not entitled to blessing at all, but pleading His grace, He grants her request and tells her, "Great is thy faith."

Delay in answering is not always a refusal and so we are exhorted to persevere in prayer like the importunate widow in Luke 18. We have previously made clear various reasons for delay in answering prayer, and many Christians can testify that answers have only come when right ground has been taken, or when some hidden and forgotten thing has come to light and been judged.

Refusal on the other hand may be so distinct as to place the matter beyond all reasonable doubt. In the case of Moses the Lord said to him, "Let it suffice thee, speak no more to Me of this matter" (Deut. 3. 26); and he was definitely shut out of the land he so desired to enter. Yet he is taken up to Pisgah's height and shewn it all. David's prayer for his sick child was refused although he fasted and lay all night upon

the earth. It was better in this case that it should be so, for had it lived it would only have kept him in mind of his sin (2 Sam. 12). Three times the Apostle Paul asked the Lord to remove the thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan sent to buffet him, but the answer is, "My grace is sufficient for thee, for My strength is made perfect in weakness" (2 Cor. 12). So he was able to glory in his infirmity, that the power of Christ might rest upon him. These desires and prayers were quite acceptable, and brought out what was better for them under the circumstances.

We do not forget that the Lord Jesus Himself prayed and was not answered: "O My Father, if it be possible let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless not as I will but as Thou wilt" (Matt. 26. 39). As the perfect subject Man He had come to do the Father's will, and that will led Him to Calvary's cross. Yet He was heard for His piety (Heb. 5. 7) and was answered in resurrection.

It is encouraging for us to notice how very few records there are in Scripture of refusal to answer prayers, and how very many records of prayers heard and answered. Such is the grace of our God.

8. *I give myself unto prayer* (Psalm 109. 4).

The real causes of powerlessness in prayer and of our perplexities with regard to it are very many and complicated. We pray for what we think may be quite right and for God's glory, and yet there is no light as to the way out of our difficulties. Our duty and privilege is to continue to wait on God that His will may be known and His glory secured in the answer. Busi-

ness, domestic and personal matters may be a link in a chain of circumstances that will lead to the way out of our difficulties. A prominent teacher amongst us, now with the Lord, said that there was no need to pray about business matters seeing that God had given us brains which we were expected to use. My readers I am sure will disagree with this, for most of us have found immense help in consulting the Lord, and praying over business, as well as other matters. As Christians we cannot afford to do without prayer.

The Psalms shew us many things that prompt the saint of God to pray. Trouble (Psalm 50. 15) and destitution (Psalm 102. 17) may be the chief, and both are heard, and deliverance and supply are the result. Such prayers need not be long; "Lord, save me" (Matt. 14. 30) and "Friend, lend me three loaves" (Luke 11. 5) are very brief and to the point and in both cases the answer is immediate and full.

There is great need of prayer to-day and especially with regard to the Assembly of God, and the in-

terests of Christ on earth. In regard to these we have sought to shew that faith and confidence in God and the realisation of the power of the Name of Christ on the one hand, and communion with Him and subjection to His word as led and controlled by the Holy Spirit on the other, are necessary if we are to expect definite and distinct answers to our intelligent intercession on behalf of all saints.

We are living in Laodicean days when indifference to Christ and the truth is manifest even in quarters where the truth has shone brightest. Let us then be overcomers and like the Apostles at the beginning "Give ourselves continually to prayer" (Acts 6. 4), or like the Psalmist say, "Evening and morning and at noon, will I pray and cry aloud, and He shall hear my voice" (Psalm 55. 17). Prayer is one of the most precious privileges the saint of God has while here on earth. The Lord Jesus will very soon come and take us home, and when we reach the glory we shall be in a scene where it is not needed.

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## The Inward man renewed.

From a Letter.

"I GOT a good cheer recently from 2 Cor. 4. 16. I had been feeling far from my former physical fitness for the ministry of the word, and it had a rather depressing affect on me, but this verse changed all that. I realized as I pondered it that there was no need for any diminution of spiritual fitness, that for this there was daily renewal. The perishing of the outward man means less of nature, less self-reliance it may be, the inward renewal means a deeper experience of the grace of God, and of the unfailing supplies that come from Him and of the blessed truth that our link with the Lord is not something to be talked about only but a blessed reality, not for one day a week only but day by day." We have but to keep in contact with our Lord and Head and we shall have no regrets but daily praise.

# THE BLESSING OF ABRAHAM.

E. P. Brown.

"That the blessing of Abraham might come into the Gentiles through Jesus Christ" (Galatians 3. 14).

Read Genesis ch. 15. 1 to 7; ch. 17. 1 to 10 and 23 to 27.

THE burden of the first few verses of Genesis 15 is Abram's seed, and in verse 5 we are let into the secret of what was in the heart of God as to this seed. God always had a seed in view, as His word to the serpent in Eden as to the woman's Seed distinctly tells us (ch. 3. 15)—and it was His purpose to have "many sons" brought to glory—the seed of faith. It was the great desire of Abram to have seed, and we find that it was the purpose of God that Abram should be the father of all that believe, and as it is so wonderfully stated they should be "as the stars" for multitude. When the blessed Lord is brought before us in the 8th chapter of Proverbs in His greatness as the companion and delight of the Lord, He tells us that His delights were with the sons of men, the seed that God had in view that was to spring from Himself.

In the verses read we have four things connected with God Himself, which we would briefly consider—

## (1) *God's Presence.*

God came to Abram saying, "Fear not, Abram; I am thy shield and thy exceeding great reward." God would remind Abram in view of the promised blessings that all his resources were in Himself, and whatever the efforts of Satan might be to thwart God's purpose, or to destroy Abram, or whatever his circumstances, there was the presence of Almighty God for him to count upon, His shield from his foes, his resource in his need, his all-satisfy-

ing portion, his all-surpassing reward. So with us to-day, in the midst of all the adverse conditions that surround us, the resources of God in Christ are there for us to count upon. If we need protection from unseen foes God is our shield. God goes before us and is our rearward; and if guidance in our pilgrim way, is needed, just as when the children of Israel when they passed through the wilderness and had the pillar of fire by night and the pillar of cloud by day, so will God be our guide (see Psa. 32), and though the path may seem to be a barren one and there is little to encourage, and our circumstances seem all against us, "My God," says Paul the Apostle, "shall supply all your need, according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 4). God vouchsafes His own presence as the exceeding great reward for the one that would tread the path of faith.

## (2) *God's Promise.*

Abram complains that he has no child, no seed, and here it is that God makes known to Abram what was in His heart. He reveals to Abram that He had something in store for him and makes him a promise. What He was about to do could not be helped by nature, it would be God's work, He would act from His own side and nature can neither help nor hinder when God shews the exceeding greatness of His thoughts. So it is for us to-day, God acts out of the dictates of His own heart, according to His sovereign will and the riches of His grace, and not according to the

course of nature or the wisdom of men. Christ was God's blessed promise; He is the true Seed and we who have believed come in as part of that glorious host that comprise the heavenly seed, of His lineage, to inherit the promises, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ Jesus. It is good to pause and consider the greatness of our calling. In the 17th chapter we find God changes Abram's name to Abraham, from which we learn that it is no mean thing to be bound up with God's promise. The saints are the peers of God's realm, suitable to inherit the promises, they are His sons. God said to Abraham, "I will give you the land to inherit it," and how our hearts look on to that day when all will come under the sway of our blessed Lord and we shall be with Him as co-heirs of all. God fulfilled His promise to Abraham, and He will do the same for us. God's beloved Son is upon the throne, all things given to Him and all authority put into His hands, and we have part with Him as the sons of God's adoption and children begotten by Him.

### (3) *God's Power.*

God's promises and blessing could not come in connection with Ishmael—the flesh, he was a figure of man in the flesh. All God's thoughts were centred in Isaac—typical of Christ. In the 16th chapter of Genesis we find rather a sad story. There is an effort to bring in the seed by way of the flesh, as though the flesh could inherit the promises. We must learn most definitely that the seed must be of God, and furthermore, we are made to realize that it can only come in by the power of God. Thus God tells Abraham to walk before Him and

be perfect. He must realize that everything must be of God from first to last. All that is of man is weakness, but in Christ we see all the power of God fully manifested. Thus in connection with our blessing it is according to the power that worketh in us. If God produces a seed it is by His own power and man has nothing to do with it as after the flesh. How blessed it is to know that God has produced the seed that is after His own heart, and that we are of that seed, for, "if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to promise" and "they that be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham."

### (4) *God's Pledge.*

God said to Abraham, "I will make a covenant with thee." He pledged Himself as to the future because of the seed, and in the 17th chapter of Genesis we find at least ten "I wills," which we do well to put in contrast with the ten "Thou shalt" of the Law. The covenant God makes with Abraham was great and unconditional, as He said, "I will make thee exceeding fruitful." God's promise far surpassed all Abraham's hopes, and He is the One who "is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think." He has pledged Himself in connection with all those heavenly blessings spoken of in Ephesians 1, and He will bring everything about according to the good pleasure of His will. But hear how it is put in Hebrews 6: "God, willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of His counsel, confirmed it with an oath: that by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to

lay hold upon the hope set before us."

The fulfilment of all the promises depends upon God's faithfulness to His own pledged word, but they will all be fulfilled in righteousness through Christ the true Seed, and we shall come into them as being His. But on Abraham's part circumcision was given as an answer to God's promises. It indicated the cutting

off of the flesh. The flesh profiteth nothing. God cannot allow it to have any part in His great scheme of blessing, for it cannot please God; in its very nature it is enmity against Him (Rom. 8). But we are the circumcision who worship God in the Spirit and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and *have no confidence in the flesh* (Phil. 3). It is thus we enter into and enjoy the blessings that come to us in Christ.

## URIM and THUMMIM.

T. Oliver.

"**AARON** shall bear the names of the children of Israel in the breastplate of judgment upon his heart, when he goeth in unto the holy place." (Exodus 28, 29).

**ONLY** in a very perfunctory way could Aaron have represented the people. Indeed, merely the names of the tribes and not of the individuals composing the tribes were inscribed on his breast and shoulders. He had very imperfect acquaintance with their needs and exercises. He did not love all and sundry in that motley host. Yet the circumstance sets forth in type beautifully the character of One who was to come and who is now at the right hand of God as our adequate representative; the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus.

Our High Priest has intimate knowledge of every individual Christian. He calls His own sheep by name and leads them out (John 10. 3). He knows His sheep and He is known by His own. They hear His voice and they follow Him. Our High Priest loves us with an indulgent love and no agency, physical or psychical, can separate us from His love (Rom. 8. 39). Aaron bore the names on his shoulders (the place of security) and on his

breast (the place of affection). Thus the great Fulfiller of the type could say:—"I give unto them eternal life and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of My hand" (John 10. 28), and "having loved His own which were in the world He loved them to the end" (John 13). So the eternal security of the believer is doubly pledged.

A beautiful example of the force of His calling His sheep by name is presented in the incident on the resurrection morning, when He said to Mary Magdalene, "Woman, why weepest thou?" (John 20. 15). She did not recognise Him. She thought that the person addressing her was the gardener. But when Jesus said to her "Mary!" she at once knew Him and confessed Him as "My Master!" Human names are not descriptive of character and are often merely accidental. But Scriptural names are descriptive and are thus not accidental. Moreover, when used by the Lord, the name is potent. His voice immediately evokes a response. So it is now, He speaks to

us individually and it is our privilege to listen and to be enraptured by the modulation of His voice.

“Sweet it is to sit before Thee,  
Sweet to hear Thy blessed voice,”

Recognition of His voice is a spiritual process emanating from love in our hearts. “We love Him, because He first loved us” (1 John 4. 19) is a terse statement of a reflex action which is invariably descriptive of the process.

That divine guidance is contingent on our hearts being formed in love is not generally recognised. That phase of truth is well set forth in type in the aforementioned passage in Exodus, where the Urim (symbolising “light”) and the Thummim (symbolising “perfection”) were also put in the breastplate of judgment on Aaron’s heart before the Lord continually. So the perfection of

light or guidance is bound up with love in a continual presentation. We might be tempted to think that light or guidance would be dependent on our mental apprehension, but that is contrary to Scripture. Every hard question becomes soluble because we have the Unction from the Holy One, the One who sheds the love of God abroad in our hearts. In the post-captivity period a question arose which defied solution and the Tirshatha wisely left the matter in abeyance until there would stand up a priest with Urim and Thummim (Neh. 7. 65). That period has come for those introduced by grace to the heavenly calling. They have the Comforter with them (collectively) and in them (individually) and so there is ample guidance and support to meet every contingency which may arise.

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## Prayer for others.

YE praying souls! who long to lead  
The loved ones of your heart to feed  
Within the fold of love,  
For you who wait a Father’s will,  
A treasury of mercy still  
Is richly stored above.

The Lord of love is now the same  
As when the Gentile mother came,  
And pleaded for her child:  
His words at first might seem severe,  
But made His last reply appear  
More loving and more mild.

Though distant from the heavenly way  
The souls you love, for whom you pray.  
Ah! why need ye despair?  
Plead on—and ye shall live to prove  
That God is power, that God is love,  
And loves to answer prayer.

# “THE HEAD OF THE BODY, THE ASSEMBLY.”

Continued.

H. J. Vine.

While rejoicing with joy unspeakable in the Personal greatness and eternal glory of the Son as revealed by the Spirit, let our glad hearts however not neglect to behold the lowly grace which brought Him down so near to us; let our opened eyes feast upon the beautiful perfections which shone in Him here; for we are to “arrive at the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God; and the four precious Gospels are given which show Him thus to us.

TO “KNOW HIM.” Backslidden Israel might boast in her own distinctions, yet be insensible to her own true condition, while the Lord through Amos calls to Israel again and again,—“Ye have not returned unto Me” (4. 6); “Ye have not returned unto ME” (4. 8); “Ye have not returned unto ME, SAITH THE LORD” (4. 10, 11). Seek not your most venerated places, He says; but “Seek ye ME, and ye shall live” (5. 5, 6). “Seek Him that maketh the seven stars and Orion . . . The Lord is His Name” (5. 8). They had actually forgotten that Israel’s true Sovereign Head and Lord was the Creator. Is it forgotten now that the living Head of the body, the assembly, is the Creator-Son? And may we know Him? Is not true ministry given that we might “arrive at the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God”? It is true, “No man knoweth THE SON but THE FATHER” (Matt. 11. 27). The Father only fully comprehends the Son in the infinitude of His glorious Person; but Matt. 16. 16-17 shows that the Father revealed Him to Peter as “the Christ, the Son of the living God.” To

“know Him” is our proper objective.

Israel has not yet sought and found Him; but He has been found, as He saith: “I was found of them that sought Me not; I was made manifest to them that asked not for Me” (Rom. 10. 20). Far off sinners of the Gentiles have found Him! He sought them! He came into the world to save sinners! Reconciled to God by the death of His Son, they are now baptized into one body by the Spirit; and the glorious Head of that body is the Son of the Father’s love. He came from above that “Everyone who sees the Son, and believes on Him, should have life eternal” (John 6. 40, N.T.). John the Baptist did not know Him until the Father’s voice and the Spirit’s coming pointed Him out. Then he bore witness that “this is the Son of God” (John 1. 33). Later he said, “He who comes from above is above all” (3. 31); and “He who comes out of heaven is above all” (N.T.). Then in verse 36 we read, “He that believes on the Son has life eternal” (N.T.). That which is eternal was brought here by the Son, who is Himself eternal. He is “ABOVE ALL,” said John; but when revealed to be the Son of the Father’s love—the Head of the body, the assembly, as we have seen—He is said to be “BEFORE ALL” also. Moreover, “all the fulness” was pleased to dwell in Him, to bring about a reconciliation pleasurable to the Father’s holy nature, and for our blessing.

Son of His bosom, come from heaven above,

We see in Thee incarnate God is love.

“No one has seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, who is

in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him." It is this glorious Person, who is "the Image of the invisible God," the Revealer of the Father, who is now the assembly's living Head on high. We have good reason to rejoice that He who is "*before all*," who came down "out of heaven," and who has reconciled us to the Fulness, "in the body of His flesh through death," is now our exalted Head in heaven.

While joy unspeakable may well be ours, we need to know Him as He was seen here on earth. Also to know the Father as seen in Him. To know Himself as the Spirit of Truth shows Him to us in the Gospels. The Spirit of Truth gives power for this. Our faith rejoices in the glorified Head of the assembly. The Spirit given produces the desires we have to know Himself and His love increasingly. The Son of the Father's love came right down to where we were for this. Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth, and

the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by Me. If ye had known Me, ye should have known My Father also: and from henceforth ye know Him and have seen Him." Then it is to be remembered, "He that descended is THE SAME also that ascended up above all heavens, that He might *fill all things*." Praise His Name.

The Son is the Holy One, and the Holy One is the Son. "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"—a revival from Him whose Name is Holy!—a revival of the spirit and heart of the humble and contrite!—A revival immediately from Him who inhabits eternity!—from Him who is said to be "*before all*" (Col. 1. 17). Who shall tell the results of such a revival?

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"It hath been declared unto me of you, my brethren, by them which are of the household of Chloe, that there are contentions among you" (1 Cor. 1. 11).

"Is Christ divided?" (verse 13).

"For are ye not carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal and walk as men?" (ch. 3).

"For while one saith, I am of Paul; and another, I am of Apollos; are ye not carnal?"

"For first of all, when ye come together in the church, I hear that there are divisions among you; and I partly believe it" (ch. 11. 18).

"There should be no schism in the body, but the members should have the same care one for another" (ch. 12. 25).

"Now the God of patience and consolation grant you to be likeminded one toward another according to Christ Jesus" (Rom. 15. 5).

## NOTES ON DANIEL. Chapter 6.

J. B.

"*BUT they could find none occasion nor fault.*" "*BUT maketh his petition three times a day*" (verses 4, 13).

THE great battle in this chapter is about *prayer*. To whom shall prayer be made? If we look at ch. 9. 1 and ch. 11. 1, we shall get most valuable help in the study of ch. 6. The reference to "the first year of Darius" in both those Scriptures seem clearly to point to the time of this chapter, and to show that Daniel's prayer in ch. 9 was his prayer in ch. 6, and it stirred up the malice of Satan against him. If the angel had not "stood to confirm and strengthen" Darius, Satan would have used his love of flattery to make him remove this man, who had power with God, from the earth. We shall see in ch. 10 that Satan has his "wicked spirits in high places," who fight for his diabolical ends in the affairs of nations, and especially those nations that have power and influence in the things of God and His people. There had been this evil influence at work in Babylon, preparing a furnace for those who would not cease to *pray*. Such a prayer as the one recorded in ch. 9 raised a war in heaven, and such a man could not be tolerated in Persia, the world empire of the moment. True, the jealous malice of the princes, and the wicked, thoughtless vanity of the king were the second causes; but the angels of God and the angels of the devil were in deadly conflict about God's servant, and His earthly centre, Jerusalem. The mercy of God makes great distinctions in judgment, and the king was not the originator of the trouble, and did not expect his folly to have such disastrous consequences. He spent the night fasting, and the angel of God intervened in mercy to spare him the full result

of his wicked vanity, ch. 11. 1. Daniel spent his night in the company of God's angel, and "no hurt was found in him because he believed in his God." "The devil fought and *prevailed not.*" God's servants in ch. 3 found "the Son of God" in the fire; Daniel found the "angel of God" in the lions' den. Does not this wonderful story show how *God values prayer*, and how *Satan hates prayer*? Does it not throw light on the persistent and determined opposition to prayer in private and in public? The empty prayer meetings, the unlooked for interruptions, the unaccountable outbreaks of ill-feeling, are due to evil power behind the scenes, where the value of prayer is known.\* Daniel was in a position of public trust and responsibility, his work was arduous and important, but he found time to pray "in his house," "upon the knees," and with a view to the centre of God's interests upon earth. The devil has the lions' den for the man of prayer; but he is "a man greatly beloved" and angels are "caused to fly swiftly" "for his words," ch. 9. The fault that the devil found in him was that he "made his petition three times a day."

How Daniel proved the precious promise made to God's scattered remnant: "I will be to them a little sanctuary in all places." Even his earthly wisdom he received from and attributed to his God; his business he did "as the king's business," but in that he "served his God contin-

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\*But there is no excuse for these things, for "greater is He that is in you than he that is in the world" (1 John 4. 4).

ually"; so that even the eye of jealousy could not find a fault on which to throw the blame of its malice. But "jealousy is cruel as the grave," and it will find a cloke if even it has to be in the undeniable devotedness of its victim. And in this form of suffering the Lord Himself, of whom Daniel is such a striking type, *suffered to the full*, and so touchingly identified Himself with His people in it that He could say, "They have now compassed us in our steps; they have set their eyes bowing down to the earth; like as a lion that is greedy of his prey, and as a young lion lurking in secret places (Psalm 17).

The princes had no angel to "stand to confirm and strengthen" them that night; and when the morning came, they found no angel in the lions' den. They thought they had put a seal upon Daniel's fate, just as the chief priests asked for a seal to be put upon the sepulchre, receiving the sarcastic reply, "Make it as sure as ye can." "He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh; the Lord shall have them in derision" (Psa. 2).

God's abundant answer to Daniel's prayer is seen in *Ezra 1*. "He did according to His will" when He sent Nebuchadnezzar to destroy the city and sanctuary, and to take the vessels of the temple and lock them up in the secret of the house of his god; but He also could and would, in answer to Daniel's prayer, cause the head of the next empire to command the restoration of the city and sanctuary; He would also give to that chosen man of His purpose "the treasures of darkness, and hidden riches of secret places" (Isaiah 45. 1-3) in order that *they might be restored to their people and place!* Little did Belshazzar think that so soon he himself would fall by the

hand of the God whom he blasphemously derided, and those vessels, in which he and his drunken company were drinking, would be restored to their place by the same God who had for His own purposes allowed them to be taken for a time! "*Prayer changes things.*" But even all this was not enough for Daniel's God to shower upon him. It might be enough, and was truly wonderful, for a happy party of repentant Jews to return to their land with permission and material to rebuild, and with the precious vessels committed again to their trust; but the angel who "flew swiftly" to touch the beloved man had secrets to impart which were for his ear alone as God's friend. The future, "from the going forth of the commandment to restore Jerusalem" down to the downfall of the fourth beast, was made known to him. And, sorrow of all sorrows, a grief that was yet in store for the heart of God, He made known to His beloved Daniel, viz., that after all His pleadings with His chosen people, "Having yet one Son, His well-beloved," He would "send Him last unto them, saying, They will reverence My Son," with the only result: "After three-score and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off and shall have nothing." Could it be possible that Daniel's people would "thus requite the Lord"? Would their wonderful return from captivity in answer to Daniel's prayer end *thus*? What an honour for him to be told this solemn, stupendous secret all those years before! To anticipate the suffering Messiah, "taken away in the midst of His days," saying, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death"; to, as it were, watch with Him beforehand, and see the "Hope of Israel" dashed to the ground!

## ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

## No peace, no joy.

I have been wearied and perplexed for some time and am writing you in hope of getting some help. Why should I, a child of God be troubled with doubts. I thought that when I believed in Jesus, these would all be at an end, but they are not, at times they are so dreadful that they make me ill, and I do not feel as though I believed anything. I love the Lord and He says He wants our joy to be full, but I have no joy. My life is a constant struggle with sickness and poverty, but I don't mind that, it is this other matter that troubles me. Some believers I know seem to have such a strong faith, and to sail along without a struggle, and here I am often shedding tears. Where am I wrong? Please pray for me.--  
ANXIOUS.

**T**HE lack of peace and joy that you confess and deplore probably arises from over much introspection. *It is the outward look of faith that brings the inward peace.* Peace with God, peace about our sinful past, peace in view of the future rest upon great facts that have been reported to us. We read in the Word "that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried and rose again the third day according to the Scriptures" (1 Cor. 15). These are facts proclaimed to us in the gospel, and the one who believes them and turns to the Lord with thanksgiving, is sealed by the Holy Ghost and has peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Our salvation and assurance and peace do not rest in any wise upon our experience or feelings but upon Jesus our Lord, who died and rose again for us.

When these doubts of which you write worry you, who is it that you doubt? Do you doubt the Saviour or the efficacy of His blood, or His ability to bring you safe to glory? If you say you cannot doubt Him, then you have no reason to doubt at all, for no one else enters into this question of your soul's salvation, everything rests upon Him and the work He has finished. "Neither is there salvation

in any other," but we need no other, all who trust themselves to Him are eternally safe, for none shall pluck them out of His hand. These great facts, reported so clearly for us in the Word, ought to drive out all your doubts and forbid and prevent them ever to enter your heart again.

A Christian lad was asked how he knew that he was saved and his sins all forgiven. His answer was the best he could have given; it was, "My Saviour is in heaven." Our iniquities were laid upon Him when He suffered and died on the cross; if He had not put them all away they would still be on Him, and He could not have been seated in His Father's throne, He could not have been raised from the dead. Look out from yourself and believe these great facts concerning the Saviour; rejoice in them, give Him thanks for them, and yield yourself to Him, whose love for you made Him suffer and die that you might be saved.

While peace springs from the knowledge of these great facts joy comes from a personal knowledge of the Saviour and communion with Him. His work saves the soul, but He only can satisfy the heart. Now the Spirit of God, who dwells in all who have believed the gospel of our salvation, has come to make our Lord Jesus a living, bright reality to us. He does not stand afar off

from us, and leave us to struggle with out difficulties alone. He says, "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee," and again, "I will come to you."

Now consider these great truths: Christ died and rose again for you; God has justified you if you have

believed in Him. The One who died and rose again is even now at the right hand of God and maketh intercession for you there, and by the Spirit you may have His love as a great reality; you may be assured that nothing can separate you from His love or from the love of God that is in Him (Romans 8).

## Falling Away.

Being troubled about Hebrews 6. 4, 5, 6, I am writing to you to help me if you can and will. Does it mean that if one is converted and then goes back and falls away, there is no more hope or opportunity of gaining eternal life; is there no getting back?—NEWCASTLE.

**T**HERE is no hope at all for any who fall away as in this passage, for it states that, "it is impossible . . . to renew such to repentance." Then this is not those all-too-often wanderings of heart, if not outwardly, from the Lord that we all deplore, and about which, perhaps, we weep bitterly, as Peter did. The falling away in these verses is apostacy from the faith, giving it up entirely. It will not be hard to understand if we keep in mind to whom the Apostle wrote thus. They were Hebrews who had rejected and crucified their Messiah, but who had repented of that great crime and had been baptised unto Jesus Christ. By doing that they had condemned their nation that cast out the Lord and taken their stand with Him, and so had entered into the blessings of the kingdom of God, in which the Holy Spirit operates. Now it would appear that some of these had nothing more than the profession of the Christian faith; they had no vital link with Christ, and now when the force and flow of those wonderful Pentecostal days had begun to slacken, and persecution sorely tried

them, there were turning back to the easier path of the Jew's religion, but in doing this they were crucifying to themselves the Son of God afresh and putting Him to an open shame. They were saying by their action: After all this Jesus was an imposter, He can do us no good; our nation was right when it crucified Him. They endorsed murder of the Son of God definitely for themselves. There could be no hope for such, for they branded the only Saviour as a good-for-nothing fraud, who got what He deserved. No true Christian would ever take a stand of that sort, no matter how far he wandered from the Lord. Of that we have no doubt.

Can such a falling away take place to-day? Yes, if a Jew, or a Moslem, or a Hindu professed the Name of Christ, and then turned back from Him to his former religion, their cases would be like these. Of the true believers the Apostle wrote (verse 9): "But, beloved, we are persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation, though we thus speak."

## CORRESPONDENCE.

## Conditions of successful Service.

*C.I.M. China.*

"... One sees increasingly that if we are to impress others in our preaching and teaching, we ourselves must first be impressed. This means the taking of much time in earnest study and meditation upon the Word of God, and also in importunate prayer that the Lord may give us His own message, which He who knows the real state of a given audience, sees to be the right word on a given occasion. The Lord is no respecter of persons. If we fulfil the conditions in the secret closet, He will not fail to respond in the public ministry. I venture to ask your prayers that the Lord's servants out here may be kept with a tender conscience as to the use of their time. It is not for nothing that we have recorded the attempt made by well-meaning people to divert the Apostles from their essential work of prayer and the ministry of the Word. Is this point practically recognized and safeguarded as it should be?"

Yours in the service and fellowship of Christ,

D. E. HOSTE."

**H**OW essential to effective service is this earnest seeking after the mind of God in secret, and giving one's self wholly to it! It is surely the will of God for His servants, for when Paul wrote by the Holy Spirit's inspiration to his son Timothy, he urged him "give attendance to reading"; "neglect not the

gift that was in thee"; "meditate upon these things: give thyself wholly to them;" "Take heed to thyself and the doctrine;" "Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."

There is another side also, if a servant of the Lord studies the Word only "to get knowledge in order to have it to pass on to others, he will soon become as dry as dust and as ineffective as he is dry; his task will be an irksome one to himself, without blessing to others and void of glory to God; but if he reads to delight his soul in the Lord, if he feeds upon Christ as He is revealed in the Word, his soul will be nourished; and if he comes unto Him and drinks, his soul will be refreshed and satisfied and overflow; the rivers of living water will flow out; he will say, My heart is inditing [welling forth, or bubbling up] a good matter. I speak of things I have made touching the King" (Psalm 45), or, like Elihu, "I am full of matter, the spirit within me constraineth me. Behold my belly is as wine which hath no vent, it is ready to burst like new bottles. I will speak, that I may be refreshed" (Job 32).

It is ministry and service of this sort that seems so sadly lacking, and our earnest prayer is that God may restore His servants to it.

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ERRATA: *June issue.* Page 122, line 8, read "deified" for "defied."

Page 123, line 2 should read: "Ye shall not surely die."

## “HE DWELT AMONG US!”

J. T. Mawson.

*“And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth” (John 1. 14).*

**WHAT** an amazing fact is revealed to us in this short sentence. He who **WAS** when time was not, at whose fiat the pendulum of time began to swing, who set all the forces of nature into motion, and made the universe pulsate with life; Who is Himself personally the exact expression of the infinite thoughts and eternal glory of the Godhead, the ever-existing Word—He became flesh and dwelt among us, taking part in flesh and blood that He might come near to us without making us afraid: it is this that fills the souls of those who have received Him with wonder and worship.

He did not come as a king might come with a brilliant retinue to visit his subjects in their cottage homes, speaking kindly words to them, and then passing on and forgetting them; He dwelt among us. There was no aloofness about Him: He entered into the joys and sorrows of men, as well as into their houses. He came near to them, and was perfectly accessible to even the poorest and the worst. There was no reserve with Him. *He dwelt among us full of grace and truth.*

We say with deepest reverence that He took men as He found them; He demanded no special treatment from them; He was full of compassion for their sorrows, He did not grow impatient at their ignorance and weakness, nor condemn them for their sins.

He was ready to set the TRUTH before a man of the Pharisees when he came to Him, and was so full of GRACE that He did not rebuke him

for coming to Him at such an hour of the night; it was enough for Him that Nicodemus was a perplexed and burdened man.

His GRACE took Him to Sychar's well to talk with a lonely and tired sinner there, and He poured the TRUTH into her soul so abundantly that she returned to her city a new creature, with Himself as her absorbing theme. And mark well His way in that story. The distance was great to where that solitary sinner sighed and sorrowed, yet no camel or ass bore Him over the weary miles, for He was a poor man: He must take that journey, every step of it, on foot; and tired and hungry and thirsty He met her—met her as one wayfarer would meet another, and talked with her so kindly that she felt neither restraint nor fear in His presence. He probed the very secrets of her sinful life and exposed what she was to herself, and she was not made angry, nor did she flee from the light. Where the truth detected the sin, the grace gave her protection, and with a great joy in her heart she ran to proclaim the glad news that Messiah had come. How truly He “dwelt among us,” and how *full of grace and truth* He was, for let not His lowliness and the poverty of His circumstances, and the way in which He dwelt among us—giving, always giving, not looking for any ministry from others but always ministering to others, let not this hide from our souls the glory of His Person. He was “THE WORD,” THE ONLY BEGOTTEN OF THE FATHER, dwelling in the Father's bosom even

while His sacred feet trod the filthy streets of those eastern towns and cities.

What a never-failing, ever-growing charm this Gospel of John has for our souls—it is the Gospel of the incarnate Word, of the Son who came forth from the Father and came into the world, full of grace and truth. How infinite are the heights in which this Gospel takes its rise, how deep are the depths into which it flows. Grace and truth were there in Him who dwelt among us, while He still dwelt in the bosom of the Father, as the only begotten Son. He brought the love of the Father's bosom to us; it is His dwelling place from everlasting to everlasting, but His will was that we should share it with Him, and with this great end in view He declared the Father's Name and unfolded the great love of His heart.

This love was not something to be admired on the sabbath day in the temple, but as that which would labour seven days in the week, seeking no rest, in order to relieve the needs of men and fill their souls with joy. TRUTH was in Him—*He came from the highest height of God's glory to reveal it; and GRACE also—He stooped to the deepest depths of our need to meet it; and He has filled the immeasurable distance between the height and the depth with the light of God's love.*

That which He declared here abides for us. What He was He is, and what He was the Father is; for He said, "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father." How infinitely attractive to our souls has the Father become since He has been revealed to us so blessedly in JESUS, who dwelt among us.

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The Lamb . . . is Lord of lords and King of kings.  
Rev. 17. 14.

O kings, your golden crowns before Him cast,  
Who reigns the King of kings;  
Who rises, as the sun on darkness past,  
With healing on His wings.

The Government is on the shoulders now  
That once a Cross hath borne.  
No crown more glorious than surrounds the brow  
That once was girt with thorn!

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JESUS can surpass to the heart the greatest concentration of blessings. He can prove Himself better than the best; at the very noontide of earthly success He is a light above the brightness of the sun, as Saul of Tarsus learnt. The Spirit has come from the glory where He is and dwells in us, that we might be continually satisfied with Him, so that instead of seeking contributions from outside to make up a lack that we feel in ourselves, we contribute to the good of others; rivers of living water will flow from us. We have enough and to spare.

## “THE ONLY BEGOTTEN SON”

EVERY passage in which this epithet occurs is characterised by remarkable emphasis. It is not employed in ordinary cases, or for the enunciation of ordinary truth. It is not applied to our Lord in cursory narrative, or even in the usual statements of important and fundamental doctrine. It is reserved for rare occasions. When an impression is to be singularly deep and affecting; when some special and peculiar purpose is contemplated; then, as the last resource of human language, and then only, is this most lofty and mysterious of epithets introduced. In the few instances of its occurrence, it comes with a solemnity and grandeur altogether inappropriate to any consideration but that of the most exalted nature.

When the Evangelist would affirm the perfect and eternal intimacy and union between the glorious Persons of the Godhead, and the unspeakable and infinite endearment of our Lord to the Father; when he would convey the loftiest possible idea of the majesty of evangelical truth; when he would impress the minds of his readers with a deep sense at once of the inscrutableness of the divine nature, and the certainty and perfection of the manifestation of God in Christ, he declares—“No man” (*nemo*)—no being of created mould,—‘hath seen God at any time; the ONLY BEGOTTEN SON, who exists in *the bosom of the Father*, He hath declared Him.” When, again, he would exalt to the utmost the glory of the Word in flesh, he styles it, “the glory of the ONLY BEGOTTEN *from the Father*.” When he would illustrate the benevolence of God with highest splendour, he says, “In this was

manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent HIS ONLY BEGOTTEN SON into the world, that we might live through Him.” With a similar purpose is the epithet used by Christ Himself: “God so loved the world, that He gave His ONLY BEGOTTEN SON, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life” And finally, when our Lord would represent unbelief as the last extreme of human guilt, and as anticipating the judgment of a future world, He finds no stronger argument than that conveyed in this appellation: “He that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the Name of the ONLY BEGOTTEN SON of God” (John 1. 18, 14; 1st Epistle 4. 9; John 3. 16, 18).

For the sake of brevity, we will submit to more minute examination but one of the passages in which the epithet occurs. “The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father) full of grace and truth.” . . . The former part of the passage, it will be remarked, is complete in itself. “The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us.” And we can scarcely conceive, had not some heightened sense been intended, that at this point the Evangelist would have complicated the construction of the sentence by the intervention of a parenthesis. Some such purpose, some sort of climax, it is reasonable to suppose. But it is not easy to imagine anything which could enhance the original proposition. The glory affirmed is that of the divine Logos (the Word), of whom just before it had been stated that He is God, and that by Him the uni-

verse was created. With such a sentiment it might have been anticipated that the sacred historian would be satisfied to conclude his statement, nothing apparently being adequate to heighten a representation so lofty and impressive.

Yet this is not enough. Something remains for the illustration of this divine splendour. In the epithet before us, the Evangelist seeks a deeper emphasis for his subject. He seems to have fixed in his own mind, or to suppose in the mind of others a certain standard as to what, abstractly considered, ought to be the majesty of One bearing such an appellation,—contemplating the inscrutable intimacy with the Father, and the ineffable endearment which it suggests. Even to this exalted measure did the manifestations of the incarnate Logos attain “the glory certainly of, or worthy of, the ONLY BEGOTTEN”; such as His infinite dignity might claim, such as the infinite affection of the Father

would bestow, and such as none besides in heaven or earth could possess.

Nor is it even sufficient that the glory of the incarnate Word should be described as that of the Only Begotten. The Evangelist elevates the thought of his readers to the august temple from which He came forth on His illustrious errand of mercy—“from the presence of the Father.” As the High Priest came from the innermost sanctuary fragrant with incense, and filled with blessing for a pardoned people; or, more in point, as Moses descended from the mount of God with radiance on his face too bright to be gazed upon; yet even more illustrious, spiritually, were the manifestations of the Word in flesh. His was the glory of the ONLY BEGOTTEN, coming fresh from the splendour of uncreated light. Every idea but that of pure sovereign Deity in this part of the sublime argument is trifling and profane.

(Treffrey)

## The Soul's Desire.

MY soul, amid this stormy world,  
Is like a fluttered dove,  
And fain would be as swift of wing  
To flee to Him I love.

The cords that bound my heart to earth  
Were broken by His hand,  
Before His cross I found myself  
A stranger in the land.

That visage marred, those sorrows deep,  
The vinegar, the gall,  
These were His golden chains of love  
His captive to enthral.

My heart is with Him on the throne  
And ill can brook delay,  
Each moment listening for the voice—  
“Rise up and come away.”

What brought Thy Son, O God and Father, down  
To dwell, to suffer, die at last on earth,  
But love divine? In Thine eternal crown  
What gem all-glorious, all-excelling worth  
Most brightly shines—irradiates all above  
With its pure beams? What jewel, Lord, but LOVE?

# THE HOLY SPIRIT IN THE EPISTLE TO THE GALATIANS.

J. T. Mawson.

Continued Notes on a Bible Reading, Revised.

QUES.: *Why has the Holy Spirit of God such a prominent place in this Epistle?*

A PART from the Holy Spirit the true blessedness of grace and of the Christian life and liberty cannot be known, and it was to bring them back to this from which they were departing that the Epistle to the Galatian churches was written. The legalists had by their seductive teaching forced Christ out of His true place in their lives, they had made them self-centred instead of Christ-centred, and Paul agonised and laboured that Christ might be restored again to the paramount place within them. "My little children," he wrote, "of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you." This work had to be done IN them. So crucifixion and the Holy Spirit stand out in the Epistle. To use the allegory at the end of chapter 4, which we would do well to consider, Ishmael had to be cast out and Isaac had to be made supreme. Crucifixion deals with the first; the Holy Spirit is in us to establish the second. Multitudes of Christians have been bewitched by the Galatian error; they need deliverance from it. This can only be by the Holy Spirit's teaching and work.

QUES.: *What is the teaching of the allegory of Ishmael and Isaac?*

Ishmael is a figure of the man after the flesh, and Isaac is a figure of Christ. The flesh as we have seen is the very nature of the unregenerate man, and it will always make "self" the great object of a

man's life instead of Christ, and while the Word definitely states that those in whom the Holy Spirit dwells are not in the flesh, yet the flesh is in them, and if they do not walk in the Spirit, the flesh will take control. Now one or the other, Ishmael or Isaac, the old self or Christ, will be magnified in our lives, and the flesh and the Spirit are continually opposed to each other in this conflict as to which shall have the supreme place. The nature of Ishmael came out when Abraham made a great celebration for Isaac as his heir. He had probably behaved himself fairly well up to that time, for he had been educated and trained by Abraham, but the exaltation of Isaac tested him, it brought out his pride, and his contempt and hatred of the true heir, and proved that he had no sympathy with Abraham's thoughts. And as Ishmael was in regard to Isaac so the flesh is towards Christ. It can be very religious and amiable as long as it is allowed to control our lives; it is when the rights of Christ over us come to be considered that it shews what it is, it won't tolerate Christ. Paul himself had learnt this by a poignant experience. He was blameless in his flesh life as to all the outward observance of the law, he was a model and highly respected man; but he hated Christ with a great hatred. What an exposure of himself to himself it must have been when he discovered that God had exalted Jesus to the highest place in heaven. What soul agony he must have endured when he realized that in spite of his boasted goodness he had not a single thought in common with God, and that the

flesh within him hated God's beloved Son! But he never would have awakened to his true condition of soul, and would have continued to be well satisfied with himself if he had not been born again by the Holy Spirit

Now the flesh that was in Saul of Tarsus, and that made him Christ's enemy, is the same flesh that is in us, and nothing can change its nature, "that which is born of the flesh is flesh," and if there is to be anything in our lives for God the man after the flesh must give place to Christ in them, for "what saith the Scripture? Cast out the bondwoman and her son; for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman" (ch 4 30)

QUES : *How can that be done ?*

Let us see how Paul did it. He has told us that he "was not disobedient to the heavenly vision," but the "I" that had up to that time been Saul of Tarsus, the "I" dominated by the flesh, had to be swept from his consideration and from the control of his life, to make way for a new object and a new power. The new object was Christ and the new power the Holy Spirit. He had to confess, when he saw things as they really were, that the law in which he had boasted condemned him to death, he had incurred its penalty, and while he had thought himself so commendable, he was nothing more than an injurious law breaker under sentence of death. That must have humbled him to the dust. Moreover, it was the end of all hope for Saul of Tarsus as to putting himself right. Certainly the law could not help him for it had already condemned him. "I through the law am dead to the law" (ch 2 19), "and the commandment

which was ordained to life, I found to be unto death" (Romans 7 10). And then he discovered what was ten thousand times worse, that he was fighting against God, and that his greatest energies were concentrated upon destroying the Name of the One whom God delighted to honour. But then and there he discovered the way of deliverance and life. God had intervened for him. He had sent forth His Son, to redeem him from the law's curse, and the Son of God had loved him and given Himself for him. What a revelation this was to his soul. It was the end of the hatred, and the end of Saul of Tarsus too, for he said, "I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." That was the casting out of Ishmael and the enthronement of Isaac in Paul's life; the old "I" had given place to Christ.

QUES : *We need to have "I am crucified with Christ" explained to us. We know that He died for our sins, but what does this mean ?*

If we have believed the gospel that tells us "that Christ died for our sins, according to the Scriptures," we have something to thank God for, for that means *the sins are gone*. To this "the Holy Spirit is a witness to us, for after that He said before . . . Their sins and iniquities will I remember no more" (Hebrews 10 15-17). But here it is not the sins but the man who committed them that is gone, for a crucified man has ceased to exist as far as the guilty life in which he committed the sins is concerned. If a new life can be given to him, he may live in that life, but it won't be the old "I" that lives, but the new "I". It will be Isaac and not Ishmael,

Christ and not the old self. This had happened to Paul. He had a new object to live for, the old self had come under the complete judgment of God in the cross of Christ; he had acquiesced in that judgment, and the life that he lived he lived by the faith of the Son of God, who loved him and gave Himself for him. In the Son of God he had found an object worthy of all his thought, all his labour, all his life. Henceforward he did not consider for Paul at all, every thing was judged in relation to Christ. His will, His glory, His interests on earth: these were Paul's consideration now, and he considered himself exceedingly happy that it was so, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus his Lord had made him throw everything that he had formerly valued upon the dung heap.

QUES.: *Are all believers crucified with Christ?*

Yes, it is thus that God views them; His just and holy judgment passed on all that they were when Christ was made sin for them; their "sin in the flesh" was condemned then (Rom. 8. 3), their "old man was crucified with Christ" there (Rom. 6. 6). But that great truth must be true in us if it is to be of any practical value to us and glory to God through us. We must first believe it, because God shews it to us in the gospel, but it is by the Holy Spirit that we answer to the truth. The Holy Spirit is indispensable to the new life; He is the power of it.

QUES.: *Is that why we are told to "walk in the Spirit and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh" (ch. 5. 16)? What does that mean?*

It shews the Spirit to be the Christian's strength, and that He can make him superior to all the desires of the flesh within, which the law could never do. The principle on which the law worked was repression; it was one big and continual "don't," and if it said "do" it gave no power to accomplish its command. The principle on which the Spirit works is the exact opposite to that. First there is given to us a blessed and worthy object for our love; our hearts are engaged, and the Spirit is within to answer to Christ, who loved us and gave Himself for us. We have a new and worthy object without, and a new power within, and as we walk in the Spirit, i.e., as we are led by Him, as our hearts and minds are controlled by and occupied with His things, the desires of the flesh do not dominate us, for we have got something infinitely superior to those desires in the Spirit's things. The law would have kept down the fleshly weeds, but it could not; the Spirit works by the cultivation of the good fruit and flowers. He produces the desires, and gives direction to them and the power to realize them.

QUES.: *But the conflict seems to be continuous, "for the flesh lusteth against the Spirit and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would." Is that like the conflict in Romans 7?*

No, it is very different. In Romans 7, we have the experience of a man who is struggling with the evil within him, and is continually defeated. Here the Spirit takes up the conflict and assures us of victory. For the passage should read, "That ye should not do the things

that ye would." Who would go back to the husks that the swine do eat when the Father's table lies before us so richly laden? This victory is a real thing in those who walk in the Spirit, who have Christ as their object and joy.

*QUES.: Then the works of the flesh and the fruit of the Spirit are contrasted.*

Yes, and the contemplation of them will make us very thankful that we are not in the flesh but in the Spirit. The works set forth what the Adam life is in its sinful development; the "fruit" shews what the life of Christ is, and we by grace have been transferred from Adam to Christ. We are "in Christ," and by the Spirit may now bring forth this fruit; it is the natural development of the new life.

The cross settles the flesh and all its claims over us and the Spirit brings forth the fruit, and develops the new life. Only we must walk in the Spirit; we must give our minds to His things, and this calls for patience and endurance, which is implied in sowing to the Spirit. We must set ourselves for the fruit. It we make provision for the flesh, or sow to the flesh, we reap corruption, distress of mind, a bad conscience, loss of peace, misery; but as we sow to the Spirit, life everlasting, the liberty and joy that goes with the knowledge of God, and the fruitfulness that that knowledge produces. But it can only be by the Holy Spirit's leading. He only is the Christian's power for true Christian living. Therefore "Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption."

## "JESUS HIMSELF."

Inglis Fleming.

Luke xxiv; 15, 36.

**WHAT** music rings in our hearts at the sound of that name! Its fragrance and fulness gladden the believer, it ever brings His greatness and grace to the mind.

The double nominative, "Jesus Himself," emphasizes the fact of our Lord's actual presence with His disciples after His resurrection. The Son of God, the One who in lowly grace during His earthly ministry, had companied with His disciples; the One upon whom their hopes had been set as the long-looked-for Redeemer of Israel, the One who had been taken and with wicked hands had been crucified and slain. Yes, He Himself was risen and show-

ing His delight in the company of His own.

Two of His followers sad at heart and discouraged because their hopes had been blasted by His death, are found journeying to their home. Cast down and distressed, they speak of the things which had happened three days before. They wonder what all "these things" can mean, and as they wonder they are troubled. A stranger drawing near to them goes with them on their way, They know Him not, but it is "Jesus Himself."

Then conversing with them He causes their heart to burn as He

shows to them that it was necessary "that the Christ should suffer," that the testimony of the prophets had been that there must be the suffering first before the Messiah could enter into His glory. And "Beginning at Moses and the prophets He expound to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself."

### JESUS HIMSELF, IN THE SCRIPTURES,

is the key of them, He is their theme. The Word of God does not circle about *us*, it circles about *the Lord Jesus*. He is the centre of the thoughts of God and of all His purposes. He is the One of Whom the Scriptures always testified. "They speak of Me," He said.

But if we read them to learn of Christ there, we shall find that our blessing is linked up with Himself, for we are bound up in the same bundle of life with Him, the Lord our God.

It was Jesus Himself of the Scriptures who was with these disciples on the road, in the time of their trial and sorrow and doubts and fears, so He is with us in all our pathway to-day. May we yearn for a realization of His company and cry, "Blessed Companion, be Thou with us in our journey of life on earth, and make our hearts to burn and our lives to glow as Thou walkest and talkest with us."

### JESUS HIMSELF ON THE ROAD

will brighten our onward, upward, homeward, heavenward way.

When they drew near to their house He made as though He would have gone further. He would not force Himself upon them as their guest. But they constrained Him,

saying, The day is far spent, Come in and abide with us. And may we not say that our Lord loves to be constrained? He desires to dwell in our hearts, to have His place there. And much we miss if He does not abide with us in our hearts and in our homes. The two of Emmaus would have been losers indeed if He had gone further. In answer to their pressed invitation, however, He went in to tarry with them. So we view

### JESUS HIMSELF IN THE HOME.

How blessed to know Him there, having Him make Himself known to us. In what way it was that He revealed Himself to them in the breaking of bread we are not informed. But thus it was. To their gladdened hearts He was manifested.

And His promise stands firm for us to-day, "If a man love Me, he will keep My word, and My Father will love Him, and We will come unto him and make Our abode with him" (John 14. 23).

In view of these lukewarm days of the Church's history, when indifference to Himself prevails, He says, "Behold I stand at the door and knock. If any man hear My voice and open the door, I will come in unto him and sup with him, and he with Me." He would have us open the door to Him that He may enter in and stay with us. "The latch is on our side of the door." He does not force an entrance. But Christ in the heart and home will have a transforming, glorifying power, making the commonest things radiant by His presence.

The effect upon the two disciples was immediate. Jesus vanished out of their sight. He was gone, but did they not know where He was

likely to be found? Probably this was in their thoughts, but in any case they determined to seek the company of others of His loved ones without a moment of delay. And thus it was that the eight-mile return journey to Jerusalem was taken at once. The remembrance that it was "towards evening" was no longer in their thoughts. Knowing where the disciples would be found, they were as soon as possible in their company. There they learned that others of them had seen the Lord. "The Lord is risen indeed and hath appeared unto Simon," they were told. (What grace is here. He had manifested Himself to Simon in order to recover the repentant saint who had denied Him so recently and so repeatedly. And thus Simon was there in the company gathered.)

When all were rejoicing together, then suddenly

**JESUS HIMSELF IN THE MIDST** was heard saying, "Peace unto you."

"Jesus Himself in the Scriptures."  
 "Jesus Himself on the road."  
 "Jesus Himself in the home," and now Jesus Himself in the assembly of His loved ones. He had said, prophetically, "In the midst of the assembly will I praise Thee," and it is the same to-day. His heart is where His loved ones are and there He gives His presence. Does He not say, "Where two or three are gathered together in My name there am I in the midst of them"?

The two to whom the Lord had manifested Himself personally, sought out the disciples to find common joy with them and they were not disappointed. They contributed what they knew of Him whom their soul loved. And they were con-

tributed to by the others. While mutually rejoicing thus the Lord made His presence and His peace known to them afresh. And so it is to-day. The faith of believers is strengthened by spiritual intercourse. We are losers ourselves and others lose if we do not assemble ourselves to exhort and edify one another and to praise and worship our Lord.

Turning to the last chapter of our Bible we find One addressing us just before the Book of inspiration closes.

### JESUS HIMSELF IN GLORY

is the Speaker. But no longer is it He presented historically, It is "I, JESUS." He is now in the glory of God. Yet still He is "the Same." "This Same Jesus," as the angels said at His ascension. The Companion of the road. The Guest in the home. The Lord in His assembly. He is the Bridegroom in the glory. The same glorious One all the way through.

From the glory of God He speaks to comfort the hearts of His own as they have to travel through the dark hours of His rejection. "I am the Bright and Morning Star." He shines to lighten the gloom of the toilsome way. He is coming again, and "Behold, I come quickly!" is His promise.

And "the Spirit and the Bride" utter the cry of welcome, "Come." Answering their cry He responds, "Yea, I come quickly." To this the hearts of those who know Him exclaim, "Even so, come Lord Jesus!"

We are to be with Him for ever at His glorious coming. Then "JESUS HIMSELF" will be our delight eternally.

## WE WILL REMEMBER THY LOVE.

L. R.

**WE** will remember "the love of Christ which passeth knowledge," which had led Him to come from the eternal glory down into this world, that He might do

THE WILL OF GOD,

that He might speak

THE WORDS OF GOD,

that He might do

THE WORKS OF GOD.

"Love made Him here a Man of grief, distressed Him sore for our relief." Love led Him to be the Lamb of God, "without blemish and without spot, Who verily was fore-ordained before the foundation of the world" (1 Pet. 1. 19, 20). Before time was, before He created the world, before Abel had brought his lamb, or Noah his burnt offering, before Moses had shed the blood of the paschal lamb, or appointed the morning and evening sacrifice, He had known what all the sacrifices would foreshadow. Never can we fathom the depths of His love that could say, when the moment was come, which had awaited Him from the eternal ages, "I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how am I straitened until it be accomplished" (Luke 12. 50).

In the prophecy it had been written of Him, "Sacrifice and offering Thou didst not desire, . . . burnt offering and sin-offering hast Thou not required. Then said I, Lo, I come, in the volume of the book it is written of Me, I delight to do Thy will, O my God" (Psa. 40. 6, 7, 8), and in Heb. 10. 5-9, we learn how His one offering superseded all other offerings that ever had been, or ever could be, and perfectly accomplished all the will of God.

Beloved, let us say it to Him again, "We will remember Thy love": would that it held and possessed our hearts and minds in fuller measure!

The Lord came also to speak the words of God, John 3. 34—life-giving words, words that were spirit and life. We hear Him bid those who were athirst to come unto Him and drink; we listen as He says to one, "Thy sins are forgiven thee; go in peace"; to another, "Thy son liveth"; to the only son of a widowed mother being borne to his grave, or to the little maid of twelve years old, "I say unto thee, arise." Sin, sickness and death fled at His word, and in their stead life and healing came.

He came also to do the works of God (John 9. 5). When the disciples asked Him concerning the man who was born blind, His answer was that "the works of God should be made manifest in him." All the evangelists unite to recount the mighty works of Jesus. The blind saw, lepers were cleansed, lame men walked, and dumb spake, the multitudes were fed, winds and waves were stilled, not by one at a distance but by One Who drew near, saying, "I have compassion." The Jews knew God as afar off dwelling in thick darkness; they knew of Him as having given the law which condemned them; they looked to Him for material prosperity, but when God drew near in the works and ways of Jesus they understood not. "He came unto His own, and His own received Him not," albeit He had done among them the works which none other had done.

God had spoken in His Son and now the Lord tells us a deeper secret

of His love. He says, "I am come in My Father's Name" (John 5. 43). When he speaks of the will of God He says, "I came down from heaven not to do My own will, but the will of Him that sent Me" (John 6. 38), and again, verse 39, "This is the Father's will." When He came to the hour in which He would do that will even unto death, He "lifted up His eyes to heaven and said, Father, the hour is come" (John 17. 1), and in Gethsemane's garden, "Father, not as I will, but what Thou wilt" (Mark 14. 36), and when all was over, "Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit" (Luke 23. 46).

Again, "the words of God" that He spake were also the Father's words, as we read in John 12. 49, "For I have not spoken of Myself, but the Father which sent Me; He gave Me a commandment what I should say and what I should speak. And I know that His commandment is life everlasting." We have seen that the words which He spake were life-giving words, but here it is not only life, but life everlasting, and a little study will reveal to us how constantly everlasting or eternal life is connected with believing in THE SON. It is so very beautiful that He Who was God, Who thought it not robbery to be equal with God, coming here and being found in fashion as a man, walked ever in communion with His Father, so that all He said, and all He did was what the Father said and what the Father did; quite plainly He told Philip this in John 14. 10: "Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me? The words that I speak unto you I speak not of Myself but the Father that dwelleth in Me, He doeth the works" If we may say it reverently, the Lord lets

us into the secret of His life here. In doing the will of God, He did His Father's will; in speaking the words of God He spake His Father's words; in doing the works of God He did His Father's works; it is the unfolding to our hearts of the great Divine mystery of love.

"I am and My Father are one"  
(John 10. 30).

Before the Lord went away, in one brief sentence He appointed His own to fill His place here: "As the Father hath sent Me, even so send I you" (John 20. 21), and bestowed on them the same love: "As the Father hath loved Me, so have I loved you" (John 15. 9). He left them here to do the will of God, even to suffer according to that will, telling them, "Whosoever shall do the will of My Father which is in heaven, the same is My brother and sister and mother" (Matt 12. 50). He bade them preach the gospel—the words of God (Mark 16. 15), and heal the sick—the works of God (Luke 9. 2), and made them the marvellous promise, "He that believeth on Me the works that I do shall He do also, and greater works than these shall he do, because I go unto My Father" (John 14 12). And the disciples who had been often so unbelieving and so slow of heart "went forth and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following" (Mark 16. 20). At Pentecost the multitudes bore witness that they spake "the wonderful works of God" (Acts 2. 11).

Has this no voice for us beloved? Do we not need to ask ourselves, or rather to pray that the Lord may ask our hearts how far are we here to do the will of God,  
to speak the words of God,  
to do the works of God?

## THE HOLY SCRIPTURE. No. 1

W. M. Rule.

What it says of itself.

*"All Scripture is given by inspiration of God"* (2 Tim. 3. 16).

THE second letter of the Apostle Paul to Timothy was written to meet such conditions as we find around us to-day. The working of evil was allowed to develop before the Apostle passed off the scene, and as he visualised the downgrade movement that would develop into the perilous times of the last days, he was enabled to indicate the divinely given resource of the man of God, when everything would be in an evil state. That resource is the Scripture. In it, the one who is seeking to maintain things for God in a day of ruin, has everything that will completely furnish him to every good work (v. 17) and indicate to him all that he needs to enable him, like the Patriarch Enoch, to walk with God, and have this testimony that he is pleasing God, while he waits, like him, the moment of his translation.

Every Scripture is given by inspiration of God. Not only is the whole God-breathed, but every part is equally so. The writers are many and each has his own characteristic way of writing, but the writers of both Old and New Testaments were divinely inspired to do so. In what is written we have the record as God would have it, and so, like Himself, it is perfect. Scripture proves itself as of God by its own power. There is nothing in it either superfluous or unnecessary, and it is received by the man of God as the Word of God, having His authority attached to it. What a precious legacy we have in the Scriptures, which are called the Oracles of God, and the possession of them counted

the main privilege of God's people. (Rom. 3. 2).

God has revealed Himself in the Scriptures. Some may object to this statement and say, He has revealed Himself in His beloved Son, which would be quite true; but we have a divinely given record of this revelation in the Scriptures, and there is nothing in the world to-day where we can learn what God is, apart from the Scriptures. So completely does the Apostle Paul identify the Scriptures with God, that he speaks of them as foreseeing (Gal. 3. 8).

Scripture is profitable for doctrine or teaching. For the man of God Scripture must be the basis of everything. It looks back into a past eternity and informs us of God's purposes of blessing for man in Christ; and looks on to a future eternity and speaks of those purposes and counsels all accomplished and God dwelling with man in His eternal rest; all being secured through the death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. It shews us the sin and folly of man and its results in death and judgment, and reveals the heart of God in its fathomless love, in sending His only begotten Son into the world to accomplish redemption. It gives the most perfect precepts, and shews us men like ourselves, living examples of how obedience to these led them into a path which is at once a testimony for God in the world, and against the world system of which Satan is the god and prince. And above all it sets before us in the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ, a perfect example of a subject, obedient, dependent Man whose steps we are to follow. Yes, all Scripture

is profitable for teaching; it is the text book of the man of God.

Scripture is also profitable for reproof, or conviction. It judges all that is hateful to God; sin, unrighteousness, falsehood; and the light of it shines upon and reveals the evil, whether in myself, amongst Christians, or in the world, and brings down the pride of man. It may, like Nathan's parable, be the means of leading us to condemn what is in itself wrong, and then as a two edged sword smite us with "Thou art the man" (2 Sam. 12. 7). It is indeed a sharp sword for the conscience, and a light, laying bare the secrets of the heart of man, and so convicting of sin and leading to self judgment. Yes, all Scripture is profitable for conviction, and the man of God will be like king Josiah, when the scribe Shaphan read to him out of the newly found book of the law, he will not only be convicted himself and put himself right with God, but he will like that king be able to lead others back from their idolatrous ways, to serve the Lord God of their fathers (2 Chron. 34).

Scripture is likewise profitable for correction. It will put us right if we are wrong and teach us how to walk in a path pleasing to God instead of following the way that seemeth right unto man, but which ends in death. Few can claim that they have no need of correction, for while in the body we all have a tendency to form wrong thoughts of God, of ourselves, of one another, and of the world in which we live. These things need straightening up and Scripture does this. Solomon says, "Correction is grievous unto him that forsaketh the way, and he that hateth reproof shall die" (Prov. 15. 10), but the man of God will

love to have his ways and his thoughts corrected by Scripture. Like Moses in a difficult situation with the people of God he will say, "Shew me now Thy way, that I may know Thee, that I may find grace in Thy sight" (Exod. 33. 13).

Scripture too is profitable for instruction in righteousness. It occupies us with what is good in itself, and it has guided and perfected men in all generations and will continue to do so. It disciplines, or educates (for that is the real force in instruction) according to righteousness, so that our minds may be formed after that which is revealed as the mind and will of God. The characteristics of the children of God are delineated to us therein, that we should be followers of God as dear children, and walk in love as Christ also hath loved us. It shews us that while we have no righteousness of our own in which to stand before God, He Himself has provided us with that "robe of righteousness" which suits His own holy presence. It tells us too that in our ways and dealings with each other, and with those around us, we should be perfectly just and righteous, for our God is a righteous God. "The righteous Lord loveth righteousness; His countenance doth behold the upright" (Psalm 11. 7). In Scripture the issues of good and evil, and of every moral question are made clear and plain. As the man of God eschews evil and does good, seeks peace and pursues it, so will he be here for God's pleasure himself, and, as fully fitted for every good work, be able to teach others also.

*"And the Scripture cannot be broken" (John 10. 35).*

The marvellous unity of Scripture is indicated in the Scripture quoted above. The separate parts are so

linked with each other, and are such a harmonious whole that they evidence the production of one mind. Likewise the parts are so adapted to each other, that they manifest the work of one and the same Spirit. It is not merely a collection of the writings by a lot of independent writers, for although everyone has his own special message, one mind and one spirit pervades all, and all point to Christ. "No prophecy of the Scripture is of any private interpretation" (2 Peter 1. 20), for each separate part fits into and forms part of one whole. The record may be historical, prophetic, or the experience of a saint of God under His discipline and instruction as in the Law, the Prophets, and the Psalms; or it may be the fourfold account of the life of the Lord Jesus on earth, the account of the introduction of Christianity, the unfolding of Christian doctrine, or the unveiling of the future as the Gospels, Acts, Epistles, and Revelation; but all are parts of one complete whole. It is called the Holy Scriptures (Rom. 1. 2), and there should be the utmost confidence in it as a perfect revelation from God.

The Jews had accused the Lord Jesus of blasphemy, because He said He was the Son of God. He refers them to Psalm 82. 6, where judges are called gods, as responsible to judge in His Name. Why then condemn Him whom the Father had sent into the world? He is convicting them of perverseness by their own Scriptures. The point is that being in Scripture guarantees the inspiration of the very words. The Lord Jesus puts His seal upon it as true. It cannot be broken up or dissolved. It is the Word of God.

Higher critics would mutilate Scripture and seek to break it in

pieces. It is futile. When King Jehoiakim took his penknife and cut the roll and put into the fire the Word of God sent through Jeremiah, thinking perhaps to escape the judgment contained therein, it came back to him again with "many like words added" (Jer. 36). Like him the critics will realize when too late their asinine folly, for Jehoiakim was buried with the burial of an ass (Jer. 22).

Roman Catholics on the other hand will not allow that the authority of Scripture over the soul is absolute, and immediate. They assume that the clergy alone can interpret and apply it, which is folly. If Scripture be not authority as the Word of God, nothing else is; for Scripture is capable of making even a child "wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus" (2 Tim. 3. 15). Anyone may be the instrument, or means of communicating truth, but the standard of all is the Scripture, for it is God's ordained method of authority. If it is not what comes directly and immediately from God, we have no divine warrant for faith. Faith is the reception of what God says, because He says it. "He that hath received His testimony hath set to his seal that God is true, for He whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God" (John 3. 33-34). God has spoken to man, and the withholding of it from others by a priestly caste, cannot be a matter of indifference to Him.

The Lord Jesus rebuked the Jews for their neglect of the Scriptures and for following the traditions of the elders. In His teaching He was ever referring to the Scriptures and puts His seal upon them again and again. To Him they were absolu-

conclusive authority. At the beginning of His pathway of service He met the devils temptations with a Scripture, and at the end, in that solemn moment of His betrayal, when rebuking Peter for his rashness in using the sword, says, "How then shall the Scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be?" (Matt. 26. 24). He shows that it was impossible to escape the conflict, for it was there in the Scriptures and they

must be fulfilled. "One jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled" (Matt. 5. 18).

David said, "Thou hast magnified Thy word above all Thy Name" (Psalm 138. 2). In Scripture all is divine and stable, and we may rest our souls upon it as "The Word of the Lord, which endureth for ever" (1 Peter 1. 25).

## THE SON OF THE FATHER'S LOVE.

H. J. Vine

THE SON of the Father's love," by whom and for whom all things were created, is necessarily *eternal*. Coming into His creation, and to Israel in particular, He was "begotten" in time, to fulfil the promises made to His own people, Israel. His Name was therefore JESUS (Jehovah-Saviour), for He should "save His people from their sins." He was "born King of the Jews." The three direct uses of Psalm 2, as to His being "begotten" in time (Acts 13, Heb. 1 and 5), show that Salvation, Kingship and Priesthood were in view. He was, however, personally THE SON of the Father's love, the Creator, and could not be confined to the favoured nation only.

Psalm 2. 7 speaks of Jehovah's Son; Psalm 45. 6 of God the Son (see Heb. 1. 8). With His King and Zion specially in view, Jehovah said to His Son, "*Thou art My Son; I this day have begotten Thee*" (2. 7). And, "Unto the Son, He said, Thy throne, O GOD, is for ever and ever" (Heb. 1. 8; Psa. 45. 6). The Father has put all things into the hands of the Son; and, not limited to Israel (now He is rejected), the believer on the Son has *life eternal* (John 3. 36).

We cannot make too much of what the Holy Spirit would teach us concerning these words: "*I this day have begotten Thee.*" That the eternal Son of the Father should "come under law" (Gal. 4. 4), being "begotten" in time of the honoured Virgin Mary, in such humble circumstances, may well arrest the lowly believer's heart, although the finite mind falters at the stupendous miracle. That the High and Holy One who inhabits infinitude, should be "begotten," as promised in 'little' Bethlehem Judah, may well explain that the Son (known only to the Father) is "meek and lowly in heart," and encourage the believer to learn of Him—that the Creator Son should so come down to His sinful creatures truly magnifies His surpassing grace—that the Object of the Father's eternal love, the Son, who is "the Eternal Life," should so come near, to bring that love and life to us, may well make our souls rejoice—and that the Infinite One should so bring what is *eternal* to the finite ones makes us bless and praise Him.

We pause before Jehovah's own words to His Son—"I this day have begotten Thee." He was begotten

to be Israel's Saviour (as Acts 13. 23, 33 explains). "Thrones" had been created by the Son before that time (Col. 1. 16); Caesar Augustus (Luke 2. 1) filled the principal one. Who guided the delay in his taxing "decree" till the due time for Jehovah's "decree" arrived?—till the Virgin mother was to journey to the foretold spot?—till "that holy thing" to be called "Son of God" should be born of her there? and Jehovah's word to His Son was fulfilled, "*I this day have begotten Thee*"? He shall be called "Son of the Highest" the angel had said to Mary (Luke 1. 3, 2), and "the Lord God shall give Him the throne of His father David." The Son had made that throne as well as the others. He has the right to it by creation, redemption, recovery, and reconciliation also, and by Jehovah Elohim's gift. Behold the wondrous sight!—"The Son" to whom it is said, "Thy throne, O God, is to the age of the age" (Heb. 1. 8, N.T.), now come right down to be born in a stable, to be cradled in a manger! "No room" in the world's inn for the Creator of the universe! From the throne of universal greatness and majesty, He stoops in infinite love to a stable manger-cradle!—Jehovah's "begotten," He is the "child born," the "Son" given, foretold by Isaiah 700 years before! and His five-fold Name then given is, "Wonderful, Counsellor, Mighty God, Father of Eternity, Prince of Peace" (Isa. 9. 6). Who but the eternal Son could bear such a Name? Who else be Saviour, King and Priest? Zechariah cried, "He shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon His throne, and He shall be a Priest upon His throne, and the counsel of peace shall be between them both" (chap. 6. 13). Glory, glory to the "begotten" One of Jehovah, who

will fill the "throne of His father David" for the thousand year-day, when "all nations shall call Him blessed."

But of the Pharisees, the Lord Jesus demanded, "What think ye concerning the Christ? Whose Son is He?" If *David's*, how came it that David called Him Lord? The proud questioners were finally silenced, but the common people were glad! Had He not in parable just spoken of being sent from another "country" (geographically, as one has said) to the vineyard of Israel; for the Owner "having therefore one beloved Son" sent "Him to them the last" (Mark 12. 6)—God's final resource, and best of all!—the "*beloved Son*," who would bring out sinful man's worst, but eventually bring in God's best! "*Whose Son is He?*" was the Lord's silencing question! The questions asked in Proverbs 30. 4—"Who hath ascended up into the heavens, and descended?" "Who hath established all the ends of the earth?" "*What is His Name, and what is His Son's Name, if thou knowest?*"—are answered by that Son; who said, "I and the Father are one" (John 10. 30, N.T.); and by the Spirit in Ephesians 4, "He that descended is *the same* also that ascended."

That same glorious Person is "above all" we are told and is "before all," but He has given ministry,—before He shines forth publicly as pre-eminent "over all,"—"until we all arrive at the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God" (Ephes. 4. 13). Those who seek to honour the Son may therefore take courage, for adverse blasts will be over-ruled by Him, deepening the heart's desire to know

Him better. The eternal Son is fully comprehended by the Father alone. Who else but the Infinite could comprehend the Infinite? but we are to 'arrive at the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God' How blessedly encouraging!

He is the Son, the Son of God, "called Son of God" as "begotten" in Bethlehem. He is "the Son of the Father" (2 John 3, John 17), the Son of the Father's love (Col 1 15). He is the Son of Man, "the Son of David, the Son of Abraham" (Matt 1 1). His own closing question was, "Whose Son is He?" By strict law, He was the Son of Joseph (in David's royal line), 'begotten' by God of the Virgin Mary (also in David's line), He was the Son of Mary—"her firstborn Son" (Luke 2 7), "called Son of the Highest" (1 32), "called Son of God" (1 35). Taken to Egypt and brought back to Nazareth, Jehovah's Son is called out of Egypt as He had said (Matt 2 15), and He was "called a Nazarean," as foretold (2 23, Isa 11 1), not a Nazarite here. But, "Wonderful" is part of the fivefold Name of the "Son" given, and He has said from heaven to the assemblies, "I am the Root and Offspring of David. The proud may be silent, the lowly be glad, when He asks, "Whose Son is He?" but the true worshippers may well adore the Son of the Father's love, by whom and for whom all things were created, and exult deeply that the Father fully knows the Son, in whom He finds His delight.

That such an One as He should in wondrous love come down so near to us might well intensify our longing to learn of Him! That such

a voice uttered by the Father from the excellent glory should bid us "hear Him" might well cause us to do so! That the Holy Spirit the Comforter, is sent by the Son, and glorifies the Son (John 16 14) might well cause praise to fill our hearts and our lips, making us glad to heed Him restfully, and drink in His "words of eternal life." The eternal Son has given to us eternal life, and feeds us with the "words of eternal life", for He Himself is "the eternal life which was with the Father, and has been manifested" (1 John 1 2). Yea, blessed be God, 1 John 5 20 tells us of "His Son Jesus Christ. He is the true God and eternal life." "Oh! come, let us adore Him."

"God manifest, God seen and heard,  
The heaven's beloved one."

The beloved apostle tells us of the harsh ecclesiastic who loved to have the pre-eminence. Diotrophes refused the last of the apostles, and cast out of the assembly those who received the brethren (3 John 10). "Beloved, do not imitate what is evil, but what is good. He that does good is of God. He that does evil has not seen God"—Mark,—"**SEEN GOD**"—How "**SEEN GOD?**"—In the Son come down close to us in unfathomable love!—In the eternal Son!—In 'the Son of the Father's love,' named, "*The Image of the invisible God*" (Col 1 15)—The invisible God visible in the Son—the Revealer of the Revealed! So He said, "I and the Father are one" and "he that hath seen Me hath seen the Father." "*He that does evil has not seen God*" The Lord said, "This is the will of My Father, that everyone who sees the Son, and believes on Him, should have life eternal" (John 6 40)

## NOTES ON DANIEL. Chapter 7.

J. B.

"*BUT the saints of the Most High shall take the kingdom.*" *BUT the judgment shall sit, and they shall take away his dominion.*"

DANIEL was a friend of God. In him the Lord found one who had an "ear to hear." "If there be a prophet among you, I the Lord will make Myself known to him in a vision, and speak to him in a dream." In the day of millennial blessing, visions and dreams and gifts of prophecy will abound; but how great the privilege to say, "Speak, Lord, for Thy servant heareth" in a day when "the word of the Lord is precious, and there is no open vision"! The Lord could "appear again" to Daniel, and the more he listened, and "wrote," and "told," and "kept these matters in his heart," the more was given to him.

He sees the four world-empires as God sees them. They appear as four beasts, each one more degraded than its predecessor. In Gen. 2, we see man as he came from the hand of his Creator, dependent and obedient, entrusted with dominion over all things *in blessing*, set at the head of a system of blessing from whence streams of refreshing flow to water the whole earth. Here we see him in a rapidly descending history which reaches its ultimate misery in the world-dominion of a devil-exalted and devil-supported man! (Rev. 13. 2-4). Daniel's vision starts with his own times in the kingdom given to Nebuchadnezzar by God, and described in chapter 4. 10-12. He appears here as a lion, the king of beasts, and as an eagle, the king of birds. There was strength and energy to enforce his rule, and it was a beneficent one where submitted to. But with all its superiority over the following empires it exalted itself against God. The head of

this empire is the only one with whom God wrought in grace, and through severe chastening in which his bestial nature was exposed to himself, made him look up to heaven as a man, and gave him a "new heart," the "heart of a man," to praise and honour the God whom he had dishonoured.

Persia appears as a bear. There is no real dignity about it, and it is merely given permission to "devour." It has no thought of benefiting those in its power, but simply satisfies its rage and its appetite. God "stirred up the spirit of the Medes" to execute His judgments upon Babylon for its cruelty to His people (Psalm 137. 9; Isaiah 13. 16, 17).

Greece next appears as a leopard with wings of a fowl; a stealthy beast of prey, watching its victim and coming upon it with peculiar rapidity; a striking allusion to the plans of Alexander the Great in his war upon Persia, and the remarkable rapidity of his conquests. The "four heads" refer to his four generals, who divided his empire after his death. The fourth beast is the Roman Empire, and there is no creature in God's creation fierce enough, degraded enough to symbolise it! Its blasphemy of God, its iron tyranny over man, not content with grasping all and breaking what opposes its will, but trampling the residue under its feet, can only be expressed in a man who has apostatised so completely from God as to accept world-dominion *directly from the hand of the devil!* (Rev. 13. 1-9). No wonder that he should

“wear out” the saints of that coming day! Do not these expressive words throw light on the source of the excessive strain often put on the minds and bodies of God’s beloved people in the present time, in which there are, even now, many beasts and antichrists? Thank God for the two “buts” of this chapter!

The beautiful “night vision” of verse 13, 14 shew us God’s Reserve, the Son of Man, who would not take world-power from the devil, and Who has waited in patience at the right hand of God for the moment when “His enemies shall be made His footstool” He appears to ask for the kingdom from the hand of God, as foretold in Psalms 2 and 110 “The heathen may rage, and the people imagine a vain thing,” but God will “set His King upon His holy hill” Satan may lead fallen man to crucify his Redeemer, the beasts of all ages may wear out the saints, but the everlasting kingdom of the Son of Man shall be set up over the whole earth and the once worn-out saints shall reign with Him and take part in the judgment of His enemies “The books shall be opened,” and in them will be found the blasphemous words uttered by the devil-possessed ruler of that day, *because of which* “they shall take away his dominion” and “his body shall be given to the burning flame” (Rev 19 20) Such is the end of dominion committed to man! Such is the black cloud, that shows up, in vivid, lovely contrast, God’s Rainbow (Rev 10 1, 2) Everything committed to man ends in failure,

only to bring out more fully the glory of Christ.

What a joy it must have been to Daniel, after his visions of man’s image and man’s dominion, to see this vision of the Son of Man “brought near” to receive the glory so rightly His! He, Himself suffered under the fourth Beast, the past Roman Empire, and He is God’s answer to all the dishonour and suffering caused by man’s abuse of authority He, His people now, look forward to the realization of this precious “night-vision” Those who have learned to love the rejected Son of Man, and have shared His sorrows, shall then share His joys and glories Joseph’s brethren did their best to prevent the fulfilment of his dreams, but the time came when those dreams were realities, and when they “came to bow before him,” “He remembered his dreams” So, too, Daniel, and those who fear the Lord, will recall in “the day of Christ” the visions of glory which cheered them in the night The words of a great servant of God will fitly close these meditations on this precious “night vision” “In the Gospels I find a Centre where my mind reposes, which is *Itself*, always *Itself*, and nothing like *It* It moves through a discordant scene, attracting to *Itself* through grace (what no Apostle did or could do) and shining in *Its* own perfection, unaltered and unalterable in all circumstances It is the thing about which all service is occupied as its point of departure, and to which all under divine influence is attracted, for it is God”

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Come Saviour—we are not our own but Thine,  
 And with Thy life-blood bought.  
 Take up Thy pearl, O Merchant-man divine  
 Which Thou so far hast sought

## ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

## The Fruit of the Spirit.

"In Galatians 5. 22, 23 we read a beautiful list of virtues spoken of as "the fruit of the Spirit." In Colosians 3. 12 we are given a similar list, but there we are exhorted to put them on. Will you please explain the difference. If these graces are fruit, which appears without effort, and if the outcome of the life within, why should be told to put them on, and how do we do it?"—ENQUIRER.

WE would suggest that the statements are in keeping with the Epistles in which they occur. In Galatians we are shewn what the fruit of the Spirit is in contrast to the works of the flesh. It is not a question as to how much of the fruit appears in the lives of Christians, but what the fruit is. It was all produced to perfection in Jesus our Lord, and the Spirit has been given to us that it might appear in us, and wherever He is ungrieved and unhindered it will most surely be seen. But that is not the point here but what the fruit itself is. The Galatians were allowing themselves to be removed from the grace of Christ and the cultivation of the Spirit, and were going back to the law which addressed man in the flesh and which brought forth no good fruit. They were going in for the cultivation of the flesh by law and ordinances, and instead of having the fruit of the Spirit they got the works of the flesh. The fruit of the Spirit is delightful to God while the works of the flesh are an abomination to Him. Fruit in the Word seems almost invariably for God and those whom He has called to have communion with Himself. The law produced no fruit, but the Spirit can produce nothing else. Hence the folly of turning from grace and the Spirit to law and ordinances.

In Col. 3 we are set in relationship to all the saints as being called in one body (verse 15). We have put off the old man and his deeds

and have put on the new man; this was done figuratively at our baptism. It is the profession we have made. Now if we have put on the new man, we must not wear the clothes of the old man; they are detailed in verse 8 and 9, and repulsive rags they are, totally unfit to wear in this place of favour and fellowship and life into which the Father has brought us. How irritating and obnoxious to our fellow members of Christ would such rags be if we wore them in our intercourse with them. No, we must wear the clothes of the new man, i.e., we must put on the character and delightful features of the new man and not the evil features of the old. We are addressed as "elect of God, holy and beloved." Titles that were the Lord's by right, but which belong to us through infinite grace, and as being members of His body. We are to be simply consistent in our practical life of Christian fellowship, with the place of favour in which God has set us. Exercise of heart is necessary; we must repudiate the evil and cherish the good, and clothe ourselves with these graces, which were first perfectly worn by the Lord Himself.

Of course we could not do it if the life were not already within us; these things to which we are exhorted are the virtues of the inward life manifested outwardly, and from this point of view we might change the metaphor. We speak of a bird putting on its beautiful feathers or of Spring clothing itself with its own beauty. It is the life within

that shews its beautiful character without. Let us use diligence that it may ever be so with us. So then Galatians 3 shews us what the fruit

of the Spirit is; Col. 3 the need of spiritual energy and purpose of heart, that this fruit may not be lacking in our relations with one another.

## To whom should we address our Prayers?

Will you please say something as to whom our prayers should be addressed. Whether to God the Father, or our Lord Jesus Christ? —NEW CASTLE.

**T**HERE is no warrant in Scripture for addressing prayer *exclusively* to the Father, though we have no doubt that those who pray according to full Christian intelligence, for Christ's interests on earth, will address the Father *in the Name of the Lord Jesus*. This is evidently peculiar to this present period, during the absence of our Lord Jesus from the world, and our being in it as His witnesses (John 14. 13; 15. 16; 16. 23). As the representatives of our Lord we can ask in His Name for all things necessary for the successful carrying on of His service, and the Father will hear and give.

Our daily needs too should be brought to God. We have many burdens and desires that we may and should bring to Him in prayer. These requests may not be such as He can always grant, but He will always hear, and if He does not answer as we might wish, He will do something better, He will give us His own peace to keep our hearts and minds from distraction and anxious care through Christ Jesus. This we learn from Phil. 4. 6, 7. But there are other matters which turn us directly to the Lord Jesus, as our Lord and Master, things that are intensely personal to us as His servants, so we find Paul "besought the Lord thrice" as to the thorn in the flesh (2 Cor. 12. 8), and he received a most blessed answer.

Many came to the Lord when He was on earth with earnest prayer for their own needs and the needs of those they loved, and how blessedly He answered them. He is just the same to-day. He has just the same readiness and authority now as then to dispense blessing to those who go to Him in prayer.

There are many matters that as His servants we must go to Him about, chiefly our own state of soul and fitness for His service; His guidance and direction as our Lord and Master should be sought in communion with Him, and the grace that we need to serve Him according to His spirit and mind. This side of prayer comes out in The Acts, ch. 7. 59, 60; 9. 6, 10=16; 10. 9=15; 22. 17=21.

We can lay down no rule, but must ever bear in mind that though in unmeasureable grace the Lord Jesus became Man for our salvation, and though He will never divest Himself of Manhood, yet He "is over all, God blessed for ever." He is presented to us as the Object of faith, and hence One to whom we should pray, and it is the Father's will that all men should honour the Son even as they honour the Father (John 5. 23). It is right that thanksgiving and praise should be offered to Him (1 Timothy 1. 12; Revelation 5. 9, etc.), and consequently

prayer also. If we pray in the Holy Ghost (Jude 20) with simplicity and sincerity we shall be rightly guided, but always according to the Scrip-

ture, and this is important, for God would have us pray intelligently; so the Word of God and prayer are so often put together.

## “The God of his fathers, and the desire of women”

I have read the June No. of Scripture Truth with great pleasure, but will you suffer one or two remarks? Daniel 11. 37: “Neither shall he regard the God of his fathers, nor the desire of women.” The latter phrase has nothing to do with marriage, but is a Jewish expression, and means Christ. He will have neither God nor Christ. If you accept this truth, it would be well to correct it in the next number.—DOVER.

WE are aware that Darby, Kelly, and other able and reliable commentators, along with our correspondent, have interpreted this phrase “the desire of women” to be Christ Himself. It has been argued by others that every woman in Israel desired to be the mother of the Messiah, but this idea seems to lose sight of the fact that the Messiah could only come of the house of David. With the deepest respect for these eminent servants of God we would suggest that our interpretation of it should be considered. This King who will do according to his own will, and who is antichrist, and the false prophet, will be the supreme apostate from God. God’s will will be nothing to him, and, if God does exist, he will consider Him altogether beneath his notice. This will be the spirit and character of the man, and we may be sure that having turned so completely from God, he will not maintain, but destroy every ordinance of God, and all those relationships in which God has set His creatures with each other. His purpose will be to sweep from the thoughts and ways of men everything that would remind them of God, and the decrees of his kingdom will be in absolute opposition to all that God has ordained for His creatures’ good.

It is remarkable that when men apostatise from God, and claim the right to live their lives without reference to Him, they clamour for the abolition of marriage and proclaim and practice what they call “free love.” If reports that come to us from Russia are reliable, then in that distressed country this terrible overthrow of everything that is of God has reached a point far beyond anything the civilized world has known, and “no God, no marriage, no loyalty to any covenant” seems to be the great slogan. In it we have a very definite foreshadowing of the quickly coming antichrist. Coming events cast their shadows. When he does appear with his signs and wonders the whole nation of the Jews, with the exception of a small remnant, will accept him as the Messiah. They rejected the true Messiah when He came in His Father’s Name, and they will receive and follow with enthusiasm this monster of iniquity who will come in his own name. In receiving him they will receive his whole policy and the beginning of it will be, we believe, “no God, no marriage.” All that remains of true religion and family felicity will be abhorrent to him. He will regard not the God of his fathers, nor the desire of women. We put both views before our readers for their consideration.

## The Burial of Rachel at Ephrath.

Can you explain why Rachel was buried at Ephrath and not in the field of Machpelah, where Leah and Rebecca and Sarah were buried. Is there any spiritual significance in this?—ONTARIO.

WE will quote from "Discipline in the School of God," by J. B. Stoney, published by Morrish, Paternoster Square, London. A book that every Christian should read. He says, "But now having reached Bethel, Jacob sets out on his journeyings again in order to reach Hebron where his father dwelt. Whether this journey was contrary to the Lord's mind directing him to dwell at Bethel, I do not say; but the fact is that he had scarcely entered on his journey from Bethel before he was visited with the greatest trial to his affections. At Bethlehem Rachel dies. Here was a blank that could never be repaired to him—a bereavement never to be forgotten during the remainder of his course. Compare Genesis 35. 16 with 48. 7. In the latter passage Jacob alludes to that sorrow as if it had closed all his hopes as to earth. 'As for me,' he says, 'when I came from Paden, Rachel died by me in the land of Canaan, when yet there was but a little way to come to Ephrath: and I buried her there on the way to Ephrath; the same is Bethlehem.' He buries the object of his affection where Christ

the real balm of every bereaved heart would yet be born. If he leaves Bethel, the house of God, the place where God had appeared to him, and told him to dwell, he is taught that there is nothing but a desolation outside. The clouds gather around his path. The immorality of his firstborn and the death of his father quickly follow."

It seems probable that having departed from the place which God had appointed as his dwelling place, he had lost the sense of His sustaining presence, and was so overwhelmed with his personal sorrow that Machpelah, the grave of his fathers, who had died in faith was forgotten, but it is a blessed thing to see that that spot of great weeping should bring forth the One who is to remove all sorrow and dry all tears. "Behold I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord." It may be that one ray of this glory shot into Jacob's heart in his sorrow when he called Rachel's son, Benjamin, son of my right hand.

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## Revealed Truth

William Olney.

GOD HAS SPOKEN, indeed, hear it, ye sons of men!

*God has spoken*, will ye, careless, disdain to read?

First to the ears of men, then through the faithful pen,

Came the great revelation, supplying the soul's deep need

God has confirmed His Word, providing witnesses—

Ages of history and a gracious experience prove

That by His truth revealed God has chosen to bless

Men all unworthy of grace, but wooed by redeeming love.

**"THEY WENT AFTER THEM UNTO JORDAN."** J. T. Mawson.

*"They took therefore two chariot horses; and the king sent after the host of the Syrians, saying, Go and see. And they went after them unto Jordan: and, lo, the way was full of garments and vessels, which the Syrians had cast away in their haste. And the messengers returned, and told the king"*  
(2 Kings 7. 14, 15).

**WHAT** a relief it must have been to those starving Samaritans to find that Jordan was the end of their strong and remorseless foes. Traces of them there were every step of the way to that famous river, for the whole way was full of garments and vessels which the Syrians had cast away in their haste; but them they found not. With what eager steps would those messengers return to tell the king! What good news their report would be to the multitudes in the city! And, set free from fear of those terrible Syrians, with what relish they would turn to the feast so suddenly and unexpectedly given them, according to the word of the man of God. And the silver and gold and raiment! the horses and the asses! it requires no vivid imagination to picture how quickly these would be appropriated by those astonished and triumphant Israelites.

Such is the end of the story so strikingly told, and so well worthy of being read, in 2 Kings 7. A story of deep interest yet of important instruction, telling in pictorial language of "the better things" which the gospel of God proclaims to us.

The Jordan figures the death of Christ. Have we traced our foes to it, to the cross of our great Saviour, and found it to have been the death of them all. Every believer in the Lord Jesus Christ may do so, and rejoice in a complete and everlasting deliverance.

We had no foes more terrible than our SINS. How the guilt of them oppressed us! What a burden they were upon our consciences and souls as we staggered beneath the load of them to destruction! And the sins themselves—some of them went before us to judgment, proclaiming in trumpet tones as they went that rebels against God were coming that way, and others followed after, stealthily and sure, like a pack of hounds upon the trail of a fugitive, or an unerring detective on the track of a criminal, and ready to witness against us in the great judgment day! But whether they went before or after, the thought of them made us shudder and fear, for we knew that our sins would find us out. Before, behind, and on every side of us they gathered like a strong host besieging a doomed city.

What a relief it was to us when we heard the gospel—when we heard how the Son of God, whose precious name is JESUS, had come to save us from our sins, and when, by faith, we saw Him bearing His cross to Calvary as the Lamb of God, who beareth away the sin of the world! How great was the load that was laid upon Him there, for the Scripture saith, "the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all" (Isa. 53. 6), and "who Himself bare our sins in His own body on the tree" (1 Peter 2. 24). Because of our sins He suffered: "He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and

with His stripes we are healed" (Isa. 53. 5). As the scapegoat in Israel's history carried away, in figure, the sins of that nation into a far off land where no man dwelt, so in His death, when the waves of judgment rolled over Him, did our Scapegoat carry away our sins. They are cast into the depths of the sea (Micah 7. 19); they are to be remembered no more (Heb. 10. 17); He was delivered for our offences that we might be justified from them all (Rom. 4. 25; Acts 13. 29). How blessed for us to see Him, the Omnipotent Redeemer, going down into the darkest waters of judgment with all our sins upon Him; to trace our sins to that sacred spot and to see the mighty flood roll over them and HIM. Then on the third day, to see Him rise up without them, having made expiation for them, and able to say to us, "Peace be unto you," and to know that now there is no condemnation for any who are in Him. In the death of Christ our sins were overwhelmed and we are free.

And DEATH also, and him that had the power of it, which is the DEVIL, what merciless foes were these! No kindness throbs in the bosom of the king of terrors, no pity in the heart of the devil; this we knew well, and how the thought of it made us dread the future—the last unavailing struggle, the silent grave, and that which lies beyond! But the gospel has brought peace to our souls, for it has told us the tidings of Him who partook of flesh and blood that, through death, He might destroy him that had the

power of death, that is the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage (Heb. 2. 14, 15). As David laid the giant in the dust of Pas-dammin and delivered Israel from the dread of him, so has our Lord delivered us; He has bruised the head of the devil; "He death by dying slew"; He has taken the sting out of death and robbed the grave of its victory. We can trace our foes to His death and find in that the death and end of them all.

There were other foes—our own evil selves—the flesh; the world with its allurements and snares; sin as a master, and many others, but the death of Christ is the way of deliverance from them all, whatsoever they be.

And being set free we may now feast upon the provision of God's grace for us, for where sin abounded grace does much more abound, and the gold, the silver, and raiment, the wheat and the barley all have their counterpart in blessed spiritual realities in Christianity. These are "the exceeding riches of God's grace," "the unsearchable riches of Christ," "the love of Christ which passeth knowledge," and "all the fulness of God."

Yes; when we come to Christ the famine is turned into a feast, and where we expected foes and feared to meet them, there we find a full deliverance and God's plenteous provision for our need, and exceedingly abundantly more than we are able to ask or think.

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Christ's work on the cross gives peace to the conscience; but it is a subdued will, a heart subject to Christ, our 'living Lord, that makes us peaceful in heart and restful in soul.

# THE LORD'S INTEREST IN AND CARE FOR "HIS OWN."

W. Bramwell Dick.

*John 13-14.*

(1) *Preparation, Prospect, Promise.*

THE service and ministry of our Lord Jesus Christ recorded in John 13, 14, 15 and 16, and His prayer in chapter 17, must ever be of interest to us. It was "the night in which He was betrayed." In a few hours He would be parted from His disciples; and all His concern was as to their welfare. It is still the night of His betrayal, and therefore what is set forth in these chapters demands our attention.

Let us look first at the disciples themselves. A few humble, unknown men, but those of whom the Lord took account as "His own" (13. 1). In the first chapter of John we read of His coming into the world, of His presenting Himself to His ancient people—the Jews—and we have the striking statement:—

"He was in the world, and the world was made by Him, and the world knew Him not. He came unto His own (things), and His own (people) received Him not. But as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His Name: which were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God" (vv. 10-13).

Those who received Him were the beginning of the company which henceforth He loved as "His own." (1) They were given to Him by the Father; (2) He would purchase them with His own blood; and (3) being born of God, they would receive Him. We can understand then how dear to His heart were those

who surrounded Him that night. Inside the upper room there were Himself and "His own"; outside, the world that "knew Him not"; those who "received Him not"; those who were plotting and planning for His death. Note yet again, those inside were "His own." He possessed them and His love for them was without end, matchless, incomparable; and it is this that gives character to all that follows. The feet-washing sets forth

## PREPARATION.

In the first place love would remove everything that would cause the slightest shade of distance between itself and its object. There is cleansing from defilement. That is not necessarily sin, but it is that which we may contract as we pass through a defiling world and which might hinder our communion with our Lord. It also suggests refreshment. What more refreshing to a weary traveller in Eastern lands than when a slave washed his soil-stained feet, made him comfortable and fit to enjoy the company of his host! How marvellous the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ! He the Host took the place of the slave, and washed the feet of "His own" and indicated by this symbolic act that He desired that they should enjoy His company and have part with Him, even though He would be absent from them.

Was it not the result of his feet having been in the hands of His Lord, he being encouraged by that gracious service of the Lord to him, that "the disciple whom Jesus loved" laid his head upon Jesus' bosom? It is our privilege to rest

in His bosom, loved by Him as He is loved by His Father, whose love He desires to share with us. It is in view of this that we have the preparation.

Passing on to chapter fourteen we have the

### PROSPECT,

and what a prospect! In words that have been the comfort of the saints of God in all ages, He spoke of the Father's house: of His coming again; and of the eternal destiny of "His own. The Father's house is home. He was going home, leaving the world and its hatred, for the love, and the welcome of home. "I will come again," said He in effect, "to bring you home, that where I am, there ye may be also" (vv. 1-3). Does this not stir our hearts as we contemplate the prospect of being with Him where He is?

But those disciples were troubled men, they needed more than a prospect, bright and unfading. They had the feeling evidently that without Him they would be orphans. This called forth His

### PROMISE,

contained in verses 14-18,

"If ye love Me, keep My commandments. And I will pray the Father, and He shall give you *another Comforter*, that He may abide with you for ever; even the Spirit of truth whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth Him not, neither knoweth Him: but ye know Him; for He dwelleth with you, and shall be in you. *I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you.*"

He, so to speak, said, "I have been your Comforter, I have cared for you; your interests have been

My concern. You shall have 'another Comforter' Who shall abide with you for ever; Who shall be in you, and watch over you with no less care than I have shown. In His hands your safety and your spiritual prosperity are assured. But that is not all: '*I will not leave you comfortless (orphans), I will come to you.*'" Do we not see this illustrated in Matthew 14? The Lord left His disciples, went to the mountain top, and they were crossing the sea. The wind was contrary, the night was dark, they toiled in rowing and were, it may be, at the point of despair, when "in the fourth watch of the night," the darkest hour, Jesus went unto them, and spake unto them, saying, "*Be of good cheer: it is I; be not afraid.*"

Did not the Lord come to Paul at a dark hour in his history? "The Lord stood by him, and said, *Be of good cheer, Paul*" (Acts 23. 11). Have we not experienced many times that He has come to us? When we are privileged to be gathered together in Assembly He comes to us, for He has said: "*For where two or three are gathered together unto My Name, there am I in the midst of them*" (Matthew 18. 20). *HE* in His infinite grace deigns to call us into *HIS* presence; to gather us there, and with what holy joy we respond to His call!

Now we observe a break between chapters 13 and 14 and chapters 15 and 16. The closing words of chapter 14 are, "Arise, let us go hence," and we are justified in assuming that at this point they left the seclusion of the upper room and passed out into the darkness of the night. This seems to give character to these chapters and to show that in chapters 13, 14 we have service in view, and

ministry suited to the inside place with Himself (13, 14); and witness for Himself in the world (15, 16). The first two chapters give us the family circle; and the two remaining chapters, testimony for Him in the world. This is divine order, inside

and outside. We need to know what it is to be *inside with Him*, before we can face the *outside for Him*. Our consideration of this we must leave for a future paper, if the Lord will.

(To continue).

## CONTINUITY OF JOY.

T. Oliver.

*"That they might have My joy fulfilled in themselves"* (John 17. 13).

RELATIVE to His pathway on earth, the Lord is usually referred to as "the Man of Sorrows." We do not usually think of Him as filled with joy. Yet if it had not been for the testimony of Old Testament prophetic Scriptures we would not have learned much about His sorrows, e.g., "A Man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief" (Isa. 53. 3); "See if there be any sorrow like unto My sorrow" (Lam. 1. 12) etc. In the four Gospels, it is remarkable that there are only two direct references to the Lord's grief or sorrow in His own words, "Now is My soul troubled" (John 12. 2), and in Gethsemane, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death" (Matt. 26. 38, Mark 14. 32). I am not forgetting His sighs and tears.

In contrast to the paucity of reference to His sorrow, there is repeated reference to His joy. The nearer He came to the climax of His pathway at the Cross, the more He spoke of His joy. In His early ministry, joy is not such a prominent feature. But as the shadow of Calvary loomed ahead, just when the tide of sorrow judging from ordinary observation rose to its highest, His joy triumphed over the sorrow. The radiant prayer in John 17 was uttered at the close of His ministry just as the meeting with the betrayer became imminent.

From whence came His joy? He rejoiced in the will of God. From the outset there was perfect acquiescence in the purpose of God. "Lo, I come to do Thy will, O God!" (Heb. 10. 9). Every step in His pathway presented that quality in an unvarying way. Moreover, it was for the joy that was set before Him, that He endured the cross, despising the shame (Heb. 12. 2). The joy of the future when He would see of the travail of His soul was the final consummation to His suffering.

In Scripture, happiness is presented as a tranquil quality, based on the peace consequent on realizing the value of the Lordship of Christ, and that involves doing His will. "If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them" (John 13. 17). Suffering for righteousness, reproach for the name of Christ, etc. all bring happiness in their course. The Sermon on the Mount was a series of instruction in the development of real happiness.

Joy seems to present the further idea of the overflowing fountain of happiness. The Psalmist said, "My heart is bubbling up with good matter" (Ps. 45. 1, marginal reading). So the hearts of the people of God should resemble a geyser which under internal pressure shoots the water high in the air. In the Yellowstone Park, Western U.S.A.,

the Old Faithful Geyser shoots up a 150 feet fountain of hot water for a short period every hour. Our outbursts of joy are more uncertain than that phenomenon. We can rely on the faithfulness of God. But we shall be greatly disappointed if we count on either our own faithfulness or that of anybody else.

In Thy grace Thou now hast called us,  
Sharers of Thy joy to be,  
And to know the blessed secret  
Of His preciousness to Thee.

In being called to share divine joy, we are introduced into the home-circle of heaven and we come to

know what transcends the fruits of philosophic enquiry. The sense of this in our souls preserves us from mere self-pleasing and lifts us into the higher plane of glad participation in the fellowship of His sufferings, which is the concomitant process to realizing His inexpressible joy.

That realization will lead us to know that we are not the creatures of circumstances. The children of God are not whiffed about on the breeze of chance. Things do not happen to them accidentally. Everything is controlled in perfect administration.

## “All the Flock”

*“Take heed therefore to yourselves and to ALL THE FLOCK, wherein the Holy Spirit has set you as overseers, to shepherd the assembly of God, which He has purchased with the blood of His own”* (Acts 20. 28, J. N. D.’s Trans.).

We learn from this address to the Ephesian elders that GOD has purchased all the flock. The blood of HIS OWN SON was the price that was paid for all the flock, and THE HOLY SPIRIT has in view all the flock in raising up those who can feed and shepherd the sheep. And every servant of God who is in communion with God will have nothing less than all the flock in his heart, and if any begin to narrow their thoughts and activities to a man-made party in it, they have left Ephesian ground and descended to the carnal Corinthian state.

*“Shepherd the flock of God which is among you, exercising oversight, not by necessity, but willingly; not as lording it over your possessions, but being models for the flock. And when the chief Shepherd is manifested ye shall receive the unfading crown of glory”* (1 Peter 5. 2, 3, 4, J.N.D.’s Trans.).

The flock is God’s flock, and those who feed it are not to treat it as a possession of their own over which they might exercise lordship, but as God’s flock, which they are called of Him to serve. They are to acquire the shepherd’s character. This character was perfectly displayed in the good Shepherd when He gave His life for the sheep. Those who acquire this character by doing this work will not be forgotten in the day of glory. They will need to toil now, and receive no honour from the world, and it may be not much from the flock, but the chief Shepherd, who loves His flock, overlooks nothing, and the unfading crown of glory awaits the labourer who serves the flock of God.

# THE BAPTISM OF THE SPIRIT

James Green.

**THIS** is a matter so often spoken of with no very clear idea of what is involved in it, and is so often confused with other operations of the Holy Ghost, that it will surely be profitable to search the Scriptures of truth in dependence on God in order to ascertain the exact meaning of the term.

Some indeed have so connected it with the water of baptism, that all sense of its spiritual meaning has been lost; others seeing this mistake have made it a thing oft repeated, or some special form of Christian experience which lifts to a higher plane of communion and service.

In Old Testament times, although the Holy Spirit was the active agent in the various dealings of God with men, nevertheless He, a Divine Person, was not dwelling on earth in the special way which is characteristic of the present period, between the ascension to glory of our Lord Jesus Christ, and His return in the air for His church. To understand the consequences that flow from His presence during this interval we must turn to the pages of the New Testament.

Some of these consequences are there spoken of such as, sealing, earnest, anointing, filling, and other results. Sealing is the mark of ownership which God puts upon all who believe in His beloved Son Eph. 1. 13 and 14 tells us that the Earnest is the present enjoyment of the heavenly inheritance, or as in Romans 5. 5, the shedding abroad of the love of God in our hearts. Anointing is that action of the Spirit which, identifying the saint with the life of the risen Head, reproduces the character of Christ in practical walk and ways. The filling is not a

thing once for all accomplished at some crisis in the Christian career, but is a continual process, to be known in increasing measure as the heart and life are yielded to God for His will. Just how the baptism of the Spirit differs from all these is the object of our present study.

The first allusion to it falls from the lips of John the Baptist, and is pregnant with meaning: "I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance . . . He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire" (Matt. 3. 11). It is here plain that the action which John attributed to the One before whom he was sent, stood in contrast to the baptism with water which marked his own office and mission. In John's baptism there was an expression of the acceptance of judgment upon the condition in which those who submitted to it stood as sinners; on the other hand the action of the Comer after John would inaugurate a new condition of untold blessing; which again would be followed by a judgment of fire which would consume the chaff of an empty profession, as verse 12 shows. The baptism of the Spirit therefore stands in relation to the wheat which will be gathered into the garner, viz., to that which is real and of value to God. In Mark 1. 8 and Luke 3. 16 the contrast between John's baptism and that which the Lord would perform is still more emphasized. Then in John 1. 33 the event of the Lord's own baptism is given, and upon Him the Holy Spirit descends and remains, definitely pointing Him out as the One who would perform this unique action of baptizing with the Holy Ghost. The question then arises, Did He do this during His ministry on earth? Evidently not.

A comparison of the passages in which are recorded the utterances of our Lord concerning the Holy Ghost will shew that the coming of the Spirit was in the future at that time, and that it was not until He was glorified that He would fulfil that which John had foretold of Him. John 7. 39 will settle this beyond question.

Before turning to the Acts and Epistles for further light it will be well to consider a statement made by our Lord in John 14. 17, noting that the reference is to the Comforter when He should have come. His advent would leave the world unaffected, but He would stand in relation to the disciples in two ways, dwelling *with* them, and *in* them. Externally He would bind them together in a common bond, at the same time He would be in each of them as the Spirit of life. This double action of the Holy Spirit is most important if we are to clearly understand what is implied by the baptism of the Spirit.

Turning now to Acts 1 we find the disciples conversing with the Lord at Olivet, and He recalls to their minds the words of John the Baptist, telling them that now these were about to be fulfilled, and that not many days hence they should receive the baptism of the Spirit of which he had spoken (verse 5). Further, He told them that in consequence of the presence of the Spirit in this way, they would receive power (verse 8); thus indicating that there would be an outward collective act, and an inward personal result. Ten days after this when the day of Pentecost was fully come this double action of the Spirit was evidenced. 1. As a rushing mighty wind He filled all the house where

they were sitting (Acts 2. 2). 2. He filled each of them, as witnessed by the tongues of fire, conveying the idea of a power in them which would be effective in testimony to others. He was *with* them and *in* them. In telling the people what had taken place, Peter refers to the prophecy of Joel, "I will pour out My spirit upon all flesh" (v. 17). "On My servants . . . I will pour out" (v. 18). The complete fulfilment of this prophecy will be in the last days (cf. Isa. 32. 15), but it will not then be accompanied by an inward dwelling as now. It will nevertheless be a baptism the beginning of which was manifest at Pentecost. Believers in the Lord Jesus were now associated in a new divine Society, constituted as such by the baptism of the Holy Spirit. He was poured out upon them, or as in verse 33, 'shed forth' from the ascended Lord, who in order that He might do this had received from the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost as the exalted Man. It is this which lifts the title of 'the Christ,' the Anointed, on to a heavenly plane.

But this action of pouring out, or baptism, was not fully completed on the day of Pentecost, for the society of believers then consisted of Jews only, and in the thought of God this company was to embrace Gentiles also, an unheard thing to a Jewish mind. In furtherance of this in Acts 10, Peter is divinely commissioned to carry the message of salvation to men with whom it was unlawful for him as a Jew to have company. While he is speaking to those assembled in the house of Cornelius, of what God had done through Jesus Christ, the Holy Ghost fell upon them, to the great astonishment of those Jews who had

come with Peter, for they saw that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost. In rehearsing what had taken place to the brethren at Jerusalem, Peter recalls the words he had heard from the Lord on Olivet, and identifies that which had taken place at Cæsarea in respect of the Gentiles, with the action of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost regarding the Jews (Acts 11. 16). These two occasions taken together constituted the baptism of the Holy Ghost. We meet with the expression once again in 1 Cor. 12. 13, where Paul in order to correct the sectarian ways of the Corinthians reminds them that "By one Spirit are we all baptized into one body whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free." The baptism of the Spirit is the act of inauguration on earth of a body or divine society, the body of Christ, consisting of all true believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, representative of Him 'the Christ' in His absence, and bearing witness to His rejection by the world, and of His glory as the exalted Man at God's right hand. To this assembly believers are constantly being added (Acts 2. 47), but it is always regarded as complete on earth, and being unique is by that fact exclusive of other bodies or associations. The individuals composing it may be removed and replaced by others, but it abides during the Lord's absence "One body." Anything unreal is not contemplated in it, for the Holy Spirit can only include in this unity those who are of the family of faith, and who are such by having drunk of the spiritual rock, once smitten to which the Apostle has alluded in 1 Cor. 10. 4.

At the same time "the baptism of the Spirit" does not involve the

thought of union, by which the members of Christ are joined to Him their living Head in heaven. Viewed thus they are a body, a vital organism which is now fitly joined together and compacted, but at the same time is increasing to full development in every part, growing unto the perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ (Eph. 4. 13, 16). This union began at Pentecost by the indwelling of the Spirit, at the same time as the body of testimony was inaugurated by His baptism, and its full result will be attained when Christ who is our life shall appear. There was no revelation however of this secret or mystery, until on the Damascus road Saul of Tarsus heard the voice of the ascended Christ saying to him, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me?" Further unfoldings of the glory of this mystery are seen in Ephesians and Colossians, but this secret belongs in its origin and issue to eternity, whilst the baptism of the Spirit concerns the corporate testimony on earth in the assembly where the spiritual manifestations of 1 Cor. 12 are to be in exercise. The quotation in Acts 2 from Joel should make this plain, for in the pouring out of the Spirit which the prophet announced there could not be included a revelation of the deeper thing hidden in God, the secret of the organic union of Christ and the church which is now made known to His holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit (Eph. 3. 3-6).

In conclusion we must distinguish between the body according to the counsel and work of God, seen in organic union with Christ its Head in heaven, and the body viewed as a corporate unity formed in this world by the baptism of the Holy

Ghost, and of which the supper of the Lord is the public manifestation (1 Cor. 10. 17). It is true that the same individual saints are seen in both relations, but in the case of 1 Cor. 12 they are not viewed as in union with the Head, but in their mutual relationship and individual service under the Lordship of Christ. It is the manifestation of this unity which the devil has sought to destroy, and as long as the apostles lived, failed in his attempt. Sad to say in later days he has been only too successful, and the sorrowful spectacle has been presented of those who loved the same Lord, becoming separated into opposing bodies from various causes. In result the ecclesiastical confusion which obtains to-day amongst those who are Christ's

has become a reproach to, and a contradiction of the unity the Spirit formed by His baptism. It is as though a corporation formed for a specific object, became broken up into selfish factions, each assuming to represent that unity, which rightly could only belong to the whole. That this should take place amongst those who are Christian only in name, would be no wonder, for the flesh is ever divisive; but that it should obtain amongst those who by grace are divinely constituted one body, calls for sorrowful confession, with shame and confusion of face, such godly sorrow leading to repentance and purpose of heart to acknowledge no other unity than that which has been formed by the baptism of the Spirit.

## Forgiveness

PETER: "*Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? until seven times?*"

What a generous impulse must have moved the heart of Peter, when he suggested that he might go the length of forgiving his brother seven times! And what a glow of satisfaction would pervade his soul as he made the suggestion. Surely the Lord would praise him and hold him up as an example of grace to the other disciples. Certainly there are many who talk much of the riches of God's grace who would not go to the length that Peter proposed to go.

But what said the Lord?

*"I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but, Until seventy times seven."*

We can almost hear Peter's gasp of astonishment and see his jaw drop. How mean were his ideas of forgiveness and grace really, when brought to the true standard, and yet he was far ahead of many Christians. When Peter got over the shock of these wonderful words, we can understand him saying, "But, Master, that is impossible, human nature could not do it. You are asking too much of me." How patiently, how tenderly the Lord would reply, "That is the way I am treating you, Peter; I only ask and expect you to treat others as I am treating you." It is the deep soul-knowledge of that that will make us ready to fulfil the Lord's words. We shall say, we can do no other.

## THE HOLY SCRIPTURE. No. 2

W. M. Rule.

What it says of itself.

*"They . . . wrest as they do the other Scriptures, to their own destruction"* (2 Peter 3. 16).

**I**T is evidently a serious matter to wrest the Scriptures. Only the unlearned and unstable do so, and if done it will be for their own destruction. The word translated "wrest" is only found here in the New Testament, and it means to wrench, especially to torture by the rack; or figuratively to pervert; to give it a wrong application to suit a theory.

The knowledge of Scripture of itself is not sufficient to place us in possession of the thoughts of God. Members of such anti-Christian cults as Millennial Dawnists (now Jehovah's witnesses), Christadelphians, Seventh Day Adventists, Mormons and others of that school, are familiar with the letter of Scripture, but pervert its words to build up their false theories. All of them are fundamentally wrong as to the Person of Christ and to test them by asking the question, "What think ye of Christ?" immediately brings out their heretical notions. Their agents are everywhere selling their books or trying to get access into homes for the purpose of gaining converts. These agents are trained not only to propagate their own particular errors (for none of them agree), but also to meet difficulties that might be raised by an intelligent Christian against their interpretations of Scripture. Yet if you question them as to their knowledge of the simplest Christian blessings such as forgiveness of sins or justification, you will probably find that they know nothing about it, and have no per-

sonal interest in the work of Christ. Neither do they understand the Scriptures they quote in support of their theories. They are both unlearned and unstable, and yet many simple Christians are taken by the snares these people lay for their feet. Such need our compassion and help as the Apostle Jude instructs us.

Others may not be so grossly wrong in their doctrines as the cults we have mentioned, but they take up a certain theory and Scripture is racked to fit in with that. Pentecostals are of many grades, from the sober sort, to those who run to extremes and lay themselves open to be controlled by demoniacal power, instead of by the Spirit of God. They essay to have the power manifest at Pentecost, in a day of weakness, confusion and lukewarmness. Those who have been to their "tarrying" meetings, describe them as pandemonium, instead of divine godly order. These people make a great public display in their tongues, healings and baptisms, which they claim is the power of the Spirit of God, but to the spiritual mind savours more of the working of Satan. Others like Gospel-preachers never advertise themselves but their missionaries are everywhere. They take up a Scripture, right enough when the Lord Jesus was on earth, and seek to act in the same way as the disciples did when sent by Him, forgetting that His death and resurrection have put everything on a new footing before God. In these cases Scripture is tortured by applying to the present time instructions which were perfectly suited to a condition which does not now exist amongst the people of God.

There is a danger with every one of us in stretching Scripture beyond its true meaning or application. If one Scripture is so stretched you will find it necessary to stretch others to fit in. If a teacher does this, it will unsettle saints instead of building them up. If our souls have been built up in the truths of Scripture, every fresh ray of light from it will fit into what we have already learnt. If there is a stretching of Scripture and an unsettling of the saints, the only way is for them to test the teaching by the Scripture and refuse what is contrary thereto. To see the truth in the Scripture will forever settle things for the exercised soul, for there only we have a solid foundation.

In rightly dividing the word of truth, spiritual judgment is essential. It is the Spirit that searcheth the deep things of God. Scripture is not understood by the wisdom of man. The truths of Scripture were spiritually revealed, and spiritually communicated, and they can only be spiritually apprehended and understood. This will keep us on an even balance, and in giving to Scripture its right and proper application, there will be no danger of wresting it.

*"Ye do err, not knowing the Scriptures"* (Matt. 22. 29).

The Lord Jesus is here meeting an attack by the Sadducees on the truth of resurrection. The Sadducees were the rationalists of that day, and sought by a process of human reasoning to discredit the truth. They assumed the extinction of the dead, like many an infidel of the present time, and were not beyond using the Scriptural injunction of Moses in Deut. 25. 5 with regard to

natural relationships, to reject the truth of resurrection. He quietly refers them to the word of Jehovah to Moses in Exodus 3, "I am the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob." God is the God of their fathers after death, as the use of the present tense shews. He is not the God of the dead, but of the living, and resurrection of the dead is an essential part of God's purpose and truth. These men were no doubt familiar with the letter of the Scripture to which He referred, but they did not know its significance. They erred through lack of spiritual intelligence. You find much the same lack in the disciples where it is said of them, "As yet they knew not the Scripture that He must rise again from the dead" (John 20. 9), although the Lord Jesus had often spoken of it, to them.

If the human intellect is allowed to work, apart from spiritual intelligence, there will be a very human and faulty interpretation of Scripture. Like the spider's web, which comes from itself, it will never get beyond human reason or imagination. These Sadducees were no doubt intellectually a very intelligent people, but they got astray from the truth through not knowing the Scriptures. They knew the letter but did not get the mind of God from it. There are men to-day of great intellectual attainments and filling high positions in the religious world much in the same condition. Much human reason pervades their utterances, but little spiritual intelligence of the mind of God is manifest.

Scepticism is fond of raising doubts and difficulties as to the truths of Scripture, and while allowing that some parts may be true, refuses to accept the whole as a revelation from

God. There is no book in existence which can assure us as to the future state of both saint and sinner, but the Scripture. The only way to meet the sceptic is to give to the Scriptures their true force and application. This will put them to silence.

Mysticism on the other hand does not deny the Scripture, but acknowledges it, and quotes it as the Word of God. But the mystic has what he calls an inner light; a consciousness which to him virtually supercedes the written word, and allows the imagination to soar far beyond it. He is not governed by the plain meaning of the written Word itself, but by the interpretation put upon it by himself, according to the inner light. He reads the Scripture, he says, in the spirit, and not in the letter. The ministry of such, while it appears to be very deep and profound, is so vague and indefinite that there is nothing in it to establish the soul in the thoughts of God. Its tendency is to inflate with pride and spiritual assumption, for their thoughts are not really subject to the Word of God. The really spiritual man bows absolutely to

Scripture. The Lord Jesus Himself quotes the letter of the word, and gives it its true force, and it effectually silenced the caviller.

Some Christians are afraid of certain texts of Scripture, because they seem to conflict with their own ideas. No Scripture contradicts another; if apparently it does, the fault is not in the Scriptures but in our lack of spiritual intelligence. Our only course is to wait on God to shew us the real meaning of the text, and let our own most cherished thoughts be corrected by Scripture.

Orthodox views of the fundamental truths of Scripture may be held, without any real power over the conscience. If we are to know the Scripture and be kept from faulty or mystical interpretations, there must be first of all a recognition of the inspiration and divine authority of every Scripture and then a recognition of the fact that the human mind, apart from the Spirit's teaching, cannot gain a knowledge of the mind of God therefrom, for the things of God are spiritually discerned.

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## John 1—18

*"We beheld His glory, the glory as of an only begotten from a Father."*

Here it is the kind of glory that the apostle saw that is mentioned.

It was the glory of an only begotten from His Father—it is the character of the glory which they saw. They saw Him in Sonship-glory, and in only begotten Sonship-glory. This glory is His, in it He is entirely alone. None but Himself can be only begotten, it is personally His alone. It is not here "the glory which Thou hast given me I have given them." In John 17 we get both ends, so to speak, of His glory, for in one sense He takes His glory as man. But there is an aspect of His glory in which none can partake with Him. "We beheld." "They apprehended that Christ was before them as a Son from His Father."

J. N. D.

# HAVE WE A REVELATION FROM GOD?

James Boyd.

THANK God, we have a revelation from God Himself, whatever men may say to the contrary, a revelation that casts divine light upon the whole sorrowful history of man, giving the reason of all the degradation, distress, misery and mortality of the creature, and flings its merciful light beyond the grave, revealing to our anxious and inquiring minds the issue of all the activities of men in the little span of life allotted to them here on earth. Let us, then, in the light of that revelation, and according to the ability given us of God, examine the nature and character of

## THE JUDGMENT THAT LIES UPON MAN.

We read in the first chapter of Genesis how God began to work upon a world that was "waste and empty," a world of which God was the Creator, and which He had made beautiful (Eccles. 11), though it subsequently became a ruin. Isaiah 45 18 shows that this was not the state in which it was created. Upon this ruin God begins to work, with a view to placing man upon it. But before we have Adam set in his place of supremacy and authority, we have everything over which he was to exercise lordship created and placed in its respective position. By means of Adam, the appointed head the whole creation was linked up with God in relationship and responsibility.

From the creature that stood nearest to Adam in intelligence, down to the most distant organism, everything was set analogously to its head, for had there been no affinity between Adam and the lower creation, he could not have been ruler, director, and governor over them. He had

insight into their various natures and characteristics, so that when his Creator brought them to him to give them names, the name he gave to each set forth the essential feature that was peculiar to itself. Even the manner of the creation of Eve was well known to him, though he was all the time of her formation in a deep sleep.

I speak of this to show the peculiar place that Adam had, on the one hand in relation to God, and on the other in relation to everything God had created; and in connection with this to draw attention to the fallacious reasoning of the evolutionists, who imagine they can trace advance from the lowest form of life up to man himself, instead of beginning with man, and tracing down to the bottom the characteristics of the various families placed under his headship.

Man was the first and great thought of God, but as all things were to be placed in relationship with him as head, the lowest and most distant of the creatures must bear some affinity to him, some more and some less; but not until man had his place as supreme was everything by the Creator pronounced "very good." Everything beneath Adam looked up to him as centre, as bearing rule, and in whom was seated the wisdom that was necessary for such a place of supremacy.

Now when he fell, everything that depended upon him fell with him. *Creation was wounded in its head.* Death came upon him and upon all that was under his headship. As far as dust was concerned it returned to dust again, and the lower creation, which sprang out of the earth or sea at the command of the

Creator, came in that death to an end of its existence. Not so man, who was first formed from the dust of the ground, and afterwards became a living soul through the in-breathing of God; death cannot end an existence like that. A dog was not first formed out of the dust, and when it was formed became a living soul by the breath of God. *The earth brought forth every creature but man: it did not bring forth man at all: man is the offspring of God* (Acts 17. 28).

The judgment upon Adam was, "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return" (Gen. 3. 19). In this there is no mention of anything but that which relates to human life on earth; there is no, "after this the judgment" (Heb. 9. 27). Where the vital principle that was by the breath of God would find an abiding place is not taken into account; the end of human life down here is what is involved in this judgment. Man as formed out of dust is all that God speaks of here; and this, He says, man is; but He does not say it is *all* that man is. Stephen was carried to his burial, and the dust returned to dust, but the Lord Jesus received his spirit (Acts viii. 2; 7. 59). And Paul speaks of his not knowing at one time whether he was in the body or out of it (2 Cor. 12. 2), and were the body everything a man is, the statement would be senseless. But this is not taken into account in the Scripture under consideration, for it has nothing to do with it.

Adam is driven out of the garden to toil for his bread until this judgment would be consummated, and he should return to dust. His pos-

terity, all sinners like himself, come under the same judgment, for God must put a period to the life of the sinner on earth; hence all are debarred from partaking of the tree of life, which would have renewed the waste and decay that a body derived from the dust would naturally undergo. Death is man's portion here below, because he is a sinner.

A Deliverer is spoken of, One who would bruise the head of their fell destroyer, but He was to be a suffering Deliverer, for His heel must be bruised by Satan. But He is not spoken of as One who would bring in redemption for lost sinners, and who would open heaven to all who would submit to His salvation. He would simply destroy the power of the devil. No mention is made of any other sphere than earth for man.

The grace of God in clothing Adam and his wife with coats of skins is brought to light, and in figure we see Christ delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification; for the two naked sinners are clothed with the skin of the victim that died for them; and this sets forth the great gospel truth, that the One who suffered for sinners becomes the clothing of the one who believes on Him.

Evidently in this was set forth a way back to God through death, the death of a victim that could not be held guilty of offence against God. And this way Abel took, and all the faithful from that day until this. Unbelief and rebellion against God take the way of Cain, a way that professing Christians are accused of taking, when once decay has set in upon the church (Jude 11).

But not during the antediluvian age, nor after it during the patri-

archal dispensation, does heaven come into view as the hope of the believer. Nor when we come to the age of law: in that dispensation the earth and life upon it is the whole point. When the law was given, the blessing promised on the ground of obedience was life upon earth: "The man that doeth them shall live in them" (Neh. 9. 29; Gal. 3. 12). The whole question raised by the law was whether man could, on the ground of the fulfilment of his obligations, maintain himself as a living man upon earth. There was no question about going to heaven raised, nor could there be; for if a man cannot by his righteousness maintain himself alive upon earth, it is plain he cannot by his righteousness lay claim to heaven.

Therefore God's dealings with men, and their state under these dealings in Old Testament times, while their probation was running its course, demonstrated clearly that there was no power in man to accomplish his own recovery; for in spite of all the ways in which God tested him, and in spite of all the advantages of God's dispensations, man remained a sinner subject to death. He could not arrive at life by his obedience, for he was not obedient. Man was lost.

I have said the question of his going to heaven was never once raised, nor will any man ever be judged because he was unfit for heaven, his conduct on earth is the only thing to which judgment has any application. His responsibility does not extend to fitness for heaven. *Heaven* is rather a vague idea in the minds of most people, but Scripture speaks of it in most definite terms as *the glory of God*.

When you come to the New Testament the question of earth is

over. I can anticipate being met with the Scripture, "Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth" (Matt. 5. 5). But that is in contrast to the proud, self-conceited, and self-confident Pharisees of the day, who thought that God had respect to none but themselves; and also the promise has the reign of the Messiah in view (Ps. 37. 11; Isa. 29. 19), when the meek will have their portion along with Him who could say, "I am meek and lowly in heart." But at the close of that reign the earth with all its works shall be burned up, and this shall bring the earth in its present condition to an end, but it will not bring to an end the inheritance of the meek, for they will come into the enjoyment of "a new heaven and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness."

But the question of man's retaining the earth on the ground of the fulfilment of his obligations is over for ever; and this was the question which was raised by the law, as I have already pointed out. Now the great truth is out, that men must go into the glory of God, as fit for that glory, or into the lake of fire, as fit for no other place. The two extremes in the last dispensation were life or death, and that as children of Adam on earth; but now "the last Adam" is in the glory of God, and it must be *that* for man, or the lake of fire. These are the two extremes. And the glory of God is the glory in which He shines out in Christ, as fully revealed. It is not the glory of God as seen in the face of Moses, which was the glory in which He displayed Himself to Israel in the old covenant, but it is the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ, which is the full revelation of God, not only in

His attributes, but in the love of His heart; that is, what He is in His nature, and "God is love."

But in connection with this the works of men have no place at all. It is all of grace, from beginning to end. In this connection God is the worker, not man. It is "To him that worketh not, but believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness"; and, "Being justified by faith we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: by whom also we have access by faith into this grace where in we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God" (Rom. 4. 5; 5. 1, 2). We are now called to contemplate what God has wrought. Here where man was overthrown by the devil, the devil has been overthrown by Man; here where God has been dishonoured by man, by Man he has been glorified; here from whence daily the effluvium of sin went up provokingly to the very throne of God, a sweet savour from the cross of Christ rises like incense before that same throne, and before Him who sits therein; here where sin abounded, grace has much more abounded; and here where death has for thousands of years been swallowing up every bit of life that has appeared upon this scene, even here shall death be swallowed up in victory. But in this glorious work of God neither Adam nor any of his race has the slightest part. It is Christ who said, "Lo, I come to do Thy will, O God," and He has done it.

### THE TWO HEADSHIPS.

Lost in Adam, the first head, men must find salvation in Christ, another head. Responsibility, in the sense of maintaining oneself in the place of blessing in which one has

been set, or of drawing near to God when sin has placed the creature at a distance from God, is all connected with the first head, the man made of dust. He lost his place by his disobedience, and came under the sentence of death, but a way back to God was for his posterity opened up by sacrifice. The altar of the worshipper, or of the one who attempted to draw near to God, bore witness to the state of the offerer's mind regarding the whole question that lay between the creature and the Creator, and the acceptance or rejection of the sacrifice by God was the witness of His acceptance or of His rejection of the worshipper.

But to come in the way in which Abel came meant the acknowledgment of the justice of the judgment which lay upon man; for Abel's altar was the witness, that he not only acknowledged the fact that his father was a rebel against God, but that he himself was by nature no better, and that therefore death lay upon him as the just judgment of a righteous God. At the same time his faith enabled him to avail himself of a way back to God through the death of another on his behalf. This was figuratively a return to God by the sacrifice of Christ. And in type and figure this way of return is kept before men in all dispensations, until we arrive at His sacrifice, which is the glorious antitype and the fulfilment of all the others.

Now by the sacrifice of Christ a way of salvation has been opened up for all. Just as Adam's one act of disobedience had a death and condemnation aspect toward all, so the one act of Christ's obedience to death has a justifying and life-giving aspect toward the whole human race; but only those who submit to the gos-

pel are partakers of that righteousness and life which are found in Him. "Be it known unto you, therefore, men and brethren, that through this Man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins," tells us the world-wide aspect of the sacrifice of Christ for the salvation of men; and "By Him all that believe are justified from all things," tells of the application of the benefits of that death upon the believer (Acts 13. 38, 39). The righteousness of God which is "unto all, and upon all them that believe" (Rom. 3. 22), is a parallel Scripture with this. And as to life, we read in John 5. 24. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth My word, and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation (judgment); but is passed from death unto life."

#### MAN'S PLACE AND PORTION FOR ETERNITY SETTLED ON EARTH.

But the earth is the sphere in which this mighty question must be settled. It was here that man was proven to be a lost sinner. It took four thousand years to bring that terrible truth fully to light; and in those long years the probation of man was running its course, and the question was, not the glory of God as revealed in Jesus, or the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, but, as I have already said, life or death upon earth. That those eternal issues were involved need scarcely be said, but they were not the elements of the dispensations. Then when it was clearly demonstrated that man was without strength to help himself, and ungodly in his life and nature, God made a way of escape for all, revealing that way of escape as in His Son risen and glorified, and that

that way of escape was only available by faith in Christ, as delivered for our offences and raised again for our justification.

The gospel brings this to the ears of men, who are called to submit themselves to God's way of salvation. The believer is clothed with the righteousness of God, has eternal life, his sins are remembered no more, his soul is saved, and all he waits for is the changing of his body, which will take place when Christ comes to receive His people to Himself (Rom. 3. 22; 1 John 5. 13; 2. 12; 2 Tim. 1. 9; Titus 3. 5; Phil. 3. 21).

The work of man's redemption was accomplished upon *earth*, on *earth* the gospel of salvation is preached, on *earth* men receive forgiveness and eternal life, on *earth* they are born again, on *earth* are they brought into new and eternal relationships with God, on *earth* they are sealed with the Holy Spirit, and on *earth* are they made members of the body of Christ.

*Here* they are waiting for God's Son to take them up and place them along with Himself in the Father's house, *here* they are assured that they shall never come into judgment, and should they die, they know they shall be raised in glory; not raised and judged to see if they are fit for glory, but raised in a glorified condition, and in the meantime, between their dying and the coming of the Lord to raise their bodies, their spirits are with Christ, in a state which is far better than the best state upon earth (Phil. 1. 23).

But what about those who are unbelievers? They have sinned away their title to life upon earth; they have lived for the world; they

have sought after the things that pleased themselves; they have done their own will, and have disregarded the revealed will of God; they have refused to avail themselves of the salvation which is in Christ Jesus; they may have been moral, or immoral, but they have paid no attention to the claims of God, or to their need of a Saviour now judgment is before them: "He that believeth not shall be condemned" (Mark 16. 16).

Nothing is made more clear in the whole Word of God than this, that the eternal destiny of every

man is settled upon earth, and while he is alive in flesh. The Lord says, "If ye believe not that I am He, ye shall die in your sins" (John 8. 24); and in Hebrews 9. 27, we read, "After this the judgment." Some think it is after this another chance in the separate state. It is a false hope; it is a lie of the devil. Again, "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him" (John 3. 36). In 1 Thess. 4. 13, those who believe are placed in contrast with the rest of the world, who have NO HOPE.

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*"Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus"* (Rev. 22. 20).

The conviction grows deeper and deeper in my soul that the Lord is coming quickly, and that the Father and God is separating a people down here to meet Him at His coming. Happy they who, alive and seeing Him, are able to say, "This is our God; we have waited for Him." And if I love any down here, no wish can be so good for them as that they may be ready in heart and in their circumstances to welcome Him, and have nothing about them practically inconsistent with the hope, unworldly, so that they can enter with joy the scene then opened to them.

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*"I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase"* (1 Cor. 3).

Why do people persistently and almost universally misquote this Scripture in prayer? Say they, "Paul may plant and Apollos water, but God giveth the increase," i.e., Paul may do his best, and Apollos may do his best, but if God does not act, all is vain. And that is true enough in one sense. But does it not seem as though they cast the blame upon God? We have done all we can, and now if blessing does not come, it is because God withholds it. Not so. Paul planted and Apollos watered, and we may be sure they did it in faith, and God blest their labours. He gave the increase, and so He always will. To Him be the glory.

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*"He led them out as far as to Bethany, and He lifted up His hands and blessed them. And it came to pass, while He blessed them, He was parted from them, and carried up into heaven"* (Luke 24. 50, 51).

## OBJECTIVE AND SUBJECTIVE.

J. T. Mawson.

I HAVE been asked to explain these terms which are so often used and so little understood. I do not know any terms that could be substituted for them, and certainly it is of the utmost importance that we should understand what they represent, and that we should keep objective truth and the subjective effect of it in their proper, relative places. The objective side of the truth is that which is presented to faith; it gives faith an object outside oneself. The subjective side is the effect that that objective truth has upon one's soul; it is what is done in us by the Holy Spirit. We become the subjects of His work, and thus an answer is produced in us to the truth presented objectively to our faith. For instance: "God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3. 16), is the objective; "The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost that is given unto us," is the subjective.

If the subjective side of things takes the prominent place in our thoughts, we are turned in upon ourselves and either become puffed up with spiritual pride or depressed, according to the measure in which we realize or fail to realize our ideals. Nothing spoils and paralyzes our Christian living like the over-stressing of the subjective side of things. This is aptly illustrated in the fable of the centipede and the toad. First the subjective working without the objective and then the objective coming into its proper and paramount place.

"A centipede was happy quite  
Until a toad, in fun  
Said, 'Pray, which leg goes after  
which?'

This wrought her mind to such a pitch,  
She lay distracted in the ditch,  
*Considering how to run.*

"While lying in this sorry plight,  
A ray of sunlight caught her  
She gazed upon its beauty long,  
Then bursting into happy song,  
Unthinking she began to run  
And quite forgot the croaker's fun.'

God, His greatness and grace and love; Christ, His unfading glory and surpassing loveliness, the deliverance He has wrought for us and all the great facts of the gospel, and the blessings that are ours in Him, the future glory, in fact all that covers the revelation of God in Christ and His great purposes of grace, and His ways, too, with His saints as recorded for us in the Word, all this is objectively preached and presented to us, for our faith, hope and love. The Holy Spirit has come that all these things might be real in us, and that the knowledge of them should work in us practical deliverance from the world, the flesh and the devil, and that Christ should be formed in us, and dwell in our hearts by faith, and this is the subjective side of things. That that commands our faith and love, is objective; the Holy Spirit's work within us to bring us into moral conformity with this is the subjective. The objective must precede the subjective, or we get all sorts of error springing up from the natural mind. On the other hand if we take up the truth without sincerity of heart before God, we become mere theologians, and indifferent as to what is pleasing to God, and may even go so far as to turn the grace of God into lasciviousness. As the objective and subjective go together we shall be imitators of God as dear children.

## “HIMSELF.”

Ingليس Fleming.

1. *“The Father Himself loveth you, because ye have loved Me, and have believed that I came out from God”* (John 16. 27).

2. *“The Spirit Himself maketh intercession . . . for the saints according to God.”*

3. *“The Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout”* (1 Thess. 4. 16).

IN these and other passages the position of the word translated “Himself,” is at the beginning of the utterance in the original Greek, in order to lend emphasis to the statement of the truth—and so, to engage our thoughts with the Person presented in the communication.

Let us consider these three passages briefly, showing as they do that the whole Trinity of the Godhead is deeply interested in our welfare.

John 16. 27 is a remarkable utterance and it stands in remarkable association in its context.

The Lord Jesus was about to leave His loved ones and in view of so doing, comforts them with His ministry concerning the coming and abiding presence of the other Comforter. But,—to their astonishment, surely,—He says, “I say unto you, that I shall pray the Father for you.” He does not say that He will not do so, but He does say that He will not pledge Himself thus to intercede on their behalf. We can understand the surprise for the moment, which might be theirs at such a pronouncement. But the further words that fell from their Master’s lips must have relieved their fears, as He added, “For the Father Himself”—

### HIMSELF—THE FATHER

loveth you.” He would have them in the joy of that deep, rich, es-

pecial love. He desired that its warmth might be known by them. Thus He would not pledge Himself to act as a go-between them and the Father. He would have them enter into the inmost sanctuary of the Father’s affection. They were the objects of the Father’s esteem in a special way because they loved the Son and had believed that He came out from God.

Blessed indeed is our portion if we have believed on Him. We share in the Father’s love—the love of the Father Himself. And that love is measured only by the love of the Father to the Son. “That the love wherewith Thou hast loved Me may be in them, and I in them” (17. 26). That love is now our home, our rest for ever. But it is to be known even in the midst of a world where the Father and the Son are alike unknown, and where we are opposed by “the flesh” within and by “the world” around, and tempted by the prince of the world—the devil.

With this in view happy it is to know that the other Comforter, now here, is within our hearts to lead us into the same peace and joy which our Lord knew. And “greater is He that is in us than he that is in the world.” We need not yield an inch of our ground, nor give up one iota of the truth. Though we remain in, and part of, a groaning creation, His strength is all-sufficient

for us. Walking in the Spirit we shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh, we shall overcome the world, we shall keep ourselves so that the wicked one touch us not. And He,

### HIMSELF THE SPIRIT,

intercedes for us, making intercession according to God. He knows the difficulties we have to encounter, He is aware of every twist and turn of the road. And He having come to take care of us on behalf of Christ, and being able to estimate perfectly the need in which we stand day by day,

“Prays the prayers within us,  
We cannot ask or think,  
The deep unspoken language,  
Known only to that love  
That fathoms the heart’s mysteries  
From the heights of heaven above.”

Himself—the Holy Spirit—within us. How wonderful! Our bodies His temple, now to be used to display something of Christ, that that which came out in Him in all its fulness may be seen in some measure in us in our lives while here.

To this end He sheds abroad the love of God in our hearts, is the “Spirit of life in Christ Jesus,” “the Spirit of Sonship.”

He is enough for all our pathway through the world, and amid the gathering darkness of apostacy we may be strong in the Lord and in the might of His strength, and so be overcomers here where Christ has been and is refused.

Happy thought for us who are “strangers and pilgrims” now that our Lord is coming again. And “He that comes will come and will not delay.” We hear His promise in John 14, “If I go and prepare a

place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself, that where I am, there ye may be also.” He desires the presence of His own in the Father’s house. And He will return to secure that gracious and glorious end. And it is *He* who will come for them.

### “HIMSELF—THE LORD”

will descend into the air and with His assembling shout summons them into His presence to be for ever with Himself.

For this in His love He died for us—“that we might live together with Him” (1 Thess. v. 10). This glorious consummation we await.

A servant being sent to meet a little niece of his master’s, and having done so, said, “If the master had loved his niece very much he would have gone himself, and not sent a servant for her.”

Such is *our* Master’s love that no servant—no man or angel or archangel may be sent to bring His loved ones home; He, Himself, will come for them. His love will allow of nothing less. And as we hear Him say, “Yea, I come quickly,” responsively, we say, “Yea, come Lord Jesus.”

And until He comes He will order everything for our good and blessing. Wonderful, indeed, is our portion as believers. The Father, the Son, the Holy Spirit all for us. Well may we exclaim, “If God be for us, who can be against us?” and rejoice in the intimacy of His concern on our behalf. Thus shall we be kept in quietness amidst the turmoil of the passing age, Himself the Lord giving us peace always by all means” (2 Thess. 3. 16).

## ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

## Answers to Prayer.

"I would suggest, referring to W. M. Rule's paper on Prayer, that answers to prayer do not depend on, "there being in us, and about us, that which suits His (God's) nature, and faithful consistency with it in our walk and ways," or how many answers should we get? Most desirable as these things are, blessed be God, He answers, although we so much fail."—DOVER.

**T**HERE is no part of the Christian life about which we ought to be more concerned than that of prayer. Prayer is our "vital breath." And that which our correspondent would guard must be first in our thoughts; we are entirely and continually dependent upon what God is toward us in grace. We could have no access to Him at all, nor could we expect Him to hear us when we pray if He were not gracious. We may approach boldly to the throne of grace, not because of what we are, or what we ought to be, but because of what He is, as the God of all grace. But there is our side which we cannot ignore. The man of the wavering mind, for instance, is warned not to deceive himself, by thinking that he shall receive anything from the Lord

(James 1. 6, 7). And with equal force, this same writer says, "Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts" (ch. 4. 3). But he also tells us that the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much (ch. 4. 3). 1 Timothy 2. 8 describes in a few words what is the condition of heart and mind that is consistent with our approach to God in prayer. "Lifting up *holy hands*—personal integrity, *without wrath*—no anger in the heart towards any, *and doubting*"—having unwavering faith towards God. God is always ready to hear and to give, but we are not always fit to receive. He will ever hear the cry of the sincere suppliant, but the prayer as well as the hope of the hypocrite shall perish.

## The Parable of Psalm 49.

Tell me what you think the parable of Psa. 49 is.—GREENWOOD PARK, PA.

**W**E suggest that life as the Psalmist saw it became a parable to him. He had opened his ears to hear what it would teach him. Divine light had been shed upon it, and he put forth what he had learnt as a riddle for others, but the solution of the riddle lies on its very surface. The fool thinks that money is omnipotent—you talk of the "almighty dollar" in America—this is a popular and world-wide delusion, and the parable of the Psalmist shews the folly of those

who trust in it, and the futility of it in all things that matter most. The rich man of the Lord's parable in Luke 12 discovered that his wealth could not purchase one hour's life in this world, and that other rich man in Luke 16 found that his wealth could not purchase for him even one drop of water in the other world. The Psalmist had observed that no man, no matter how much he boasted and trusted in his wealth could redeem the soul of his brother, nor could he save himself from

death. His inward thought is that his wealth gives him stability and a perpetual tenure of possession in this life, but death shepherds him out of this life and gives him no habitation in the next life. The

Psalmist's hope was in God. He would redeem his soul, which riches could not do. The interpretation of the parable is that he that trusts in his wealth is a fool, but the man who trusts in God, happy is he.

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## Forgiveness.

*"Forgiving one another; even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye."*

**B**ELOVED followers of Jesus, called to manifest His likeness to the world, learn that as forgiveness of your sins was one of the first things the Lord did for you, forgiveness of others is one of the first that you can do for Him. And remember there is a joy even sweeter than that of being forgiven, even the joy of forgiving others. The joy of being forgiven is only that of a sinner; the joy of forgiving is Christ's own joy, the joy of Heaven.

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## Prayer

The empty vessel is by prayer carried to the full fountain.

If there be any action of the spirit which requires the complete exclusion of the thoughts of men, it is prayer, which is the communion of the soul alone with God.

If prayer is the yearning of the soul before God, we shall feel that the innermost chamber and the closed door are its fitting accompaniments.

There are those who praise the Mohammedan as a model of devotion because he does his praying in public. But our Lord condemns as hypocrites those who pray standing at street corners to be seen of men. It is in the secret place and under the eye of our Father that we reach His ear and heart.

The persistency of prayer, which is the child of faith, is no relation to the parrot-like repetition which is the dead child of dead formality.

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## From a Letter.

"Bucarest, Roumania. . . Then there is a man and his wife, Mr. and Mrs. R—. Their story is one of real interest. The wife was a girl at the Olteni school; whether she was strongly influenced to Christianity there or not, I do not know. The man she married was an utter rotter, so much so that at last she left him and returned to her mother. At this time she came under the influence of Mrs. N— and was converted, and conceived it her duty to return to her husband; this she did to his and others' amazement, but she made it quite clear to him why she did it. After a while her life and her prayers won him for Christ, and now we have there a happy Christian family."

## EATING AND WORSHIPPING.

A. J. Pollock.

(Read Psalm 22).

PSALM 22 is in one sense well known, beyond most of the psalms, and yet, I venture to say, a psalm with depths of meaning in it that none of us have plumbed, and one feels in meditating upon it, as if one were on the edge of a mighty ocean. This psalm, written by David, could not possibly describe the experience of David. According to 1 Pet. 1. 10, 11, David himself enquired diligently into the meaning of what he wrote. If you read the Old Testament by itself you would not get so much out of it, but let the light of the New Testament shine in upon it, and it is very wonderful in its depths of meaning.

The Psalm begins with a cry uttered in all its intensity a thousand years later upon the Cross. It begins with a sob from the depth of a spirit so anguished that none of us can ever know its unparalleled anguish and grief.

At the beginning of the Psalm we get the cry, "My God, My God, why hast *Thou* forsaken Me?" In contrast the sufferer speaks of two classes of people, who turned to the Lord in their distress, and *were heard*. He says, "Our fathers trusted in Thee: *they* trusted, and Thou didst deliver *them*"; and if we were to follow that line up to the narratives of the martyrs of different ages, we should find that in their hour of deepest trial they were upheld by the shining of the glory of an open heaven, and I believe in many cases they were rendered superior to the pains of the faggot and the flame. Then again in verse 24 we read, "He hath not despised nor abhorred the affliction of the afflicted," neither hath He hid His face from him; but

when he cried unto Him, He heard. And why? Why does God succour the martyrs and the afflicted, and yet forsake the blessed One on the Cross? Why?

I pray God that the solemn meaning of this psalm may take hold of some of the lives here and alter them permanently. When we speak about the Cross it is the centre of all history.

"In the cross of Christ I glory  
Tow'ring o'er the wrecks of time,  
All the light of sacred story  
Gathers round its head sublime."

A wonderful theme is the Cross: there is nothing like it. It would be well if we fixed our minds upon the Cross with all the depths of its meaning, and seek to come under its wonderful influence.

The cross sets forth the exceeding love of God. His righteousness is shown—"Thou art holy, O Thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel." Who was the holy Sufferer?—we know from the New Testament He was the eternal Son of God—the One, that was ever in the Father's bosom; the One who, being in the form of God, took upon Himself the form of a bondsman, and became obedient to death, even the death of the Cross.

We know that ever as He went through His pathway here the sound of His every footstep was sweetest music in the ears of God. Every word was a treasured memory in the Father's mind. Every act that He did was altogether and only delightful to Him. Aye, and if there was one act in which He showed above all His obedience and in which He

was dearest to God, it was when He was put upon that Cross and endured the forsaking of God's face. Think of the glory of His Person! Think of what He was doing there! Think of the abominableness and the pollution and the horribleness of sin! He bore it there and God's judgment fell upon Him because of it, and if you are a Christian at all you will say goodbye to sin. You won't play with it. You won't toy with it. You won't sow to the flesh, for if you do you will shew that you do not appreciate what Jesus suffered because of it, and if you do sow to the flesh, you will of the flesh assuredly reap corruption.

May God move our spirits as we meditate on this psalm. There is nothing so affecting as the mighty love of God displayed at the Cross as nowhere else.

The second thing I want to say is this. If the Cross shows forth the wonderful love of God it likewise shows the utter evil of man's heart. It says later on in the Psalm, "They pierced My hands and My feet"—the foreshadowing of a punishment unknown at that time, but invented by the cruel ingenuity of the Romans. What had those hands done? They had touched the leper; touched the ears of the deaf man; touched the eyes of the blind man; they brake the loaves and fishes and multiplied them to satisfy the hunger of the thousands who gathered around Him. His hands only acted in blessing man for God's glory. His feet? Oh! those feet! What we owe to them. "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of Him that bringeth good tidings." They crucified those hands, and those feet, and the robber-soldiers gambled for His clothes at the foot of the Cross. I see in that great scene the

display of the mighty love of God and I am attracted to God, and at the same time I see the awful wickedness of man, and I turn from myself in loathing and shame. It is an impressive thing to see these two sides of the Cross.

And then at last the Holy Sufferer comes to a point where he says, "Deliver my soul from the sword; my darling from the power of the dog. Save me from the lion's mouth: for Thou hast heard me from the horns of the unicorns." There came a moment in that crucifixion when there was the impenetrable darkness, and He was utterly forsaken of God, all the wrath of God against sin poured upon our blessed Saviour; and then He cried, "It is finished." This psalm begins with one cry, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" and ends with another, for the last verse says, "They shall come, and shall declare His righteousness unto a people that shall be born, that He hath done this"—in other words, that "*It is finished.*" At that triumphant cry the darkness vanished, and as He dismissed His spirit, He said, "Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit—He was heard from the horns of the unicorns.

Think of the extraordinary way in which Scripture is put together. People that tell us the Bible is not inspired must have very strange spectacles. In one verse it speaks of the lion's mouth and the horns of the unicorns, setting forth the extremity of His sorrow on the cross as from man's side, and then He says, "I will declare Thy Name unto My brethren: in the midst of the congregation will I praise Thee." That is triumph; it is resurrection and the fruit of His suffering and death, as

seen in a multitude that He can call "My brethren."

What has the blessed Lord undergone all this for? He might have been alone in His glory, but He wanted *brethren*, He wanted *companions*, He wanted those that He might have around Himself, to gratify the love of His heart and the love of His Father's heart. Hebrews 2. 12 permits us to apply this 22nd Psalm, which in strict interpretation refers to Israel, to the present time. Hebrews 2. 12 says, "I will declare Thy Name unto My brethren, in the midst of *the Church* will I sing praise unto Thee." The longer I live the more I am impressed with the wonderful wisdom of God in putting believers together in assembly. It is a very bad sign when we are not attending the meetings—God puts believers together—likeminded ones. You may go out into the world, become depressed, and bewildered, and then you may come into a company like this and be refreshed and comforted, and get a little foretaste of the glory.

Verse 26 says, "The meek shall eat and be satisfied," and verse 29, "All they that be fat upon earth shall eat and worship." Now there is a good deal said about eating in Scripture. You remember in the Gospel of John, chapter 6, where the Lord speaks about eating His flesh and drinking His blood—as a proof that we have life, and the way to maintain that life. "Why should there be this remarkable simile of eating in Scripture again and again?" The answer is, Eating is the strongest expression of assimilation. If I put money in my pocket I may lose it, my pocket may be picked, but no person can take from me the breakfast that I had yesterday morning—

the cleverest doctors and chemists in the world could not extract it from me. I have assimilated it—it has gone in a hundred different ways to succour my body in its different parts—blood, flesh, hair, skin and secretions of various sorts. It is important that we should consider how far we as Christians are really assimilating—making things our own.

It says here, "The meek shall eat and be satisfied." Now what is meant by "the meek"? You remember what the Lord said in the perfection of His Manhood down here—"I am meek and lowly in heart." Think of Him in Manhood down here, He who "was God over all, blessed for evermore," that He should say "I am meek" is very instructive. What does "meek" mean? I answer, The meek is one that is not occupied with self, then I must be occupied with something else, for nature abhors a vacuum. If I am not occupied with self, then I must be occupied with something else. If we are not occupied with self, we are set free to be occupied with Christ. "The meek shall eat and be satisfied." Oh! the satisfaction that there is in feeding upon the mighty love of God, and upon Christ as the expression of it! "The meek shall eat and be satisfied," and if you are satisfied, you will want nothing else. You won't want the world, and its pleasures and its associations.

Then it goes on to say that "they that be fat upon earth shall eat and worship." "The fat upon earth" sets forth those that assimilate largely and with profit that which is communicated in the Word. What is the Father seeking from each one of us? John 4 tells us that the Father is seeking worshippers.

It is the appropriation of these divine things that so fills the heart that there is the *overflow*, and that is what the Lord wants. I am sure it is possible for a person to be under the shelter of the blood, and yet to be living so carelessly—perhaps even worse than carelessly—that they have never experienced the slightest sensation of what worship means. Worship is a wonderful thing. One knows so little about it oneself, but there are times when the soul is so in the contemplation of God and Christ and all these divine things

brought to us, that one can only fall before the Father's face, or before the Lord, and *worship*.

If we do not know what it is to be meek, and to eat and be satisfied, and above all to worship, what is the remedy? Let your heart be divinely moved by the first verse of our psalm. Get to understand the wonderful meaning of the Cross of Christ. You owe all your everlasting blessing to it.

Nothing humbles us or wins the heart like the Cross.

## A Summer Song.

God giveth much; but He hath more  
 And better things to send  
 Withholding not, from seeking hearts  
 The joys that never end  
 Soon daylight dies, soon summer goes,  
 And trees lose all their shade;  
 But God the Lord's a sun and shield,  
 His love can never fade.

Lord! Thou art Love—and shall we dare condemn  
 The feeblest soul where Thou art pleased to dwell?  
 Where love divine, that pure and perfect gem,  
 Dim and unpolished now, shall far excel  
 Yon orient sun, when sorrow's night is past,  
 In its full lustre, unobscured at last.

To be with Thee, Thou risen Lord!  
 To see Thee as Thou art:  
 This blessed hope, so long deferred,  
 But founded on Thy faithful word,  
 Still cheers the drooping heart.  
 The Spirit and the Bride say, COME!  
 Thou wilt not these deny,  
 Thy blood-redeemed invoke Thee from  
 Earth's deserts and can not be dumb;  
 O hear the earnest cry.

## NOT THIS . . . BUT THAT.

David Ross.

Read Luke 9. 49-56.

Romans 8. 15.

2 Timothy 1. 7.

THE need of the world to-day is Christianity—not merely its profession, but its practice. Even worldlings in their thoughtful moments admit this and lament that there is so little of it. It behoves us, therefore, as those professing Christianity, to learn “what manner of spirit we are of,” and our three texts show us clearly what the Spirit of Christ is and what it is *not*. *Not this but that*. Even in our day Christ is still being “wounded in the house of His friends,” for if wicked Unbelief has slain its thousands, the inconsistency of Christians has slain its tens of thousands.

*The Spirit of Sacrifice.*

John with his companions Peter and James had a most wonderful experience on the Mount of Transfiguration; they saw the power and coming of the Lord and were eyewitnesses of His majesty. No longer was He the despised humble Nazarene, but transfigured, with face shining as the sun and raiment white and glistening. He talked with the saints in glory, Moses and Elias. Of what? Of judgment against the rebels who had refused their message and would refuse His? No, but of sacrifice, of the deace about to be accomplished at Jerusalem. Then leaving the mountain top they descended to the valley where there was a striking display of human weakness, despair, distress, a heartbroken father, a demon-possessed boy and helpless disciples. “I brought him to Thy disciples and they *could not* cure him.” What a picture of the world to-day. Christ withdrawn from its sight, and His disciples to whom it looks powerless.

Now note the sequel. He who could and did heal the child, the High and Mighty, Glorious and Majestic One, now speaks of going to the lowest place of shame upon the Cross; the disciples, weak, helpless and humbled in the face of evil, contend among themselves as to who should be greatest. Then our Lord reveals the true spirit of Christianity as He tells them that while the way to become great is to become a servant, the greatest place is reserved for the one who is willing to become a slave, the supreme example being the Son of Man, who came not to be served but to serve, and to give His life. Let us look at Him in His service. “Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into His hand, took a towel and girded Himself and began to wash His disciples’ feet.” The Latin historian uses almost the same words when describing the indignities heaped upon the haughty Roman nobles by the mad Emperor Caligula, the climax being reached when he compelled them to gird themselves *with a towel* and serve him at table. The Son of the Highest, with all power committed to Him, voluntarily stoops to do what the puny “great ones” of this earth submit to with indignant reluctance. What grace and condescension! Oh, Mystery of grace, He who was equal with God, for He was God, took upon Him the form of a bonds slave.

Truly the spirit of self-seeking is not the spirit of Christ, nor is the hateful spirit of sectarianism. John who had still much to learn in the School of Christ, says, “Master, we saw one casting out devils in Thy Name; and we forbad him, because

he followeth not with us." Just think of the cool cheek of it. They had shown themselves powerless to do it themselves. Yet they forbade the other man to do it. Have we no modern parallels of this uncharitableness and intolerance into which zeal for our wretched "US" leads us? If there are, and even if we deceive ourselves that they are the result of zeal for Christ's honour, let the rebuke of our blessed Lord remind us that the spirit of sectarianism is not the spirit of the Christ who said, "Forbid him not, for he that is not against us is for us." It is true He also saith, "He that is not for Me is against Me," but there is a difference between His "Me" and our "Us," and further He spoke of what He in His perfect knowledge knew to be Satanic opposition.

Neither is the vindictive spirit that calls for power to execute judgment that of Christ. James and John asked for power to call down fire from heaven on the Samaritans who refused to receive Christ into their village. How it must have grieved the heart of Him who even then had His face steadfastly set for Jerusalem wherein His mighty Sacrifice was to be made. How His rebuke in all its sternness and yet loving-kindness, must have moved the two brothers, "Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of. For the Son of Man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them." But are we not all similarly prone to demand power, to have our littleness dressed for a brief space with authority to execute the judgment which is the prerogative of God alone. Let us not so much seek power, as the willingness to lay our all upon the altar and put Self in the place of death. "If any man will come after me, let him deny

himself, and take up his cross and follow Me."

Yet though the Spirit of Christ would lead us to self denial, let us remember that He has not come to impoverish, but to enrich. "The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to destroy; I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly." Oh, that we may know the enrichment He gives and that the full pulsing abundant life may be filling and flooding our beings, so that we in turn, imbued by His Spirit may go forth bringing life and blessing to those ready to perish.

#### *The Spirit of a Sound Mind.*

Over the continent of Europe there are surging at the present time two mighty waves of evil. From Russia the tide of Atheism, godlessness sweeps westwards, while from the South, the great counterfeit of Christianity, Romanism, despite some setbacks, pursues its apparently triumphant course. In Ireland the recent Eucharistic Congress has cheered the forces of superstition and correspondingly depressed those seeking to maintain the purity and simplicity of the gospel. And what is there to meet these two mighty forces? A Protestantism wounded to death and paralysed by Modernism, and an orthodoxy largely rendered powerless by worldliness. What, then, is to be our attitude during the present eclipse of faith? Surrender? No, for God has not given us the spirit of cowardice, but of power coupled with love and a sound mind. The Christian can take stock of things as they are and face them fearlessly. Consider the crisis in the Church's history when these words were written. Paul, the vessel of the testimony was in prison; Nero was on

the throne, a man whose lust for blood was so great that he is reported to have wished that all the Roman heads were on one neck, that he might cut them off at one stroke. The Neronian persecution in which both Paul and Peter perished was meant to be the death stroke of the infant Church. So, too, did the Herodian persecution of Acts 12 intend, but the persecutor died eaten of worms and the Word of God grew and multiplied. Again and again has the enemy, during the long history of the Church, stretched forth his hand to vex it, but all the gates of Hell have failed to prevail against it.

It is not easy to be a Christian in any sphere of life, but it is especially hard in educated or semi-educated circles where it is the fashion to sneer at Bible Christianity, despite the fact that the arguments used against it are being continually disproved. Still it is the fashion and the Christian who has not realized that God has given him the Spirit of love and power is apt to play the coward. "Be not thou ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me His prisoner." Paul was not good company for comfort-loving Christians, and to-day the people whom God honours are sometimes the ones whose company the worldling and the worldly-minded Christian shun, perhaps for no better reason than that they lack culture or social status. Let us not yield to the spirit of cowardice, but let us also remember to manifest a sound mind. There is room for much daring and wholehearted enthusiasm, but none for foolhardiness nor fanaticism. Christianity is the only truly sane thing, a manifestation of wise discretion. Cromwell's command to his men, "Trust God and

keep your powder dry," showed how in him a strong enthusiastic faith was combined with sound practical commonsense. Little wonder that he so completely beat the enemy at Dunbar Drove, in whose ranks the wise discretion of the soldiers had been overborne by the foolish zeal of meddling preachers. Let us ever remember the manner of spirit we are of, and never substitute foolish fleshly zeal for the sane but exultant enthusiasm created in us by God's Holy Spirit.

### *The Spirit of Sonship.*

How distressing it is to see in what professes the name of Christ the widespread tendency to revert to the spirit of bondage instead of realizing that the Christian is called to the privilege of Sonship. On all sides the liberty which was partially recovered for us at the Reformation is being lost, and one sees the crucifix erected, the dictates of the priests triumphant, the crowds flocking to masses to gain indulgences from the penalty of purgatory, and this legalism, this ritualism is appearing in places where one would least expect it. How different is the true Christian spirit by which we know ourselves now as the children of God, made meet to enter into the presence of God as Father, lisping the name "Abba, Father," brought nigh to God by the blood of Him who died for us on Calvary, led in our praises by Him who, knowing the Father's love, declares to us the Father's name and speaks to us of love, beyond all human thought.

The truth of sonship is one that might well stagger us, as it did the first converts in India. The Danish missionaries were using some educated native Christians to translate a Catechism. When they came

to this truth of sonship, the astounded translators refused at first to write it, saying, "It is impossible. Let us rather put 'They shall be permitted to kiss His feet.'" It would indeed be incredible, had God not revealed it to us by His Word and Holy Spirit. Every system of bondage has man's merits in view, true Christianity thinks of the satisfaction of God's own heart in blessing.

"Trembling we had hoped for mercy—  
Some lone place within the door  
But the crown, the throne, the mansion,  
All were purposed long before."

Let us therefore stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free, and be not entangled again in any yoke of bondage.

Three times is this blessed truth spoken of in the New Testament. In Eph. 1 we learn that the *Father* Himself in the counsels of Eternity has predestinated us to sonship, then the Son came—made of a woman—to redeem us for sonship (Gal. 4), and now the third Person of the Blessed Trinity is within us as the Spirit of sonship. The consummation of blessedness for us will be when the full manifestation of the sons of

God takes place, and not only for us, but for this groaning creation which is waiting in earnest expectation for the manifestation of the sons of God. What a change from the cry of the man in the seventh of Romans, "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver!" to the glorious assurance that God has predestinated us to be conformed to the image of His Son.

"O Lord, I seek a holy rest,  
A victory over sin,  
I seek that Thou alone shouldst rule  
O'er all without, within.

This cruel self! O how it strives  
And works within My breast,  
To come between Thee and my soul  
And keep me back from rest.

How many subtle forms it takes  
Of seeming verity,  
As if it were not safe to rest  
And venture all on Thee.

On Thy strong arm I lay me down  
So shall the work be done,  
For who can work so wondrously  
As Thou, Almighty One.

Work on then, Lord, till on my soul  
Eternal morn shall break  
And in Thy likeness perfected,  
I satisfied shall wake."

Till that day may we all seek grace to manifest the Spirit of Christ in sacrifice, wise courage, and the enjoyment of our privileges as sons and heirs of God.

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Praise ye the Saviour! Praise Him in the morning,  
Ere is the battle of your life begun;  
Praise Him when dayspring is the hills adorning,  
Praise Him when labour of the day is done.

Praise Him in youth while still the heart is tender,  
And in your middle age, ye men of might:  
Praise Him at eventide: to Jesus render  
Honour and glory, morning, noon and night.

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I dread narrowness of heart more than anything for the church of Christ.—J. N. D.

## THINGS CONTRASTED.

E. P. Brown.

Read 1 John 2. 14-17.    Philippians 4. 8, 9.    2 Corinthians 4. 17, 18.

**T**HE Scripture speaks to us of the things in the world, and the things that be of God, of earthly things and of heavenly things, of seen things and unseen, of temporal things and eternal things. These things are set in contrast, and we are warned of the evil and unprofitableness of the one set of things, and encouraged to follow after those that are good and permanent. We shall be practical Christians if we obey the Word in these things.

The things of the world are summed up in a brief threefold definition, "the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye and the pride of life." And Satan, who is the god of the world uses these things to lure even Christians from the Lord. We need the warning, "Love not the world, neither the things that are in it; if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him." It was by these things that Satan, that old serpent, ensnared Eve and Adam in Eden. As Satan presented the tree of the knowledge of good and evil to Eve, she saw that it was 1. good for food, 2. it was pleasant to the eyes, 3. a tree to be desired to make one wise; and so she took and ate of it. She thought of herself and what appealed to her instead of God's word and will, and Satan triumphed. Those features of the world abide to the end, they are here almost at the close of God's Word. They may not be wrong in themselves, it is the lust within us that makes them wrong. God has given us all things richly to enjoy; we have eyes that can see and appreciate the beauties of nature, and appetites that can

make us eat our meat with gladness, but suppose our sole purpose in life is to see beautiful sights and to enjoy food, suppose self-indulgence controls us and our minds are filled with these things instead of the things of God, and suppose these things instead of the love of the Father fill us, what losers we are and how the Father who loves us is dishonoured. There are the positive evil things too, we do not need to be told what they are. Satan can suit all tastes by the world though he satisfies none, but the evil of it all lies in the fact that God is shut out of the life by these things of the world. We are not surprised that the lives of those who do not know God are made up of nothing else but their food and pleasures and recreations, but we who are children of God have a new life, a new nature and a new Master, and we can rejoice in God and His things, and find our pleasure in His Word and service.

As to the pride of life it is not wrong to desire to do everything well. Whatsoever your hand finds to do, do it with all your might. I often have to interview young people seeking special posts in my firm, and I ask them, "What is your ambition?" To do your work to the satisfaction of your employer and for the honour of the Name you bear is right, but if your object is to make a name for yourself or to amass wealth for yourself, you are ensnared by the pride of life. How subtle is the devil and how full of pride are our hearts; upon that pride he works, and sets us self-seeking, and the Father's desire that we

should be for His pleasure is lost to us if we are on that line.

In contrast with these things we have the things enumerated in that beautiful Scripture in Philippians 4. The great Apostle was reaching the close of his life and service, and writes with all his experience behind him; he tells us of what Christ was to him, for to him to live was Christ; and how Christ was the one example for all His own. "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus," and again, that Christ was his one object, "I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." He yearned for the spiritual well-being of His children in the faith, and so he urges them to think on the things that would secure this—they are the things of God. "Whatsoever things are true." In this artificial world we are to be guided by what is true, and this brings to our mind the One who is the Holy and the True, and because we are His we are to be occupied with His things, the things that are real, as opposed to what is artificial. Most of us like to appear before men in a character which very often we have not got. How artificial we are naturally! It is as if the Spirit of God would put His hand upon us and say, "God requires that which is TRUE." As we think about the things that are true, we become like that we are thinking about, for as a man thinketh in his heart so is he. But the true things are the things of the living and true One—the One Who lives at the right hand of God for us.

"Whatsoever things are venerable," or "noble," as the New Trans. puts it. The modern spirits sneers at that that is precious to the saints of God

as being out of date, and we may be easily affected by that spirit and forget the foundations of our faith laid long ago. The foundation of God standeth sure and that which to many is "out of date," is to us noble and venerable and most worthy to fill our thoughts.

"Whatsoever things are just," and for just things our thoughts must be lifted up above the things of this unrighteous world. The message that Ananias carried to Saul of Tarsus was, "Thou shouldest see that Just One, and hear the voice of His mouth." How like old Jacob we are, scheming and planning to get his own way, and to achieve his ends without refernce to God's just way. He suffered for it, but we believe he learnt his lesson in the end. We may learn it at the beginning, and as we dwell upon the things that are just we shall be occupied with those things that will bear the scrutiny of the light.

"Whatsoever things are pure." We need to dwell upon this for a moment. We live in days of impure talk and impure literature and of filthy-mindedness. We are enjoined in the Word of God to follow holiness—"Be ye holy, even as I am holy." We need to purge ourselves from these things that are impure, and to flee youthful lusts, to make a clean cut and be separate from what is evil, "Come out from among them, and be ye separate." Oh, that our hearts may take this home, for holiness is not merely an outward separation, but a separation of heart from all the evil around. In brief, how we need to see that the blessed God is leading us to occupation with what is pure! The psalmist asked, "Wherewithal shall a young man

cleanse his way?" and the answer is, By the Word of God, the Word in which His holy will is given to us. And as we cleanse our way we shall be able too wash each other's feet. What manner of persons ought we to be in view of all that has been lavished upon us of love and grace and favour by the ever-blessed God! How it should affect our hearts! Let us beware also of evil-speaking; it is the evil mind that is the keenest to suspect evil in others, and in that connection we may consider "Whatsoever things are amiable" or lovely." Occupation with that which is lovely will make us turn naturally to the intercourse with others like-minded, and we shall know the sweetness of true fellowship. We shall develop and delight in brotherly kindness.

"Things that are of good report." We are not to be occupied in finding fault with others. It is an evil sign if we are elated when we hear of others going wrong. There are many evil reports in this world, and amongst Christians our part is not to occupy our thoughts with these but think of that which is of good report. To be occupied with these will bring us nearer to what is in the heart of God before we see the face of the One who loved us and gave Himself for us.

"If there be any praise; if there be any virtue." There is a very common saying—"I see no harm in these things." The moment you begin to say that you see no harm in a thing, you may be quite sure there is harm in it. The question is, Is there any praise or any virtue in it? What the Spirit of God would bring before us is that whatever is of this world is very harmful; and to deliver us from it, our Lord

Jesus Christ gave Himself according to the will of God.

We are left here for a purpose, as the blessed Lord in the 17th John said so beautifully in prayer, "They are not of the world . . . I pray not that Thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that Thou shouldest keep them from the evil." How blessed to be kept by His grace and to be, as described in Colossians, chapter 3, "dead to the world and risen with Christ." We are exhorted in this 3rd of Colossians to set our minds on things above, where Christ sitteth. These are the things now that occupy a heavenly people. "I have got to be educated," you will say—a very serious matter to-day is education. The world by education is trying to make a new world of itself. The world is educating itself for the moment when "the man of sin" will step in and take control. I am not decrying education in its right place; we need instruction in order to fulfil our earthly callings. But it is being forced out of its place. I was at a missionary training college in Madras recently, and in conversing with the principal, I introduced the Name and things of the Lord. He just put up his hand and he said; "Mr. Brown, we are not here for religious purposes; we are here for educational purposes." That was at a missionary training college! And I have little doubt that the cause of the trouble in India is education. Even those professing the name of Christ can be occupied with these things, to the exclusion of the things that are above, whereas the Spirit of God would turn our gaze to heavenly things. How blessed they are! We have got a new outlook, a new interest, a new life, a new purpose. In the 5th chapter of 2

Corinthians the word is summed up—"a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." We have got a new citizenship, we are not of this world. We belong to heaven, and the people who belong to heaven have got heavenly things as their portion now, direction from heaven for their service, and will have the welcome of heaven at the close of their earthly pilgrimage.

With all these things brought before us we have plenty to be occupied with. But, you say, I have got to do my business; I have to earn my living, and it is very difficult, indeed. Yes God has left us here: our responsibilities here have to be fulfilled. We must do our work well because we belong to Christ. We serve the Lord, and there is no credit to us if we do not work well. Your employer expects you to do your work well. All God-ordained responsibilities should be the better fulfilled if we belong to Christ, but some take up responsibilities that are not theirs. Lot took on responsibilities when he took a place at the gate of Sodom. He became a town councillor—a responsibility that brought anxiety, sorrow and trouble. We are told he vexed his righteous soul from day to day, and he had no call to be there at all! Lot had looked at the things that are seen, and had been so occupied with those things that he chose the well-watered plains of Sodom for his dwelling place, and he landed himself in a host of troubles. So much so that he was able to escape only by the skin of his teeth from the judgment

of those cities. Abraham was quite willing to undertake what God gave him to do and to go anywhere that God might send him. He could trust God for the whole pathway from beginning to end: and the end was that he had not even a foot of land that he could call his own in the land that God gave him, for "he looked for a city whose builder and maker was God."

This brings me to my last point. We have had the unseen things before us, and this is the region where faith comes in. The one thing I pray to God daily for is that my mind may not be so engaged with my business that I cannot serve the Lord, or see the unseen and eternal things. In these unseen things we come to the region of faith. The Apostle speaks of the tribulation of the present time, these things that the Christian has to endure. If we are to be here for Christ and His interest and the pleasure of our blessed God, we shall meet with suffering, but the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed. Oh! how wonderful to realize that there is a host of things that are going to occupy us for all eternity. We shall be there to explore the things of God throughout eternity. They are unseen now, except to faith's keen vision, but faith will give place to sight very soon and we shall be at home with Christ in glory, and see His blessed face. Well may we say,

"Keep us Lord, oh keep us cleaving  
To Thyself and still believing  
Till the hour of our receiving,  
Promised joys with Thee."

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"Love to all the saints" is an element of blessing spoken of by the Apostle.—J. N. D.

# THE YOKE OF OUR LORD.

J. T. Mawson.

Read *Matthew* 11. 25-30.

OF the Lord's grace and yoke I would speak to you. But as you well know we miss the full meaning and beauty of the great sayings of Scripture if we separate them from their setting, so I must first shew you the circumstances in which He spoke these most wonderful of all His words recorded in this Gospel of Matthew. "At that time," we read. What time was that? It was a solemn time, a time of crisis. As we reach this part of the Record a sadness creeps over our spirits, we feel that we are entering upon the fulfilment of Isaiah 53. There is a quotation from that heart moving chapter in the 8th of this Gospel. "Himself took our infirmities and bare our sicknesses." The King had come to His kingdom, He had come to dwell among His people, full of grace and truth. He was with them to pour out His mercy upon them in a healing flood, but they did not know Him; to them He was only a passing sensation, He had no form or comeliness and when they saw Him, there was no beauty that they should desire Him. WHY?

You have all read Bunyan's immortal allegory, and may remember that when the pilgrims on their journey to the Celestial City reached the house of the good Gaius, where they were entertained after a godly sort, they had much profitable talk. The 53rd chapter of Isaiah was read, and old, white-haired Mr. Honest who was one of the pilgrim band enquired, Why was it that they saw no beauty in Him? And that is the question, surely, that must spring up in every honest, enquiring heart. Why? Greatheart who was the war-

rior and the instructor of the party—and no one can be a successful Christian warrior who is not instructed—answered, "*Those of whom that is said lacked the eyes that could look into the heart of our Prince.*" That was a shrewd and inspired answer.

The wise and prudent of the day who formed public opinion, looked only upon what was outward, and for all their prudence they were deceived by the vain shew in which they and their fellows paraded themselves, and Jesus was to them only "the carpenter," or "a Galilean," who "had never learnt." Away with Him! They were blind. Blind! Blind to the infinite, divine loveliness of Him, blind to what was in His heart. They were blinded by the god of this world whose willing prey they were, and as it was then, so it is now, even in this last week of July 1932, those who do not rally to our Prince are those that have no eyes to see into His heart. Did that heart, the tenderness of which they could not appreciate, feel it when they turned with contempt from Him? Yes, it felt it deeply, but for their sakes and not for His own. Behold Him stretching out His hands towards blind, rebellious Jerusalem, and saying, while tears of pity ran down His face, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem . . . how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings but ye would not." His heart was broken because they had no eyes to look into it, and because they spurned the love that was there.

It was in that crisis, "at that time," when it could be clearly seen that

they wanted neither Him nor His blessing, when they despised and rejected Him, that He lifted up His eyes to His Father. Did the Father care? He had sent His beloved Son into the world. "Having therefore one Son, His well-beloved, He sent Him also unto them, saying, They will reverence My Son" Mark 12. 6. Was He indifferent then to the fact that His Son was despised and rejected. No, He was not indifferent, He looked down upon it all and passed His judgment upon these wise and prudent men who imagined that they could discriminate and discern, and He left them to their blindness and gave to the babes eyes that could look into the heart of His Son, He revealed His grace to them.

It is a most affecting thing to keep in mind that if we have been attracted to Jesus and can say to Him

"Fairer than all the earthborn race  
Perfect in comeliness Thou art,  
Replenished are Thy lips with grace  
And full of love Thy tender heart."

we have been the subjects of the Father's work. He has revealed these things to us, He has given us eyes that can look unto the heart of our Prince. Our Lord was satisfied to have it so, since this was His Father's doings. There was no resentment in His heart, He accepted the situation, and spoke those memorable words of perfect submission, "Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Thy sight." Which words I desire you to keep in mind.

But though He was rejected by the people who ought to have welcomed and worshipped Him, yet His glory could not be hid. He is more than King of the Jews, He is Heir to and has been called and anointed

to a universal throne, for He said, "All things are delivered unto Me of My Father." The Father has trusted Him, fully and for ever. Into His hands the Father has committed the maintainance of His limitless glory and the carrying out of all His will. His absolute and universal supremacy is assured; He has the disposal of every created being in His power, from the highest angel in heaven to the meanest demon in hell. At the name of Jesus every knee shall bow, in heaven, in earth and under the earth. But His personal greatness is greater than all that He will do. *He is the Son*, and none can know the mystery of His eternal being and of that eternal relationship but the Father. And He knows the Father, for He dwelt in an eternal intimacy of love in the Father's bosom, and He has come forth from the Father, and become Man that He might reveal to us men the Father's Name and love, that the fulness of joy and everlasting satisfaction that that Name and love afford might be ours, that we might share it with Him, who is to be the Firstborn among many brethren in the Father's house.

We are glad to have that glimpse of His greatness but now we come to the other side, we make haste to reverently acknowledge the glory of His Name, but now we must open our eyes to look into His heart. His face is toward the multitudes now. He has accepted His rejection by Israel and now offers Himself as the Saviour of a needy world. O listen to His words. "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest." It is an overwhelming word. Behold Him in the presence of the world's need. He knew every thing; He measured everything; He

had heard every sigh, seen every tear, weighed every burden; no heart was hidden from Him; the sin, the sorrow, the sordidness of men's lives was all uncovered before His eye, and He stretched out His hands to to the world, and cried to the world with its countless woes and claimant needs, "Come unto Me!" . . . Of course, we say at once that only God could speak like that. For who but God could sooth every fevered spirit, relieve every accusing conscience, bind up every broken heart and bless every troubled sinner! Great is the mystery of Godliness! Only God could speak thus, and yet these words came from the lips of Jesus, the lowly, rejected yet unresentful Nazarene. God was manifested in the flesh!

Have you been arrested by these words? Then now you need eyes to look into the heart of the One who spoke them. If you can do this, wonderful things will be revealed to you. That heart cares for you, it pities you. He looks into your heart and knows its sins and hopes and fears, its shattered ambitions and hidden secrets and desires, He knows your burdens and every deep and unspoken longing of your soul. He knows

"The regret, the struggle and the failing!  
The long days desolate and useless  
years!  
Vows in the night, so fierce and un-  
availing!  
Stings of your shame and passions of  
your tears."

As you look into His heart and see this you draw near, you are encouraged to commit yourself to Him, to trust in Him. Surely you may fully trust the One whom the Father has fully trusted, you may safely commit your soul and its everlasting welfare to Him whom

the Father hath committed all His glory. Yes, surely, but it is only as you look into His heart that you will really Come. It is the grace rather than the greatness of His Name that attracts us, the tenderness of His heart rather than the glory. Here is rest for you, perfect rest. The only One in heaven or earth who could undertake your case is willing to do it. He appeals to you to come to Him, to come just as you are, and to bring all you are, with everything that is a burden to you, He invites you, and there is the yearning of divine love in His words, to cease your labours, and to rest in Him.

"Lay down, thou weary one  
Lay down thy head upon My breast."

How can He do it, and be consistent with God's holy Name and righteous rule? That question we must ask as we draw near to Him, and He answers it. Look upon the multitude to whom He calls. "There is not a man that sinneth not," said Solomon, as on bended knees he stretched out his hands in supplication to Almighty God. How can this question be met. Above that multitude of sinners a cross raises its rugged head, and to that cross Jesus went; on it He bore in His own body our sins; there He was wounded for our transgressions. And His great sacrifice and precious blood answer the question. The Lord hath made to meet on Him the iniquities of us all, and our sins and iniquities are remembered no more. "I lay down My life for the sheep," He said, "I have power to lay it down and power to take it again, this commandment have I received of My Father."

Now it is this One who suffered for our sins, and whose grace has

no limit, and Who is now the risen Lord who invites us, in winning tones, to subject ourselves to His will. "Take my yoke upon you and learn of Me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest to your soul," He says. Other lords have had dominion over us and the bondage was bitter. What a heavy yoke Satan lays upon the necks of his dupes and how he befools them. Artists have often portrayed Satan with a sardonic smirk upon his face, and they have not defamed him. He seems to take a pleasure in double-crossing his victims. We have examples in Scripture. He enticed Achan, and Achan saw and coveted the wedge of gold and the Babylonish garment, surely they were lawful plunder, but having got them what should he do with them? Bury them, that was all he could do, and he was soon buried with them beneath the avenging stones of an outraged people. And there was that servant of Elisha, who pursued Naaman because Satan had put it into his heart to covet his Syrian wealth and gay apparel, but do you think he would wear his ill-gotten finery with pride and satisfaction when with it went a leprous face? There are many examples both ancient and modern of this same thing, they warn us, if we need the warning, that the yoke of Satan is not easy and the burden of sin is not light, and that Satan lays his yoke upon the necks of his dupes with a sinister motive and a terrible purpose. How greatly we should rejoice if the hand of our Saviour has lifted that yoke from us and set us free. If the Son shall make you free ye shall be free indeed.

But we must come under some yoke, and Jesus offers His. Shall we not gladly accept it as a great

gift? If we have looked into His heart we can do no other, for we shall be persuaded that His will can only mean our blessing. His will is not against us, it is for us and against everything that could do us harm, His will is our greatest blessing. In this Gospel of Matthew He is the King, but the King rejected, but we will not reject His Kingship. We rally afresh to His banner and with uplifted hands and loyal hearts we cry

"Christ of God, our souls confess Thee,  
King and Sovereign here and now."

How shall I speak for Him who invites us to yield to Him? He must speak for Himself. He says, "I am meek and lowly in heart." What is it to be meek? It is remarkable that Moses, the God-chosen leader for His people in the Old Testament, was the meekest man in all the earth; he was a figure of Jesus our Lord. God's leaders are meek, and that certainly does not mean weak. Meekness is not weakness. The meek man is the One who is subject to the will of God, and Jesus was so absolutely. "My Father's business," "Even so Father," "Not My will." This was the whole tenor of His life, and He has qualified by His great obedience to command us. In the meek man there is an absence of pride, meekness and lowliness go together. There have been leaders of men who were haughty tyrants, men of unbounded pride, who brooked no challenge to their wills. Such were Nebuchadnezzar, Nero, Napoleon. But think of JESUS. He took the lowest place, even with those disciples who rightly called Him "Master and Lord." His love made Him their servant. He is not a hard Master, His commandments are not grievous, His yoke is easy and His burden is light.

"Learn of Me," He says. Some of us have rather unpleasant memories of teachers, and tasks, and schools. But who of us would desire to be excused from this school and from the lessons that our Lord would teach us? We learn of Him as we consider Him. His words are words of life to us, He teaches us by His ways also. Our wonder increases as we sit at His feet and learn of Him, and as we wonder we grow and worship. If we cease to wonder we shall cease to grow; we shall slip back and lose the joy of what we know. But as we learn of Him we wonder and grow and find rest to our souls. We rest in His perfect love, His perfect wisdom, His perfect way, we can take up His own words in all circumstances, "Even so, Lord, for so it seemeth good in Thy sight." And that submission to perfect love and wisdom means rest of soul.

But I have heard it said, "It is hard to be a Christian," and some of you have said it in your hearts, if you have not confessed it with your mouths. A young Christian man said that to me once and he seemed very depressed about it. I met him about a year afterwards, and his face was radiant "It was hard when I was half and half," he said, "but its different now." He had yielded to the Lord's yoke and he was proving how true were the Lord's words, "My yoke is easy and My burden is light."

If your experience contradicts His word, it has not been true Christian experience, and can we discover where it is wrong? I once saw a

man labouring with a mule. His desire was that it should go one way, its determination was to stand still just where it was. It was hard for the mule and hard for the master, for their wills were in opposition. If your will is opposed to the Lord's will, it is hard for you and it is not easy for Him, but that clash of wills will cease if you yield yourself wholly to Him. Do you find that difficult? Pray then for the single eye. Take your eye off the world's tinsel and its unsatisfying prizes, cease to consider for yourself and look into the heart of your prince. Here lies the secret. It is easy to yield to perfect love, and if you will look into the Lord's heart you will gladly yield yourself to Him, for His love for you is perfect, and you will find that His yoke is padded with love, it will not chaff or irk you. He will not lay upon you any burden you cannot bear. He lifts the heavy burdens, and puts a joyous burden on the necks of those who look into His heart. The burden He lays upon them is witness for Him; He wants you to bear Himself in witness to the world, to shew to men what He is and how blessed a thing it is to belong to Him. It has been said, "His burden bears those that bear it."

Take these words of shrewd old Bunyan with you and consider them well, "Eyes that look into the heart of our Prince," and take these words of our Lord and let them be a comfort to your heart and a soft pillow for your head. "MY YOKE IS EASY AND MY BURDEN IS LIGHT."

# “YIELD YOURSELVES UNTO GOD.” W. Bramwell Dick.

Romans 6.

I WANT to suggest to you to-night three reasons why we should yield ourselves unto God.

The first is—Because of the love of God for us. Let us go in thought to Calvary, and behold the suffering Son of God there, and ask the question, *Why?*

“What was it, blessed God,  
Led Thee to give Thy Son,  
To yield Thy well-beloved  
For us by sin undone?”

The answer comes,

“Twas love unbounded, led Thee thus,  
To give Thy well-beloved for us.”

We learn that God gave His Son, that He spared not His own Son in the hour of judgment, that He might save us, and possess us for Himself. As a result all the wealth of heaven is ours, things that eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, but which God has revealed to us by His Spirit, these things are freely given to us, with His Son. As we think of that love, that incomparable, wonderful, excellent, eternal love, what should be the result? Surely that we shall say, “We love Him because He first loved us.” But there rises another question—How much do we love Him? Do we love Him enough to yield ourselves unto Him, not part of ourselves, but spirit, soul and body. He has shed His love abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost that is given unto us, and if God loves us, and we know it, are we *prepared* to yield ourselves unto God?

The second reason I suggest is: the wonderful salvation that our blessed Lord Jesus Christ has secured by His suffering and death. We tarry at the cross and with reverent

hearts we view our suffering Saviour. We hear His triumphant cry, “It is finished,” and we see Him bow His head and yield up the ghost, and the finished work and the great sacrifice say, “Yield yourselves unto God.”

“Were the whole realm of nature mine,  
That were an offering far too small;  
Love so amazing, so divine,  
Demands my soul, my life, my all.

We sing that on a Lord's Day and at such gatherings as these, and we sing in fervently and sincerely I have no doubt. But what about Monday morning, and Tuesday morning, and all the other mornings? That love that gave all for us demands our soul, our life, our all. That love, the love of Christ, constrains us and calls upon us to yield ourselves unto God completely and at all times.

And thirdly: because the Holy Spirit is continually working in us to produce this great result. With this end in view He creates exercise within us, stirs up our affections and touches our consciences. It may be that sometimes we are stubborn. Our wills are active and will not bend to that love, and we have to be broken. Often we have to be passed through troubles and sorrows and trials that we do not like, and with it all the Spirit takes of the things of Christ and shews them to us and the end is that we may be brought to this point of decision, and yield ourselves unto God.

Consider another thing in this connection, that in a simple, practical way will come right down to our everyday life. What will it mean if we do yield ourselves unto God? In the first place, what will it mean

to God? It will mean that He will have that in us and from us for which His heart is yearning. He loves us so truly that He wants us absolutely altogether for Himself, and if we would give joy to the heart of God, and to the heart of our absent and rejected Lord, we must yield ourselves unto God. What will it mean for us? That is just where the shoe pinches! We sometimes weigh these matters up and we say to ourselves, "If I take that course, what is it going to mean to me?" It may mean that I shall not be able to carry out that plan of my life that I have mapped out for myself. It may be that I shall lose something or someone upon which or upon whom my heart is set." That is the wrong way to reason. God once said, "They that honour Me I will honour," and He said that through His servant to one who, according to the Scripture, honoured his family more than he honoured God and the result was he lost his family, he lost his life, he lost everything (1 Samuel 2. 3). Some years ago a young lady came to me after a meeting and said, "I am a Christian of a sort. I quite believe my sins are forgiven and I have no doubt of going to heaven when I die, but I feel that I haven't been of any use to God in this world. I love music, am fond of singing and frequently I sing at concerts, and I am engaged to a young man who is not saved, he is not a Christian. What do you advise me to do?" I said, "I advise you to put the claims of God first and then everything else will come right in its proper order." She came back a few days afterwards and said, "I have had a sore struggle." I asked what had happened and she said, "I cancelled the engagement for the concert, and I have written to my friend

and have told him everything—that I have been sailing under false colours and that I want now to be out and out for Christ and to serve God, and he has written and said that whilst he quite respects my convictions and respects me for having the courage of my convictions, he does not see as I see, so I do not know what will happen." I advised her to leave it to God. A few days afterwards, I was invited to her parents' house for tea, and after a little while I asked her to sing something to us. She sang that beautiful hymn, "Take my life, and let it be consecrated, Lord, to Thee. When she came to one verse there was a break in her voice as she sang—

"Take my voice and let me sing  
Ever, only for my King."

Now what happened? Well, some time after that the young man turned to the Saviour for himself and was converted. Some uncharitable people said that he professed conversion just to secure the young lady: such things have been known. But he was soundly converted. They got married, and are a bright, happy, devoted couple seeking only the glory of God and the interests of our Lord Jesus Christ. Them that honour Me I will honour.

But it is not a case of weighing the matter up and saying, Am I going to gain or lose? If I yield because I think that I shall gain thereby it would be a false and selfish motive, and no true yielding at all. God has got an incontestable claim upon us, and He calls upon us to *yield ourselves to Him*.

When a commercial traveller calls upon a hoped-for customer, he not only expatiates on the excellence of the goods he is selling, but he gets out his notebook and says, "Now what can I do for you?" and if a

servant of Christ goes out to preach the gospel, he sets out to catch men, and if God is speaking to us, as I am sure He is in these meetings, we must listen and answer. This is a time of decision for us. What shall the answer be? If God has spoken to you, you have not to answer me

or anybody else on earth, but on your knees in the silence of His presence, answer God. Let His voice fall upon your ear and get down into your heart, saying, "Yield yourselves unto God," and then say to Him, "I thank Thee, and I yield myself to love divine."

*"I am the resurrection and the life."* What great all-assuring words are these for any whom He loves as they walk through the valley of the shadow of death. He has been that way; He has tasted death in its intensest bitterness for us, so that we shall neither see it nor taste it. And He has made the way THROUGH; none of His own can be arrested on the way by its power, or affrighted by its terrors. "Thou art with me" settles all that, and resurrection—glorious and triumphant—is assured, for He is the resurrection and the life.

## "NO PROFIT"—"GREAT GAIN"

F. B. Hole.

Read Ecclesiastes 1. 16-18: 2. 1-11.

1 Timothy 6. 6.

I NEED not point out the contrast, for it lies upon the surface. Let me read once more the last verse read in Ecclesiastes and then our verse in 1 Timothy:—

*"Then I looked on all the works that my hands had wrought, and on the labour that I had laboured to do; and behold, all was vanity and vexation of spirit, and there was NO PROFIT under the sun."*

*"But godliness with contentment is GREAT GAIN."*

You do see the contrast of course, and you can have either of these contrasted alternatives as the sum total of your lives.

If you want to live a life which shall be of no profit, well, you can follow in the steps of Solomon; only it will be not merely at a respectful distance, but at a very great distance

indeed. God gave that remarkable man the most astonishing opportunities of digging into every possible source of human enjoyment, such as you and I will never know. By position, by the especial wisdom conferred upon him, by his magnificent mental equipment, by the fact that he was a king, and that he entered into the kingdom made splendid by the labours and conquests of his greater father David; with wealth rolling in upon him from every side, with every possible luxury and opportunity for self-indulgence, the very world lay at his feet. You have been hearing his own words. He has put on record what he determined to do and how he found things. He was able to investigate every world that there is within this great world, as far as it existed in his day. The mechanical world of his day was a very small affair, whereas our

mechanical world is gigantic; but the intellectual world of Solomon's day and the worlds of wealth and splendour and luxury were very great.

No man, I suppose, has had such a marvellous mental equipment as Solomon. You may remember how his very songs were as many as a thousand and five. One is preserved for us in the Song of Solomon, but that is only one, though perhaps the chiefest, out of all that immense number. Then there are his proverbs, of which he spake three thousand! You have read his book of Proverbs. If any one of us in the course of a long life were to coin a pithy terse sentence of value, which captured the public imagination, and passed into a proverb in the English language—well, we should have done something. But, my friends, Solomon *kept on doing it over and over again*. He uttered so many that we find it most difficult to think of anything further to say! He rolled out proverbs like a mass-production machine! Then he spoke of trees, from the cedars of Lebanon to the hyssop upon the wall, for he was a great horticulturalist. Moreover, he was a great naturalist, investigating and speaking of "beasts and of fowls, and of creeping things and of fishes."

I do not intend to dwell upon the details of the passage from Ecclesiastes which I have read in your hearing, but you can see how he went into things most intellectual, connected with wisdom and knowledge. Then what was even more wonderful, he also had a knowledge of God. The queen of Sheba came to hear the wisdom of Solomon, and there is a very significant word as to this in 1 Kings 10. When she "heard of the fame of Solomon"

she came. But the fame she heard was not concerning his poetic powers, his literary skill, his wide knowledge of natural history in all its forms, but "*concerning the name of the Lord.*" So she came down to see this extraordinary king raised up to reign over the people of Jehovah. She discovered he had an extraordinary knowledge of God, and he answered all her questions, which were not about natural history or horticulture or proverbs or poetry—but ABOUT GOD. When she had heard and seen "there was no more spirit in her."

So much for Solomon's wisdom. But then he said, I am going "to know madness and folly." If there is any pleasure in a thing, I am in for it. He turned to wine—a dangerous thing; he married wives; he executed great works; he gathered riches; he not only sipped but drank deeply of every sparkling cup. He tried every imaginable pleasure. He not only ruined his testimony, but very largely wrecked his kingdom. In all this self-gratification, in all this heaping to himself every delectable thing, making everything minister to himself, his aim was that he should be able to say, "*So I was great.*"

Now in all this he landed himself into the flattest possible disobedience to the Word of God. Turn to Deuteronomy 17. 14-20 and you will find that the Lord, who knows the future before it arrives, had laid down instructions for Israel's kings. They were not to multiply horses to themselves, because that meant going down to Egypt again—re-opening communications with the land out of which they had been brought. Also the king was not to multiply wives and not to multiply riches unto himself. David multi-

plied riches, but he multiplied them for the glory of the house of God which was to be.

In 1 Kings 10 and 11 we are told all about Solomon's doings. He *did* send to Egypt and he *did* multiply horses. Apparently before his time a few horses, just stragglers, came into the land, but the ass was the ordinary beast of burden, and Absalom was only riding on a mule when his hair was caught in the oak. Solomon had his horses and his chariots. David won his great victories without horses since God was with him. Solomon had horses, and from that point Israel began to say goodbye to victory. He multiplied horses and wives and riches. He did most flagrantly the three things the king was told not to do. The consequence of all this self-aggrandisement, this idea that the way of life is to get everything possible for self-gratification, is a solemn one—you are entrapped into disobedience and you forfeit the support of God. Solomon did not act in ignorance of God's Word—it was simply staring him in the face, and consequently he did it outrageously.

I do not know, but perhaps Solomon had very plausible excuses for what he did, when he read that passage in Deuteronomy. He may have said—Ah! but those instructions from the Lord through Moses were written so long ago. Times have changed. All the other nations have horses. What are we going to do without horses when all those chariots come against us? I can quite imagine the plausible reasoning that might have come in concerning each of the three prohibitions. But it was all *false*.

Thank God, ere Solomon ended his career his eyes were opened and

he was led to write this striking book in which he puts on record the results of the experiment. He was not inspired in doing what he did, but he was certainly inspired to put on record the result of the experiment. Listen to what he says:—I have investigated on a grand scale—on a scale that others can never touch—others might have one per cent of it—I have had the whole hundred per cent, and the verdict is, there is not a bit of profit in it. There is "no profit under the sun."

Now we turn to the New Testament, and here is a much greater man than Solomon. He is getting near the end of his remarkable life. He has been through great sufferings. He too was a man who had a most wonderful mental equipment and a wonderful equipment also from a religious standpoint. He was the very highest grade specimen of his age—a Pharisee—an observer of all the rites and ceremonies of his most holy religion. He had a good conscience and an earnest desire to serve God.

A moment came when all these things were forgotten—he came into the light of Jesus, revealed to him from the glory. He was blinded: and now he absolutely loses life as regards this world. You can read for yourself in 2 Corinthians 11 what he endured. Five times he was beaten of the Jews, receiving forty stripes save one. Thrice beaten with rods—that makes eight fearful floggings in all! Thrice was he shipwrecked, and he had not been shipwrecked, as recorded in Acts 27, when he wrote this. He must have been shipwrecked four times at least. A night and a day he spent in the deep—picked up by no one knows who out of the Mediterranean. Troubles, persecutions, trials, worries

came upon him morning, noon, and best part of the night. But what marked him? Why, the very thing that he recommended to Timothy, in saying, "Godliness with contentment is great gain."

What is this godliness? someone may ask. I do not want to give you a theological definition, but I can say that godliness is very much connected with *God-consciousness*. A godly man is a man upon whose soul God is impressed. He acts, he lives, he thinks, in relation to God. The fear of God is upon his spirit.

You may remember what Nehemiah said after describing a great many things that went on in his day. He described the way in which the rulers were behaving; how they oppressed the people, getting all sorts of things out of them to which they were not entitled; even their servants bearing rule and oppressing. Nehemiah said, "*So did not I, BECAUSE OF THE FEAR OF GOD.*"

There are not a few countries today, where financial profit is the great end of politics. If you were a governor there you would find it so easy to feather your own nest and in a few years retire a wealthy person! But what of God? If God is to control, and if my life is to be lived under His eye, then that alters the whole matter. Now godliness—this *God-consciousness*, this living as under the eye of God, this having God as the trust and the glory of our hearts—with the contentment that flows from it, is great gain.

I have to ask myself—we cannot get away this time from these practical questions—Am I going to be content to accept as from the hand of God that which He allots me, not making it my great object to

make myself something other than I am, or to attain to higher or greater things than I possess? If so, that is great gain.

I do not think the Apostle Paul was in prison when he wrote these words, though his captivity was near. Here he is, living his life in the fear of God—absolutely content, as he tells us in the Philippian letter, written when he was in prison—"I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content." Paul was a great gainer; he had Christ for his gain, and his eye is upon the coming glory, when his great gain will be manifested. Paul, rather than Solomon, is going to be crowned in that day.

If it is permissible to think of anyone other than our Lord Jesus Christ when we get to heaven, I hope I may be permitted to salute the Apostle Paul. I would like to say—and I think I should say it with tears on my cheeks—"Thank you, Paul, thank you a thousand times for being so devoted to the Lord Jesus and His gospel. Thank you for going through fire and flood; thank you for coming to Europe; thank you for the thrashing at Philippi, for the triumphant song in the jail; thank you for thinking of the regions beyond, where my ancestors were but poor savages. I thank you for the zeal which led you to carry forth the gospel, in the teeth of the greatest opposition, in obedience to that word of the Lord, 'Depart, for I will send thee far hence unto the Gentiles'; and for enduring that furious shout, 'Away with such a fellow from the earth: for it is not fit that he should live.'"

Here, then, is Paul, who must have been amongst the finest intellects of

his age; he had suffered the loss of all things. He had been living in the fear of God. God had dominated his life. Do you say, "It is all loss"? It is not: it is all gain—great gain. We shall never be Pauls, but we may tread in his footsteps, we may be imitators of him.

So I am going to close with an appeal. Let us yield ourselves to God in accordance with that word we have just been hearing. Let us go in for godliness; let us have God before us in this God-forgetting age. To-day God is being put out of everything, out of the world's great scheme of things, especially intellectual things. Men refuse to see God anywhere; they don't see Him in nature. They feel entirely independent of Him, and rule Him out of all their plans. Shutting God out, men fall a prey to superstition. Everybody wants his mascot—a polite word for a fetish. The more they forget God, the more the fetishes of the heathen come in.

But we are of those who "trust in the living God, who is the preserver of all men, specially of those that believe." We have God and His Word before us—the Word

which bid us yield ourselves to Him, that we may be the servants of His pleasure. Depend upon it, if we yield ourselves to God, we shall not be losers. We shall say,—Thank God, I have great gain, great gain even in this life—for godliness is profitable for the life that now is as well as for that to come.

In view of the coming again of our Lord Jesus Christ, in view of the passing of the world system and of the things that dominate it, what great gain to be connected through grace and by faith with that great system of things to be brought in with the Lord Jesus Christ when He steps forth, God's anointed One, God's great Administrator for the coming age. Oh! my friends, when He comes, in His splendour,

"It will be glory then to say,  
That He's a Friend of mine."

Let me tell you, however, a little secret:—if you and I see things in their right light, it is equally glory to stand by His side in the day of His rejection and to say, after the language of one of the great men of David's day, "Thine are we, Jesus, and on Thy side, Thou Son of God!"

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STAR OF THE MORNING!  
HERALD OF THE DAY!  
FOR THE HOUR OF THY RETURNING  
HERE WE LONG AND WATCH AND PRAY.

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Oh! what a lonely path were ours,  
Could we, O Father, see,  
No home of rest beyond it all,  
No guide or help in Thee!

But Thou art near, and with us still,  
To keep us on the way  
That leads along this vale of tears  
To that bright world of day.

There shall Thy glory, O our God,  
Break fully on our view,  
And we, Thy saints, rejoice to find  
That all Thy word was true.

There Jesus on His heavenly throne  
Our wondering eyes shall see;  
While we the blest associates there  
Of all His joy shall be.

# THE PASSING AND THE PERMANENT. Robert Whyte.

Read: Hebrews 11. 24 and 25; 1 John 2. 17; Psalm 16. 11; 1 Cor. 3. 14 and 15; 2 Cor. 5. 1 and 9; 2 Peter 3. 10; Rev. 21. 1.

“There from His head, His hands, His feet  
Sorrow and love flow mingled down:  
Did e'er such love and sorrow meet,  
Or thorns compose so rich a crown?  
Love so amazing, so divine  
Demands my soul, my life, my all.”

**T**HERE has been much talk lately about investments. Papers have been booming the great conversion loan, £2,000,000,000, and Financiers have told the British public that it is the finest investment in the world. But what we are investing is not money, at least that is only a small part of it. We have sung about “my soul, my life, my all”; these are our capital, and there are two investment companies that are claiming our investment. They are the passing investment company and the permanent investment company.

When making an investment you want to know who are the directors of the enterprise, and you look down the list of shareholders. It is instructive to examine the list of shareholders in these two investment companies; some of their names are given us. Cain was the first shareholder in the passing investment company. There are some wonderful names in the permanent investment company. They shine on the pages of Holy Scripture, and they are all written in the Lamb's book of life. We must demand of the passing investment company, Who is the chairman, and what is your prospectus? The devil is the god and prince of the world, he is in the chair, and the company offers pleasures of sin for a season and treasures in this world. When Moses was come to years, not when

he was just a lad, but when he had weighed things, he invested his life, his all, his future for time and I am sure for eternity, but not in that which was passing, but in that which was permanent. Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, mighty in word and deed, a great soldier, a wise counsellor, one who could balance the pros and cons, and when he had reached maturity he refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than all the treasures of Egypt.

Men in that day looked on Moses as a fool, but their judgment was hasty. We must not jump at conclusions. Don't judge by the first step, judge by the end. “In all that thou doest consider the end.” That is what Moses did when he was come to years; he refused and he chose, and what was the result? The kings who reigned at the time of Moses are hardly known even to historians; some occupy prominent positions, but it is as mummies in the various museums of the world. Most likely the king at the time of Moses will be found in one of these museums. “Well,” you will say, “that is not a great destiny, to be a mummy in a case in a museum.” But Moses had the recompense of the reward in view, and we see him

standing upon the Mount of glory, with Elias, and they are talking with Jehovah, the Saviour, the One who came from the glory, that a place in heaven might be secured for Moses and Elias, and that the path of life might be opened to you and to me, the One who died in sorrow and suffering that we might share His place of joy eternal and pleasures evermore. I am sure that Moses never regretted his choice, and never would he be more thankful that he made it than when on that mount.

The Lord calls us to make the same choice. He is entitled to ask for "my life, my soul, my all." No creature can make such a demand, but the One who speaks from Calvary, the One who bore my sins there and died in my room and stead, He has the right to make it. He has opened for me the path of life, and with a wounded hand He beckons you and me to pleasures that are for evermore. He invites us to tread the path of life. He endured the cross to open it up for us, but He rose again and He invites us to invest our all in His interests to cast our lot wholly in with Him and He invites us to follow Him to the joy unspeakable and the pleasures that are for evermore.

"What are we going to do about it?" Am I going to invest my soul, my life, my all in the passing investment company the world, that is dominated by Satan and the enemies of God, the world that gave my Lord and Saviour His crown of thorns, and the cross of shame, or am I going to line myself up on the side of the One who opens for me a permanent investment and pleasures eternal and joys for evermore?

Consider some of the shareholders in the passing investment company

Look at Esau. He is a man of the field, well set up, a fine shot, fleet of foot, an athlete, a sportsman. He returns weary and faint from the chase to cook himself a meal. Then his brother appears, his brother who desires the blessing of God above everything else. Quite true he was willing to cheat for it, for he did not then know the character of God, yet he would do anything to get the blessing, the birthright. Esau was a profane person, the passing present and not the permanent future governed him and he sold his birthright for a mess of pottage. Shall I, shall you sell 'my soul, my life, my all,' for a mess of pottage, or something that is not so satisfying? Yours must be the answer, as mine must be the answer. Christ who asks all is able to keep all that we commit to Him to that day and for eternity.

The will of God abides for ever, the world is passing away, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye and the pride of life shall all be soon as if it had never been. Those who have invested their all in the passing world shall pass away with the world, but he that loves God and does His will abides for ever. Is it irksome to do the will of God? His commandments are not grievous. It must be best for our highest blessing to be under His direction. Commit thy way unto the Lord and lean not on thine own understanding. Delight thyself also in Him and He shall give thee the desires of thine heart. God is a blessed God, in His presence is fulness of joy and at His right hand are pleasures for evermore, and it is God's purpose that we shall be there with Him. He can only dictate for us what shall end in happiness for us and be happiness on the way, while the

world cannot give what it does not possess.

“It has nothing new to give,  
It has no true no lasting joy.”

The world passes away and the lust thereof, but when all the things that man hold to as being great and grand, and when all the glory of the world shall have passed away, just like a morning mist, our joy shall be complete.

We pass on to the works that pass away, and the works that abide. “If any man’s work abide he shall receive a reward; if any man’s work shall be burned he himself shall be saved yet so as by fire.” There are those who provide the work that abides and those who provide the work that shall be burned up. “Oh,” you say, “I would not like my work to be destroyed.” It was bad enough, in our school days, to see a blue line drawn through our examination paper, and to know that we had spent so much time upon it and that it was all scored out as defective. How much better it was to see the mark of approval on the paper; it might be good, very good, or even be excellent, but how distressing to find that we had failed. You and I are going to have our life reviewed, and the One who knows the secrets of men’s hearts, and all that has been done, or sought to be done in this world, is going to be the Reviewer. Your Saviour will sit in the judgment seat and shew you your life and go over it from the time when you first drew breath, up to the time when you first learned to know Him. And then on through your Christian pathway that He may ascertain if there is work that will abide, “and then you shall receive a reward.” Would it not be a wonderful answer to labour and reproach

here if in that day you should hear from His lips, “Well done, good and faithful servant; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.” But on the other hand, if any man’s work shall be burned up he himself shall be saved, yet so as by fire. You are a Christian and your friends have looked to you, and have a right to look to you to lead them in the path of life, but has your influence been against their best welfare? If you are an unfaithful worldly Christian it has; your work will be burned up though yourself, saved yet so as by fire. What shame and regret it will be to be empty-handed then, to see the results of a life-time all gone and you yourself left with nothing to lay at the feet of the Lord who died for you, at the feet of the Saviour whose love justly demands your soul, your life, your all. I am sure as you review your life and as I review mine now, we are filled with shame; there has been much failure, but, thank God, much grace from Him. We cannot do anything with regard to what is past, but we have the living present, and, if God please, the future, and the opportunity of seeking in devotedness of heart to yield ourselves to this blessed One, and to answer His call and to invest our all in His interests.

We have now the earthly house of this tabernacle, the tent house, and it is passing and the building we are going to receive is permanent, the “light affliction is passing, it is but for a moment, and it worketh for us . . . an eternal weight of glory.” The things that are seen are only temporal, the things unseen eternal.

And the earth is passing away, as we read in 2 Peter 3. 10, it shall be burned up. What a finish! Sometimes when people invest their money

the time comes when after they have drawn a dividend for a year or two, they get notices that the company is not able to meet its liabilities and has gone into liquidation. In that day when the earth is destroyed and the works burned up, and the passing investment company has gone into liquidation, when it is destroyed, what then will those receive who have invested their all in it? The earth also and the works therein shall be burned up, that is going to be the final end of this passing investment company. But the permanent investment company goes on.

When man's day shall all be ended, the day of God shall burst upon this scene. As we read, "I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away." The tears all gone, the pain all gone, the sighing all gone, former things all passed away, but God abides, Christ abides, and the Church abides, the

object of His love abides. The tabernacle of God, like a bride adorned for her husband, and the people who shall be therein abide, what a glorious, wondrous eternity when God shall be all in all, and where there shall be a full and eternal answer from the redeemed throng in ceaseless praise, and worship, as the Apostle says, "Unto Him who is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, unto Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end." Then the passing will have passed for ever and the permanent will abide through God's eternity. "Love so amazing, so divine, shall have my soul, my life, my all," and we shall be there, the redeemed of the Lord, the sharers of His joy, and the objects of His unchanging love. "Love so amazing, so divine!" There can be but one answer to it. It "demands my life, my soul, my all."

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. ix. 20.)

## For those who would win souls.

**T**HERE are three essential things. The first is compassion. "When He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion." No man could be a soul winner without that. **COMPASSION** is the first necessity. But how appalling is the need, who can meet it? The more moved a man is the more he feels his impotence. What then must he do? "Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest." **PRAYER** is at once a relief and a resource. What is impossible with us is not impossible with our Lord. And it is when compassion for the multitudes and dependence on the Lord have their right place in us, that He can send us forth as labourers into His harvest. **LABOUR** comes in its true place. It is the outcome of compassion and prayer. Notice, the very people whom the Lord told to pray are the ones that He sent out to labour.—Matt. 9. 36-10.

## “OVERFLOWING.”

Robert Turnbull.

- 1 John 2=12. “Your sins are forgiven you for His Name’s sake.”  
 „ 2=20. “Ye have an unction from the Holy One and *know all things.*”  
 „ 2=27. “The same anointing (unction) which ye have received of Him abideth in you, and *ye need not that any man teach you.*”  
 „ 2=15. “*Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world—* If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.”  
 „ 2=28. “Abide in Him, that when He shall appear we may have *confidence* and *not be ashamed* before Him at His coming.”

IT is the overflow of the sap that produces the leaves, the flowers and the fruit of the tree, and as it is in the realm of nature, so it is in the spiritual life. It is the overflowing heart that carries with it the blessing of God, and if that overflowing is not there, we might well challenge our hearts as to what is the hindrance.

The granaries of Egypt were filled as the result of the overflow of the Nile—not simply the river flowing naturally in its course! but at certain periods, the river overflowed, bringing the land into that fertile condition which enabled it to bring forth the corn which filled the granaries; and unless there is the overflowing power of the love of God flowing in and out of our hearts, you may depend upon it that the blessing of God is not flowing through us to others. Yet I am quite sure that in every heart here, there is the real deep-seated desire to be an overflowing Christian and I believe the Apostle has this in view when he says, “These things write we unto you that *your joy may be full.*”

A Christian whose heart is overflowing with joy, whose joy is full, is a happy Christian. A happy Christian is a praising Christian, and a praising Christian is a fruitful Christian. I appeal to my younger friends, is there not in you a deep

desire that you, in the life that is before you, shall be a fruitful Christian, that the joy of the Lord shall fill your heart to overflowing. You will certainly be a happy Christian. You will be a praising Christian (God will have His portion first) and you will be a fruitful Christian! How could it be otherwise?

In turning to this particular chapter, one usually is prepared to consider the great subject of ‘spiritual growth’ in the family of God. There are the babes, young men and fathers—and whilst it is of the utmost importance to read and study it from that standpoint it is not exactly what is before me. Yet we shall do well to remind ourselves that God intends us to grow and develop. It is a dreadful thing to see a child who is dwarfed and who does not develop as the years go by, and yet, remarkable to say there are some Christians just like that. They seem to be quite content with the knowledge of the forgiveness of their sins as though that were everything instead of just the threshold of their blessings. A very wonderful thing it is to know our sins forgiven, but what is said of the fathers? “Ye have known Him that is from the beginning.” Who is that? Surely it is Christ. We learn that from the first verses of the Epistle. This knowledge of Christ suggests spiritual growth does it not? It appears to have been the absorbing thought in

the mind of the Apostle Paul when he wrote his epistle to the Philip-  
pians "*That I may know Him* and  
the power of His resurrection." He  
had given up much but He could  
add, "I count all things but loss for  
the excellency of the knowledge of  
Christ Jesus my Lord." He knew  
Him that was from the beginning.  
Let us go on to that!

To the young men, those in the  
strength and vigour of their calling  
in Christ, he says, "Ye are strong,  
and the Word of God abideth in  
you, and ye have overcome the  
wicked one." The secret of their  
strength lay in the fact that the  
Word of God was abiding in them.  
I would ask you young men and  
maidens, does this not suggest close  
contact with the Word of God?  
If we are going along without that,  
be we young or old (and one might  
well couple with it prayer—the spirit  
of dependence—) we put into the  
hands of the devil the secret of our  
power. Give up the study and medi-  
tation of the Word of God and  
you will become powerless as a  
Christian, and you certainly will not  
overflow.

To the babes he says, "Ye have  
known the Father"—They know the  
Father. How delightful it is to  
listen to a babe in Christ—one newly  
converted—coming consciously into  
the presence of God—the Almighty  
God—and addressing Him as Father!  
But why is it that the Apostle in  
writing to the babes, the young con-  
verts, should at that early stage tell  
them of the Antichrist? Why should  
he trouble them as to the coming  
evil and of the evil that even now  
is around them "for even now are  
there many antichrists"? We are  
told from our platforms, are we not,  
that we should not be occupied with  
the evil that abounds? That is per-

fectly true, and one would repeat  
it, but the Apostle's desire here is to  
put the young Christian on his  
guard, so that meeting the evil, he  
may pass it by—giving it a wide  
berth. We are certainly not to  
meddle with all or any of the evil  
doctrines of the day in order to  
meet them. One has heard the ex-  
pression "If you hug a sweep you  
get all soot, and if you fight a sweep  
you get all soot." Leave the things  
of Satan alone, but it is well that  
we should be warned—"To be fore-  
warned is to be forearmed."

I have been told that when a  
young man is going through his  
training for the Bank of England,  
he has to be trained, amongst other  
things, to recognise sound Bank of  
England Notes. Why is that neces-  
sary? It is necessary because of  
the fact that there are spurious ones  
in circulation. He is warned of  
this fact and needs some guidance  
to discern them when they come into  
his hands. How do you think it is  
done? Oh, you say, I suppose there  
is some kind of a museum in which  
is laid out various types of spurious  
bank notes, and lectures are given  
explaining the various defects.  
Nothing of the kind—He is put into  
a Department where it is only pos-  
sible for him to handle good notes,  
and he becomes so accustomed to  
the handling of sound Bank of  
England Notes that, as you can  
imagine, immediately a spurious one  
comes into his hands he detects and  
rejects it. He knows there is some-  
thing wrong, not by studying the  
bad points in connection with it,  
but by the fact that he knows the  
feel of a good one.

In looking at the Scriptures that  
I have read there are three points  
brought out, having reference to *The  
Past, The Present, and The Future.*

1. *The Past.*—"Your sins are forgiven you for His Name's sake." That is where we begin. There is something about this that is a charm to my soul, and yet one finds it difficult to express what it fully means; nevertheless, I can say, 'My sins are forgiven me for His Name's sake' and every one in this hall can say, 'My sins are forgiven.' Am I right? or is there one here who says, No! I cannot say that? Then to such I would repeat the message brought before us here last evening in the Gospel meeting, "To Him give all the prophets witness that through HIS NAME, whosoever believeth in Him shall receive remission of sins" (Acts 10. 43). If this is believed by you in faith, your sins will be forgiven you and you will truly be able to say, 'My sins are forgiven me for His Name's sake.'

You remember the words, "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 . . . and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father." Think of Him at God's right hand in highest glory, and realize something of what God's thoughts are concerning Him. God's thoughts are ever centred in Him. His beloved Son has glorified Him, and your sins and mine are forgiven for HIS NAME'S SAKE.

Young Christian, have you any doubts or fears as to your soul's salvation? There are times you say, when I have. But why should you? Remember that JESUS LIVES, and He lives at God's right hand. He bears there a Name which is above every Name, and because of His Name, and all that is involved in

that Name, and the value of His work as appreciated by God, your sins are forgiven you. It is the Name that makes all the difference. If I gave you a cheque for £5, duly signed, and you presented it here where I am not known, the cashier would say, 'Sorry I cannot honour this cheque; I don't know the person who has signed it, his name means nothing to me!' But if you were in Edinburgh and my friend Mr. W. could be persuaded to make out and give you a cheque for £100 upon his Bank, the cheque would be honoured. Why? Because of the name at the bottom. The name you see makes all the difference. We can understand it in everyday things—alas, we sometimes forget it in the things of God.

2. *The Present.*—Following the forgiveness of our sins, we are taken possession of—sealed—by the Holy Spirit of God—as the property of God, and in this connection there are two things brought out:

- (a) "Ye know all things" (verse 20) and
- (b) "Ye need not that any man teach you" (verse 27).

I can quite imagine a young Christian saying, 'I have read those statements many a time and have thought that whilst it may be true of some it certainly is not true of me.' From these Scriptures, however, we find that these things are said of the babes in Christ, and if they are true of the babes, they must be true of all Christians. As a matter of fact, if you went to the oldest Christian you know, even if he has been 60 years on the Christian pathway and say to him, 'Do you know everything?' he would probably reply to the effect that though he had been on the road so many years he was only on the very fringe, but

waiting to get to glory. It does not mean in that sense that you know and are fully conversant with all things, but, because your sins are forgiven you, and you are indwelt by the Spirit of God, you have a capacity to distinguish between truth and error and to take in and understand the things of God in a way that is impossible for the natural man to do.

A young man might go to the University and study the Scriptures; he might learn Hebrew and Greek so that he could explain all the different shades of meaning conveyed in different passages in the Word of God, and yet not truly understand a word of it, for as the Scriptures say, "Eye hath not seen nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him, but God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit, for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea the deep things of God" (1 Cor. 2. 9-10). These are things concerning Christ, and it is the knowledge of Christ that will make us overflowing Christians. The more we know of Him, the more we will want to know.

It is very wonderful that we have been brought into such a place. It is a high honour to have our sins forgiven us for His Name's sake, and to be indwelt by the Spirit of God, for He enables us to understand what is brought to our notice from the written and spoken word—most of all by the Word of God itself—if only we are subject to the Spirit of God.

There are hindrances in the way of each of us. Of this I must speak softly for I am speaking to myself as well as to you, and there is an old saying, "Those who live in glass

houses must not throw stones," but I trust the Spirit of God will bring it home to my own soul, "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world." The legitimate, and it may be the lovely things of the world—the recreation that we need, good, proper and necessary, but take care that it does not become part of the world to us. The little thing that is quite permissible might develop, so far as we are concerned, to something that is of the world. "If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him." You will observe this is not 'the love of God,' but 'the love of the Father.' The love of God has been shed abroad in our hearts. If your face is towards God, it will radiate something of His love. If you have turned your back to God, His love will follow you until you turn right about face and bring you back to Himself to realize that though your love still ebbs and flows, His is an unchanging love.

Just as I finish there is one other word as to 5.—*The Future*. The Apostle says (verse 28), "Abide in Him, that when He shall appear, we may have confidence and not be ashamed before Him at His coming." Are we living to-day in view of the coming day, and will we have *confidence* and *not be ashamed* before Him at His coming?

We have all heard of the young man who was converted on his death-bed. He had been told he could not recover. Must I go? "Yes," said the doctor, "I cannot do anything more." To those who cared for and loved him he asked, "Must I go?" Sadly they shook their heads! "Must I go empty-handed?" was his cry! Think of that—consider it—ashamed before Him at His coming!

# “PERFECT.”

David Ross.

2 Tim. 3. 16-17.

Rev. 3. 1-2.

Luke 8. 14.

Phil. 3. 12 and 15.

Col. 1. 28.

## *A Tragedy.*

MY subject to-night has been suggested by the tablet on the wall of this College, which shows the names of those students who fell in the Great War. In the third column each name has only one date opposite it, and therefore speaks to us of an *unfinished* career. The students came here with a definite purpose, but a terrible catastrophe—for which they were not responsible—cut them off, and they never brought their studies to *perfection*. No prize, no diploma, no plaudits of friends marked the successful close of their stay in this place.

## *The Bible the True University.*

Now it is my solemn duty to write “Finis” on these meetings. What is to be the real “Finis” of this season of spiritual refreshment? Is it to be “Fruit unto Perfection”? We are holding these meetings in a College, i.e., an institution in which men and women are trained for a specific career, in this case teaching, and associated with it is the University which provides intellectual equipment, not merely for one career, but for life in general, and has the power to confer degrees on those who successfully pass its examinations. Every one has not the privilege of a college or university education, but in the Bible every Christian is provided with the truest and best university or college education. What nobler degree could anyone wish for than that of “Man of God”? Where except in the Holy Scriptures can he find that which

will make him, “proficient and completely equipped for good work of every kind”? Not only does this apply to things spiritual, but even in our secular callings the man who conducts his business, whatever it may be, according to the Divine thoughts and principles revealed in the Word of God, will have a distinct advantage over the worldlyling guided by his own thoughts.

In the Bible we have an efficient professorial staff, for it is profitable for “teaching.” And the teaching of this text book does not require like that of most professors and text books to be scrapped every thirty years or so as out of date. It is always up to date. Here, too, we have a perfect censorship of morals. Some universities attempt such a censorship, and Rome seeks to provide such a safeguard for her youth in the realm of literature, but the man of God in whose heart the “Word of God” is hidden needs no such censorship and the slavery to priestcraft which it brings. He is free, but free to choose the good and eschew the evil, for the Holy Scriptures bring “conviction or reproof” to him. Rowdy undergraduates stand oftentimes in need of “correction” from the authorities, but the Christian is subject to the “correction or amendment” of the Word. In most universities great stress is now put upon physical instruction and truly bodily exercise does profit a little, but for the godliness that profits both for this and the future life, the student must turn to the Book of Life to get “instruction in righteousness,” moral discipline.

*The Examiner.*

And now we come to the "Examiner" in whom the essential qualification is a thorough knowledge of his subject. This week we heard the words, reiterated seven times by Him who is alive for evermore and walks in the midst of His professing churches, searching the reins and the hearts, "I know, I know, I know." How terrible to be like Sardis, "tried and found wanting." "I know thy works that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead, for I have not found thy works perfect before God." Recently I heard of a young fellow whose widowed mother supplied her son for years with money to support him at the University. Imagine her shock when she went to see him graduate, only to learn that he had never been at the University. "He had a name that he was a student, but was a liar and a deceiver." We may deceive our friends and even ourselves, but there is an eye which sees and knows all.

Some time ago I visited the North British Rubber Works and was astounded to see how much labour and skill were involved in the manufacture of a golfball. What struck me most of all, however, was the extraordinary care taken at every stage to detect flaws. In some of the rejects I could see no defect at all, and even our guide who as manager was very much alive could not find them, but the trained eye of the expert had found the work "not perfect" and so it was set aside.

*The Handicaps.*

Our Lord has indicated some of the hindrances which prevent us from bringing fruit to perfection. First of all there are the cares of this life which choke the word. Perhaps some of you young people have

not a really big care in your life, but there may be a great many little frets. A £1 note can be as effectively disposed of in 240 pennies as in 8 half crowns. So can a discontented, grumbling disposition hinder fruitfulness as surely as some really overwhelming trouble. Then come riches and perhaps the greatest handicap is not so much the possession of wealth as the desire to possess it. "They that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare and into many foolish and hurtful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition." And thirdly we come to the greatest hindrance especially for the young, "the pleasures of this life." Many a youth of promise has failed to secure his degree because the pleasures of University life kept him from his studies. It is not that the Christian must adopt the Puritanic attitude that pleasure in itself is a sin. Even perfectly lawful things may prove a handicap in any career. While at the University the late Bishop Moule abandoned at his mother's request his study of music in which he was an expert, not because she thought it wrong, but because she believed it was handicapping him in the achievement of his true aim in life. "All things are lawful, but all things are not expedient." "If thy hand or thy foot offend thee, cut them off, and if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out."

*Ideals.*

"Fruit to perfection" was seen only in the One who could say, "I am the true Vine." All that perfect harmonious blending of qualities, which God looked for in man and never found, was seen in Him who could say, "I do always those things which please the Father." And we have His encouragement to

follow Him. "Herein is My Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit: so shall ye be My disciples." Shall we ever attain to perfection here? No, the claim to sinless perfection is a foolish boast, very easily demonstrated to be such. Those who have come nearest to the true spirit of discipleship are the first to admit imperfection. Paul says, "not as though I had already attained, either were already *perfected*, but I follow after . . . I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling." Aim high. "Let us go on to perfection." In Scottish Universities the result of a year's labour may be "First Class," "Second Class" or simply "Duly Performed." I remember reading with amusement a piece of doggerel in the Edinburgh University Reading Room, in which a student described the fall of his ambition from "Prizes and a First Class certificate" to the attainment of a "good old D.P." Well, even a D.P. was something to gain, but in spiritual things let us aim at a First Class. "Covet earnestly the *best* gifts." What a tragedy it is when we sit down content with the progress we have made. We are so constituted that we must ever strive to attain to something higher. An artist was found one day weeping over his work. "I have attained my ideal, and now I have nothing to live for."

### *Maturity.*

Yet though the Apostle confesses that he has not been perfected, he speaks of those who are perfect. Here he is referring to those who have Christ as their one object in life, even though they had not advanced as far as he had in the Christian race. Just before the

saintly Richard Cameron met his enemies and his death at Airds Moss, he prayed, "Lord, take the ripe and spare the green." And there is a sense in which the green is perfect, i.e., perfectly developed according to the measure of its growth. Take a bud and cut it across and see how the sepals, petals, stamens are so beautifully folded together. You exclaim, "How perfect!" But if the bud always remains a bud, and there is no development into flower and fruit, then surely perfection is wanting. What a delightful thing is childhood, youth, when lived under the developing power of the Holy Spirit. We do not look for those monstrosities, old heads on young shoulders. How beautifully we see this development unmarred by sin in the childhood and boyhood of our blessed Lord. Truly great is the mystery of godliness, not to be grasped by the speculations of the human mind, but none the less worthy of contemplative adoration. See how He who was God over all blessed for evermore "grew and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom," how "He increased in wisdom and stature and in favour with God and man." Young men and women, live for Eternity and development will be rapid. In a tract which greatly influenced my youth someone wrote, "Robert Annan carved 'Eternity' on his doorstep and then crowded into three years a lifetime of Christian endeavour." Robert Murray McCheyne was only about thirty years old when he died in 1843, but he brought down the power of God upon Scotland in a way that is felt to this day. He was truly ripe, but his ripeness was the result of the persistent desire expressed in his prayer, "Lord, hold me on with a *steady* pace."

*Prize Day.*

Paul was ambitious both for himself and his converts. Seldom, if ever, does a school or college achieve a 100% pass mark for 100% of its students. Yet such is the Apostle's aim in his labours. "We preach Christ, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present *every man perfect* in Christ Jesus." Let us all live our individual lives in the light of that presentation day, so that we

may not be ashamed at His coming, but may hear His "Well done, good and faithful servant. Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." Then let us also keep in view in all our service the whole Church of God so that there may be "the edifying of the body of Christ, till 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 the Christ."

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What men call the trend of things or the irresistible drift of public opinion, Paul by the inspiration of the Spirit calls "the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience."

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## The Cross Unchanged.

The Cross stands unchanged; it was and is to us the manifestation of an invincible and tender love; it tells of a propitiation for our sins; of Jesus Christ the righteous, who met every charge that could be brought against us. The sins of our preconversion days were all atoned for, and those sins in which we have indulged since that happy moment too; and Jesus, who bore all the suffering for us in that awful hour, now lives in the presence of the Father for us, our Advocate.

As we consider the Cross, there is forced from our hearts the cry, "The Son of God loved me and gave Himself for me." Yes, even though that "me" is a shameful and wretched backslider.

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## "Jesus Christ: the same yesterday, to-day and for ever."

Circumstances change, friends change, everything around may seem changing; but there is no change in Him. Oh, what a hold this gives the soul of the living God! What peace, what joy, what repose, what happiness, and what irresistible power against the enemy! His arrows cannot reach us here. We are behind the shield of faith. Under the painful sense of failure the heart is broken by the assurance that His love is the same, and cannot change toward us, though chastening may be necessary. But in place of doubts, or dark despair under His chastening hand, there will be the bowings and the meltings of worship.

# AUTHORITY AND CONFIDENCE.

T. Oliver.

**T**HERE are two aspects of the truth which are realized in Christian experience and which are wholly inconsistent with historical records. The first aspect is the establishment of the authority of God in man's soul which is an essential feature of His kingdom. The other aspect is that He has gained the confidence of those over whom He has established His authority.

The authority of God is represented by the Lordship of Christ. With the heart man believes unto righteousness and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. The word of faith involves confession of Jesus as Lord (Rom. 10. 8-10). At the name of Jesus every knee should bow . . . and every tongue confess Jesus Christ as Lord to the glory of God the Father (Phil. 2. 10-11).

The Lord has established an unchallengeable claim and an absolute authority over every believer. The kingdom of God is an absolute monarchy!

If God has chosen to establish His rule over man no one can gainsay His right to do so, but the enigma remains that in doing so, He has promoted a corresponding confidence or assurance in the heart of man who has come under that rule. These two results have never been brought into harmony in human history. The more absolute the rule established, the greater has been the measure of discontent inspired thereby.

For example, Caius Julius Caesar, the greatest man of ancient secular history, in the course of a long series of brilliant military successes

established an absolute autocracy over the known world. During that period, he showed the greatest administrative capacity of any ruler up to his time (and for that matter since). But his magnanimity and beneficent rule did not inspire confidence. On the contrary, conspiracies sprang up all around. The result was that Caesar died at the dagger points of his most intimate associates. As he sank under sixteen wounds, recognising amongst the assassins Brutus, the man above all others who owed everything to Caesar, the latter exclaimed reproachfully, "And, thou too, Brutus!"

Such was man in ancient times. Yet we have the principle well exemplified in comparatively recent history in the case of Russia, where an absolute monarchy was established for two centuries. Throughout that period, conspiracy was rampant and few of the Czars escaped violent deaths.

With such depressing examples of man's ingratitude on the pages of secular history, we turn with zest to the pages of Holy Writ to find a wonderful contrast. In the descriptions of the kingdom of God in display during the Millenium we see that the authority of God will be publicly demonstrated in the world, and there will be a guarantee to man of immunity from the power of the enemy. While, on the other hand, the New Covenant will result in the most unswerving conviction in the hearts of men as to the rectitude of God's government.

At the outset, man departed from God, following the devious ways of his own self-will which carried with it pride and desire for display of

the results of human achievement. In his evil course he has thus established himself as antagonistic to God. But the issue of God's ways must necessarily emerge in the subjection of every opposing force and the ultimate displacement of evil altogether.

These two aspects of truth are brought out very well in the examples of Moses and Aaron. The former was the mediator, representing the authority of God to the people, while the latter was the priest representing the people to God, enabling them to have confidence in God.

On the entrance of Christ to Jerusalem, a week before His crucifixion, the people hailed Him in the language of prophecy. "Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord." On that occasion the confidence established in the hearts of the people was of a transient nature. Because a week later the multitude cried, "Away with Him!" Such is the fickle estimate of the mob! But the prophetic writings have a further interpretation. They relate also to the Lord's second coming, when He will be welcomed to Jerusalem in identical terms, but not on the basis of Israel's faithfulness. The welcome will depend on the certain ground of God's faithfulness and the continuing fruits of the death and resurrection of Christ. Then will spring

up in the hearts of men a permanent confidence in the Lord.

But while the affairs of earth await solution, those who have the heavenly calling know Christ in both aspects as Lord and Priest at the right hand of God, giving us confidence in God. In the midst of trouble we are not afraid because we have His support. We are exhorted to come "boldly" (literally, with confidence) to the throne of grace to obtain mercy and grace for timely help (Heb. 4. 16). We are conscious of the constitution and ability of our great High Priest. As Christians, we are imbued with the spirit of the New Covenant while in the place of testimony and responsibility.

"Herein is love with us made perfect that we may have "boldness" (literally, confidence) in the day of judgment, because as He is so are we in this world" (1 John 4. 17). This refers to our responsibility as Christians. The judgment day will close for ever the history of responsibility. All that we do is in view of the judgment seat. When we shall receive the true appraisal of Christ. But it is of all importance that we should have confidence of heart in view of that day, because we are as Christ is. Love is thus completed with us so that we may be without fear or apprehension as to the future.

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A God in nature is a God above me, for who by searching can find out God—His works any more than Himself? A God in providence is a God beyond me, for who can trace Him in the mighty working of His throne, the vast operations of His hand. A God in law is a God against me, but a God in Christ is a God with me and for me. Oh, beloved ones, do you know anything of this? Can you say "my God"—that God is your God in all the opulence of His divine and essential nature and glory of His love and grace?

## THE CONFLICT.

J. T. Mawson.

"Behold, Satan hath desired to have you that he may sift you as wheat: but I have prayed for thee" (Luke 22. 31, 32).

AND what can Satan do against the Lord's intercession? One thing is certain, he can never get ahead of our Lord. The intercession comes before the temptation, for our Lord has foreknowledge of all that will come to us, and Satan has not this, for all his subtlety; it is a divine attribute. Our Lord's love for us is greater even than Satan's hatred of us; and our Lord has more at stake in the preservation of our faith than Satan has in its destruction.

We may turn a deaf ear to Satan's suggestions; we are wise if we do: it is better to ignore him than argue with him. John Bunyan tried arguing, but he found that Satan could say, "Sell Him, sell Him," very much faster than he could say, "Not for ten thousand worlds, not for ten thousand worlds."

But suppose Satan should cease arguing and shew himself as "a roaring lion" to make us afraid; suppose he should "straddle quite over the whole breadth of the way," and say, "I swear by my infernal den that thou shalt go no further: here will I spill thy soul," as he did when he hoped to crush the pilgrim in Bunyan's great allegory. Why, we have the uplifted hands of our true Moses, who needs no Aaron and Hur to support Him, for He is never weary, and ever liveth to make intercession for us. And we have Christian's weapons: *the shield of faith*—which the warrior-pilgrim used when "Apollyon made fast at him, throwing darts as thick as hail." And though it is true that in that fierce conflict he was wounded

in his head, his hand, and foot, yet when he emerged victorious from the fight, a hand held out to him leaves from the tree of life, which he applied to his wounds, which were healed immediately. He had also *the sword of the Spirit*, and "while Apollyon was fetching his last blow, thereby to make a full end of this good man, Christian nimbly reached out his hand for his sword, and caught it, saying, "Rejoice not against me, O mine enemy: when I fall I shall rise again" (Micah 7. 8). It is a glorious tale of a more glorious reality! "with that," it tells us, Christian gave his foe "a deadly thrust, which made him give back, as one that had received his mortal wound. And Christian, perceiving that, made at him again, saying, 'Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us' (Rom. 8. 37, 39); James 4. 7). And with that Apollyon spread forth his dragon wings, and sped him away, so that Christian saw him no more."

I had not intended making that long quotation from the immortal Bunyan when I began to comment on the intercession of our Lord, but it is plain that there are two sides to the conflict. That Moses should intercede for them in the mountain was an absolute necessity, without this Israel would never have overthrown Amalek, but they had to fight him foot to foot in the plain, yet it was by the intercession that they prevailed. And it is because "HE," our victorious Saviour, who loves us, ever liveth to make intercession for us, that "we are more than conquerors through Him."

And how shrewdly Bunyan thought of everything; he wrote out of a great experience surely, and with a great knowledge of his Prince. He tells us, that his pilgrim, when the victory was secured, "sat down in that place to eat bread, and to drink of the bottle that was given to him a little before: so being refreshed, he addressed himself to his journey with his sword drawn in his hand, for he said, I know not but some other enemy may be at hand."

Fellow pilgrims to the Celestial city, we must keep ourselves for

Christ against all the enemies' efforts to draw or drive us from Him, and for this we must not cast aside the shield of faith and the sword of the Spirit, but let us realize our dependence upon our Lord and His ceaseless intercession. After all, it is He that keeps us and not we who keep Him. And He is able to keep us from falling and to present us faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy, and to Him, God only wise, our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and for ever. Amen.

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## THE WORD.

IN the four Gospels, or rather in the four books of the one Gospel, the Apostle John, deservedly compared to an eagle, has lifted his enunciation of the truth to a far higher and sublimer point than the others. The other Evangelists walked, so to speak, on earth with our Lord as Man. Of His Godhead He said but a few things. But John, as if he found it oppressive to walk on earth, has opened his treatise as it were with a peal of thunder; he has raised himself not merely above the earth and the whole compass of the air and heaven, but even above every angel host and every order of the invisible powers, and has reached even to Him by whom all things were made, in that sentence, "IN THE BEGINNING WAS THE WORD."

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The Word is not merely a divine Being—He is God. From His eternal existence—"In the beginning was the Word" we ascend to His distinct personality—"and the Word was with God," and finally to the full truth of His substantial Godhead—"and the Word was God."

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"The only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him." There is nothing like that! The deep, unspeakable, unfathomable love of that bosom is the love that has visited us. It is heaven to the heart to be silent and still, and in simple faith let such a revelation tell its own tale upon us.

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What the Lord Jesus was in any one place at any one time, He was always and everywhere; so that, if the mirror of the Gospel history were to be broken to a thousand fragments, every fragment would yield the same image; "God manifest in flesh."

What it says of itself.

*"Then opened He their understanding, that they might understand the Scriptures"* (Luke 24. 45).

THE mind of the natural man is well able to understand natural things, but for the understanding of the mind of God as revealed in the Scripture, it has no capacity. There must be an operation of God if man is to be intelligent in the Scripture. The child of God has been born of God and is indwelt by the Spirit of God, and has in consequence the capacity to know the mind of God. Even babes in the family of God have this, as we read of them, "Ye have an unction from the Holy One and know all things" (1 John 2. 20). The capacity to know the mind of God in the Scripture lies in the gift of the Spirit as the Anointing. Of itself this does not give intelligence, for there must be diligent study of the Scripture in order to learn His mind, and there is growth in this, but the Holy Spirit is the source of intelligence for "He shall teach you all things" (John 14. 26).

In the first part of Luke 24 the Lord Jesus had given the two disciples on the road to Emmaus a wonderful exposition of Scripture, so that their hearts burned within them. He expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself (v. 27). But though their hearts were warmed up with the exposition of Scripture, and they could tell the disciples how He was known to them in breaking of bread, they did not yet understand the meaning of all this. But when about to ascend He opened their understanding that they might understand the Scriptures, and commissioned them as

His witnesses to preach repentance and remission of sins among all nations beginning at Jerusalem—they understood what the Scripture had foretold, that the death and resurrection of Christ were necessary, if blessing for a man was to be proclaimed.

The key to the understanding of the Scripture is CHRIST. They all speak of Him. The Ethiopian Eunuch was reading Isaiah 53 when Philip asked him the question, "Understandest thou what thou readeest?" (Acts 8. 30). On acknowledging his ignorance "Philip opened his mouth and began at the same Scripture and preached unto him Jesus" (v. 35). He had been to Jerusalem and was returning home with his heart unsatisfied, but this meeting with Philip and the exposition of the portion of Scripture he had been reading, so filled his heart with joy that he went on his way rejoicing. The subject of Scripture is Jesus, and to read Scripture with Jesus in mind is the only way to understand it. In Scripture you find the things concerning Himself.

Along with the understanding of Scripture as to the Lord Jesus personally, we should also be intelligent as to the Dispensations. It is recorded of the children Issachar that "They had understanding of the times to know what Israel ought to do" (1 Chron. 12. 32), they came to crown David King. Now the Lord Jesus is sitting at the right hand of the Majesty on High, having set Himself down there after making purification for sins (Heb. 1). The Throne upon which He sits is a throne of Grace, to which

His people may come with boldness to obtain mercy and find grace for seasonable help. It is a day when the grace of God that bringeth salvation for all men hath appeared and the glad tidings of His grace is being proclaimed in all its sweetness and fulness world wide. God is now a Saviour God. We who know the Lord Jesus Christ bow and own Him Lord of all. We are subject to Him.

If we understand the Scriptures we shall have understanding what the will of the Lord is (Eph. 5. 17). Not only shall we be intelligent as to the scope of His counsels and purposes concerning His people, but in the midst of the ruin of Christendom, we shall be able to discern in the Scriptures the path of His will, and walk therein.

But our intelligence depends upon our spiritual state. If the Spirit is ungrieved and we are living in sweet communion with Himself, He will make His mind known to us, as He did to His disciples at the supper table. Faith in Him, obedience to His commandments, and love one to the other will secure His presence with us, and the result will be that we shall be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and

spiritual understanding, walking worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, fruitful in every good work, and growing by the knowledge of God (Col. 1. 9-10).

"*They searched the Scriptures daily*" (Acts 17. 11).

Scripture searching is a healthful occupation spiritually for the believer. It stimulates growth. If we are to grow in the knowledge of God's mind, there must needs be a scrutiny and examination of the Scriptures in regard to what may be brought before us by others. These Berean Jews were more noble than those at Thessalonica, in that they received the Word with all readiness of mind. Their minds were open to receive the truth, but they searched the Scriptures daily whether these things were so. Nothing will establish the soul like the Word of God.

In learning the truth from Scripture the soul grows, and every fresh truth learnt will fit into what is already there and add to the growth. That is what edification is; building up; and we are exhorted to build ourselves up on our most Holy Faith (Jude 20). The Faith, or the Revelation of God in Christ, is the foundation upon which we build.

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## God's Choice. Ephesians 1.

It is God Himself that has chosen us in Christ to be holy and without blame before Him in love. *The thought, the choice, the love, are His own.* His be all the praise and glory. Man had no voice in this matter. It was before the foundation of the world. All is according to God, and worthy of Himself. It is the necessity of His nature and character to have those that are near Him like Himself. It must be so. The principle is universal. The man of letters chooses for his companions literary men; and we all choose to have with us and around us those that are suitable to our nature and ways. God acts upon this principle in the fourth verse. He is holy and blameless and love, and those that are to be with Him for ever must be suitable to Him, and He has found a way by which even this shall come to pass.

# THE LORD'S INTEREST IN AND CARE FOR "HIS OWN." No. 2.

W. Bramwell Dick.

(II.). *Productive, Progress, Protection, Preservation.* John 15. 16, 17.

WE have already called attention to the division so clearly made by the Holy Spirit between chapters 13=14 and 15=16. They ignore this who make any attempt at a rearrangement of these chapters. In chapter 13 we have preparation not only for communion inside but for testimony outside. In chapter 14 there is the cheering prospect of His return to encourage the heart amid the opposition of the world; the promise of the coming of the Holy Spirit by whose power they, and we, should be maintained; and the assurance by the Lord that He Himself would come to them, so that His support might ever be available. As they pass from that hallowed scene into the darkness of the night, the disciples must have been conscious of the hatred and enmity of the world in which He was going to leave them.

Do we ever stop and ask ourselves why are we left here? Are we not in danger of catching the spirit of the world, and, while professedly separate, yet associating with it? Do we sometimes venture across the border-line because we think we will attain a higher position in our profession, or be more prosperous in business? Alas! How many derelicts are strewn everywhere to-day who, it may be, have attained their wish but have lost their life and are of no use to God. Why, then, are we left here? If we may continue the alliteration, it is that we may be

## PRODUCTIVE,

in other words, that we may bring forth fruit for God. If we are in the enjoyment of that which we have been considering in chapters 13=14 this will be so; if we consider God's claim upon us this must be so. One verse from chapter 15 must suffice:

*"Ye have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in My Name, He may give it you"* (16).

This is primarily Apostolic and had reference to those whom the Lord addressed. We have no hesitation, however, in saying that we may take it to ourselves. Our blessed Lord looks for that response from us to His love for us that will bring joy and comfort to His heart during the night of His absence. Do not let us limit the thought of fruit bearing to more or less public service, or to that which can be produced only by certain persons. *Every believer has been divinely ordained to go and bring forth fruit.* Therefore not one of us can say, "There is nothing that I can do"; nor will any of us tell the Lord at the judgment seat, "I did not think there was anything that I could do." Let us visit that shut-in saint: cut off from the fellowship of his or her fellow-Christians, suffering much pain, with little to secure the ordinary comforts of life, yet with heart happy and face radiant, mouth speaking of Christ, prayers ascending on behalf of His interests, and

praise rising to Himself. What fruit there is in that! We may be in affluence or poverty; in a position of prominence or obscurity; we have each been placed just where He desires us to be in order that right there we may bring forth fruit for God. That will be effected not so much by preaching as by practice; not so much by talk as by walk; and by our shedding abroad the fragrance of Christ wherever we are. For all this there is an inexhaustible source of supply. We come to the Father. We ask and we receive. Have we responded to the call to "go and bring forth fruit"?

In chapter 16. 13, we learn the secret of divine

#### PROGRESS.

If we are to bear witness for Christ in the world there must be progress in divine things. For this we have received the Holy Spirit whose normal and happy work it is to guide us into "all truth." This means a knowledge of the Holy Scriptures apart from which we cannot learn the truth; a moral condition, so the Holy Spirit may be free to instruct us; a heart-acquaintance with Christ that will cause us to seek to learn more and more of Himself. This will save us from the working of the natural mind, and from putting forth or receiving as fresh light that into which the Holy Spirit does not guide us.

It will also deliver us from occupation with one phase of the truth to the neglect of other portions. This is a day of specializing. Doctors specialize, teachers specialize, etc. This may be all right in the professional world, but it is to be avoided in the things of God. The Holy Spirit guides into "All truth." It is most undesirable to hear a

babe in the family trying to speak like a father, but it is no less desirable to hear one who should be a father talk in the language of a babe. We may rest assured that the Holy Spirit will guide us each according to our spiritual capacity into the apprehension of the truth. As we go in for, and make progress in the precious things of God, we will find more than ever how completely our links with the world have been severed. This will bring us up against the world, and will bring the world up against us. We must reckon upon its relentless opposition, but we can assuredly count upon the Lord's

#### PROTECTION.

Hence His encouraging word in verse 33.

*"These things I have spoken unto you, that in Me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world."*

How delightful is that! In the world, tribulation, in Me, peace. Does not this remind us of the word spoken to Abiathar by David while in rejection?

*"Abide thou with me, fear not: for he that seeketh my life seeketh thy life: but with me thou shalt be in safeguard"* (1 Samuel 22. 23).

Abiathar was associated with the rejected king, and only as he abode with him was he safe. We are identified with the rejected Christ. It may be we find the path difficult, the opposition severe, the tribulation sore; but through the darkness of the night there comes His encouraging word: "In Me, Peace: be of good cheer: I have overcome the world." This closed His precious

ministry to "His own" and what a close!

In the incomparable chapter 17 He turned to the Father, and prayed for the

### PRESERVATION

of "His own." As Man He prayed, but none save He, who ever was, Who is, and Who ever shall be *the* Son could have addressed the Father as He did. He spoke as One who as Man had carried out the commission entrusted to Him; and yet He spoke to the Father as One who was on terms of equality with Him, for had He not said, "I and the Father are One" (John 10. 30, New Trans.). How lovingly He spoke of those who had been given to Him by the Father. His prayer simply throbbed with love for them, and the burden of His desire was that, during His absence, they might be preserved. We can depend upon His prayer being answered, and may we not take shelter behind it if we encounter the biting, stormy blasts of the world's opposition? What will be the end of it all? Could any word stir our hearts to their depths more than His closing request in verse 24?

*"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 foundations of the world."*

We are back to where we commenced. He loves to the end, an end which will never have an end. Yet here is the end which after all is only the beginning of that which will be endless. None but the Son could speak thus to the Father. What does He ask? That "His own" should be with Him where He is. Surely that would be the acme of happiness. But His love seeks still more, and that is that they should be permitted to behold that incommunicable glory which is peculiarly His very own, which shall fill that home, and upon which He would have us feast our delighted eyes for ever and ever. God's triumph will be complete; Christ's joy will be supreme; the Spirit's work brought to glorious consummation, and "His own" will be at home in the Father's house, in the likeness of Christ; to bask in the sunshine of divine love for ever and ever. May our hearts be led into the deeper knowledge and better appreciation of these things and may there be a response that shall be to His glory, for His dear Name's sake.

### For the Preacher.

*"Preach the Word; be instant in season, out of season" (2 Tim. 4).*

**UNLESS** the preacher interests the people by what God has said, he has done nothing. Unless he impresses his hearers by what God has said, he has not begun his work. Though he were to attract a multitude, and move them by the contagious influence of his own earnestness, he would have made no advance towards the beginning of the Christian's life. Only when he is able to tell men what God has said, does he begin to sow the true seed. If he sows the Word of God, he may ever be hopeful—his labour is not in vain. For that Word endureth for ever, while the social, or political questions that so many preachers occupy themselves and their dwindling audiences with are like the grass that withereth and the flower thereof that fadeth away.

## ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

## The Problems of Revelation 4 to 7.

*We have received from a correspondent in America a series of problems in regard to the Book of the Revelation. He asks that the arguments for the usual interpretation of which he is aware should not be given, but that his difficulties should be solved by a consideration of the Word itself. This we shall endeavour to do.*

## THE FOUR AND TWENTY ELDERS.

“Not to speak of the exercises of others, I have myself been far from satisfied with the exposition of these chapters usually accepted. It seems to me that there is no sufficient reason for regarding the 24 *πρεβστεροι* as representative of a combined company of O. T. and N. T. saints. (ch. 4. 4)

I do not know who these 24 elders, or ‘ancients’ are. It is probable that they represent a high order of heavenly beings specially interested in, and able to interpret, God’s ways with the church and others—Eph. 3. 10.”

**WE** acknowledge this difficulty that faces us at the beginning of these chapters in the unveiling of the future. But some of the features that these elders bear prove, we think, that they do not represent angelic beings but men. The fact that they are clothed in white raiment would not be enough in itself to prove this, for in one passage in the Book angels appear in pure white linen, yet white raiment does seem to be the heavenly answer to an earthly life of faithfulness and separation to God from the evil of the world (see ch. 3. 4, 5; 6. 11; 7. 9; 19. 8, 14); but the fact of their having crowns of gold on their heads seems to be conclusive, for crowns in heaven are undoubtedly rewards for service and witness on earth, and we do not know of any Scripture which speaks of angels being crowned. In ch. 5 they have every one of them harps and they sing the new song; angels are not said to possess harps, nor do they sing; music and song belong to the redeemed of the Lord. It is well known that the first mention of song

in Scripture is in relation to Israel’s redemption out of Egypt. Nor do angels “interpret God’s ways with the church” to others. Eph. 3. 10 shews us that they *learn* God’s manifold wisdom by the church. They are learners not interpreters. They are the Lord’s messengers, and probably intelligent in their service, yet learners. They desire to look unto these things (1 Peter 1. 12).

We conclude that these 24 elders represent all those who from the beginning have owned and worshipped God as the Creator of all things, Who has supreme rights over all that He has created, for it is this that they ascribe to Him. This is the beginning of all truth, it underlies all faith; it is really the everlasting gospel. And it is because men have refused to yield to the supremacy of God and live for His pleasure that the judgments in the Revelation will be poured out upon them. To have owned and maintained those rights in a world where they have ever been denied is a great thing indeed, and only pos-

sible to faith. It means that those who have done it have held the fort here for God and are seen in this chapter as raised up and rewarded in heaven by being clothed in white, enthroned and crowned as kings and

priests. They are not the church only but all the saints from Abel to the time of the coming of the Lord—"they are Christ's at His coming" (1 Cor. 15. 23).

### IS THE CHURCH IN HEAVEN AND DOES CHRIST APPEAR THERE IN REV. 4?

It is difficult to see how this chapter gives a view of heaven after the rapture of the church. No Christ appears in it. The praise offered by the ancients is solely connected with God's glory as Creator. Does not the chapter rather present a view of heaven while Christ was on earth? It is the setting (with the following chapter) of the "hereafter" that was to ensue.

**WE** do not share our correspondent's difficulty as to this. Laodicea (ch. 3) is clearly the closing of the history of the profession of Christ's Name on earth. The promise of the Lord's coming to take His church out of the hour of tribulation (ch. 3. 9, 10), has been fulfilled and our thoughts are turned from earth where hitherto His chief interest had been to heaven. A new work of God is to be done and it starts from heaven. "The things that shall be hereafter" or "after these" (ch. 1. 19) are about to commence; this is most surely indicated in the way the chapter begins. "After this" or "After these things" (New Trans.), that is, after the things predicted in the seven prophetic letters have been fulfilled. The new work is a work of judgment—the day of vengeance of our God—and the church must be removed from the earth before this can begin, for Jesus is our Deliverer from the wrath to come (1 Thess. 1. 10).

We believe that Christ is seen in this chapter, but it is in His Divine glory, for who could the One that sat upon the throne be but He?

And how could heaven be opened for us to look in if He were not there? It is God who is in the throne, of course, but the Son is God, the effulgence of His glory and the express image of His Person, and whatever revelation of God there has been, or is, or yet shall be, can only be seen and heard in Him; He is the everlasting Word. He was, to look upon, as "a jasper and a sardine stone." The pure light of the crystal-like jasper stone (see Rev. 21) would set forth in symbol the purity of God's holy nature, and the blood-red sardine stone in conjunction with the jasper would set forth the redemption by blood that enables God to establish His supremacy among men in blessing in absolute consistency with His holy nature. This comes out not in dim symbol but in clear and definite language at the end of the Book, where out of the throne of God and the Lamb the waters of blessing flow.

In this panoramic view of these things to come the moment had not arrived to shew the Lamb upon the universal administrative throne, God's judgments had to be executed before that could be, but the symbol

indicates that He is there. And it is comforting to see God thus presented on the rainbow-circled throne from which the thunders and lightnings must proceed, but it could not have this character if Christ were not in it. Further, it is to Christ that God would call attention, and while the heavens were opened upon Him when He was on earth, it was not that men might look up there where He was not, but that heaven might look down on Him who is the Father's Beloved. Heaven was not opened for men to look up into it until He was there, and we believe that it is because He is there, that

this door was opened and John was called up to see the things that shall be hereafter and to write them for us.

In the previous paragraph we have said why we believe the elders ascribe glory to God as the Creator. It is the key to this section of the Book. The supremacy and rights of God have been refused by men, who have lived for their own pleasure and not for God's. These rights are acclaimed in heaven before they are enforced and established on earth.

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### THE LAMB AS IT HAD BEEN SLAIN. Rev. 5.

"In this chapter an entire change takes place in the situation in heaven. An announcement is made: a victory has been gained. And immediately there appears in heaven a mighty Victor—but He is 'a Lamb as it had been slain.' The living creatures and ancients fall down before Him. It is the immediate sequel to Calvary. They sing a new song celebrating the redemption of men of every kindred, tongue etc., and the Lamb is linked in praise with Him who sits on the throne."

**WE** should not interpret this scene as the immediate sequel to Calvary, but the necessary preliminary to the establishment of God's will in the earth. The prayer of millions of saints, "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven," must be answered. These prayers treasured in the golden vials, have always been as sweet odours to God, for they shewed the unison of thought between God in heaven and His saints on earth; they were according to His will and have been heard; and it is in answer to them, and for the establishment of God's will on earth that the Lion of the tribe of Judah appears as "a Lamb as it had been slain." He only could look upon the scroll of God's will and open the seals of it that that will might be accomplished, and it is this that calls

forth the song, "*Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof.*" He had proved Himself self worthy and able to do this by the fact that He had been slain to redeem to God a multitude of men before the day of vengeance.

We should not say that chapter 5 shews an entire change in the situation in heaven, but that it follows in divine sequence. The revelation of God as the Creator and supreme Lord of all, and acknowledged as such in heaven, demands that One should appear to bring this to pass also on the earth. The Lamb is the One worthy to do it and He will do it so completely and well that every creature in the universe will join in acclaiming Him.

# “WELL PLEASING TO HIM.”

J. T. Mawson.

*Report of an address given at a gathering of young Christians at  
Leeds on Oct. 22nd, 1932.*

*Read 2 Corinthians 5.*

THAT may not appear to be a very suitable Scripture to read and speak from at a gathering of young Christians. What with the dissolution of this tabernacle, our body, in which we are said to groan, and the desire to be absent from it, and the word in the previous chapter about the outward man perishing, it does indeed seem to be an old man's chapter, and so it is, but what is good for the old is good for the young, and Scripture adapts itself to every state and phase of spiritual life and growth. Young as some of you are there is one sentence in it that I know will appeal to your heart if you love the Saviour; it is verse 9, and I will read it as it ought to be. *“Wherefore we labour that whether present or absent we may be well pleasing to Him.”* That is my text. The “Him” of it is the One who died for you, your Saviour and your Lord. You will all agree with me when I say that we could have no higher and more blessed aim or ambition in life than that, and also that we ought not to have a lesser one. No life can be right and successful that has not the right aim, and this is the Christian's right aim, to be well pleasing to his Lord. The life that has this aim will be a happy life; it will be a life moreover that will be useful and full of blessing for others, and most and best of all, it will glorify the Lord. Truly this aim must be yours; you will be hopeless and miserable fail-

ures if it is not, and we do not want you to be that. You must labour to be well-pleasing to Him, there are a thousand reasons why you must.

Now Paul, the writer of the Epistle, speaking for himself and his fellows, says, *We labour to be well pleasing to Him.* We realize as we read the words that this is not a mere pastime, something about which we may be more or less indifferent, and take it up and put it down as the mood takes us. Paul was zealous about it; it was his great purpose in life and to it he bent all the vigour of his saved and devoted soul. It must be so with you if you are to make anything of this Christian living, for of a truth if you are not well pleasing to Him, you will please nobody worth considering, and if you are to please Him you will have to labour for it. And that rules out other objects and pursuits; it means a bending of all your energies to this purpose.

If you are to do this you must, of course, be free from all anxious thought about yourself. Some of you may not yet have the assurance of salvation. You are happy sometimes, in the gospel meetings for instance, when the Name of Jesus is sweetly proclaimed, but at other times you are just as miserable and uncertain. If that is the case with any of you, you cannot labour to be well-pleasing to Him, for you

are self-centred and thinking of your own blessing, and quite right too, until that question is a settled one with you. Look at the end of our chapter, "*God hath made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.*" That wonderful statement ought to satisfy your anxious longings and still your fears. In amazing love to us God made Christ, our great Substitute, all that we were in our sinfulness, when He suffered for us on the cross, that we might become all that He is in righteousness now before God. He was charged with our guilt, for the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquities of us all, but more than that, He was made sin for us. He suffered for what we were as well as for what we had done, that there might not remain one stroke of judgment for us either because of what we were or had done, but that we might be received into everlasting favour. And now for all who believe it is true, that though they were lost and vile indeed, to every sin a prey, and could do nothing else but sin because of the very nature that was in them, yet now as a result of and on the basis of that great sin offering they are made the very righteousness of God in Christ. God will be able to say to the intelligent universe, "If you want to see My righteousness, the way I can act in blessing in complete consistency with My eternal justice, look at those who were once in their sins and Satan's slaves, but are now in Christ before Me." If you are in Christ there is no condemnation for you, you stand in grace and favour before God, favour which is as changeless as God Himself. Consider that great statement well, pray that you may understand it, and cast away your doubts and fears for ever.

Questions as to the future may trouble you and prevent you from labouring to be well pleasing to your Lord, you may be afraid of the changes that such an aim and purpose might involve you in. You don't know what His will might mean for you, and you shrink from wholly yielding to it. Well, the beginning of the chapter describes the greatest of all changes in our lives. "If our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." The greatest of all changes means the greatest of all blessings, and every other change in our lives which shall be according to God's will, will bring to us fresh blessing. We speak with absolute and unshakable confidence as to the final change; we cry with exultation, "We know," and we may have the same assurance as to every other change, for it is written, "We know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are called according to His purpose." You then, young Christian, may look back on the past and view it in true Christian peace. You may face the future and press on to it in this blessed Christian confidence, and free from all anxiety and fear labour to be well pleasing to your Lord.

But others say, "These are not the questions that trouble me, what hinders me, and what I deeply deplore is my coldness of heart. I never loved the Lord very well, but I seem to have lost what little love I had, and how can I labour to be well pleasing to Him when my heart is cold and fickle." Look again at our chapter, verse 14 says, "*For the love of Christ constraineth us.*" This love of Christ only will avail to rekindle the dying embers of love

to Him in any heart, but it is enough. This love constrained Paul to labour and endure the most extraordinary suffering, and it will act in like manner in you if you will let it. I hope you all read Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*, especially the second part of that immortal story; in it you will find much profitable talk, and especially from the mouth of Greatheart, the warrior pilgrim. Well, when in that story old Honest desired to join the pilgrim band, he had to give an account of himself to them, and he said, "I come from the town of Stupidity, it lieth about four degrees beyond the city of Destruction."

"I have often wondered," remarked Greatheart, "that any should come from your place; for your town is worse than is the city of Destruction."

"Yes," said old Honest, "we lie more off the sun, and so are more cold and senseless. *But were a man in a mountain of ice, yet if the Sun of Righteousness will rise upon him, his frozen heart shall feel a thaw, and THUS IT HATH BEEN WITH ME.*"

"I believe it, father Honest, I believe it," cried Greatheart, "for I know the thing is true."

That is it: let but one ray of the love of Christ into your heart and it will thaw its iciness, and warm its coldness, and it will operate in constraining power, and you will not desire to live unto yourself but unto Him who died for you and rose again. The love of Christ! What a theme it is! How tender yet how strong it is! It passeth knowledge, and you can say, He "loved me and gave Himself for me"!

Yet still you plead your weakness; you have the desire, but how to realize it you know not. Turn again to our chapter. Verse 5 tells us that God has wrought us for the glory, for that magnificent destiny that the first verse describes, and it also tells us that He has given to us the earnest of His Spirit. The Spirit of God dwells in you, to make the love of Christ a present and living reality to you and to foster your desires to be well-pleasing to your Lord, labouring with that object in view. You are not cast upon your natural powers for that would be vain indeed; the Spirit is in you as the power by which Christ strengthens you to do His will, and the Spirit does not work in vain.

Now to be well pleasing to any person you must know him, and it is even so with your Lord, and you cannot know Him intimately and well if you do not spend much time with Him. You must live unto Him and not unto yourself. I am sure you will gladly admit the rightness of that, for if He died for you that you might live, the life you live should be unto and for Him. I am not talking now so much of your service, though He does appreciate your service. It pleases the Lord when a young brother stands up and out of a full heart tells what a dear Saviour he has found, and when a young sister gathers a few children about her to tell them of Him, but this must flow from acquaintance with Him if it is to have its full value in His eyes. Do you remember that when He chose His apostles, it was not that He might send them forth to preach, first of all, but that they might be with Him, the preaching followed that. We are well pleasing

to Him when we desire His company above all things else and when His love is better to us than wine. John was well pleasing to the Lord when he put his head down upon His bosom, and he was not an old grey haired brother when he did that; he was the youngest of the disciples, and as far as we can make out, not more than twenty at the time. He found his solace in a time of trouble on that breast, in which the tenderest heart in the universe beats, and when the great test came and all the older brethren fled, this youth of twenty with a few women stood by the cross of Jesus. And his Lord was able to trust him, to entrust to him his mother, a most precious legacy, for to him, and not to Peter, He said, "Son, behold thy mother." Put your head on His bosom, there is room for it there and as you do you will live unto Him; you will be His friend and He will be able to trust you and when the test comes you will witness, and when the opportunity arrives you will serve, and your witness and service will be well pleasing to Him. Yes, in these smoky, soiled West Riding towns with their sin and sorrow and misery, you will be well pleasing to Him.

Finally, the time is coming when He will shew us everything as He sees it. "*For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that everyone may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad*" (verse 10). The review will take place and we shall all stand face to face with our Lord at last, and give an account to him as to how we have lived. And some of you say, "I don't like the thought of the judgment seat of Christ; it makes me tremble." Well it may

not do you any harm to tremble a little; it may indeed be good for you, and make you seek the Lord more truly now and learn the infinite efficacy of His one sacrifice that gives a purged conscience and peace with God even in view of the judgment seat of Christ. And if His love with you is made perfect, you will have boldness in the day of judgment because as He is so are you in this world.

You will see everything in that day as He sees it, and you shall know as you are known; and it will give Him great joy to shew His approval of all that has pleased Him in your life and to put the crown on your brow, which you will cast with gratitude and adoration at His feet. How glad you'll be to have a crown to cast before Him then, then see to it that you labour for it now. There will be much that will not bear His scrutiny. The wood, hay and stubble will all be burnt up, and everything will be lost that has not been well pleasing to Him. Yes, with some there may be days, weeks, months, perhaps years of life—all lost.

I was asked to visit a young man. He had professed the Saviour's Name as a boy, but when in his teens the world put in a claim for him and he yielded to it, and lived for sport and pleasure and forgot the Lord, and at twenty-nine he was dying of consumption. He was unresponsive to anything that I could say; the world had cast its chilly blight upon his soul and he seemed insensible to the Word. But that night or the next, he awoke out of his sleep in a state of great excitement. And after a while he told his wife the cause of it. He had dreamt that he was in an exhibi-

bition of wood carving work. He was himself an expert in that branch of art, and many fine pieces of his own were there. Suddenly the building burst into flames and he managed to escape almost miraculously through a window, and only just in time, for the whole structure collapsed and buried in its ruins every bit of work in it. No wonder he was excited, for he saw the meaning of his dream. His life was like that. He was going into heaven truly, his soul was saved, but all his life was lost. The thought filled him with regret. He might have lived those dozen years well pleasing to the Lord, but he had wasted them, they were lost years. It is true that his soul was restored, for the grace of the Lord is unbounded,

but the joy was mingled with sorrow. A friend called to see him and he said, "It is kind of you to come and see me, but don't stay. I am going to spend my eternity with Jesus, and I know so little about Him; I want to spend all the time I can with Him now." In a few days he went home, through the merits of the Saviour's blood, but he left his wasted years behind, all lost.

. . . O gracious and living Lord, grant in Thine infinite grace that not one here shall have that bitter experience, but may we, whatever our past has been, live henceforth not unto ourselves but unto Thee, and so be well pleasing to Thee. For Thy dear Name's sake. Amen.

## Christian Sanity

*"The cloke that I left at Troas with Carpus, when thou comest bring with thee, and the books, but especially the parchments"* (2 Timothy 4. 13).

OF what possible use to us could such a request as this be? Why should it have been preserved in Holy Scripture? How could such a passage be given by inspiration of God? We like many others have wondered about it. But an unfolding of the underlying meaning of it that we heard somewhere made it of great value to us. Paul was in prison and expecting martyrdom, but he will not neglect his body. The winter nights were cold in his prison cell and he needed the cloke to cover his aged limbs. Incidentally, what were the Christians in Rome doing, to so sadly neglect their brother? Nor would he allow his mind to become stale and inert; he would have the books for the exercise of his mind, but above all he had a soul, and that was of the greatest importance; he could do without the cloke perhaps, and the books, but Apostle though he was the parchments were indispensable—*especially the parchments*, which would be, of course, the Holy Scriptures. He was a sane man, and a Christian; he would not neglect his body, nor his mind, but above all he thought of the need of his soul. Viewed in that light we can have no doubt about the value of the passage or question the Divine inspiration of it. It is indeed a profitable passage and one to be well pondered.

# WAITING FOR GOD'S SON FROM HEAVEN.

T. Oliver.

*(The Substance of a brief address at the graveside of an aged Christian man who had experienced 90 years of mercy and who had been controlled by one dominant idea for 60 years.)*

Scriptures read:—2 Peter 1. 10-11.  
1 Thess. 1. 9-10.

1 Thess. 4. 15-17.  
Luke 12. 35-36.

**WE** shall read a few passages from the only book which really matters at a juncture such as this. These passages were favourites of our departed friend and were constantly recurrent in his ministry and prayers.

Over 40 years ago, on the first occasion of meeting him, a very lasting impression was conveyed by the reverent way in which he uttered the words "our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." For him it was no mere empty formula. If the force of these words is apprehended in their spiritual import, a marvellous revolution is worked in a man's life. To know Jesus as Saviour, entails owning Him as Lord. Henceforth He becomes the dominant factor in life. The Lord's will both as to the present and the future becomes paramount. "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do" will be the expression of the soul.

Sixty years ago, our friend was going down the "broad road" that leads to complete eternal undoing. By the hand of the Lord, he was turned to God from idols. The running track and places of sport and amusement which had hitherto monopolised his time and effort, from that moment, knew him no more. Henceforth, his primary business was to serve the living and true God. But not merely as a man with a changed life for earth.

A new vista was opened up so that he became engaged with the politics of heaven. The early Christians were exhorted to set their minds on things above where Christ sits on the right hand of God. In many professedly Christian circles it has become fashionable to focus attention solely on the work of the Holy Spirit in souls to the exclusion of the politics of heaven. Such are either ignorant or oblivious of the fact that the Holy Spirit's presence on earth and work in souls are consequent on the exaltation of Christ to the right hand of God.

Moreover, our friend was in constant expectancy of the coming of the Lord. "Waiting for God's Son from heaven" became the dominating idea of his life. His expectation was not to pass through the article of death, but that the Lord would come in his lifetime. Strange as that may seem to the sceptical mind, it is the normal outlook of the Christian. What solid comfort indeed it is to be derived from the words in the fourth chapter of 1 Thessalonians, giving the details of the answer to that expectancy!

However, the Lord has not come yet, and the thought arises that our departed friend must have been disappointed at the non-fulfilment of his expectation. But he has not been put under any disability thereby. We see from the intelligence con-

veyed by the Scripture that the living who remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent or precede those who are asleep. Indeed a premium (and not a discount) is placed on the latter condition! He has the better part beyond comparison. His oft-repeated remark was that many will get a happy surprise. Surely his sudden home-call would be a happy surprise!

It may be added that occupation with heavenly affairs entails a certain attitude to things on earth. Our hearts are necessarily engaged with the place where our treasure is. Then the direct message from the Lord is in His own words, "Let your loins be girded about." The Ephesian epistle shows that is achieved by the truth which is to be found in the Scriptures and there only. In consequence the Christian becomes a specialist. His interest is entirely engrossed with one Book.

This interest will result in our lights being burning. We are responsible to display to all around on whose side we are. In general deportment and business transactions we are to be like men who wait for their Lord. No mere lip profession of and formal adherence to time-worn principles will receive the approval of the Lord. These principles must have become living and operative in the soul.

In conclusion, it is obviously a test to everyone of us as we stand around this open grave. We must necessarily ask ourselves individually the question, "How do I stand with relation to God?" The uncertainty of our tenancy of this life is forced upon us by the contemplation. What we possess beyond the grave then becomes a dominating enquiry, which is solved conclusively in the Scriptures!

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## WATCHFULNESS AND PRAYER.

Watchfulness and prayer are inseparable. The one discerns dangers; the other arms against them. Watchfulness keeps us prayerful, and prayerfulness keeps us watchful. To watch without prayer is presumption, to pray without watchfulness is hypocrisy.

The eye that sees clearly the facts of life will turn upward from scanning its dangers and snares and will not look up in vain. These two are the indispensable conditions of overcoming. Fortified by them, we shall not "enter into" though we pass through temptation.

As a sunbeam passes through foul air, untainted and keeping the radiance of heaven, so may the Christian pass through temptation as he watches and prays, and is in consequence maintained by grace from on high.

Watchfulness denotes reality, sincerity, spiritual alertness. Prayer is the expression of dependence upon God, self-distrust, but confidence in Him.

We must be watchful lest we lose our sense of dependence whilst enjoying the results of dependence.

## DARK DAYS.

(L. R.)

DO the children of God, those who are blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ, and who are loved as He is loved, really have dark days? They do. St. Paul tells us of a time in his life when he was "pressed out of measure above strength," when "without were fightings, within were fears," and He Who is God over all blessed for evermore. when He walked this desert scene groaned in the spirit and was troubled.

Nearer our own times, one of the greatest preachers of the last century has told that, at times, the exercise as to his work filled his soul "with unutterable anguish."

It will not then surprise us if we who live now, in what are confessedly difficult times, should have dark days. The trouble is when we begin to be unhappy, to wonder if God has forgotten us, to think that dark days are sinful days. What a comfort it is to look back on those who have gone before, and especially to consider Him Who is the Author and Finisher of faith, to think of the nights He spent on Olivet, as well as of His wonderful days of healing and blessing.

The Scriptures teach us very plainly that God appointed light and darkness. "God called the light Day, and the darkness He called Night" (Gen. 1. 5). Who could image a world where it was always day? In our present conditions it would be impossible to bear it. The soothing night must follow on the

sunny day, and in the night nature and men recuperate, for this is the Divine order. Moreover, the ebb and flow of the tide, seed time and harvest, summer and winter are equally appointed of God.

What shall we do then, if called to pass through dark days? First let us remember Him Who has been over all the dark way before us, knowing its anguish and depths of grief as none other could know. Do we ever think of the contrast between the glory which was with the Father before the world was, and the place in which He had not where to lay His head? Who could understand all about dark days as He can? How precious then to turn to Him, laying bare all our hearts and resting, in such peace, in His wondrous words, "If ye shall ask anything in My Name I will do it" (John 14. 14), having come, in our soul's experience, to the place where all is according to what He is, not according to what we are. Perhaps in this dark hour He will teach us some lesson of His love we could learn no other way, leading us "into His garden to the beds of spices, to feed in the gardens and to gather lilies" (Cant. 6. 2).

Then we may well assure our hearts that no strange thing has happened to us. The saints who have gone before have had their dark days, and have passed on victorious, through Him that loved them, and as we wait patiently for the Lord, in His time and way, the night will pass and the morning without clouds will come. Perhaps it should be added, that a saint who is grieving

over dark days should enquire, is there any sin? any wrong, or bitter spirit unjudged? any habit of thought or life that is unsuited to the Lord? He will make this plain where there is sincerity and integrity before Him, and, needless to say, the wrong must be put away, must be refused unsparingly; but this being settled in the light of His word and Spirit, how sweet to be still before Him just knowing that the dark days and the light may equally do His bidding, and "the seed in darkness nourished a goodly plant shall make."

The effort of the enemy, alas! too often successful, is to fill the mind with distrust, doubts, fears. There is no sin in passing through dark days; as we have seen the holiest and most advanced saints have experienced them, but there is sin in doubt, in distrusting the love and wisdom that have planned our path.

Read Heb. 2. 12, 13. Between "I will declare Thy Name unto My brethren" and "Behold I and the children whom God hath given Me" lie the words we need to bear ever in remembrance, "I WILL PUT MY TRUST IN HIM." Perhaps we ask how is this possible? We say our difficulties are too great, our way is too hard, there are days when we can scarcely even pray, what then? Then "He is able to save to the uttermost those who come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them" (Heb. 7. 25), and "Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities, for we know not what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us... according to the will of God" (Rom. 8. 26, 27). A Christian lady once told her friend how, in a time of great weakness, she had been so helped and comforted by just repeating to herself that precious Name "Lord Jesus Christ."

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## 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.

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"He that humbleth himself shall be exalted." The crowns of heaven are not reserved for swelled heads.

## ISAIAH 53.

*The late John Urquhart.*

*"Unto the Jews a stumbling block, and unto the Greeks foolishness. But . . . the power of God and the wisdom of God" (1 Cor. 1. 23-24).*

**H**OW impossible it is to escape from the conviction that the prolonged description of Isaiah liii. suits only one figure in all human history—the Man of Calvary—will be seen from these following details, which are all true of Him, and which in their totality cannot possibly be applied to any other. (1) He comes in utter lowliness: He is "as a root out of a dry ground," and "hath no form nor comeliness." (2) "He is despised and rejected of men . . . He was despised and we esteemed Him not." (3) He was the bearer of others' ills: "Surely He hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows." (4) His suffering was vicarious, and formed a remedy for sin: "He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed." (5) It was suffering in which God Himself made a transfer of our guilt. "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all." (6) His absolute resignation under His fearful affliction: "He was oppressed, and He was afflicted, yet He opened not His mouth: He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so He opened not His mouth." (7) He died as a felon: "He was taken from prison and from judgment." (8) He was cut off prematurely: "And who shall declare His generation?"—who will consider His life?—"For He was cut off out of the land of the living." (9) And yet He personally was guiltless: "For the transgression of my people was

He stricken . . . He had done no violence, neither was any deceit in His mouth." (10) He is to live after death: "When Thou shalt make His soul an offering for sin, He shall see His seed." (11) These last words (He shall see His seed) indicate that, after His resurrection, offspring shall be given Him. He shall have a following so closely connected with Him that they shall form His family: they shall be His children. (12) He is, after His death and resurrection, to have an enduring and successful ministry: "He shall prolong His days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in His hands." (13) This offspring, and this successful ministry, will be the outcome of His sufferings: "He shall see of the travail of His soul and be satisfied."

Is it possible to mistake the likeness? As trait after trait is added, is it possible to write any other name beneath the portrait than this, JESUS OF NAZARETH? And when we recall the fact that this portrait was drawn, and every trait filled in, at least 500 years—according to the critics themselves—before Christ came, what shall we say? Is prediction, distinct and clear, a fact, or is it not? What mind could have pictured this Sufferer, described His condition, told His story—a story which, full of unique and startling details, is exactly the story of the Man of Sorrows, but to which no one before Him answers, and no one since? Is that a miracle or is it not? If it is not a miracle, then we expect the man, who avers that to so forecast the history of a man yet unborn is quite an ordinary

event, to give us an example of the possession of such power by any mortal man, or to tell us whereby we may obtain such an example. There will possibly be men, say in the third generation after the present, who will make an era in the history of the world. But who will affirm that such an era will be made, and who will tell now the history of the man who will make it? Is there one single example anywhere outside the Bible of such a thing? And will any sane man set himself to search for any fact of the kind elsewhere? But if man has no eye to read the future, then who read the future in this case, and who gave us the description of the great Sin-bearer, which is still the truest and the fullest that can be found? If that is not an instance of the supernatural, and a proof that this Book of Isaiah is a Divine message, what is it?

But, if I may make a distinction where everything is so wonderful, there is a still greater marvel in the opening words of verse 9: "He made His grave with the wicked, and with the rich in His death." The words have had difficulties for expositors, and critics have proposed to alter the text and to put the words "grave" and "death" in their natural order. But we shall find that they yield so startling a sense when taken as they have always stood, that we cannot doubt that that arrangement was designed. Hebraists are agreed that the verb "made" is here impersonal, and that the words mean "His grave was made," or, as the Revised Version has it, "They made His grave" with the wicked. By the Roman law the body of the crucified was left hanging on the cross till it disappeared through exposure. But in Judea a

change had to be made. The Law of Moses expressly enjoins that the body of no executed criminal was to be exposed after sunset. There was in this case also an additional reason. The following day, which began at sunset, was the commencement of the great Passover feast; and, therefore, a Sabbath, "and an high day." That could not possibly be profaned. The Roman officials had, consequently, to make provision for the burial, as well as for the execution, of our Lord and the two malefactors. There were three graves as well as three crosses. These must have been nigh to the place of execution, if not actually at the feet of the crosses, to which the three sufferers were fixed. And what, now, must have been the order of these contemplated burials? The order, evidently, which was followed in the execution. Our Lord was crucified in the midst of the two thieves: and so it was doubtless arranged that He should also be buried between the two thieves. "They made His grave with the wicked." Yes, they had so arranged it, but God had not ordained that it should be thus! Remember what happened. A thought sprang up within the breast of one who had hitherto been a secret disciple, but who in these last days, when all men were forsaking the Nazarene, was not afraid to declare himself. His soul revolted at the thought of the intended desecration. This ruler, Joseph of Arimathea, "went in boldly unto Pilate, and craved the body of Jesus" (Mark 15. 43).

It was a great thing to ask, and the Jewish ruler knew it. The reader will note the word "craved." Matthew and Luke also emphasize this. In both we are told that Joseph "begged" the body of Jesus.

In John we read that he "besought Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus" (ix. 38). It was a great thing to ask, and it was a great thing to grant. But the permission was given. The body was surrendered to Joseph. He had a new tomb ready, no doubt for himself, and one which wealth and art had prepared and adorned. There, touched with reverent hands, and enveloped in rich and fragrant ointments, the Redeemer's body was laid. That is the record of the Gospels; but lo! it is all written there 700 years on the prophetic page! "They made His grave with the wicked, and with a rich man in His death." He has a felon's doom, but an honoured burial!

Let us now note one thing more. The words form a turning point in the description. Up to the words, "They made His grave with the wicked," the story is one of deepening humiliation. It changes with those next words—"and with the rich in His death." That is, when He was actually dead, and when all the penalty was paid, and the full atonement made, the story suddenly alters. It may be observed in passing that all this is emphasized by a difficulty which exercises the critics of to-day as it exercised the expositors of the past. "Death" is in the plural. He was with a rich man in, or at, "His deaths." What, it is asked, can the word mean? Can a

man die more than once? But is not the answer found in the entire description? This is the Sufferer for humanity. His death is literally "deaths," so that each believer can say that he died with Christ and is free from the terrors of broken Law. But when these deaths for "us all" have been suffered, there is no room for condemnation, and so far as we are concerned all suffering has now been endured. The turning point in the story is therefore marked by the words: "He was with a rich man in His death; because He had done no violence, neither was any deceit in His mouth." It is also repeated that He was there simply and solely, as "an offering for sin." And now, from this point on, all is brightening glory and crowning triumph. Who was it that saw so clearly that, at the moment of burial, the humiliation should be arrested and the exaltation be begun. Who said this from of old, that though "they made His grave with the wicked," in that grave the Redeemer's body should not lie? Who was it that predicted that an interposition should be made just there? When we receive a merely natural explanation of this, we may believe this Book to be the forgery and the imposition which criticism would convince the world that it is. But, till then, reason and experience, mind and conscience, demand that we receive it as the Word of the living God.

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God does not comfort us to make us comfortable but comforters.

Our peace of mind lies in trusting God for to-day and leaving to-morrow in His hands.

The Lord did not teach His disciples to pray about to-morrow's needs, but "give us this day our daily bread."

To receive our food from God with thanksgiving gives a relish to the plainest meal that no sumptuous banquet could possess.

## THE FATHER'S COUNSEL.

James Boyd.

FATHER, our ransomed souls would bless Thy name,  
 As all Thy counsels deep before us shine,  
 Formed ere the spacious earth or starry frame—  
 Counsels of love eternal, love Divine.

Before Thy works of old, Thine eye beheld  
 That radiant sphere where Thou in love wouldst rest;  
 Where love's eternal triumphs would be swelled  
 By those with favour satisfied and blest.

'Twas man that filled Thy vision, not the host  
 Which flame before Thy throne in splendour bright.  
 Man having in Thyself his holy boast,  
 Thy love, of his rejoicing heart, the light.

Brought near before Thy face, within the veil,  
 To worship Thee, *man only* Thou hast sought;  
 Nor can one thought of Thine, blest Father, fail,  
 For by almighty power Thy love has wrought.

Thou wouldst have us with Thee, that we might find  
 In Thine own self our everlasting joy;  
 Thy holy love the strength of heart and mind,  
 Thy praises sweet our ceaseless blest employ.

Like Jesus there! Oh, with what great delight  
 Thou shalt survey His fellows glorified!  
 Made God's own righteousness, and clothed in white,  
 Their place forever by His faithful side.

In Thy Son's image! What could love do more?  
 At home with Him, His own deep joy to share;  
 And, of His mighty love's exhaustless store,  
 Partake to endless satisfaction there.

O house of heavenly love! Thy love! The Son's!  
 In life, and light, and glory, there to rest,  
 Where joy unspeakable breaks forth in tones  
 In heavenly melody from all the blest.

We praise Thee! Thou who art all praise above,  
 Who for Thyself our wayward hearts hast won;  
 Blest be Thy faithful, everlasting love,  
 Our portion in Thy well-beloved SON.

*"To the praise of the glory of His grace, wherein He hath made us accepted in the Beloved"* (Ephesians 1. 6).

# THE SON AND LIFE, THE WORD AND WISDOM.

H. J. Vine.

"He that believeth on the Son hath life eternal" (John 3. 36).

WITH all its assuring blessedness, this truth is made known in the Word of God for faith to rejoice in. It is beyond mere human understanding, nevertheless the Holy Spirit, who is the Comforter, has made it known. It is a great and unchanging fact that "He that hath the Son hath life (1 John 5. 12). The Son, who ever dwelt with the Father, and delighted in and responded to His ineffable love, came forth from the Father and brought eternal life for us; something we could not discover or define but which He could give.

We write for those who have been baptised to "the Name,"—"to the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit," to the revealed Name of the ever blessed triune God; and who have been by this committed to the faith of the Name of the glorious Trinity, the one God.

"No one has seen God at any time; the only-begotten Son who IS in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him." To Him we delight to sing:—

"Son of His bosom come from heaven  
above,  
We see in Thee incarnate 'God is love.'"

And so great was that love that God gave His Son that we might have eternal life! There was no other way! If life eternal was to be ours, the Son of God must be given! And a God of love has not withholden this stupendous gift! Blessed be His holy Name!

Moreover, the Spirit of Truth, the eternal Spirit, has made known to us what we could never have found out, this "life eternal" was promised

"before the ages of time" (Titus 1. 2); but according to the commandment of our Saviour God, the proclamation of which has been told out as glad tidings in its own due time. The Jews rejected the salvation brought by Jesus, and refused the glad tidings through Paul, judging themselves "unworthy of eternal life" (Acts 13. 46), but those of the Gentiles who "were ordained to eternal life, believed" (48).

Those who are saved now by this overabounding grace, are taught, and may we all learn the great truth that, as sin had reigned unto death, so grace reigns through righteousness right on to eternal life in its fulness, through Jesus Christ our Lord (Rom. 5. 21). It is God's gift! There was no other way sinners like ourselves could obtain this priceless possession! The wages of sin is death; but God's free favour has given us life eternal in Christ Jesus our Lord. It is sovereignly given; not loaned to us on certain conditions. Its full and actual realization however the apostle Paul presents as future—"in hope of eternal life" as he says. It is already given; but grace reigns "unto eternal life." Then the promise made before time ages, and given to believers now, will be fully known in the coming glory, in hope of which we rejoice.

But it is a present possession and in John's writings the Holy Spirit has shown this. John had learned of the deep, deep love of Jesus. He leaned on His *bosom* at supper time. He wrote of Him after—who "IS in the *bosom* of the Father"—who made known that Father's

Name,—that the love wherewith the Son was loved “before the foundation of the world” might be ours—and that we might rejoice in that eternal love and eternal life even now. These eternal verities are shown to be vitally connected with the Father and the Son. We are warned that there would be those who would “lead astray” the objects of the Father’s love and tender solicitude, therefore 1 John 2. 24, 25 says, “If what ye have heard from the beginning abide in you, ye also shall abide in the Son and in the Father.” And this is THE PROMISE which He promised us, LIFE ETERNAL.” The Son is here named before the Father because He is the Revealer of the Father, and the bringer and giver of life eternal. He has brought life to us in a world of death! He has brought the abiding and eternal to us in the passing scenes of time! Everlasting praise be His. How cheering and comforting are the words of the Spirit, “He that hath the Son hath life.”

Seen here as Man and for man, He said, “Even as the Father hath life in Himself, so has He given to the Son also to have life in Himself, and has given Him authority to execute judgment, because He is Son of Man” (John 5. 26). He knew what was in the Father’s mind

before the ages of time. He knew His will and His promise of life, and said, “This is the will of My Father, that everyone who sees the Son, and believes on Him, should have life eternal”; also, “He that believes on THE SON has life eternal” (3. 36).

John 1 significantly introduces Him as “THE WORD” in whom “was life.” He was in the beginning with God, and was God. Through Him all things received being. Life was in Him; and when He was here “*the life was the light of men,*” though not apprehended apart from faith. Indeed, men preferred a life-taker, and they slew “the Originator (or Author) of life” (Acts 3. 15).

We are told in 1 Corinthians 2. 8, they “crucified the Lord of glory.” They knew not *the Son* who brought life eternal for men. They knew not *the Word* in whom was life. None of the world’s leaders knew “*the Wisdom of God*” we are told in verse 8. That “*hidden Wisdom*” was “predetermined before the ages of time” for the joy and glory of those who believe on Him. Long ago (Prov. 8. 35) “WISDOM” had said, “*Whoso findeth Me FINDETH LIFE, and shall obtain favour of the Lord.*” The Son of God has come, and “He that hath the Son hath life.”

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“Neither pray I for these alone,” that is, for the apostles who were were around His Person, “but for them also which shall believe on Me through their word.” For you, fellow-believer, and for me, in the great love of His heart, His voice reaches the ear of the Father. O the marvel of it! He had us on His heart before the world was, He had us on His heart amid the blackness of Golgotha and the sorrows of His abandonment by God, and He has us on His heart in glory. Precious Saviour! Let us ever keep in mind the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge!

# A REMARKABLE CONFESSION AND PROPHECY.

Inglis Fleming.

*"The words of Agur, the son of Jakeh, even the prophecy: the man spake unto Ithiel and Ucal" (Prov. xxx. 1-4).*

AGUR and Jakeh are thought by some to be symbolical names for Solomon, and Agur is said by others to mean *gathered*, or *received*, as from sages, and that Jakeh means, most probably, to *hearken* or to *obey*. Accepting this and putting these thoughts together we may apply them thus. We should be gatherers or willing receivers of the mind of God and be in readiness to obey, to carry out fully that which we learn.

God has given us His word, His communications, and it is for us to gather up what He has been pleased to reveal. Earnestly should we seek therefore to be acquainted with all that which He has spread for us in the Scriptures.

Of the animals it is said, "These wait all upon Thee: that Thou mayest give them their meat in due season. That Thou givest them they gather. Thou openest Thy hand, they are filled with good. Thou givest . . . they gather; they are filled." No premium is put upon laziness in the animal creation. Activity is called for. And thus spiritually "Giving all diligence," we are to add. Thus growing by the knowledge of God we may learn how to walk in obedience "worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing," and to be fruitful in our pathway.

It may be that Ithiel, to whom Agur speaks, may tell us by his name that he is one to whom "God

is," or to whom "God has arrived." "God is," the Ever-Existing I AM—and to us who believe He has come. In these Christian days He has revealed Himself in Christ. *Emmanuel*, God with us, tells the story of His grace, as He tabernacled in our midst. "And we know that the Son of God has come and hath given us an understanding, that we may know Him that is true" (1 John 5. 20).

Now it was in the light of the presence of God that Agur the gatherer had learned himself and thus it is that he makes the remarkable confession,

"Surely I am more brutish than any man, and have not the understanding of a man. I neither learned wisdom, nor have the knowledge of the holy" (Prov. xxx. 3).

"More brutish than any man." What a statement! In what way he had learned his state we are not told. How far he had discovered the evil of "the flesh" within him, we know not. But in God's light he saw light and takes the lowest place among his fellows. This was the same spirit which marked the apostle Paul, who could say, he was "least of the apostles," "less than the least of all saints," and "chief of sinners." It was he who had fully learned the terrible condition in which fallen man is found and who exclaimed, "I am carnal, sold

under sin; who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" Again, Agur's words are like those of the Psalmist who, after his period of wandering, said, "Then I was brutish and knew nothing. I was as a beast (a dumb beast) before Thee." Foolishness and ignorance had marked him. He had been dumb in his insensate judgment of God (Psa. lxxiii. 22).

Here Agur compares himself to his own disadvantage, with all others. He speaks of himself as stupidity personified. Each of us must come to self-condemnation in some similar way, and to own "In me, that is in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing," for "the flesh profiteth nothing; the mind of the flesh is enmity against God; it is not subject to the law of God neither indeed can be, so then they that are in the flesh cannot please God."

Happy are we when we believe and enter into the joy of the words that follow; "But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you" (Rom. 8. 9).

"*And have not the understanding of a man,*" Agur adds. That which was proper to a man was not his, was his feeling. Was he conscious that he was part of a fallen race? we may ask. Did he know that Adam forfeited this "understanding" by his sin and plunged all his seed into a state of darkness, "Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, through the ignorance that is in them because of the blindness of their hearts" (Eph. iv. 18)?

At any rate Agur is aware that he has not the intelligence suitable to man's position. And continuing

he says, "*I neither learned wisdom, nor have the knowledge of the holy.*" His whole course had been stamped by folly and unholiness. Thus in true self-condemnation he makes his confession, lying, as it were, on his face in the dust of his sinfulness before God.

Then it is that the Spirit of God turns his thoughts away from himself to engage him with God and with His Son. Then it is that he utters a remarkable prophecy concerning Christ, and what He has done.

*Who hath ascended up into heaven or descended?*

*Who hath gathered the wind in His fists?*

*Who hath bound the waters in a garment?*

*Who hath established all the ends of the earth?*

*What is His name? and what is His Son's name if thou knowest?*

Blessed indeed it is, when we have felt "weary of self and laden with our sin," to have our eyes directed by the Holy Ghost to Him who is "the Man of" God's "right hand, the Son of Man whom" He "has made strong for Himself."

Let us examine briefly this remarkable prophecy—"Who hath ascended up to heaven or descended?" Was not this verse in the mind of the apostle Paul when he wrote Ephesians 4. 9? Our Lord Jesus first "descended" to accomplish the will of God and to obtain eternal redemption for us, having "suffered for" us, "the Just for the unjust to bring us to God." He has now "ascended up to heaven" and is seated at the right hand of

God. He, the last Adam, has become our Head. From Him blessing in its fulness flows. For ever now we are linked up with Him. He is our Saviour. But more than that He is our Life. "God manifest in flesh" He has met our every need, and laid low our every foe. And in His death He has brought to an end all that we were in our "brutish" condition, as bound up with Adam "the man of sin and shame," so that we might now "live unto God" in the sunshine of His eternal favour, in the acceptance of Christ.

The three questions which follow lead our thoughts to Him Who made all and maintains all. The winds and the waters and the ends of the earth are controlled by His power. All creation exists through Him and subsists in Him. The heavens declare the glory of God and the firmament showeth His handiwork" (Psalm 19). "Lo, these are parts of His ways: but how little a portion is heard of Him? (*what a whisper of a word do we hear of Him*). But the thunder of His power who can understand?" (Job 26. 14).

His eternal power and His Godhead are seen in the works of His hands. His Almightyness in creation and in providence. This greatness and glory might and should appal if we had only this "whisper of a word of Him" in His creation. But He has revealed Himself now and fully, for though "No man hath seen God at any time, the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him" (John 1. 18).

To Abraham He made Himself known as Almighty. To Israel He was declared as Jehovah, 'I am that

I am." But the full revelation was reserved for these later days. "The Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost," are known in Christianity. Thus no longer is He "the Unknown God." No longer does He dwell in thick darkness. He is in the light of manifestation. Privileged is our lot. No more to ask what is His name? All that He is has been expressed in the beloved Son for our delight, that we may walk before Him in the light of His countenance and find our joy in holy relationship with Him as children.

"What is His Son's name?" A truly remarkable enquiry surely. Is there not a clear prophecy here of Him who was to come, the Son sent by the Father, to be the Saviour of the world. Of Him Psalm 2. 12, had spoken, "Kiss the Son, lest He be angry, and ye perish from the way. . . Blessed are all they that put their trust in Him."

His Name we know, "Jesus, is the Son of God." That name, so sweet to us, carries with it His Godhead glory. For it means JEHOVAH THE SAVIOUR, "EMMANUEL. . . God with us."

Happy indeed to know it! Happy indeed to "tell" it, to be allowed to be vessels, however small, to bear that name to others.

"And to the weary heart proclaim  
'Behold the Lamb of God.'"

It is with Him we are linked up now and for ever. The "brutish" man has been judged in the death of Christ and ended there. And Christ is our life, beyond death and condemnation. We are "in Him" and soon to be with Him and for His glory conformed to His image "that He may be firstborn among many brethren."

## “LEANING ON HIS BREAST.”

A. H. Storrie.

WHAT is the most exalted experience that the individual believer may have here below? Preaching the glad tidings to thousands? Holding multitudes spellbound with the amazing story of the Cross? Narrating thrilling incidents of gospel triumphs? Sailing across the seas to carry the news of deliverance to those still “held in error’s chain”? Doubtless such efforts are of a very satisfying nature; but do they offer us that which may be described as the very acme of spiritual blessedness? We think not.

It is sadly remarkable that what is of most value is often most neglected by us, whilst the things that are comparatively inferior are allowed to claim so much of our time and attention. Here our thoughts at once turn to the case of Martha and Mary; and surely no one can serve the Lord very efficiently or very acceptably who neglects the “better part,” but not even Mary’s notable example provides us with the full answer to our enquiry. It is “John’s simple page” that supplies us with what we are seeking: “Now there was at table one of His disciples in the bosom of Jesus, whom Jesus loved ... he leaning on the breast of Jesus ...” Again we meet with the record—after the betrayal, the garden, the cross and the tomb, and amongst

the latest words of Scripture: “... the disciple whom Jesus loved following, who also leaned at supper on His breast.”

Appropriately enough, a beautiful hymn speaks of this blissful resting place for the departed saint; but we need not wait until we fall asleep in order to enjoy it. It avails for living saints as well. John, dependent and confiding, proved the exceeding blessedness of the most intimate communion with the Son of God. And so may we all in our measure.

We shall not be slothful servants in consequence of time so spent. Such an elevated walk may cost us something, for it demands great holiness and vigilance. It involves “having no confidence in the flesh.” It means making and taking opportunity to be much in the Lord’s presence.

And so may the beloved disciple’s supremely blessed experience be ours. For the most exalted privilege and joy that the saint may prove here below, is not that of ardent service, but is, surely, that of abiding in divine love.

Yet sure, if in Thy presence  
My soul still constant were,  
Mine eye would, more familiar,  
Its brighter glories bear.  
And thus, Thy deep perfections  
Much better should I know,  
And with adoring fervour  
In this Thy nature grow.

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Christians often look to man for help and counsel, and mar the noble simplicity of their reliance upon their God. Christian, mix not thy wine with water; do not alloy thy gold of faith with the dross of human confidence. Wait thou only upon God, and let thine expectation be from Him. Covet not Jonah’s gourd, but rest in Jonah’s God. Let the sandy foundations of terrestrial trust be the choice of fools; but do thou, like one who foresees the storm, build for thyself an abiding place upon the Rock of Ages.

## ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

## Propitiation and Substitution.

“As a young believer in the Lord Jesus. I find much difference of opinion among God’s people regarding the question. Did Christ die for the sins of the whole world or only for the sins of the elect? I should be obliged if you would answer the question in ‘Scripture Truth.’”—CAMBUSLANG.

YOU will find if you search the Scripture for yourself that it does not say either the one or the other. What it does say, and what may be preached freely to all, is that Christ died for “the ungodly,” for “sinners” (Romans 5. 6, 8), and “for all” (1 Tim. 2. 6), and that He is a propitiation for the whole world, as 1 John 2. 2 should read. That surely means that the value of His death is available for all. A man has only to put in his claim, to believe the gospel, to say in faith, If Christ died for sinners then He died for me, for that is what I am, and he stands at once in all the efficacy of His sacrifice before God. God has set forth Christ Jesus and the redemption that is in Him to be a propitiation for all, and He can offer His blessing of justification to all, for it is “unto all,” but it is only “upon all them that believe” (Romans 3. 22-26). They only receive the benefit.

If you search further you will find that all the Scriptures that speak of Christ dying for sins have believers in view. It is they who can say with gratitude, He “was delivered for our offences” (Romans 4. 25). “Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures” (1 Cor. 15. 3), “Who Himself bare our sins in His own body on the tree” (1 Peter 3. 24), and many others. When we come to this side of the truth we have more definitely what

is rightly called *substitution*. Propitiation means “a mercy seat,” or “meeting place,” and sets forth the abiding efficacy of the redemption that is in Christ Jesus for all who will avail themselves of it; substitution describes more particularly what Christ is to those who have believed—they can say He was our Substitute: “He loved me and gave Himself for me,” and every anxious to-be-saved sinner and every believer can use such a statement as Isaiah 53. 5, which the saved remnant of Israel will actually take up when they see the Lord.

Illustrations sometimes help a little. Consider this one. A man deposits in a bank a large sum of money and advertises all the debtors in the town to bring a statement of their debts to the bank on a certain day between the hours of 10 and 3, and they will all be paid. Many believe the strange but generous offer and bring their bills and are cleared of all their debts. Others are too proud to own that they are debtors, some refuse to believe that the man means what he says, and some procrastinate until the hour is past and the bank is closed. The offer was a *bona fide* one; it was for all, but only those who believed it and acknowledged their debts and came in time benefited by it. They could say, “Our good friend has paid all our debts,” but the others could not. So it is only the believer in

Jesus who can say, "He was wounded for my transgressions," and "I am justified from all things through Him."

Of course these learn afterwards that they are God's elect ones, and we know that no one can lay anything to the charge of God's elect, and that because "It is Christ that died, yea, rather that is risen

again." But the joy of being able to say, "Christ suffered for my sins" is linked with my faith rather than God's electing grace.

If you said to a totally indifferent man, "Christ suffered for your sins," he might readily answer, "Then I shall not suffer for them." But he will, for the dead are to be judged according to their works (Rev. 20).

## Problems of the Revelation (continued).

### THE MULTITUDE THAT NO MAN CAN NUMBER. CHAPTER 7.

"About the earlier of these two visions there is no difficulty. There is reason to believe that for 'Manasseh' in ver. 6, we should read 'Dan'—and thus ver. 4 would be comprehensible: 'of all the tribes.' It is a picture of the saved remnant of Israel.

The great difficulty to my mind is the second vision. The population of the earth is approximately known. After the translation it will be greatly reduced, a third part of the (prophetic) earth being destroyed under the first three trumpets the sphere of the power of evil being thus limited.

It is exceedingly difficult, therefore, to see how a great multitude, not merely of thousands or even millions (200 millions can be counted, as we have just seen) but such as 'no man can number' can be saved during 'the time of Jacob's trouble.'"

IT appears to us that the unlimited mercy of God to the Gentile nations is the answer to this difficulty. We know that the number 12 stands for administration on earth, and consequently we view the number of the sealed 144,000 to be used here symbolically rather than literally. God will secure for Himself what may seem to be only a remnant of Israel, but that remnant will be so complete and according to His own selection, that it will be a perfect instrument for the administration of His blessing among the nations. The position of that nation

will be according to promise, prophecy and covenant and kept within these defined limits. But when the saved from among the Gentiles come into view there are no limits. The mercy of God does not flow as a river, but all banks are obliterated, and it will be as the waters that cover the sea. This is what the "multitude that no man can number" conveys to our mind. We do not think that we are to take it literally, but as a symbolical expression setting forth the unlimited reaches of the sovereign mercy of God.

### WHO ARE THIS MULTITUDE?

Is it right to say that this great "tribulation" (Rev. 7. 14) is identical with "the time of Jacob's trouble." May it not mean something else? "Tribulation" is a frequent word in Revelation—See chaps. 1. 9; 2. 9, 10, 22. Why may not the reference be to what from the standpoint of the Christians A.D. 96 (when the Revelation was written) is the great tribulation indeed?

IF our answers on the problems in Rev 4 in our last month's issue are right, then this great company cannot be any that have lived and suffered during this Church period, for they are definitely distinguished from "the elders that are round about the throne" Tribulation has been the lot of the followers of the rejected Christ throughout the whole of the church's history, according to the Lord's words, "In the world ye shall have tribulation," and some-

times it has been more severe than others, but this is not tribulation in the ordinary sense, but a specially defined tribulation—the *great tribulation*—or the tribulation, the great one, which will be wider than "Jacob's trouble, though at the same time", it is the "hour of temptation that is to come upon all the world to try them that dwell upon the earth," and from it the church is to be kept, by being taken out of it (ch. 3 10)

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### HAS THIS COMPANY BEEN AFFECTED BY A WORLD-WIDE MISSION?

It is held that they will be the fruit of a world wide mission of the converted remnant of Israel But is there any Scripture besides Rev 7 that lends support to the belief that there will be such a mission during those three and a half terrible years?

THIS company could not have been saved and separated from evil and victorious in their testimony for the Lamb apart from a testimony from God, heard and believed by them Where shall we look for that testimony? We believe that it will be that foretold by the Lord in Matthew 24, which chapter describes the time of the great tribulation, "and *this gospel of the kingdom* shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations, and then shall the end come" (verse 14). And Isaiah 66 seems to refer to this

same testimony, for when the Lord by fire and sword enters into judgment with all flesh (verse 16), He will send those who shall declare His glory among the nations (verse 19) It seems probable that those who carry this gospel to all nations will be those whom the Lord speaks of in Matthew 25 40 as "My brethren," and that the sheep, "the blessed of My Father" that inherit the kingdom prepared for them from the foundation of the world (verse 34), are the multitude of Rev. 7

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### ARE THEY A HEAVENLY OR EARTHLY COMPANY?

The argument as to the character of the blessing of this innumerable multitude not being heavenly does not impress me "Before the throne" is consistent with the character of the book As for the assertion that no temple in heaven exists in the apocalyptic visions, Rev 11 19 is sufficient answer

IT will be admitted by all that the remnant of Israel in the early part of the chapter will be saved for earthly blessing, then why should it be questioned that this innumerable company are those who are to share that blessing with them? If we except the fact of their being before the throne of God, and serv-

ing Him in His temple, their blessing is precisely that described in Isaiah 49, in which chapter Christ is given as a light to the Gentiles and God's salvation to the ends of the earth The blessing is certainly Millennial and earthly in that chapter, and so also we believe, must it be here. There is that said of these

people, that sets them in a higher place than Israel as a whole, namely, they "are before the throne of God, and serve Him day and night in His temple, and He shall dwell among them," and this seems to be the blessing of those Gentiles, that care for the children of Israel and bring them as an oblation to the house of the Lord (Isa. 66. 20). "I will take of them for priests and Levites, saith the Lord." F. W. Grant points out that it is to Gentiles that this refers.

Again we must remember that the Revelation is a book of symbols, and consequently that the serving

God in His temple night and day does not necessarily mean that they will be in the actual temple at Jerusalem, but that they will have priestly access to God as worshippers and intercessors. Just as the tribe of Levi was taken out from Israel to represent the whole nation before the Lord, and just as the church, God's house, has the privilege of drawing near to God on behalf of all men now (1 Tim. 2. 1), so will these have the honour and the privilege of drawing near to God in a priestly and Levitical character, to serve Him in view of all those who will be blest in the Millennial age.

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## THE HOLY SCRIPTURE.      No. 4

W. M. Rule.

What it says of itself.

We may be helped to an understanding of the mind of God in a threefold way; by oral teaching; by written ministry; or by our own study of the Scriptures. God has given gifts for the perfecting of the saints; for the work of the ministry; for the edifying of the body of Christ (Eph. 4. 12), and we do well to profit by the teaching, or writings of these gifts. At the same time teachers are not infallible and many capable men have dropped into serious error. To imbibe error is serious and hence the necessity of comparing and examining all teaching like the Berean Jews, by searching the Scriptures, whether things are so. There is always a danger of accepting the ministry of a favourite teacher without examining it in the light of Scripture. There is also a very grave danger of confining oneself to a certain line of teaching and prescribing other lines. We are not warranted to refuse teaching

simply because it is new, or something we have never heard before, but we should search the Scriptures and compare it with them if we are to know whether it is in accordance therewith or otherwise. If you accept the Word of the Teacher without doing so, you are making him the standard of truth, and if you confine yourself to a certain line to the exclusion of other lines equally important, you will become lopsided, or like a lame man—the legs of the lame are not equal. True knowledge is only found in the Scriptures and if the teaching is not in accordance therewith, we are entitled to reject it.

In our own Scripture searching, or study of the Scriptures, we should see that we have the right interpretation, or at least a right one, for Scripture is many sided. This is not a difficult matter if one is looking to God. In this too a better instructed Christian may help, or the writings

of those that have stood the test of criticism. One has known those who have kept to the "Fountain Head" as they called the Scriptures, and refused all help from others. Usually they get "notions" and become a bit of a trial if they parade them in public readings or in ministry. Reading meetings are a great help, in getting our thoughts of Scripture adjusted.

With our Scripture searching, there should be meditation, for it is in chewing the cud like the ox, that it is assimilated, and reduced to practice in the power and energy of the Spirit. Scripture searching is not simply to gain knowledge, though that will be the effect, but that the soul may be established in the knowledge of the mind and will of God, and with a real desire to be a light for God in the world; to shine for Him.

We may and shall attain to different measures in the knowledge of the Scriptures. Some are more gifted of God, and some may have a deeper spiritual insight than others; but

Scripture is our common standard of authority. In Scripture searching we need a single eye for Christ, and a deep self-judgment of ourselves, with great dependence on God if we are to obtain the maximum of profit from our searching.

The Lord Jesus said to the "Ye search the Scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life; and they are they which testify of Me" (John 5. 39). Here was Scripture searching to no profit, because they did not find Christ there. Had they done so they would have been waiting to receive Him. Alas! when He came and presented Himself to them, they did not know Him nor would they come to Him that they might have life.

Scripture searching is a good tonic for the spiritual invalid, and if overcome by sorrow, trouble, or conflict, it is wonderful the effect it has. The soul acquires a colour and tone from it you can get nowhere else. You are lifted above things and carried into the mind and thoughts of God and comforted by the Scriptures.

## 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.