Thy word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path.

Psalm 119. 105.
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"ABBA, FATHER."

At the beginning of this year let us take up afresh this Name, which is in truth the beginning of all Christian language. The babes know the Father, (1 John 2. 13), and ABBA is the language of the babe; yet there is a sweetness and wealth of meaning in it that the oldest saint on earth has not wholly comprehended. It is remarkable that it has been left untranslated into our English tongue, and, indeed Paul, as inspired by the Holy Ghost did not give its equivalent in Greek, in Romans 8. 15 and Galatians 4. 6. It is left there as the Lord Himself used it, when in His agony of blood He bowed down in prayer in the Garden. It is left for us, and given to us and we may take up the very word, the very sound, that came forth from His mouth when He addressed His Father there.

Let us consider it as and when the Lord used it, for then we may gain a fuller entrance into its meaning. His disciples were not able to watch with Him in that solemn hour, but we may look back to it now and contemplate Him there. What holy unquestioning submission, what confidence pervaded His prayer! He shrank from what lay before Him, if it had been possible He would have asked to have been saved from it, but the Father's will was supreme, His will must be accomplished whatever the cost and suffering might be, and so when the agony was past He said, "The cup that My Father hath given Me, shall I not drink it?"

It is Mark that tells us that He said, "Abba Father." Mark who writes of Him as the perfect Servant. His path of service had brought Him to this dark hour when He had to say, "My soul is exceedingly sorrowful unto death." To whom could He turn? Only to Him whom He served with that holy and perfect devotion and in whom was all His trust. He put the whole matter into His hands saying "Nevertheless not what I will, but what Thou wilt." Again we say, what blessed submission, what confidence, what trust, and what intimacy! And what heart can conceive the affection with which the Father viewed Him then. He had said, "Therefore doth My Father love Me, because I lay down My life ... this commandment have I received of My Father." Did not that love flow forth upon Him in the garden? and was He not conscious of it? It surely did, and He surely was, and it seems to us that in the presence of that upflow of confidence and holy submission to the Father's will, and that downflow of unspeakable affection we learn something of what the Name, Abba implies. It describes a relationship in which the knowledge of a perfect love finds a response in perfect trust. It is thus we see it revealed. It was perfectly revealed in and by Him.

But we have been brought, according to inconceivable grace, into this relationship, and the Name, Abba, may be upon our lips as we address our prayers to God. The Name describes for us the character of the relationship. It is not one of bondage or of fear. We do not stand at a distance but we draw near. It implies a holy intimacy coupled...
with deepest reverence. It describes a love towards us and care for us that attracts us and attaches us with unbreakable bonds to Him who bears that Name, a love and care that creates within us an ever increasing trust and true submission. In view of the sufferings of this present time of which Romans 8 speaks, and which many of God's children are feeling keenly, this Name is most sweet, most blessed. It is in the sense of it that we can say "we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them that are called according to His purpose."

And Galatians 4. 6 helps us. "Because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, Abba, Father." This Spirit is the Spirit of God, but in this special character and active in this special way. It is the Spirit of His Son, and surely if we are to know the meaning of this cry we must contemplate His Son.

"Thou shalt call Me, My Father, and shall not depart from Me," was God's word to a backsliding people in ancient days. and it seems to us that this Name, Abba, is that that will keep us from wandering, and preserve us from worry. In the knowledge of His perfect love and care for us we shall rest, and whatever our lot may be in the future, submission to His will and trust in His love will pervade our lives until the sufferings of this present time give place to the glory that shall be revealed in us, who are the beloved children, and destined heirs of God.

God's Salvation.

I can only pour out my heart in gratitude to our Triune God that He has, in His boundless grace brought me to see, like Jonah 2. 9, that "Salvation is of the Lord"—and like David, Psalm 3. 8, "Salvation belongeth unto the Lord, Thy blessing is upon Thy people." Truly, Salvation is absolutely of God. All the sin, shame, hate, enmity to God, alienation of mind, self-will and unwillingness were on my side, and all the love, grace, mercy, power, seeking and saving are on God's. Eternal praise be to God the Father, God the Son and God the Spirit.

How beautifully Thomas Binney expressed this in his inimitable lines.

"O! how shall I whose native sphere
Is dark, whose mind is dim,
Before the Ineffable appear
And on my naked spirit bear
The uncreated beam?

There is a way for man to rise
To that sublime abode—
An offering and a sacrifice
A Holy Spirit's energies,
An Advocate with God."
FINISH THE QUOTATION!

There is a danger common among Christians of quoting certain favourite sentences of Scripture without observing the setting of them. This custom generally results in great spiritual loss. The completion of the quotations would bring additional light and blessing, and show the bearing of the truth presented. This is all-important. Let me give five out of many instances.

1. How often one hears the precious words concerning our Lord's substitutionary sacrifice,

"Who His own Self bare our sins in His own body on the tree."

Blessed they are, but can you finish the verse without reference to 1 Peter 2. 24?

In the words which follow the reason is given for His wonderful atoning work. It is not here, as in some other places, that in His grace He died to save us from eternal judgment. What is it then?

"That we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness; by Whose stripes ye were healed."

Relief for our consciences there is. Blessed relief indeed! But the object in view was that those relieved should have done altogether with sins and live unto righteousness, —live a life following the steps of the Lord Jesus (see verse 21) and right in every relationship towards God and man.

At the infinite cost of His holy passion He has won us for such a life.

2. 1 Peter 3. 18. The words,

"For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the Just for the unjust,"

are frequently to be seen upon wall-cards in Christian homes.

It would seem from them that freedom from fear of wrath as knowing our sins put away was the chief thought in the reference. But is it? What follows? (Test yourself now. It will help you to remember the close of the verse). What was His object then in those measureless sufferings endured for us at Calvary? Turn to the passage and you will read,

"That He might bring us to God."

That is the goal which was before Him. That we might be recovered for God's glory—reconciled to Him. That all distance—the distance caused by our sins—might be removed and nearness might be enjoyed, now.

"Being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit," He, in resurrection life brings us into God's presence faultless and spotless before Him and able to "joy in God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the reconciliation" (Rom. 5. 11).

To leave the verse unfinished is to leave us as forgiven sinners only, more or less at a distance from God, instead of having the joy of being brought by Christ into the presence of God in perfect righteousness and glorious relationship, there to tell out the glad praise of our hearts.

3. At a Conference of Christians the question was asked, What have I left out in this passage?

"But now ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ."

The words came from Ephesians 2. 13.
Several answers were attempted but, strange to say, not one could give the correct reply.

Without looking up to the passage or down the page of this paper can you fill in the missing expression? The passage is robbed of its true force and fulness by the omission of the three words

“IN CHRIST JESUS.”

They give the measure of the nearness into which we are introduced. We were far off “in Adam,” we are brought nigh “in Christ Jesus.” In the awful darkness and distance of sin and alienation from God, and outside the privileges of Israel in the flesh, we were found as Gentiles “in Adam.” Now we are introduced into light and privilege “in Christ Jesus,” these Israel never knew, Christ Jesus Himself as risen from the dead being the measure of that position.

As one has said, “Christ’s place is our place;” while another has phrased it, “In Christ is as Christ.” “To the praise of the glory of His grace, wherein He hath made us accepted in the Beloved.” God “hath made us”—mark the words well for He hath done it completely and He hath done it, He hath taken us into fullest favour in His Beloved, Christ Jesus our Lord.

What gain there is for our souls in finishing that quotation! Is there not?

4. “Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood.”

Happy we are in knowing that He loved us—(or rather loves us). Happy too in knowing that He has washed us from (or rather loosed us from) our sins at the infinite cost of His precious life-blood. But there is something of vital importance added which is oftimes overlooked. Do you know what it is? Our selfishness in thought discovers itself here, as in other quotations.

In this passage it is not for our comfort and peace that He has loosed us from the bondage of our sins—though comfort and peace are ours. Why then is it?

Read on and note carefully what has been left out,

“...And hath made us kings and priests unto God and His Father: to Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen” (Rev. 1. 5, 6).

He loosed us to make us—to make us kings and priests—a kingdom of priests. And note it well, it is “unto God and His Father.” He has freed us that we might be for the praise and pleasure of His God, and Father (not “our God and Father” here, though that relationship is ours by grace). It was that His God and Father might have worshippers and witnesses, that He has liberated us.

Well may we delight to ascribe honour and praise to Him, our Lord Jesus, as we say, “To Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.”

5. Those who seek to serve the Lord Jesus in happy ministry in the gospel, or in seeking the refreshment and edification of their fellow Christians, are often heard quoting only part of a verse, from Ecclesiastes 11, saying,

“In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thine hand: for thou knowest not whether shall prosper this or that.”

What is wrong here then? It is our unbelief which is responsible. Try if you can to make the corre
tion and supply the words wanting. Do not turn at once to the book of Ecclesiastes: but think over it for a while. It will profit you to do so.

How should we read it then? So—"thou knowest not whether shall prosper either this or that, or whether they both shall be alike good."

Is there not encouragement for the worker here? His labour is to be fruitful in "either this or that." He may count on results from one or the other—but it may be that "both shall be alike good."

We should go on in confidence in God, counting upon Him for success. The apostle Paul did not say—as sometimes misquoted, "Paul may plant and Apollos water but God alone can give the increase." There is an element of uncertainty in these words which is not found in the apostle's utterance. This was "I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase." Let us not forget that it pleases "God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe" (see 1 Cor. 1. 21; 3. 6). We are to labour, He will give the increase.

These instances will suffice to show the danger of partial quotation of a passage, and should lead us carefully to observe the setting of a verse of Scripture of truth (see Psalm 12. 6).

He who in his dealings with men leaves out the mercy of God, leaves out the God of mercy, and shews that he has not properly learned the need of mercy for himself (James 2. 12, 13). We must hold on to principles, but we must hold to them with God, for edification and not destruction, so that they are effectual for blessing by the vital power inherent in them. When we constitute ourselves the guardians of the truth, we lose it. Let us rather seek to be guarded by it: like Timothy, to whom the apostle wrote, "Take heed to thyself and to the doctrine; continue in them; for in so doing this, thou shalt both save thyself and them that hear thee" (1 Tim. 4. 16).

Our Homes.

God grant us that this house may be
A Home where Love to reign is free,
A Home where Christ shall always be.

At every hour the welcome Guest
In weariness, the Source of rest,
In loneliness, of Friends the best.

To Christ we give our Home, our days,
To serve Him both in words and ways,
And for our Home give Him the praise.

C. F. B.

From "The Hebrew Christian."
A PLACE OF REFUGE.

"His children shall have a place of refuge" (Prov. 14. 26).

There is a widespread impression that 1934 will be a fateful year in the history of the world. It may be so, though we do not know any Scripture that confirms this. One thing about which there can be little doubt is that it will be a very difficult year for a great many people. To survey the world from a Christian, from an economic or from a military standpoint is to be assured of this. We joyfully regard every effort to spread the gospel and the response, among the young especially; nevertheless, much of the modern teaching applies the terms of the truth to that which is utterly false, or else so transposes the terms of the truth as to be unrecognisable as such. Again, in some parts of the world food is being destroyed, while in other countries people starve for want of it. Values decrease too, and many who once had comfortable means are now reduced to poverty.

It is a quite open secret that, disarmament conferences notwithstanding, many nations are arming and with more terrible weapons of destruction than ever before. On sea, on land, and from the once peaceful sky danger threatens; over everything in this world a shadow rests. Not only men of the world suffer, real Christians, heirs of the world to come are quite equally involved with others, the only difference being—albeit a very great difference—that Christians have a place of refuge, and they have a Father who has promised to care for their temporal needs as they seek Him.

Let us then meditate a little together, beloved fellow-Christian, on the place of refuge. "Having therefore brethren boldness to enter into the Holiest by the blood of Jesus" (Heb. 10. 9). Let us look back at the type which was given for a pattern. Can you picture a golden hall with a marvellous embroidered ceiling? It is foursquare but three sides of it are of golden panelling reaching to the ceiling (really each is a separate board of shittim wood overlaid with gold) and the fourth side is a most beautiful embroidered curtain of the same design as the ceiling which screens off the shrine from the rest of the tabernacle, all having its own typical meaning. No furniture is there but the ark of the covenant overlaid with gold and the cherubim of glory shadowing the mercy seat, and within the ark are the golden pot that had manna, Aaron’s rod that budded, and the two tables of the covenant, each and all patterns of heavenly things. No light from outside enters this holy place, its light is the cloud of glory over the mercy seat. Once every year, once only, the high priest enters these sacred precincts, with the censer of burning coals taken from the golden altar, and in his hand the sweet incense to burn on the censer that the cloud of incense may cover the mercy seat, and on and before the mercy seat he sprinkles the blood of the sin offering. In virtue of that shed blood, and of that cloud of incense Israel in the person of the high priest, may draw nigh to the holiest place in the world, and know that atonement has been made for sin and that he is accepted even in the searching light of the glory of the Lord. Perhaps he would apprehend very little, but what mattered was that he received the testimony of God’s word by simple faith.
If then the type is so beautiful how much more so the antitype? You and I, believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, are invited to draw near to the holiest spot in the universe, to the very presence of God, and through the blood of Jesus and His perfections as shewn by the incense to know ourselves accepted there; the cherubim the ministers of judgment can say nought against us because their eye rests on the sprinkled blood, and this in the full shining of the glory of the Lord.

What a refuge for us! Not once a year but the place whereunto we may continually resort.

When our Lord Jesus was going away as recorded in John 14 He told His disciples of another refuge. Soon He was going to suffer and would leave them without Him in a hostile world, and on this last evening He says to them, "In My Father's house are many mansions, I go to prepare a place for you" (John 14. 2). It would be such a wonderful home of love where sons with Him Who is the Son would be at home with the Father, and though the full entrance there is yet future, by the Holy Spirit who takes the things of Christ and shows them to us it may be enjoyed now. Just as the returning son, in Luke 15 was kissed and clothed and welcomed to the joy of the father's house so the simple believer enjoys now what will be his blessed and eternal portion. As one who is now with the Lord, loved to tell us, he has home comforts and home joys on the way there.

There is yet another refuge for us, though indeed they are all one. There is a fair country where they need no candle, neither light of the sun, where there shall be no more death neither sorrow nor crying neither shall there be any more pain (Rev. 21. 4). A place where the Bridegroom welcomes to His home the bride whom He has loved so long and for whom He suffered on the cross. As we write it is still future but so soon it may be present and the words "the marriage of the Lamb has come and His wife hath made herself ready" may have their fulfilment; meantime as the Bridegroom of our hearts He gives us to find a refuge in His eternal and unalterable love. It is a well-proved love for He loved even unto death, it is a constant love for He loves unto the end, it is such a great all encircling love embracing every blood-bought saint now and for evermore, and oh! it is such a personal love stooping down to the poorest and feeblest of His saints. How many have been constrained to tell of His love to them "He spoke to me" they say "He comforted me, when the way was dark and apparently hopeless Jesus Himself drew near saying, It is I, be not afraid."

It has been pointed out very helpfully that different lines of truth have each their appropriate end; thus on the line of righteousness we are brought to the Holiest; on the line of life we come to the Father's house and on the line of the church we are brought to the Bridegroom. One may say the end is the same, but it helps to a clearer apprehension to see the different lines indicated.

There were saints of old who had forgotten their resting place, and we have to own how often we are like them, but we can pray for one another that in these difficult days we
may more constantly resort to the place of refuge He has made for His children.

Some one may read this page, some fresh reader of Scripture Truth to whom its teaching is unfamiliar and may ask how may I find this refuge in my pain? We would answer, by prayer and meditation on the Holy Scriptures, listening for the teaching of the Holy Spirit and above all by turning very simply to the Lord Who knows each heart perfectly, and Who knows, as many of us have learned with wonder and worship just how to lead the seeker to Himself.

While our days on earth are lengthened, We would give them, Lord, to Thee; Cheered by hope, and daily strengthened, We would run, nor weary be, Till Thy glory, Without clouds, in heaven we see.

Then in worship purer, sweeter, Thy people shall adore, Tasting of enjoyment greater Far than they conceived before— Full enjoyment, Full, unmixed, and evermore.

If the gospel will not allow us to pay our enemies in their own coin, and give them wrath for wrath, much less will it suffer brethren to spit fire at one another’s face.

When love hath once laid the dust which passion and prejudice have blown in our eyes, we shall stand at greater advantage for finding out truth. Pity thy weak brother, and take him by the hand for his help, but despise him not; God can make him stand and suffer thee to fall; Christ doth not quench the smoking flax—why should we?

The persecutor’s sword is not at the church’s throat among us; but are not Christians falling out among themselves? The question hath often been asked, why the word preached hath been no more effectual to convert the wicked, or to edify the saints? One of the chief causes is the divisions amongst those that have made the greatest profession of the truth.
“HIS OWN.”

“Having loved HIS OWN which are in the world, He loved them unto the end.” (John 13).

If we had been called “His own friends,” or “His own brethren,” it would not have been as forcible or affecting as this simple unqualified “His own.” Seasons come and go, years roll by, and change, and decay in all around we see, but this abides—this love that never wearies or wanes and the fact that we are “His own.” Treasure those words, beloved Christian reader, they speak volumes.

The human heart, has a peculiar joy in having something that it can call its own. It is not so much the value of what is possessed, as the simple consciousness that it is mine. Now it is just thus that Jesus speaks of us. He tells you that you are His, and that He delights in its being so. He would not occupy you with yourself, nor with your feeble estimate of Him. He would have you lose yourself in His thoughts of you.

Are you prepared for this, beloved—prepared for divine love, speaking and acting from its spring which is wholly in itself, without a question of what you are being raised from first to last? Oh, this is rest! He knew you, and yet He loved you. He died, not merely in pity and compassion that would save you from hell, but in love that had set itself on you as its object; and now He calls you “His own,” as well He may. We are His by more than all that by which one ever belonged to another; and it is ours simply to own it. Do you stand overwhelmed in the presence of such love? It is well; you will never look again to find the reason of it in yourself; but be content that the only reason for it should be found deep in that love itself.

But listen—“He loves them unto the end.” Do you ask to the end of what? To the end of our path in the world, till we shall need the assurance of it no more. But what an assurance for your heart! He knows your path through to the end. He knows the failure that marks every step of it, the oftentimes coldness, and faithlessness, and treachery of your heart, and yet He loves you to the end. Was ever love tried like His? And oh, how it stands the heaviest strain put upon it! What a strain that was, that was to be put upon it that very night, known before to Him too (v. 38); and yet Peter was by, to hear the blessed words, and know his part in a love that could never change. Now, it is because we have so deep a place in His love that He delights to have us near to Himself in the enjoyment of it. True, it is our joy to be there: but that is nothing to His joy in having us there. He died that we might know and take our place there, and now He lives to secure and maintain us in unhindered enjoyment of it. He will not easily give up what He has acquired for Himself at so infinite a cost. “His own,” is still the spring of the service He enters upon in this chapter—the object of it, to secure our hearts for Himself while He is away. For having loved His own which are in the world He loves them to the end.
"HE THAT SHALL COME, WILL COME."  J. T. Mawson.

The scoffers are saying, "Where is the promise of His coming?" The Holy Scriptures anticipated this and said they would. In this paper we give THREE REASONS WHY THE LORD MUST COME AGAIN.

WILL He really come again? Long has He been expected; will He fulfill that expectation? May it not be a vain hope? "Behold the Bridegroom cometh" (Matt. 25), was a great text with earnest men nigh upon a century ago, and the hope of His coming spread amongst those who loved His name, until many were saying: "Even so, come Lord Jesus." It became a theme of ordinary conversation. I heard of it as a child. It was talked about in our home, and I remember that one of the first teachers I ever had asked me: "What do they preach in the meetings you go to?" I answered: "They preach that the Lord Jesus is coming again." "What!" she exclaimed, evidently startled. "Yes," I said, "and we believe it, because the Bible says so." It was a child's answer, but it shows that whether true or false this teaching had made a deep impression on my mind.

But that was many years ago, and He has not come yet, and those who looked for Him so earnestly in those years that are passed have fallen asleep without realizing their hope. Were they deceived in their belief? And are we? Will He really come? The scoffers are saying: "Where is the promise of His coming?" and we must answer their challenge. What shall the answer be?

First Reason. Our answer is: "Yes, He will surely come," and the basis of our confidence is that He has said so. We do not build our hope on signs and portents, they may easily and often deceive us, but we rest in His own Word, for that cannot fail. He must come because He has said, "I will come again." Other prophecies have been fulfilled, and so shall this be. God declared in the Garden of Eden that the woman's Seed should bruise the Serpent's head. It was the first word that was ever uttered as to the coming of the great Deliverer, and that word was fulfilled when the due time came. Four thousand years passed between the prediction and its fulfillment, and throughout those long long years men of faith waited and watched. They carried the torch of faith and hope in the darkness for a while, each in his own day, and then handed it on to their successors, until at last He for whom they looked appeared; the Day-star from on high visited them, and faith and hope gave place to sight as they gave thanks to God and cried, Our eyes have seen Thy salvation.

God's prophets had spoken of the sufferings of Christ and of the glory that should follow. When He did appear His disciples thought only of the glory. But the glory was not yet to be, it awaited HIS SECOND COMING. It behoved Him first to suffer that the Scriptures might be fulfilled. His first coming was for shame and spitting, for suffering and death; His second coming will be for honour and glory, for the crown and the throne. He told His disciples in the plainest language that He had come to suffer, that He
would be delivered to the Gentiles and be mocked and crucified. It seemed much more likely that He would be stoned, indeed the Jews in their frenzied hatred of Him attempted this more than once, but they could not do it, a power they did not understand restrained them, that the Scripture might be fulfilled. But why should He be crucified? This was a Roman mode of execution, and He did not come into conflict with Rome. He offered no resistance to Caesar's authority, but on the contrary He taught that what was due to him must be rendered to him, and for that saying the Jews hated Him the more, but the Romans had no cause to condemn Him for such teaching, He was no criminal according to their laws. Yet they crucified Him. Why? Because the Scriptures had said that thus He would die, and they cannot fail. More than one thousand years before it happened it was all foretold in the most graphic details (Ps. 22). Long before the Roman power had any existence the very way they would treat Him was revealed, and the ancient word was fulfilled to the last letter of it. And by His own words He confirmed what was written of Him. He said he would die and He did, He said He would rise the third day and He did, He said He would come again in glory, and He will.

Every word of Scripture that foretold His first coming and His sufferings when He came has been fulfilled, and just as surely shall every word that has been spoken about His second coming in glory be fulfilled. If He does not come again His own word and the Scripture will be broken, and this cannot be: Heaven and earth shall pass away but not one jot or tittle of His word can fail. Our first and greatest reason then for holding the coming again of our Lord as a sure and blessed hope is His own word, and the word of Holy Scripture.

Second Reason. The Divine plan and purpose will be incomplete if He does not come. If Sir Christopher Wren had built St. Paul's cathedral without its dome, we should have said that it was not finished, that the crown of it was wanting. And if the Lord Jesus does not come again there will be a great want in the ways of God. To come first in humiliation and not come again in power, to suffer and die for sin and not come again in glory to establish righteousness in the world where wickedness has so long held sway, to bear the cross and not wear the crown, would be to leave unfinished God's great scheme of blessing for men and glory for His Son. The crown of His purpose would be lacking and the universe would say that God was not wise, or He had not the power to make His wisdom effectual. Yes. The once suffering Saviour must come in glory; where He was dishonoured He must be exalted; He loved righteousness and hated iniquity, therefore His throne must be established for ever. He must come again to bring to its consummation the whole will and purpose of God.

Third Reason. His love demands it. He cannot leave even the bodies of His blood-redeemed saints under the power of death. He must raise them up again, and He will do this at His coming again: then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, "Death is swallowed up in victory" (1 Cor. 15). And then will He present to Himself His
church, His bride, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing. The patriarch Jacob would not have been satisfied to have laboured and waited for Rachel and not have possessed her, yet love's labour might have been lost in his case but the Lord's great sacrifice and labour of love cannot be lost. He must see of the travail of His soul and be satisfied, and this can only be when He receives to Himself His church, all glorious without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, and this cannot be apart from His coming again. Because His love demands it, we read: “The Lord Himself shall descend from Heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first; then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we ever be with the Lord” (Thess. 4. 16, 17). “And then shall be heard as it were the voice of a great multitude and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia, for the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth. Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to Him; for the marriage of the Lamb to come (Rev. 19. 6, 7). He must come again for His church. His love demands it.

The first message that the ascended Lord sent from the glory to His disciples upon earth was that He will come back again (Acts 1), and His last message from the glory to His church on earth is “Surely I come quickly” (Rev. 22). Truly His coming again lies very near to His heart. It is as though a mother leaving her children for a while, said to them as she put the good-bye kiss upon their lips: “I'll come back soon,” and if she has the opportunity of sending a message to them during her absence, the burden of it is, “I'll come back soon.” She knows well that nothing will please them better than that, but it is because she longs for them, yearns to see and embrace them again that she sends such a message to them. Her desire is greater than theirs. Even so it is with our Lord. Yet surely His love to us has awakened desires to see Him in our hearts, and if so, we shall respond to His message to us with the church’s cry “Even so, come, Lord Jesus.” And as the years roll by we shall rejoice that they are carrying us ever nearer to that longed for moment when He that shall come will come and will not tarry.

Many a sharp conflict there hath been between saint and saint scuffling in the dark through misunderstanding of the truth and each other.

There is a day coming, and it cannot be very far from us, in which we shall meet lovingly in heaven, and sit at one feast: full fruition of God shall be the feast, and peace and love the sweet music that shall sound to it; and what folly it is for us to fight here who shall feast there!
THE NAME ABOVE EVERY NAME.

It must be something a person values himself upon, and glories in, that is worked up into his name. Sometimes the noble actions of ancestors, sometimes the eminent qualities that distinguish their own character—these are blazoned in the coats of arms, drawn in paintings, artfully woven into hangings, or added to the name, and made a part of the royal style and state of the person, in perpetuam rei memoriam. Salvation is woven into the name and style of our Sovereign Lord JESUS, to show what His heart was set upon—what He aims at and glories in. With this name He came into the world. With this name He went through it. And with this He lives above and bears it about Him always; not so much a memento to Himself as a pledge to us of the business He came down and went up for, viz. "to save His people from their sins."

Some have taken their names from the devastation and ruin they have carried with them wherever they went... Scipio takes the name Africanus from the havoc he made in Africa... Germanicus from his exploits in Germany. These men carried the blood and ruin of thousands in their formidable names. But when the Lord Jesus comes into the world—no mean person neither, for the angel said of Him, "He shall be great and shall be called the Son of the Highest, and the Lord shall give unto Him the throne of His father David"—what's the name this great Person fits on to Himself? Whence does He take His Name? Does He borrow it from the destruction of the fallen angels? or from the final victory He will gain over all His enemies, that "would not that He should reign over them"? No, but from something that lay nearer His heart than all this—the "salvation of His people from their sins."

What Themistius said once to Valens the Emperor, in order to inspire him with compassion towards a city that had so highly incurred his displeasure, that he was resolved it should be destroyed, "How much more excellent, great Prince, is it that you should derive your name from a people that you have spared than from a people you have destroyed?" is here infinitely outdone; for, "Blessed JESUS! how much more excellent is Thy name, which Thou hast derived from a people Thou couldst so easily destroy. A name, like Thyself, all sweetness, and goodness, and love—it carries no blood in it but Thine own, shed in order to accomplish the salvation it imparts."

Whatever passes as a cloud between
The mental eye of faith and things unseen,
Causing the brighter world to disappear.
Or seem less lovely, and its hopes less dear;
That is our world, our idol, though it bear
Affections impress, or devotions air!
SUNRISE AND SUNSET.

To the Older Readers.

ANOTHER year opens on us. The past has been one of abundant mercy, as is proved by the one fact that the Lord is increasingly precious to us. He is the Sun of the one eternal day, and the more He is before the heart, the better and the easier do we accept the falling shadows on man's life here. He is before us as the Sun rising. On His side every joy and every tie is abiding and perennial; on our side it is a sunset, everything is gradually yielding up its vigour and beauty, though as the rising sun engages our hearts the ignis fatuus of our sunset is eclipsed.

It is an unequalled moment to our souls when the Lord Jesus, the Sun of the never-ending day, is the light of our hearts, and the set-off for the evening shades of our own life. The circle of His radiancy, in its diameter, reaches down to the utmost line of our fading life, and up to the excellent glory; so that, once within the circle, there is darkness nowhere; death is abolished. We are then Simeons (see Luke 2); the sun of nature going down, holding as it were in our feeble arms of failing strength the Lord Jesus; our eye fixed on Him, and connecting the great future with Him, we let the past, with all its chequered hopes and sorrows, glide away. "Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen Thy salvation." When the eye is diverted from the rising Sun, it is beset by either the hopes or the fears of the setting one. But when it is steadily and immovably fixed on Jesus, like Stephen when he looked up into heaven, then the halo around Him embraces us,—includes us in its blessed circle, and distances the darkness or the sparks of our own kindling, on our own side. We come up to Jordan to see the ark of the covenant where the waters of death were, and practically to find that there is nothing between us and the heavenly land. The eye must be turned to the east and not to the west. I mean that when the eye turns to what is sinking below the horizon, there is either fear, or an attempt to retain the retiring light, but when it is simply and continuously set on the Lord, the light of His presence is above the brightness of the sun (all created life and power); and we know we have it because we are blind to things here because of the glory of that light.

Everything depends on the way the eye is turned. There are the two lights—the fading or closing one, and the opening or eternal one. When the eye turns to the former, the varied distortions which haunt the twilight are conjured up before the mind; but when it is fixed on the latter, the encircling wave of light encloses us, and we see in beautiful outline the eternal realities. The sunflower has but one sun, and to this it turns all day long with an expanding heart: the sun has always a message for it, a ray to strengthen, to cheer, and to beautify; and thus as your eye is consciously set on Christ, so will you not only know that the efforts or the pretensions of man are eclipsed, but that every moment there is a message from Him to your heart by the Holy Spirit, conveying to you the love and thought of His heart about you.
You are not only in the presence chamber, where all is light and perfection, but the greater than Joseph assures your heart that you are His Benjamin.

May each of us enter on the new year as real Sunflowers, with the eye of the heart unfolded to Christ, and receiving from Him the gentle, exquisite, and invigorating influence of His own presence. There must be jealousy of heart that the eye turn not to any rival, for then we commit two evils; we forsake Him the Fountain of living waters, and hew out to ourselves cisterns which hold no water. Let our motto for the year be: “Seek those things which are above where Christ sits at the right hand of God.”

Strife produces weakness.

The body of Christ is edified by love (Eph. 4. 16). The apostles themselves, when wrangling got little good by Christ’s sermon, or the supper itself, administered by Christ unto them. One would have thought that was such a meal, in the strength whereof (as so many Elijahs) they might have gone a long journey; but, alas! we see how weak they arise from it; one denies his Master and the rest in alarm forsake Him. Christ prays for His people’s unity, “That the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me” (John 17. 21). This should stir up all that wish well to the gospel, to pray for the reunion of divided hearts; hot disputes will not do it; prayer will, or nothing can. The God of peace can only set us at peace: if ever we are wise to agree, we must obtain our wisdom from above; this alone is pure and peaceable.

How to hold the Truth.

Lay this deep in thy heart, that God, which gives an eye to see truth, must give a hand to hold it fast when we have it. What we have from God we cannot keep without God; keep therefore thy acquaintance with God or else truth will not long keep her acquaintance with thee. God is light: thou art going into the dark, as soon as thou turnest thy back upon Him. We stand at better advantage to find truth and to keep it also, when devoutly praying for it, than fiercely wrangling and contending about it: disputes toil the soul and raise the dust of passion; prayer sweetly composes the mind, and lays the passions which disputes draw forth; and I am sure a man may see further in a still, clear day, than in a windy and cloudy. When a person talks much and rests little, we have great cause to fear his brain will not long hold out; and truly, when a person shall be much in talking and disputing about truth, without a humble spirit in prayer to be led into it, God may justly punish that man’s pride with a spiritual frenzy in his mind, that he shall not know error from truth.
“BE OF GOOD CHEER.”

(Matt. 9; Mark 2; Luke 5.)

The Lord Jesus had arrived in His own city, Capernaum, where He had done so many wonders, and had spoken so many words of grace, more wonderful still. Hearing He is in the house the people come in throngs and among them Pharisees and Scribes and doctors of the law, out of all parts of Galilee and Judea, and even from Jerusalem itself. These last are “sitting by,” while the house is filled with a miscellaneous crowd, blocking up all access to where He is. Luke tells us that the power of the Lord was present to heal them, while Mark writes that He preached the Word to them. But those who are “sitting by” have come in no friendly spirit, far less with any sense of need. They have come to criticise this “teacher,” who had never sat at their feet, nor graduated at their schools. The fame of His works and His words had however reached all parts of the country, and they find themselves compelled to come up to despised Galilee, in the north country, to see and to heal for themselves. In their eyes He was but an upstart peasant, who had been rightly cast out of the village of Nazareth, and had taken refuge in the lake town of Capernaum, where His followers were. These followers were mostly fishermen, rough and untaught, and He had actually enlisted amongst them a tax-gatherer, while it was well-known that He had often been seen speaking in a kind and friendly way to vile men and disreputable women. He was known as a friend of sinners.

It must have been hard for the Lord to speak the Word where no faith listened to it, but even as He speaks, sounds come from the ceiling of the room, which show that there are some whom no crowd can keep away from Him. The roofing tiles are broken, and the undercovering and its supports are removed, and down between two of the beams comes a pallet-bed, hung by four ropes, on which is lying the trembling figure of a young man, a paralytic, who is gently lowered until he comes to rest at the feet of the Lord.

What a refreshment to the heart of the Lord when He sees, amidst all the unbelief around Him, the faith of these five men, the helpless one and his four helpers. It is an act of the simplest faith, done without the utterance of a single word, and He honours it at once. His eyes could see the faith that burned behind the mute appeal of beseeching eyes, which spoke of deeper pain than bodily disease. The sick man believes in His power to heal, and is prostrate before Him in the utter helplessness which speaks for itself, but the Lord sees that the poor sufferer is in deep anxiety as to how He will regard this bold intrusion into His presence. To reassure him, and to encourage his fearing, wavering heart, He says at once, “Child” (for so it should read) “BE OF GOOD CHEER!” and then, going right to the deadly root of all man’s diseases, pains and sorrows, He startles His hearers by the wonderful announcement, “THY SINS BE FORGIVEN THEE!”

Having heard of His power to heal diseases of the body, the Pharisees would not have been surprised to hear Him speak of healing for the dire sickness of the youth, but
they could not find words to express their astonishment at what they considered the temerity of the One who thus spoke. In their hearts they counted His words to be blasphemy, and said to themselves, “Who can forgive sins, but God only?”

The Lord Jesus could read the silence of unbelief as easily as the silence of implicit faith, and He answers the challenge of their hearts. He shows them something of His power in revealing their thoughts, and then asks them which is easier, to say, “Thy sins be forgiven thee,” or to say, “Arise and walk.” They know that both alike are beyond the power of man, so treating their thoughts as spoken words, He continues, “That ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins,” then turning to the sick man, He says, “Arise, take up thy bed, and go to thine house!” Immediately the young man rises from the spot where he lies helpless, picks up his pallet-bed, folds it beneath one arm, and the spectators make way for him as he steps quickly to the door, down to the street, and on to his home, healed in his body and happy in his soul, full of the “GOOD CHEER” he has received from the gracious Lord when he was so helpless and with no hope but in Him. He was speechless when he was laid at the feet of the Lord, but now his lips are opened, and the once paralysed gives glory and praise to God. How lovely a picture of the Saviour’s grace! What an answer to the Pharisees, blind to the grace and truth in their midst, He so near and they so far. They rise from their seats, and pass out silently, as they came. They present no point of contact through which His power to heal can reach them. They are not sick, nor have they any need of the Physician. There is no faith, and so there is no blessing.

Beloved friend, this blessed word of forgiveness from a Saviour-God is the first need of your life, the most important thing of all that concerns you, both here and hereafter. Unless you come to the Saviour for the forgiveness of your sins, all is dark and hopeless. There can be neither joy in life, nor peace in death. Coming to Him, you will find forgiveness the alone gateway to true rest and lasting joy, the foundation and basis of the immeasurable blessings which our Lord and Saviour has in store for all who come to Him in simple faith, and trust Him, utterly and altogether, for all their need. He welcomes all such with His own wonderful words of GOOD CHEER.

(Matt. 14; Mark 6; John 6.)

It is dark, and the wind is wild and stormy on the sea of Galilee. The Lord has bidden His disciples cross to the other side, while He sends away the multitudes who have partaken of His mercies. Now He climbs the mountain side to seek a place of peace where He can unburden His heart to His Father. All night long, His disciples are “toiling in rowing” against the wind which tosses their little ship amidst the waves. They are wet and cold and weary. In the last storm He was in the boat with them, and how they wish He were with them now.

They cannot see the Lord, but His sleepless eye watches them, battling with the sea. It is the fourth watch, three o’clock, the dark hour before dawn, and looking landward they see a figure, Him who.
Scripture Truth

is the Light of the world, in the midst of the gloom coming towards them as if there were a crystal path across the troubled waters. In their fear they mistake the blessed Presence of the Lord for a phantom, and cry out in terror. He seems to be passing them by, but immediately He speaks to them, and His well-known voice calms their fears. Like a silver trumpet pealing above the roar of wind and waves come the peace-giving words, "BE OF GOOD CHEER! IT IS NOT AFRAID!"

We too have been sent on a voyage across the stormy sea of life, and it is night with us since the Lord has gone on high, and sometimes we feel that the wind and wave are against us. But we are the objects of His ceaseless love and care. Although enthroned in the heavenly heights, He intercedes with God for us, and His ever-watchful eyes, the same "to-day" in the midst of all that is the modern world, just as in the "yesterday" of Galilee, ever look down with the tenderest grace and compassion on all His loved ones who are "toiling in rowing."

"He, of old the Man of Sorrows
Pleads before the Father's face—
Knowing all the needed solace,
Claiming all the needed grace.
On His heart, amidst the glory,
Bearing all our grief and care;
Every burden, ere we feel it,
Weighed and measured in His prayer."

He has bid us go on "to the other side," where He shall meet us. The world's winds would not beat their cold hard blows on the Home-set faces of His own, if they would but turn back and go with the wind that blows softly. We cannot turn back. He has set the helm for the long desired Haven. Our High Priest and Advocate on high will never fail us. His own words come to us with undiminished sweetness and power—"These things have I 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" (John 16. 33).

How wonderful it is to realize that the Lord spoke these words to comfort and strengthen His own when He Himself was about to pass alone into the storm which gathered round His thorn-covered Head in the dark hour of Calvary's sorrow and suffering.

The fourth watch is passing, and surely He comes quickly. He would cheer the hearts of His own with the sweet promise of His coming. (Acts 23. 11.)

Night has fallen on the old city of Jerusalem. The temple courts which a few hours before had echoed with the wild cries and execrations of a fanatical crowd are silent and still. Within the grim keep of the Roman fortress of Antonia lies Paul, bondsman of Christ, and messenger of God's world-wide love. Full of love to the people of his own nation, and ardently desiring their salvation, he has experienced the sorrow of a complete rejection of his message by a great multitude of his kinsmen in the very heart of the "holy city."

It may well be that the words of the Lord, spoken long before, came with power to his soul in the silence of night, as he doubtless agonises in prayer before the Lord on behalf of those who so bitterly refused Him who would be their Saviour.

Many have passed their criticisms on the actions and words of Paul in this journey to Jerusalem, but
it seems best to leave all that to his Lord and Master. He knew that servant's heart beat true to Him, and that the fullest fidelity and deepest devotion of his soul were ever at the service of his Master. The Lord graciously comes down to Jerusalem that night, and the place to be honoured with His Presence is the dark dungeon where His servant weeps many tears. He stands alongside His beloved servant and lets him know that neither his tears nor his testimony have escaped His loving sympathy. "BE OF GOOD CHEER, PAUL" are the first words to reach Paul in this night of sorrow. The Lord lets him know that if his testimony was rejected in Jerusalem, it was heard by Himself, in heaven. Does Paul fear that night that he has preached the gospel for the last time? The mob had listened to him until he spoke of the Lord's mission to send him far off to the midnight lands with the Light of His love, and then they refused to listen to another word. The Lord graciously banished all fear from His servant's heart, He owns that he has testified of Him in Jerusalem, and assures him that he will witness for Him in Rome also. He would send him with the Message of God's own heart to the sick heart of a dying world, so that along all the long Roman roads the message of the Cross would go in all its saving, healing power to the ends of the earth.

So the gloomy cell of Paul, the Lord's prisoner, is lit up with the good cheer of his Lord and Paul receives encouragement for the days yet to come—more witnessing for Christ, more scattering of His unsearchable riches, more forthtelling of His unspeakable love, more and more of Christ, Christ for all, and in all, all the way home until He should be with Christ for evermore.

These words of our Lord Himself, "BE OF GOOD CHEER" are not dead. They come down to us today with all their gracious living power. They come, as they did in days of old, to the sinner who comes, confessing His need of Him, even now in the closing hours of God's long Day of Grace. "Let him that is athirst come" (Rev. 22. 17).

They come to the saints of today amidst all the trials, troubles and fears "of the last hour." "IN ME . . . PEACE. I HAVE OVERCOME THE WORLD" (John 16. 33). Beautiful are His feet on the mountains of glory, but to-day His feet are swift on the path of the storms which surge round His own, swift to succour them, to uphold them with His everlasting arms, to comfort them with the music of His good cheer, sweeter than all the songs of earth, foretaste of the eternal joy of the Father's home.

They come too to His servants, amidst all the sorrows, and disappointments of labour in a world of sin and death, whether in the crowded cities of the home lands, in the dead coldness of an apostate Christendom, in the sweltering forests of Africa, in the isles of the southern seas, in China's wide lands, or on the sun-baked plains of India—wherever the Seeker and the Saviour of the lost sends His own in search of the far scattered objects of His peerless Love, there still ring His own words—"These things have I spoken unto you, that MY JOY MIGHT REMAIN IN YOU, and THAT YOUR JOY MIGHT BE FULL" (John 15. 11). In the midst of it all, He desires that His own should be filled with His own victorious, overcoming Joy.
ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

"Whose soever sins ye remit."

"Please explain John 20-23. In what degree or character does this commission to remit or retain sins still apply in the church?"—SOUTHVILLE.

ONE thing is certain, and that is that God alone can forgive sins and remit their eternal penalty, and we hold it to be one of the proofs of the Deity of the Lord Jesus, that He, the Son of Man, had power on earth to forgive sins. Here the Lord was giving His APOSTLES their commission with the special authority and power needed for its fulfilment. He had been in the world, sent by His Father, reconciling the world unto God, not imputing their trespasses unto them, and now the Apostles were to continue this mission, and to them the word of reconciliation was committed, that they, as ambassadors for Christ, might in Christ’s stead beseech men to be reconciled unto God (2 Cor. 5). Their ministry was a ministry of grace and forgiveness to a guilty and rebellious world; they had to make known for the first time in the world’s history that this was God’s mind and attitude towards men. This we suggest is the primary force of the Apostles’ commission as given to John.

This public proclamation of forgiveness was something entirely new. Repentant individuals who had cast themselves upon God’s mercy, such as David, knew the blessedness of forgiveness in Old Testament days, but it was not publicly proclaimed, for that was the age of law, which meant just demand on God’s part, and condemnation where the demand was not answered. But now, since Christ who knew no sin had been made sin for us, all is changed, and the apostles were entrusted with the proclamation of the change, and we see how well Peter used it amongst the Jews at Pentecost and how zealous Paul was in carrying it to all nations, the remission of sins and the gift of the Holy Spirit were their great themes.

It was a very serious thing to refuse the Apostolic testimony. They were “unto God a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish: to the one the savour of death unto death: and to the other a savour of life unto life” (2 Cor. 2. 15, 16), and John says, “He that knoweth God heareth us (the Apostles), and he that is not of God heareth not us. Hereby know we the spirit of truth and the spirit of error” (1 John 4. 5, 6). And this abides, and the witness of the Apostles we still have in the God-inspired Scriptures. So that their commission is still in force, and those who believe the word of reconciliation that was committed to them are forgiven; they receive by faith what is in God’s heart and mind for them, and the sins of those who reject that word are still retained upon them. Hence how serious is that modernistic teaching which ignores the Apostles, and raises the deceptive cry, Back to Christ, for those who refuse the Christ whom the Apostles preached have no Christ at all.

As to how far this commission should be taken up by the saints of God today: we do not believe that the statement you send us is right; we do not believe that “the saints should be conscious that they are here as endowed with that divinely given authority to remit sins,” that “they are sent into the world
to remit sins; if need be, to bind them.” We have no sanction for such a claim. We may indeed proclaim that God will do this; we may preach repentance and remission of sins in Christ’s Name among all nations, Luke 24, for, it seems to us, that it is in Luke’s Gospel that we have the commission that abides to the end; the Apostles had a special place and commission, they were Christ’s special delegates, and they spoke as inspired and filled with the Holy Ghost, in Christ’s stead, the very words of God. We may call attention to those words, we may preach them and we know that all who believe on the One who is the theme of them shall receive the remission of sins, that is surely as far as we may go.

There is, no doubt, involved in this commission what is called “administrative forgiveness,” which has to say, not to a man’s eternal relationship with God, but as to his reception into or exclusion from the privileges of that favoured sphere on earth where the Lord’s Name is owned. Peter exercised the power of retaining sin in the case of Ananias and Sapphira in Acts 5; and again in the reception of the Samaritans, there would be the remitting and in the rejection of Simon the Sorcerer the retaining (ch. 8). And the same authority in the Name of the Lord, was exercised by Paul and the assembly at Corinth, in retaining sin upon the wicked person and excluding him from Christian fellowship until his repentance (1 Cor. 5), and in remitting his sin and receiving him again in 2 Cor. 2.

This authority to bind and loose has been committed to the church as such, but for this we would go to Matthew 18. 15-20.

“Better and honey shall he eat.”

“Please explain the two references to butter and honey in Isaiah 7. Does verse 15 refer to Christ? Who is the ‘he’ of verse 22?”—NORWICH.

We say without hesitation that verse 15 refers to Christ. And we suggest that the reference to “butter and honey” indicates that He was to be brought up as a child in circumstances of poverty, and feed upon the natural product of the land which would be the food of peasants and, not on luxuries that the rich might buy with money. But we would suggest that another thought may lie behind these words; “Butter (or cream) and honey” were the natural product of the land, that which it brought forth apart from the sweat of man’s face or his skill as an agriculturalist; for it was a land flowing with milk and honey at the beginning. These things flowed from the abundance of God’s supplies; and a time was coming when those who dwelt in the land would be entirely dependent upon God’s supplies for their sustenance, for it would no longer be cultivated by man; and it seems to us that “butter and honey shall He eat” simply means that He shall be entirely dependent upon God. This was the life the Lord Jesus lived from His lowly birth, for He said, “I was cast upon Thee from the womb” (Ps. 22. 10).

He was entirely independent of men and derived nothing from the results of their labours or wisdom. In Luke’s Gospel, in which Gospel He is presented as the Man wholly dependent upon God, we read of Him, “They found Him in the
Temple sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them and asking them questions. And all that heard Him were astonished at His understanding and answers." Yet He had received no culture or education in the schools of men, for afterwards they said, "How knoweth this man letters, having never learned?" He was at the age of twelve when this incident occurred, the age at which a child has probably just begun to discern good and evil, and to definitely choose or refuse for himself. What His choice was comes out clearly in His words to His mother, "Wist ye not that I must be about My Father's business?" (Luke 2. 45-49).

We believe that it is admitted that the sense of the verse is, "Butter and honey shall He eat until He know to refuse the evil and to choose the good."

Verse 22 evidently was prophetic of the time when the Assyrian over flowed the land and desolated it in so much that butter and honey were the only food, yet this would be so plentiful that even if a man had only a cow and two sheep, he would have enough.

Women preaching and teaching.

"Please explain 1 Cor. 14. 34, 35. and 1 Tim. 2. 11, 12. Is there any Scripture which allows women to publicly preach or teach, was not all preaching and teaching put in the hands of the men both in the Old and the New Testament? The question arises out of the assertion that women may teach and preach in the assemblies."—A SISTER.

The things that are written in 1 Corinthians 14, are the commandments of the Lord (verse 37). Hence those who ignore or discard these things are guilty of disobeying His commandments; a very serious thing for any person or company of people professing to be Christian to do. It should need no argument to convince us that if the Lord's commandments are disobeyed, His Lordship and rights are refused, and His presence and blessing cannot be enjoyed, for these depend upon obedience to Him as John 14. 21-24 teaches.

Now one of these commands is given with great emphasis in verses 34, 35. "Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but to be under obedience, as saith the law. And if they will learn anything, let them ask their husbands at home: for it is a shame for women to speak in the church"—whatever they do elsewhere—and it is evident that they did pray and prophecy somewhere and were not rebuked for it, but instructed how to do it in a comely way (chap. 11)—they are to be silent in the church, or assembly, i.e., where the saints of God are gathered together in that character.

In the assembly, the first thought is ministry to the Lord (Acts 13. 2.), and in this the men are to be active, they may be said to be the mouth and the intelligence; but the women may be the heart none the less, and nobody can be more active than the heart will allow him to be. The unseen and silent members of the body are by no means the least important. Mary of Bethany poured her spikenard upon the feet of the Lord in silent adoration while the men talked and criticised.

In 1 Timothy instruction is given as to right behaviour in the house of God (chap. 3. 15), and there we read: "Let the women learn in silence with all subjection. But I
suffer not a woman to teach nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence" (chap. 2. 11, 12). The language used here seems to be stronger than that of 1 Corinthians and the passage would have a wider bearing. It is the conduct “which becometh women professing godliness” (verse 10), not when the assembly is convened only, but wherever they may be, for being a part of the house of God, they are never out of it.

These two passages will be conclusive for all who desire to do the will of God, but it is right that we should enquire why this very definite restriction should be put upon women. Let it not be supposed that inferiority is implied by their subjection to the man and silence in the assembly. There are many members in the human body that are silent and unseen, but no one would contend that they are inferior to or of less use and value than those that are more prominent. So also is the body of Christ, and the condition of soul and devotion to Christ or otherwise of each member of the body, whether man or woman, raises or lowers the tone of any church or any assembly in which they may be; each one is either a help or a hindrance.

In God’s wise ordering in creation the woman was put in the subject and dependent place, for Adam was before Eve; this was confirmed by the law, and it has not been changed now that God has been fully revealed in Christ by the gospel, but now we know the reason for it. God’s purpose was that the woman should be the complement of the man, his fulness and glory; and that he should support her, guide her, love and cherish her, and in this the blessedness of the church’s relation-ship to Christ is typified. In the assembly the woman is to be in subjection and not the head, she is to be taught and not the teacher, she is to be in dependence and not the source of supply or leader; and thus has the church to be to Christ. His church’s dependence upon Him and subjection to Him draw out His constant and tender love and care that nourishes and cherishes her. All this is beautifully presented in Ephesians 5. 22-33. And He will yet acknowledge her as His fulness, and share His glory with her. Just in the measure in which the church has got out of this position has she missed the blessedness of it, and as the woman revolts from her God-appointed place does she miss the blessedness that belongs to that place and God’s support in it, and only confusion and discontent can result.

God’s order in creation has been all spoiled by sin, but grace and the power of the Spirit restore this in the assembly, and as all who are in it are subject to the Lord who is the Head of it the blessing of God’s order will be known, and the angels will be instructed in the manifold wisdom of God (see Ephesians 3. 10 and 1 Corinthians 11. 10).

The reason given in 1 Timothy 2 why the woman was not to be a teacher is that she was deceived by the devil. She was and is more liable to the seductions of the enemy, not only because it is her nature so to be, but because when she gets out of her place of subjection she has not God’s support and protection which she will have in keeping her place and fulfilling the purpose for which God formed her. All kinds of heresies have sprung up of late years through women taking the place of authority and leadership and
formulating doctrines and systems of teaching.

These texts about which our correspondent enquires have to say to church order and to taking precedence and asserting authority over the man in the house of God; but as 1 Cor. 11 shows they did and may exercise their gifts in their proper sphere of service, and this we should say is among women. In Titus 2, 2, 3 the elder women are exhorted to teach the younger women. They may speak to women and teach them, for we know of no Scripture that forbids this, but nothing could be more emphatic than this, they are to be in silence in the assembly and not to teach when men are present.

PRAYER.

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

THE great importance of prayer is, not that you may get your request, but that you may have the sense that God has to do with your affairs. You have got a sense of what it is to go to Him and get an audience. I have taken, as it were, the whole contents of my heart, and poured them out before Him. I say, I know He has them; I need not tell Him about them again. The fact is people lose their time saying a great many words to relieve their consciences, and not to ask for what they really need. When I ask for anything according to His will, I know that He hears me, and that I have the petition that I desired of Him.

The first great parable about praying is that in the eleventh of Luke. The man would not go away without his friend giving him the loaves, because he wanted them, and had no other way of getting them. Do not go to God if you have any back door; do not have any plan of your own if you are going to pray to Him. That is the principle of real prayer. What makes people so often not gain in prayer is that they have some plan in the background. They go to some place for their health, and pray about it, but all the time they are thinking that if this place does not cure them they will go somewhere else and try another.

Well, how can you know when you have had an audience?—when you have gained God's ear? You can know at once; I will tell you how. The most wonderful favour that ever was conferred upon man will be yours. You will have the peace of God. Have you any troubles at this present time? You have. And why do you go about troubled with them? Because you do not go to God with them. When you go to God with your troubles and get an audience with Him, He gives you His own peace about them. You are in the state that God is in. What a wonderful thing! Here is a man who was troubled this morning; he has gone to God and got an audience. And has he got his prayer answered? Perhaps not. But he has come out in the state of God—the peace of God is his.
The Miraculous Conception: the Fact and the reason for it.

In a recently published book a popular preacher gives his views as to the great facts of our Christian faith. He begins with the birth of our Lord and questions the miraculous conception and Virgin birth. His reasons are that only two of the New Testament writers speak of it; that nothing is based upon it; that the notion arose in the early church because it was supposed that natural conception was sinful, for which he quotes Ps. 51. 3. There is nothing new in these views. Men who have pledged themselves to preach and testify to “the Faith once delivered to the saints,” have become bold and more bold in rejecting the truth as to our Lord’s entrance into the world. To quote from one of them: “I cannot help including the birth stories among things that do not matter. There are some things that matter a great deal. There are some life and death matters, if it comes to that, but this is not one of them. It does not matter.” It is my purpose to shew that it does matter, that it is one of the foundation stones of our faith, and that apart from it the whole edifice of the truth must collapse and fall, indeed, if it is not as revealed to us in the Word, there is no truth at all except that which would condemn us for ever, for apart from the miraculous conception and birth of our Lord there is no Saviour for men.

MANY are the names and titles that describe the person and glories of our Lord Jesus Christ in the New Testament. He is the Word who was with God in the beginning, and who was God; the Creator of all things, the Light of men, and the Life-giver; He is the only begotten Son which is in the bosom of the Father, His Beloved in whom is all His delight; He is the Resurrection and the Life; He is the brightness of God’s glory and the express image of His Person, who upholds all things by the word of His power; He is the wisdom of God and the Power of God and the Lord of glory, the Christ, who is over all, God blessed for ever, having an everlasting throne and ruling with a righteous sceptre; the same yesterday, to-day and for ever; He is the Root and the Offspring of David, the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End: He is the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world, the Bread of God and of life, the Door of Salvation, the Son of Man with power on earth to forgive sins; He is the only Saviour and universal Judge, the Lord, having a Name which is above every name, before whom every knee must bend and in whose hand lies the destiny of every creature: He is the One who liveth and was dead, and behold He is alive for ever, more and hath the keys of Hades and of death; He is Emmanuel, God with us, and in Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily; He is the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ and the bright Morning Star, the true God and Eternal Life, and the I AM.

Some of these names belong to Him as having become Man, and as having died and risen again; others describe what He was before the pendulum of time began to swing, or ever the world was made—what He is in His own uncreated, unchangeable and eternal Being. To these latter belong “the Word,” “the
only-begotten Son which is in the bosom of the Father,” and “the Son” whom the Father only knows. By these names, He is distinguished as to His personality in the Godhead, but being one with the Father and the Holy Ghost in the Godhead, He shares in every title that belongs to God, such as “the blessed and only Potentate, King of kings and Lord of lords; who only hath immortality, dwelling in light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen or can see: to whom be honour and power everlasting. Amen” (1 Timothy 6. 15, 16). We should not be subject to the Father’s decree, “that all men should honour the Son even as they honour the Father,” if we did not acknowledge this.

We are to consider the entrance of this august Person into the world and to enquire what manner of birth was His who bears all this glory. That He was born of a woman is not disputed; He was a true and proper Man and not a phantom; and yet we must not, we cannot lose sight of the fact of who He was before He became Man. Every other man born into the world began to be at his conception, and came into the world as a personality that had had no former existence; but our Lord Jesus Christ was rich before His poverty in Bethlehem; He thought it not robbery to be equal with God before He was found in fashion as a Man; He was the Word before He became flesh; God’s own Son who was sent in the likeness of sinful flesh, made of a woman, when the fulness of time had come (Gal. 4. 4). This glorious pre-existence surely, means that the birth of our Lord into this world was not as the birth of any other man that had ever been born; it was an incarnation, the coming of a Divine Person into a condition in which He had not been before, to carry out all the will of God and be the Saviour of us men.

His birth was a unique event; the greatest, the most amazing that had ever happened; greater by far than the creation of man at the beginning, and unless our minds are darkened to the true meaning of it, we should certainly expect that it would be brought about in some other way than by the ordinary laws of nature; we feel that a Divine Person must have a supernatural birth, and this feeling is established and confirmed by the Word of God.

We open the New Testament and find on the first page of it the story told in simple language and in about 250 words. It is a subject on which the imagination might have run riot, as it did in the numerous fables and legends that gathered about it as spirituality declined and superstition advanced in the early centuries of the Christian era; but in this God-breathed account of it, the imaginations of man’s mind are excluded, and every sentence of the story bears the Divine imprimatur. “Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as His mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost. Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not willing to make her a publick example, was minded to put her away privily. But while he thought on these things, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take to thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. And she shall bring forth
a son, and thou shalt call His name JESUS; for He shall save His people from their sins."

This then is the beginning, the door through which we enter into the New Testament and into the realm of infinite and eternal blessedness that it reveals to our souls. It is the beginning of the revelation of God to man, and we must not refuse the beginning if we are to advance to its climax and completion. The fulness of time had come, and the voice of the Son spoke and said, "A body hast Thou prepared Me...Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of Me) to do Thy will, O God" (Hebrews 10. 5-7). It is said that only two of the New Testament writers make mention of the Virgin birth; well, if that is so, two witnesses are enough, and at their mouth every word shall be established; but does not this saying, "A body hast Thou prepared Me" give a third witness? It surely involves the miraculous conception; it proclaims the fact that the will of the flesh or the power of man had no place in it, but that the will and wisdom of God combined to prepare that holy incorruptible body within the womb of the Virgin-mother.

MATTHEW’S RECORD.

There are two accounts of this great event. Matthew’s Gospel records the communication to Joseph by the angel, and Luke tells us of the annunciation to Mary. And when we discern the respective characters of these two Gospels and the way the Lord is presented in them, we have no difficulty in seeing how perfect these records are, each in its own place. Matthew unfolds the glory of the Lord as King. His Gospel is "the book of the generation of JESUS CHRIST, THE SON OF DAVID, the Son of Abraham." He came as the Heir to the throne of David and to establish and fulfill all the promises made to Abraham. But here was a difficulty; while Jesus Christ was the long-promised Heir, Joseph stood in the direct line of succession and was the legal heir, as this genealogy proves. And this was recognised by the Lord’s messenger when he saluted him as "Joseph, thou son of David." He was an obscure village carpenter, proving the truth of the words of the prophet that the tabernacle of David had fallen down and lay in ruins (Amos 9. 11), and yet he shewed traits of true royalty according to God, in his mercy to the weak, and as he thought, failing, and in his trust in the Word of God and obedience to it.

It was right that he should have been addressed by the angel, not only because of his own personal concern as to the condition of his espoused wife, but also because of his care for the integrity of the succession to the throne of David. It might appear a foolish and futile thing to have been concerned about the latter, seeing that six centuries had passed since the sceptre had departed from the house of David, but faith holds on to the promises of God, even when human strength has failed and every visible hope has fled; and Joseph was a man of faith. And being a man of faith, he did as he was bid by the angel of the Lord and took Mary unto him as his wife, without hesitation or further misgiving; and by so doing, he cast the protection of his name about her, and made her first-born Son, his Heir—the legal Heir to David’s throne. And this
would be a matter of the greatest importance to those pious Jews who were looking for the Christ, the Son of David, and for whom this Gospel was written in the first place.

But there was a matter of even greater importance than what was due to Joseph and the integrity of the Royal line and the necessity of Jesus Christ being the legal Heir to the throne; there was God’s own integrity and His faithfulness to His Word. And these were made good and revealed in the words, “Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call His name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us.” That was the most astonishing prophecy that God ever gave through a prophet’s lips; it meant as we hope to shew, the intervention of God in a new and personal way for the deliverance of His people; it foretold something that would be outside and apart from all the power of man, and it was fulfilled when the espoused wife of Joseph conceived by the Holy Ghost and brought forth a Son, whose name was called JESUS, the Saviour of His people from their sins.

In that lowly Babe, the Virgin’s Son, conceived by the power of the Holy Ghost, the Son of David and Heir to his throne, Jehovah the Saviour, and Emmanuel, the two Testaments are bound together; the hopes of the Old and the faith of the New unite in Him, and we can with exultation take up the prophetic word and join with Israel and say, “Unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given; and the government shall be on His shoulders: and His Name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace. Of the increase of His government there shall be no end, upon the throne of David and upon His kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and justice from henceforth for ever. THE ZEAL OF THE LORD OF HOSTS WILL PERFORM THIS” (Isaiah 9. 6, 7).

LUKE’S RECORD.

The Gospel of Luke was written to a Gentile believer and has the world in view rather than Israel; consequently there was not the same necessity as in Matthew’s Gospel to shew that the birth of the Lord was in accordance with the prophecies made in the Old Testament to Israel. In it, the Lord is presented as true Man, born of a woman, come in grace to all men, and there was not the same need to give Joseph the prominence that he has in Matthew’s Gospel, where the true heirship to David’s throne was vital. But there was need that all people to whom “the good tidings of great joy” as to the Saviour, who is Christ the Lord were brought, should know from whence He came and how, that they might understand and appreciate the fact that His coming was all of God and in sovereign grace. The annunciation to Mary, a lowly daughter of David’s house, and espoused to a working man, brings out this grace in its unsurpassable richness and charm.

Gabriel’s message from God to Mary is divided into three parts. First, the salutation which proclaims the greatness of the favour that God was to bestow upon her, unknown and poor though she was. She was
chosen by sovereign grace, from among all women to be the vessel by whom God would bring about His great purpose. Second, there was the revelation of what this purpose was. "Fear not, Mary," said the angel, "for thou hast found favour with God. And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a Son, and shalt call His name JESUS. He shall be great and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of His father David: and He shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever, and of His kingdom there shall be no end."

He that was to be born to her was to be the Son of David, and to have His father's throne: that she might have understood, seeing she belonged to the house of David, but how could He be JESUS—Jehovah the Saviour? How could He be called the Son of the Highest? The Highest is the title of God in His supremacy over all the earth, and in heaven; the One whose word and ways none may challenge, and who will manifest Himself thus in the coming Millennial Kingdom. How could the Son of her womb have the right to be called His Son? We do not wonder that she asked that question; it was a right and proper question to ask, and it brought out the third part of Gabriel's message from God which enlightened her as to how it was to be brought to pass. "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee; therefore also that holy Thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God."

This last utterance of the angel "who stands in the presence of God" requires no comment. It drives away all doubt. This conception was miraculous. it was by God's power, it was God's work. Man and his corruptible seed had no part in it; the Son of Mary was holy and undefiled. He was the Son of God. "It is not here the doctrine of the eternal relationship of Son with the Father. The Gospel of John, the Epistle to the Hebrews and that to the Colossians, establish this precious truth and demonstrate its importance, but here it is that which is born by virtue of the miraculous conception, which on that ground is called the Son of God" (J.N.D.). And if unbelief says it is contrary to every law of nature and impossible, faith answers in the words of Gabriel, who knew God's power so well, "with God nothing shall be impossible."

THE NECESSITY FOR THE VIRGIN BIRTH.

The fact that men need a Saviour, a Deliverer, is evident everywhere, and has been all through their history since the fall. And the first promise that one should appear followed swiftly upon Satan's triumph over man in Eden, and it came forth from the mouth of God. "The Seed of the woman," said He to the victorious serpent, "shall bruise thy head and thou shalt bruise His heel." If Adam had been able to recover himself and bruise his tempter and conqueror beneath his feet, God would have stood aside and let him do it, but there could be no hope from him or from any that he could beget. If he had fallen a prey to Satan's subtlety when he stood erect in the plenitude of his powers, how could he by any means recover what he had lost now that he was defeated and fettered and lying under the sentence of death by God's just decree? and all his progeny were powerless like himself.
"By one man sin entered into the world and death by sin, and death passed upon all men for that all have sinned" (Romans 5. 12). The hope was not in Adam but in the woman's Seed. It was He, whoever He might be, who was to destroy the great destroyer of our fallen race, and deliver us from his power. The New Testament tells us plainly who He is. "For this purpose," says 1 John 3. 8, "was THE SON OF GOD manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil." And Hebrews 2. 15 tells us that THE SON—in whom God has spoken in these last days—because "the children were partakers of flesh and blood, also Himself likewise took part of the same; that through death, He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage." It is plain from these Scriptures that the Seed of the woman is the Son of God, and we are told that "all the promises of God in Him are yea and in Him Amen."

The first promise prepares us for the Virgin birth and we are not surprised to read, "Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call His name Emmanuel." And if unbelief declares that to be impossible, faith answers, Yes, with men it is impossible; and that is the great and solemn fact that this God-given sign throws into prominence, it is the very lesson that God would teach by the manner of His intervention. Men are unable to save themselves and unable to find amongst even the best of Adam's fallen children one man who can redeem his brother, or give the just ransom for him. Every man needs a Saviour for himself, and because of that, God has stepped in and has provided the Man—the Kinsman-Redeemer, but He has done it in a way that humbles the pride of man and sets him aside. "A virgin shall conceive and bear a son." The Virgin's Son would owe nothing to man; His very presence in the world would be independent of man. His coming into the world would be God's work. It would be God's intervention in miraculous power and sovereign mercy—the salvation of the Lord. So we read that in due time, Mary brought forth her firstborn Son and "wrapped Him in swaddling clothes and laid Him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn." Thus came Emmanuel, apart from all the power of men and outside the abodes of men, for not only could not men produce the Deliverer, but they did not want Him when He came.

DOES IT MATTER?

Like produces like. This is one of the fundamental laws of nature as established by God. It is stamped upon the Creation chapter—fish, fowl, and flesh were all ordained to bring forth each "after his kind." And man could do no other than this. "Adam," we read, "begat a son in his own likeness, after his own image" (Gen. 5. 3). And so it has been throughout all the generations of men. Sinful men beget sinful children. Therefore it is written, "They go astray as soon as they are born, speaking lies" (Ps. 58. 3), and "all we like sheep have gone astray" (Isaiah 53. 6), and "All have sinned and come short of the glory of God" (Romans 3. 23). In the great penitential Psalm, David confesses, "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me," which simply means,
I have come of a sinful stock, my very nature is sinful,' and this is true of every man born into the world. Does it matter then or does it not, how the Lord was born into this world? Had He come by natural generation, would He not have been as every other man? To deny the Virgin birth is to deny His pre-existence in the Godhead, and to deny the holiness of His Manhood, and apart from these two great truths as to His glorious Person, He could not have been the Saviour.

It is said that nothing is based upon this great truth in the New Testament. But everything is based upon it; it is the foundation of everything that follows. I stress the fact that it meets us on the first page of the New Testament, that it is the door through which we enter into the full revelation of God. Apart from it, we have no intervention of God for His own glory and our salvation; Jesus is not the great I AM, but a mere man like the rest of men, and we have no sinless Saviour. How, apart from the miraculous conception and the Virgin birth, could the Lord have said, .. I know whence I came . . . I proceeded forth and came from God. . . . Verily, verily I say unto you, before Abraham was, I am" (John 8); or how could Peter have applied to Him the words of the Psalm, "Thou wilt not suffer Thine Holy One to see corruption" (Acts 2. 27); or the Apostles have spoken of Him as God's Holy Child, Jesus (ch. 4. 30). Or how could Paul have spoken of Him as "Christ who is over all, God blessed for ever" (Romans 9. 5), or as "the Second Man, the Lord out of heaven" (1 Cor. 15. 47); or how could John have insisted with such persistence on the fact that Jesus is the Son of God, and is now the great object of faith, the true God and Eternal Life?

For ourselves, we linger with the shepherds as they gather round the Babe in the manger; we press into the house with the Magi from the East and worship the young Child with them. We own Him to be truly Man—sinless and holy; but more, for we confess Him, as did Thomas, when He saw His wounded hands and side after He had risen from the dead, OUR LORD AND OUR GOD. And we say as we consider the manner of God's intervention for His glory and our eternal blessing, "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and the knowledge of God! how unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been His counsellor? or who hath first given to Him, and it shall be recompensed to Him again? For of Him, and through Him, and to Him are all things; to whom be glory for ever. Amen.

In our next issue, "The Sinlessness of the Lord Jesus" will be our subject, God willing.

What place is there for great assertions of self in a man who sincerely believes that he has been saved by the death of the Incarnate Son of God? Who has the heart to vaunt his own opinions, or to parade his accomplishments, or to take a secret pleasure in income or station or intellectual power, when he reflects upon the astonishing grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who, though He was rich for our sakes became poor?
"NOT IN VAIN."

A word of encouragement to Christian Workers.

"Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord" (1 Cor. 15. 58).

"I HAVE laboured in vain, I have spent my strength for nought, and in vain." How often does the Christian worker, as he looks at the seeming futility of his labours, echo the sentiment of these words of Jehovah's Servant. Yet it is well for us to remember Jehovah's answer. "It is a light thing that thou shouldest be My servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel. I will also give Thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be My salvation unto the end of the earth." Dying at thirty and three, despised and rejected, buffeted, crowned with thorns, crucified, forsaken even by the feeble band of disciples He had gathered, could any life appear more hopelessly futile than that of our Lord Jesus Christ? Cut off, and having nothing. But was it in vain? No, indeed, for as Napoleon is reputed to have said, "Jesus Christ alone founded His empire upon love; and at this hour millions will die for Him."

To realize the apparent futility of our service will be a wholesome experience, if it drives us to God as the source of strength, but in this mood we are exposed to serious dangers.

There are some who yield to impatience and discouragement and give up because they fail to see immediate fruit. Having tried once or twice to teach a Sunday School class, they play the coward with the excuse that they are not suited for such work. Others recognising their failure, continue in the work as a matter of routine, indifferent, lukewarm, unexercised, with the ready excuse, "We mustn't expect results." There is a third danger to which many have fallen victims, while they say, "You cannot expect to gain and to hold young people, if you stick rigidly to the Bible and the simple gospel. You must provide other attractions for them." And so we have a multiplication of organisations in connection with the professing Church, with an ever increasing tendency to worldly methods and an almost complete exclusion of the gospel. But it is all in vain, for "except the Lord build the house they labour in vain that build it: except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain."

"But we simply must get results," say some, and they secure them by forcing conversions, and thereby often wreck their own labour. Building, watching, all require patience, but how much more so does farming, and we take heart from the words, "they that sow in tears shall reap in joy. He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall without a doubt come again with rejoicing, bringing the sheaves with him." A passer-by remonstrating with a farmer for toiling in his muddy field on a miserably wet day received the answer, "Sow beans in the mud, And they'll grow up like a wood."

Is this not the secret of our failure? Have the seed and the soil been
sufficiently moistened by our tears? Do we know anything of agonising for souls? Exercise of soul is necessary, but let us guard against the God-dishonouring over-anxiety that sometimes mars our service. “It is vain for you to rise up early, to sit up late, to eat the bread of sorrows, for so He giveth His beloved in sleep.” The farmer having ploughed and sown retires to rest, and the God of Creation sends the rain and sunshine which will bring his work to fruition. So the Christian worker, having ploughed and sown and watered, must not dishonour God and weaken his own service by hours of sleepless anxiety, doubting if God is able to carry on His own work in the souls of men.

What is the incentive to labour, when one feels humbled, depressed and ready to give up? First the peremptory command of our great Captain, “Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel.” All the world is not merely in Africa or India, but includes our next door neighbour. Some one asked the Duke of Wellington if it was worth while preaching the gospel in India, and the old soldier answered, “Look to your marching orders.” A soldier must never question the worthwhileness of his orders, his duty is obedience. Ezekiel was warned that the people to whom he was sent were impudent and hard-hearted, but his orders were to speak, “whether they will hear or whether they will forbear.” If the children you try to reach prove to be impudent, brazen-faced and ungrateful, it is still your duty to seek to win them for Christ.

Then if there is the peremptory “Go,” there is also the pleading “Come.” “Come over into Macedonia and help us.” Have you heard the cry of the children in our pagan mansions and slums? Are you living lazy, idle, selfish existences, while all around is a crying need? And if you “go” and “come,” you will not go or come alone for His Presence will be with you, for He said, “Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.” The One who made this promise was the risen Lord who said, “All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth.” It was on the glorious fact of the Resurrection victory of our Lord Jesus Christ that Paul based his heartening exhortation, “Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.”

This power is always available for us, for our power house is prayer.

The power is prayer, which soars on high
Through Jesus to the throne,
And moves the Hand which moves the world
To bring deliverance down.

Nor are we always left without present proof that our work is not in vain. Like the downcast prophet under the juniper tree, we receive our cake and cruise of water in the strength of which we can go on for another forty days, or it may be years. Said a dying soldier, “Tell my mother I die a Christian, and tell my Sunday School teacher I have never forgotten her teaching.” This message reached a disheartened woman about to give up her seemingly useless labour, and renewed her zeal and desire to labour on, spend and be spent. And the prize is sure, for “God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love,” nor will Paul be the only one
to whom the righteous Judge will give the crown of righteousness or award the praise, “Well done, good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.” The women who laboured in the gospel, and the countless other fellow labourers whose names, unknown to fame, are nevertheless in the book of life, will also share that joy.

“Go labour on: your hands are weak, Your knees are faint, your soul cast down; Yet falter not; the prize you seek Is near—a kingdom and a crown.”

With thoughts of Christ and things divine For ever fill this heart of mine.

“Behold, as the eyes of the servants look unto the hands of their masters . . . so our eyes wait upon the Lord our God” (Psa. 123. 2).

It is said of George Herbert, that sweet singer of the Lord’s praises, that, to maintain in his soul the sense of his independence of all others, and to quicken his diligence in the Lord’s service, he used in his ordinary speech, when he made mention of the blessed name of Jesus, to add, “My Master.” Happy is the man who lives in this most blessed bondage, and bears this gracious yoke! Here is preservation from evil; here is communion with the Lord; here is true submission, and here the fulness of supplies from the Master whose authority over us we own with joy.

Half hearted! Master, shall any who know Thee Grudge Thee their lives, who hast laid down Thine own? Nay: we would offer the hearts that we owe Thee—Live for Thy love and Thy glory alone.

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

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

It is said that there is a great deal in the Scripture which is of so natural, and, indeed, of so trivial a character as to make the idea of inspiration unnecessary, and even absurd. Did Paul require a special revelation, we are asked, to tell Timothy that Erastus had stayed at Corinth, and that he (Paul) had left Trophimus sick at Miletum (2 Tim. 4. 20)?

Now what is the suggestion beneath these questions? Is it that such things are too trivial for God to concern Himself with? Faith knows that it belongs to the very miracle of Divine love that God scorns nothing that concerns us. Jesus leads us still farther than that when He tells us that the very hairs of our head are numbered. The minute in nature reveals God’s glory as well as the stupendous; and the Divine Providence is as present in the trivial affairs of daily life as in its gravest crises. Inspiration cannot, therefore, be excluded on the ground that these things were beneath the notice of Him who careth for us. If the cloak was a concern to Paul, or the movements of Erastus and the state of Trophimus of interest to Timothy, there was nothing degrading in God’s directing Paul to make mention of them. We can do God’s will in such work as that, and why should Paul be excluded from it?

But the real force of the objection probably lies in the supposition that for the mentioning of such personal matters inspiration was not necessary. Has the reader ever reflected on the silence of the writers of Scripture in regard to their own affairs? The message is delivered, the work is done; but the personality of the writers is hidden. When that method is for a time abandoned, we may be sure that there is some good reason for the change, and that the speech as well as the silence, is due to the Spirit of God. It was well for all after workers in God’s kingdom to know the great apostle was poor enough to be mindful of an old cloak; that, worker of miracles though he was, sickness laid fellow-labourers aside; and that, while himself incessantly toiling in his worldwide work, he had to leave behind him one fellow-worker after another. These revelations had their effect on Timothy; and they have their lessons of patience, perseverance and faith for us all. There are times in the experience of all God’s servants when they have reason to thank God for the mention of that cloak left at Troas.

What are we?

"Ye are the light of the world." Light guides and gladdens (Matt. 5. 14).
"Ye are the salt of the earth." Salt preserves and purifies (Matt. 5. 13).
"As a dew from the Lord." Dew freshens and fertilises (Micah 5. 7).

People think that they will get rid of their besetment by fighting it, they never will. Be occupied with Christ and you will be surprised how attenuated your besetment will become.
THE SIGN, IN THE DEPTH AND IN THE HEIGHT.

Isaiah 7.

Who is it to whom the Old Testament from Genesis to Malachi so constantly points, raising in our hearts the very highest expectations, as it speaks of “the Woman’s Seed,” “Abraham’s Seed,” and “David’s Seed”? Who is this through whom all the world is to be blessed? What is His name? Has He come? Is He living?

The first chapter of the New Testament answers these questions. There we are introduced to the only One who could be truly called “the woman’s Seed”—the promised Son of the Virgin (vers. 21-3). The first verse of the New Testament shews Him to us—“JESUS CHRIST, the Son of David, the Son of Abraham.”

The glorious Fulfiller of the promises has come! The “Yea” and “Amen” of them all! Yes, He lives! for though He was slain, He could not be holden of death, He rose from the dead and is alive for evermore!

“The woman’s Seed,” but—meditate on the divine wonder here—He is also “Emmanuel”—“God with us.” He is “Abraham’s Seed,” but, stupendous fact! He could also say, “Before Abraham was I AM” (John 8. 38). He is “David’s Seed,” but He is also “David’s Lord” (Matt. 22. 41-46). Yea, “Jesus Christ of the seed of David raised from among the dead,” saith, “I am the ROOT,” before David, as well as “the Offspring” after David. He is THE FIRST, as well as THE LAST.

We will join Isaiah “at the end of the conduit of the upper pool in the highway of the Fuller’s field” (chap. 7. 3). Ahaz the king of Judah comes there also, and is told to ask “A SIGN” of the Lord, and what is most striking is that He is requested to ask it “either IN THE DEPTH, or IN THE HEIGHT above” (ver. 11). The monarch, however, for some ulterior reason, will not do so. Close dealings with God were not congenial to him. Consequently, a marvellous disclosure is made in verse 14. Ahaz, of “the house of David,” would not ask for the sign “either in the depth, or in the height.” God therefore says, as it were, I will give the sign Myself without your asking! I will give it both in the depth and in the height; and, as we see from other Scriptures, in that very “house of David.” Mark then, the wonderful words: “Therefore the Lord Himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call His name IMMANUEL.”

What a vast store of divine wealth is laid open to us here. The Virgin’s Son becomes THE SIGN, given of God in “the depth” and in “the height” also. Who but the blessed God, who is infinite in wisdom, could have thought of or given such a sign? Behold in “the depth” of human weakness that wondrous Babe nursed on the Virgin’s lap; but even there His name tells us of “the height” of His glory—“IMMANUEL,” “GOD with us.” He is truly the Sign in “the depth” and “the height.” The Sign in the depth and height is that which the Holy Spirit of God introduces at the very opening of the New Testament. Here in “the house of David” appears the promised Sign!
What a commotion immediately takes place! In the seen and unseen; among the learned and the unlearned; among the great and the small; among the wicked and the pious! Why?

"Unto us a Child is born!"

The Sign in the depth behold!
The break of the glorious morn
By prophets long foretold.
See the virgin mother fair
In yon stable, lowly, meek;
And in the manger cradled there
The Babe whom the shepherds seek.

THE SIGN IN THE DEPTH BEHOLD!

Creation moves at the sight!
Angels cry "Glory to God!"
The star in the heavens shines bright,
To guide wise men on the road;
The faithful behold and sing;
The pious worship the Lord;
They talk of the new-born King,
Come forth to fulfil God's word.

THE SIGN OF ETERNAL LOVE!

Could the New Testament have an opening more striking and glorious? The wisdom which knows not God may see no glory here, but such wisdom is the folly which led the princes of this age to crucify the Lord of Glory.

The angel of the Lord said, "Behold, I bring you 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. And this shall be a SIGN unto you; Ye shall find the Babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger" (Luke 2. 10-12).

Again, Simeon, a just and devout man, came by the Spirit into the temple and said to Mary, the virgin mother, "Behold this Child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel; and for a SIGN which shall be spoken against . . . that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed" (Luke 2. 24-35). Surely this Sign in "the depth" of sorrow and woe, and yet in "the height" of the glory of "THE CHRIST THE LORD," is worthy of God who is "the ALL WISE." "It is the glory of God to conceal a thing; but the glory of kings is to search out a thing. The heaven for height, and the earth for depth, and the heart of kings is unsearchable" (Prov. 25. 2, 3). Search the Scriptures! "These are they which testify of ME," said the Son of God! Finding Him we shall fill our treasures with the finest gold and enrich our store with all manner of precious things.

The Dew from the Lord.

The dew, formed in the silence of the darkness while men sleep, falling as willingly on a bit of dead wood as anywhere, hanging its pearls on every poor spike of grass, and dressing everything on which it lies with strange beauty, each separate globule tiny and evanescent, but each flashing back the light, and each a perfect sphere, feeble one by one, but united, mighty to make the pastures of the wilderness rejoice—so, created in silence by an unseen influence, weak when taken singly, but strong in their myriads, glad to occupy the lowliest place, and each ‘bright with something of celestial light’—the children of God are to be in the midst of many people as a dew from the Lord.
THE COMING AGAIN OF CHRIST AND THE CHRISTIAN LIFE.

The truth of the return of the Lord Jesus is interwoven with the history of the Christian in its very beginning, and we shall seek to show how it is connected with the believer's course all through his pathway upon earth. In order to simplify the consideration of the subject we shall limit ourselves almost entirely to the epistles to the Thessalonians.

With this in view let us remember that the subject of the Lord's return is one which has a most prominent place in the New Testament. It has been pointed out that there are 27 writings in the New Testament. In 5 of these the Lord's Supper is spoken of. In 7 of them Christian Baptism is referred to. In 23 the Lord's coming again is presented from various standpoints. Its importance is thus manifest.

It is generally believed that the epistles to the Thessalonians were among the first of Paul's writings. And they were written to some who had been converted during a short visit of the apostle to their city. They were young believers who had had but little ministry of the word.

Is it not remarkable therefore that the truth of the Saviour's coming again occupies so large a place in these brief letters. We shall see that every chapter in both epistles mentions this truth.

In the first chapter of the first epistle we find the CHRISTIAN'S CONVERSION connected with the truth before us. The apostle shows that the Thessalonians were good converts. They were right with the Lord. "Ye became followers of . . . the Lord" (v. 6).

They were right with their fellow Christians. They were examples to all that believe" (v. 7).

They were right with the world. "From you sounded out the word of the Lord" (v. 8).

Thus we learn that
1. They were following in the steps of their rejected Lord.
2. They were models which other believers might copy.
3. They were bells, cast in God's foundry of grace, sounding out the gospel by life and by lip to the world at large.

The tidings of their conversion had spread far and wide in the two large provinces, Macedonia and Achaia, and they were borne witness to, in both these districts. The facts told concerning them, being,
1. They had turned to God from idols.
2. They served the living and true God.
3. They awaited the Son of God from heaven (vs. 9, 10).

As to the past. They had turned to God.
As to the present. They served God.
As to the future. They waited for the Son of God.

It is evident that their earliest knowledge of the Lord Jesus, our Deliverer from the approaching wrath, was linked up with His personal coming again. He was their expectation. He was their "hope"
The coming again of Christ

(see 1 Timothy 1. 1). The prospect of His return was brought before their mind when they received the gospel message.

"Turning," "serving," "waiting.... This should be true of every believer of the glad good news today. With the question of our sins and sinfulness all settled through the work of the Lord Jesus at Calvary, we are free to serve the Lord with gladness, and thus fill our little day for His glory and the blessing of others. And the future is bright with the knowledge that He is coming again and that "quickly" as He says three times over in Revelation 22, verses 7, 12, 20. Blessed change—their conversion! Blessed occupation—their service! Blessed expectation—Christ Himself!

The second chapter speaks of the

CHRISTIAN'S REWARD

at the coming again of the Saviour.

"What is our hope or joy or crown of rejoicing?" asks the apostle. "Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming?" (v. 19).

In some way or other the apostle will be seen in that day to be associated with these believers who were the fruit of his labours. They were brought into the light through his ministry, and his portion will be to have them recognized as his children in the faith when rewards are given. They will be his crown then—his joy and rejoicing.

Shall we ask ourselves whether any such reward awaits us at the return of our Lord and Master? Are we seeking His glory in endeavouring to win souls for Himself? Have we had the joy of leading some into the knowledge of the Saviour? Has it been our privilege to carry the tidings of God's so great salvation to one who was in darkness and distress? It is a luxury we all may covet. Let us lay out ourselves for the gaining of witnesses for our rejected Lord.

It is good to single out individuals of our acquaintance and to bring them before the Lord in prayer—definitely and persistently and then to bring the Lord and His glorious atoning work before them. We can do this in a loving way, speaking face to face—or by letter—or by posting leaflets, pamphlets and books. But the first way is the best way. It may cost more to do it, but if kindness and longing for their welfare is evidenced by personal dealing it will be far more effective. Even if resented at the time the result may be expected later. Naaman at first went away in a rage. But he came back lowly and humbled and was blessed. (The little girl who waited on Naaman's wife will have some reward for her simple service.)

If we use what we have of power and opportunity we shall be "received into everlasting habitations" by those who have benefited through our service. An old sacred song asks, "Will anyone there at the beautiful gate be watching and waiting for me?" Will there be someone who will be glad to welcome us as we cross the threshold of the Father's house? Let us endeavour at least to secure one who shall serve the Lord here and swell the chorus of praise to Him on high eternally.

The story is told of a young man who was converted on a bed of sickness and who was brought thus to enjoy peace with God. He mourned that he could not live for Him who died for him, saying, "Must I go and empty handed?"
CHRISTIAN LOVE AND HOLINESS

are seen associated in the thought of our Lord’s coming in chapter 3 verse 13. “The Lord make you to increase and abound in love one toward another, and toward all men, even as we do toward you: to the end He may stablish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all His saints.”

The Christian is called to walk in love as Christ has loved him. “To increase and abound in love.” The increase is within our hearts, the abounding, the manifestation, of that which has been wrought within. As he abides in Christ, as he keeps himself in the love of God, so will this increasing and abounding be brought to pass. Love is of God. It is a holy love. It is an abounding love. It is toward all. And God has revealed Himself in love toward us for our present and eternal blessing and so that, having now the divine nature, we should express that love ourselves.

“Love one toward another and toward all.” We ought to love one another. We have been loved and we are under obligation to love one another. He loves all “His own,” and all “His own” should love all “His own.” He makes no exceptions and we should make no exceptions either. Then overflowing in love our hearts go out in love and longing for the blessing of all men. They become worldwide like the love of God in John 3. 16.

So walking in holy love our hearts will be established in holiness, a holiness which will be well pleasing to God and meet with His approbation “at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all His saints.”

And let us remark here that “all His saints” are with Him when He comes. All “the dead in Christ” will have been raised, and all the living in Christ—all those that are Christ’s at His coming will together have been caught up to meet Him, as the next chapter will bring before us.

CHRISTIAN COMFORT

is in view especially in chapter 4.

Some of the number of these Christians had fallen asleep; they had died—possibly as martyrs. Their brethren seem to have feared that these would lose the joys of the kingdom and glory of Christ, though they had shared in the kingdom and patience of the Lord. To comfort them a special revelation was given. The dead in Christ far from being overlooked would have the first thought and care of the Lord Jesus at His coming.

We read that He is coming for His own—for all of them alike.

“The Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God.”

WHAT THEN? The dead in Christ shall rise first. The power of the Saviour will be put forth on their behalf at the very beginning.

“THEN we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words” (vv. 15-18):

The sorrowing ones were to be looking for the coming back of the Lord Jesus and for their lost and loved ones being with them, when all may be caught up to be for ever...
with the Lord. His coming was to be before them when their hearts were distressed by bereavement.

In chapter 5 we may see CHRISTIAN PRESERVATION connected with this same truth.

"And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ" (v. 23).

The walk of the believers was to be in the light of the near return of their Lord and Master. If this truth grips us, our whole course will be affected. Every action and every word will be brought into consistency with our calling, as we remember that He is near and that He will soon be manifested in glory and we with Him. So the apostle longs after them that their "whole spirit and soul and body may be preserved blameless." That they may fully accord with the mind of the Lord now, being sanctified wholly by the God of peace Himself.

The coming of the Lord is seen thus to be an event which may take place speedily. It is that which will produce its effect upon our whole walk and ways and separate us in spirit and conduct from the age in which our lot is cast.

CHRISTIAN REST is before us in the first chapter of the second epistle. The coming again of the Lord Jesus is still in view. Not now His coming for His loved ones to receive them unto Himself that where He is there we may be also. This as we have seen is detailed in chapter 4. Here it is His manifestation in glory when He is revealed from heaven to put down all authority and power.

He will appear then with His mighty angels, in flaming fire to punish those "who know not God and who obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ" (v. 8).

In the midst of the overwhelming judgment being poured out upon the ungodly the believer will be in complete calm of spirit. For him the judgment is past. He is already with and like Him who comes to judge. No fear fills him. He can but say Amen! as the righteous wrath of the Lamb is expressed. The Judge of all the earth will do right then as always.

The Christian's perfect peace of conscience through the finished work of the Lord Jesus is clearly shown by this fact of his being in "rest" at such a season. It is seen in a similar way when the twenty-four elders are viewed as sitting on thrones while "lightnings and thunders and voices" proceed forth from the throne of God (Rev. 4. 4, 5).

CHRISTIAN STEADFASTNESS is called for in awaiting the Lord. The Thessalonians had received a false report or a forged letter, it would appear, professing to be from the apostle. This had stated that the day of the Lord was already present. "He therefore exhorts them not to be troubled or distressed, as "that day" of His manifestation would not come until the apostacy had taken place and the man of sin had been revealed. The wicked one would be manifested in due time and be destroyed by the word of the Lord's mouth. Meanwhile he beseeches them "by the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, and by our
gathering together unto Him,” to be firm and unfaltering. As we have seen He will take to Himself all His own whether they are sleeping through Him or serving God for Him. Not one will be forgotten, all will be “gathered together unto Him.”

Outwardly the church has failed in its responsibility and has been broken into a thousand pieces. The sheep have been scattered but the great gathering day is at hand. Then all will surround Him at His shout and be with Him for ever, shining in His likeness and for His glory.

He is coming—surely—quickly coming. We have to hold fast “until He come,” and to stand firm and fearlessly. He will not fail His own and before the day of the Lord with its terrors and troubles sets in He will call them to be with Himself. Enoch was taken away before the flood came and Christ’s loved ones shall be kept out of the great tribulation which shall come upon all the world to try them that dwell upon the earth (Rev. 3).

May it be ours to be like Enoch—to walk with God—to please God and to have the testimony that we please Him before we are caught away, translated to be “for ever with the Lord.”

CHRISTIAN PATIENCE is needed while we wait.

“The Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and into the patient waiting for (or into the patience of) Christ” (3. 5).

Christ waits in patience while the church is being gathered out. He waits until His Father’s direction to rise up and come for His loved ones and then to come with them to take to Him His kingdom and reign in glory.

He waits in patience there at the right hand of God and we are called to wait in patience here. “The love of God and the patience of Christ,” go together. While we await Christ’s return the love of God will be the refuge of our hearts in times of storm and stress and strain, He would have us find our home in all its warmth and blessedness.

And all His gracious purposes will be carried out in due course. We are anxious for a speedy fulfilment. But our God is unhurried. He knows the end from the beginning. To an ant our steps must be slow indeed, their little feet move hundreds of times faster than ours. They are so small in comparison with ourselves.

How little are we in the presence of our God. We are creatures of such brief life and we are in danger of impatience. Thus “ye have need of patience” sounds in our ears. It is but “a little while”—a little while and He who comes will come and will not delay (Heb. 10. 36, 37).

We hear His voice saying, “Surely I come quickly,” and our hearts respond “Even so, come, Lord Jesus” (Rev. 22. 20).

While we wait His return may we become increasingly conformed to His will and answer more and more to His gracious mind for us.

Thus we see how intimately the truth of our Lord’s return is bound up with our lives as believers. Our conversion, our reward, our love and holiness, our comfort, our preservation, our rest, our steadfastness, our patience, all are affected by “that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and Saviour Jesus Christ” (Titus 2. 13, 14).
Much disputation has occurred on this theme from time to time. We need to be preserved from allowing the spirit of controversy to dominate our minds. It is easy in the process of correct analysis to lose the sense of the preciousness of the subject. Every fresh distinction coming before our minds should tend to fresh exercise. With that admonition we are free to examine the subject matter.

Scripture would lead us to conclude that the sufferings of Christ were of threefold character, viz.:— (1) vicarious, (2) martyrial, (3) constitutional. In examining these categories in a little detail, the following thoughts amongst others pass before us.

(1) The vicarious or atoning sufferings of Christ were those which He suffered at the hand of God on account of sin, and these were exclusively confined to the brief period which the Lord repeatedly referred to as “His hour,” unique in the history of all the ages!

O solemn hour! O hour alone!
In solitary night.
Centre of two eternities
Which gaze with rapt adoring eyes
Onward and back to Thee!

As soon as sin entered by the disobedient act of our first parents in Eden, God’s solution was predicted in His prophetic word to the serpent, relative to the woman’s Seed, “He shall bruise thy head and thou shalt bruise His heel” (Gen. 3. 15). So throughout the Old Testament, there were abundant evidences of the coming of Christ to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. Moreover, the sacrificial system made the elements of God’s requirements clear. The lamb was to be without blemish, typifying that the victim must be sinless. Again a period of testing the virtue of the victim, was observed in keeping the lamb four days. So an adequate period of testimony was afforded in the case of Christ’s public ministry of three and a half years, which fully showed His perfect conduct in every test. Then the thought of substitution comes in. Christ stood in the sinner’s place, the Just for the unjust. The perfect One was made sin for us that we might become God’s righteousness in Him (2 Cor. 5. 21).

Propitiation is the aspect of atonement with relation to God. Every attribute of God was completely vindicated in the death of Christ. So that God’s character of being just is shown to be quite consistent with His justification of the believer in Jesus (Rom. 3. 26). Reconciliation is the aspect of atonement with relation to us and to creation (Col. 1. 20-22).

Man’s sin necessarily brought him under the curse as inflicted by God in His inflexible righteousness and holiness. Thus the Sinner-bearer on the cross was under the curse which entailed His being forsaken by God. He had been in the infinite favour of and communion with His God and Father up to that hour. The suffering was thus not only indescribable but inconceivable by the human mind and hence it is useless multiplying words on the subject.
A final quality not demonstrated by the Old Testament typology lay in the fact that the Sin-bearer must be able to exhaust the judgment of God on sin. All the antecedent sacrifices had remained in death. Thus only One who was infinite could satisfy God's righteous claims and besides glorify God as to every aspect of sin. He only could have exclaimed as He died on Calvary's tree, *Tetelestai*, lit. "finished." That was not merely relative to His life here, but that the work of redemption was absolutely completed.

(2) The martyr sufferings of Christ were those which He suffered at the hand of man on account of righteousness. He loved righteousness and hated lawlessness (Psa. 45. 7). But sin is essentially lawlessness (1 John 3. 4). Again He said, "I am come as a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on Me should not abide in darkness" (John 12. 46). "Everyone that doeth evil hateth the light" (John 3. 20). Darkness, evil and lawlessness are elements or qualities of the world. Thus the world knew Him not and did not receive Him. Indeed He was speedily rejected as the proofs of His origin and characteristics became evident to the religious leaders. So that the prophetic word, enounced over 700 years previous to the occurrence, was literally fulfilled. "He was despised and rejected of men" (Isa. 53. 3).

The Psalms were primarily the expressions of exercises through which their writers were passing at the time. Although most of them are so written as to express also the experience of the Israel of God as a remnant under governmental dealing on earth, but there are expressions therein which could only be true of Christ. From these we learn that He was hated without a cause. Reproach had broken His heart. Man requited His love with hatred and so on. When we turn to the record of His pathway in the Gospels we see repeated evidences of the world's hate and persecution. But until the incident of His betrayal, He was not subjected to any physical abuse because "His hour" was not yet come. Indeed, when at that juncture He proclaimed Himself "I am," they went backward and fell to the ground. The hour was also that of man and the power of darkness. So strong bulls of Bashan beset Him round; the assembly of the wicked enclosed Him (Psa. 22. 12, 16). They had repeatedly endeavoured to kill Him, but when every restraint was removed, the inveterate hatred of man's heart was evinced in scourging and other indignities, when with wicked hands they crucified Him.

This aspect of the sufferings of Christ has nothing whatever to do with atonement. However, that statement cuts directly across much of the current theology which would seek to shake up the sufferings of Christ into an indistinguishable mass. So that justification may be found for the wholly unscriptural contention that man may have fellowship with Christ in the spirit of sacrifice, and so that he may contribute to his own salvation. The doctrine is not new theology, but was really initiated by Cain 6,000 years ago. The way of Cain is a broad road that ends in everlasting woe!

But notwithstanding the foregoing paragraph, there is a real fellowship of the sufferings of Christ. But it appertains entirely to His non-aton- ing sufferings. The Christian has
the privilege of suffering for Christ and for the cause of righteousness, i.e., for well-doing according to Scriptural definition. Those who will live godly or according to the will of God shall suffer persecution (2 Tim. 3. 12). Therefore, there need be no wonder expressed if the Christian finds that he is hated of the world (1 John 3. 13). That will be his portion according to his faithfulness in bearing testimony to the truth of God. But in doing so the Christian has rich compensation in the corresponding privilege of sharing in the personal peace and joy of Christ (John 14. 27 and 15. 11). "If ye suffer for righteousness' sake, happy are ye" (1 Peter 3. 14).

(3) The constitutional sufferings of Christ were those He suffered because of what He was in a world which had no element in common with Him. The first and second characters of suffering were directly inflicted on Him by the hand of (a) God or (b) man. But the third character of sufferings had no relation to either agency, but to the fact that His whole nature revolted at sin. He loved righteousness and hated or abhorred lawlessness or sin. He knew no sin!

Throughout the Old Testament, there are abundant evidences of the deep sorrow that God felt as He contemplated the awful havoc that man had wrought in His fair creation. He was grieved at the heart as He saw man's great wickedness on the earth in the time of Noah. So much so that He repented that He had made man (Gen. 6. 5, 6). The earth which had come from God's creational hand had been pronounced very good. In the interval of a few generations, it had become full of corruption and violence, while man's imaginations or inmost thoughts were evil continuously. Only one bright spot in Noah was preserved for God.

Similar grief must have been God's portion when in much shorter space of time on the earth cleansed by "the flood," Noah's immediate descendants erected the Tower of Babel in defiance of the will of God. Later the sin of Sodom and Gomorrah was very grievous to Him. The subsequent investigation test brought out its nature so markedly that His summary judgment could not be delayed. In the wilderness, God was continuously grieved by His people (Ps. 78. 40). In the land, their idolatry and self-will brought them repeatedly to such a state, that His soul was grieved for the misery of Israel (Judges 10. 16). The Psalms are expressive of similar thought. The prophets, too, afford evidence in support of the statement, e.g., "In all their affliction He was afflicted" (Isa. 63. 9). Christ as God must necessarily have entered into all that these Scriptural references convey.

But we are not left to found conclusions on the statements of the Old Testament. When we turn to the record in the Gospels, we see the exquisite harmony of the feelings of Christ with those of God. In the synagogue, He was grieved at the hardness of their hearts. He was displeased when the disciples rebuked those who brought the children for blessing. He sighed deeply in His spirit when the Pharisees sought a sign of heaven's approval of His work. He sighed deeply in opening the ears and loosing the tongue of the afflicted man (Mark 7. 34).

Christ was perfect in love and sympathy in the midst of the dis-
tress and need of man. As He saw the grief of Mary and her friends, He groaned in spirit and was troubled. On the way to the sepulchre Jesus wept. As He reached the grave, Jesus groaned in Himself (John 11. 33.38). "He took our infirmities and bare our sicknesses" (Matt. 8. 17). He sorrowed to an inconceivable degree, even over those who rejected Him. He wept over Jerusalem (Luke 19. 41-44). He was the Man of Sorrows indeed and acquainted with grief as no one else could be, owing to His constitution as the Light and darkness being the constitution of the world.

This third character of suffering like the second had nothing to do with atonement. God's grief at man's sin in the Old Testament did not provide a remedy for man's state. So the grief of His Sent One while on earth did not solve the sin problem. God's inexorable justice demanded the death of the victim.

In Gethsemane, the first and third characters of Christ's suffering would seem to make contact. The devil tried Him in the wilderness at the outset of His ministry. He had departed from Him for a season, but in the hour of the power of darkness Satan pressed "the power of death" on the heavy spirit of Christ. So that He had to say, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death." His agony was such that His sweat was as great drops of blood falling down to the ground. That suffering was antecedent to the cup of infinite sorrow which God was about to give Him to drink upon the cross.

Not only was Jesus heavenly in His nature, but, as Son of Man, He lived in heaven—as He said, "the Son of Man which is in heaven." The whole spirit of His mind, the tone of all His feelings and thoughts, was heavenly. So if there is any motive in my heart which I could not have if I were in heaven, I am not like Christ.

All the grace that was in Him was brought out to meet man's sorrow and misery, and to bear on every earthly circumstance. In this we often find our failure. Even when the motive is right, the manner is wanting in graciousness. But it was never so with Christ. He was always seeking to promote the glory of God; but never did He in manner, on any occasion, depart from the spirit of grace.

The Lord Jesus, amidst all His zeal, never failed in love. Strictly speaking, there is no motive in love, though there may be joy in its exercise; and this is our triumph. If I look for a motive, it is not love. Therefore love enables a man to meet all trials. Should one spit in his face, this makes no difference, for love abides; because it never draws its strength from circumstances, but rides above all circumstances. Nothing can be presented to a saint which can separate him from the love of God. The love which He enjoys triumphs over all circumstances. If we do not shew this heavenly-mindedness of the love which is of God, doing nothing from any motive but obedience, we are not a true epistle of Christ.
THE LAMB OF GOD.

Report of a short gospel address by a beloved preacher now with the Lord.

"AND the blood shall be to you for a token upon the house where ye are, and when I see the blood I will pass over you, and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you when I smite the land of Egypt" (Exodus 3. 12).

You will find in reading your Bibles, that God speaks to us in different ways. Sometimes He speaks to us in the plain and simple language of unvarnished doctrine and sometimes He speaks to us in pictorial terms, so anxious, if I may be allowed to say it, is God that we should understand what He has to say. In the 3rd chapter of Exodus, we have it very simply stated what God was going to do for Israel. He had heard the cries of the down trodden and oppressed people; He had seen and He knew their sorrows, and by the mouth of His servant Moses, He sent and told them He was going to do for Israel. He had heard the cries of the down trodden and oppressed people; He had seen and He knew their sorrows, and by the mouth of His servant Moses, He sent and told them He was going to do for Israel. He had heard the cries of the down trodden and oppressed people; He had seen and He knew their sorrows, and by the mouth of His servant Moses, He sent and told them He was going to do for Israel.

Now this message in itself should have convinced the people that God was for them. He thus revealed His gracious intentions towards them, and so likewise in His gospel God speaks to us. God's object in the gospel is not merely to save a man's soul, it would be a grand thing to save him from the everlasting consequences of his sins, but God not only proposes to do that, but in the gospel, He makes it known to us that He has it in His heart to bless us with the greatest and richest and grandest blessings that He has it in His power to bestow. Moreover, God tells us that His desire is to bring us bye and bye home to His kingdom and to His glory, so then, just as He sent that message to the children of Israel that He was going to bring them out and to bring them in, so God sends His message to us of His desire, not only to save our souls and bless us, but to bring us home to His kingdom and glory, to a land flowing indeed with milk and honey.

Having said this much let us come to the 12th of Exodus to the story of the Passover. What was that story written in the book of Exodus for? Are we to look upon it as simply a little page out of history of long, long ago, or are we to look upon it as a page containing lessons of great importance that concern us. I think we have to look at it in the latter way, for the things that were written aforetime were written for your learning. Now if you were to say to me, "What do you think is the great truth that is taught in the 12th of Exodus?" I should answer "I think the great truth taught in the 12th of Exodus is what is called in the New Testament 'redemption by the blood of Christ.' It shows us in figure and type how completely sheltered from judgment is the soul that trusts in that blood, and how that blood meets
all the claims of that Holy and righteous God in respect of our sins."

Observe, now, what the people had to do. First of all they are explicitly told that on the 10th day of the month the father of the family was to go forth into the fields and choose from the flocks a lamb, a male of the first year, and having chosen it he was to keep it from the 10th day up to the 14th day, on the evening of which day the head of the family of each household was to kill it. That was the first direction that was given. There can be no doubt at all that the lamb chosen by the Israelites was a figure, or type if you please, of the Lord Jesus, Who is called in the New Testament Scriptures "the Lamb of God." No question about that.

What is meant, do you think, by the lamb being kept from the 10th to the 14th day? Remember that it was to be without blemish. The Israelites had to subject it first of all to close scrutiny for no lamb but a lamb without blemish would do to be a figure of Christ, but not only had it to be without blemish so far as the first scrutiny went, but it had to be kept for those four days, I take it, so that if any blemish escaped observation at the first, it might afterwards come to light. So the Lord Jesus. Think of Him in His pathway here on earth in every little part of it down to the minutest detail, all exactly what God would have it to be. No blot, no spot, no blemish, no dark place, nothing of a corrupt nature was ever found in the life of the Lord Jesus. His words were all spoken as they should have been spoken, all His actions were what they should be, everything that He did was done to God's glory. Have you ever noticed how in the Holy Scriptures the Holy Spirit guards with jealous care the sinlessness of the Lord Jesus. Why one inspired writer tells us that, "He knew no sin," and a second tells us 'He did no sin," while a third speaking of Him says, "in Him is no sin." No sin then was found in Jesus. We have plenty of it in ourselves. The holiest man on earth has got the blemish of sin in him, for all have sinned and come short of God's glory, but there was not one spot in the Lord Jesus. He did no sin, He knew no sin, and no sin was found in Him. O suffer me to repeat it! With most jealous care did the Holy Ghost declare and emphasize the sinlessness of the Lord Jesus. All that pathway from Bethlehem to Calvary was what God would have it to be, and if I might use a figure of speech in speaking of it, it all went up to God like incense, pure and fragrant. But if we were to be delivered from the bondage of sin and Satan, the Lamb of God had to die, His holy life had to be poured out in sacrifice, His blood shed for our redemption. Upon Him who knew no sin the judgment of our sins had to fall, and it is by that blood that we are sheltered and saved from the judgment. It was not the living lamb inside the house that kept the destroyer outside, but it was the sprinkled blood, the blood of the lamb without blemish. It is a truth to ponder over; out of it spring all our blessing; it is the chief note in our song today and will be for ever. "Unto Him that loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood" and "Thou wast slain and hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood." Worthy theme for endless praise!
THINGS MOST SURELY BELIEVED. No. 2.
The Sinlessness of the Lord Jesus.

It will be for our profit to consider what sin is as God shews it to us in His Word, for if we have superficial thoughts of it we shall not appreciate the sinlessness of our Lord, nor the necessity and significance of His offering of Himself without spot to God; nor shall we feel how necessary it is for us to cleave to Him, the Holy and the True.

Three words are given in Scripture to define sin; they are brought together in Exod. 34. 7, Psalm 32 and Psalm 51—they are transgression, iniquity and sin. These words are not mere synonyms that could displace one another and nothing be lost, for each has its own terrible meaning. TRANSGRESSION is revolt from, it means a tearing of oneself away. God has declared His will for men, but they prefer their own wills, and in the pursuit of their own wills they tear themselves away from God. INIQUITY means twisted, crooked, perverse. God has laid down a road for the feet of men to tread, and that road is as straight as His everlasting sceptre, but men have made for themselves crooked ways (Isa. 59. 8); they are a crooked and perverse generation (Phil. 2. 15). SIN means missing the mark. God has set up His mark, the end at which every man should aim. God Himself should be the end and aim of every man’s life, but every man has substituted self for God, and set up his own mark to displace God’s; and has missed the very mark and purpose of his existence. Along with sin in this threefold character goes GUILE; it permeates the life of every man who has not been honest before God. His effort is to appear different from what he knows himself to be, to cover up and hide his sinfulness and even to imagine that he can deceive God Himself as to it. Then the New Testament gives us a striking definition of sin in 1 John 3. 4, where we should read, “for sin is lawlessness,” and that covers all that sin is; it is not a mere yielding to the sudden and capricious impulses of our nature, but the determination that lies deep in a man’s will, though perhaps seldom expressed, to go his own way and be independent of God.

As we consider what sin is as it is defined for us in the Scriptures, we are conscious that we must plead guilty before God to transgression and iniquity and sin, and confess that it is not only in practice that we are sinners, but that we are sinners in our very nature: that what we have done springs out of what we are, the fruit reveals the nature of the root. But we are equally conscious that in this respect our Lord stands out in complete contrast to all that we are; our minds recoil from even the suggestion that there was sin in Him; our spiritual instinct tells us that He was not as we are, that He would be of no use to us if He had been, and we find that these instincts are confirmed by the plainest possible statements in the Word of God.

The flesh and blood that He took was wholly apart from sin; His body was a holy body prepared for
Him by God; as a man He was "holy, harmless and undefiled"; He was as holy in His manhood nature and life amid the sordidness and sin of the world as He was in the beginning, when by His divine power and glory He created the heavens and the earth. This holy manhood could not have been apart from the miraculous birth. In no other way could the everlasting Word have come in flesh. Hence in announcing His birth to the Virgin-mother, the angel of the Lord declared, "That holy Thing that shall be born of thee, shall be called the Son of God." And from the moment that the Holy Ghost came upon the most blessed of all women, and the power of the Highest overshadowed her, her Firstborn Son was wholly for God; His own words were, "Thou art He that took Me out of the womb; Thou didst make Me hope when I was upon My mother's breasts" (Psa. 22). Heaven and earth and even the nether regions confessed His holiness; God and men and demons bore witness to it. The Holy Ghost descended upon Him at His baptism, not as a burning flame, but as a dove, indicating surely that there was nothing in Him that was obnoxious to the holiness of God's Spirit, but everything in absolute harmony there with Him; and the Father declared that His eye had searched, and found only that in Him that delighted Him. At the very beginning of His public service to God and men, the demons recognized Him and confessed Him as God's holy One (Mark 1), and His Apostles, by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, and in the full light of His life and death and resurrection and ascension to glory, bore witness again and again to this essential fact of our Faith: this fact apart from which our Faith is a delusion and a lie.

THE SINLESS SACRIFICE FOR SIN.

It stands out in the Epistles as a thing to be noted and cherished, that when the question of sin and the sufferings and death of the Lord Jesus as our substitute in regard to it arises, His sinlessness is emphasized. 2 Corinthians 5. 21 tells us that God made Him to be sin for us, but adds that He "knew no sin." 1 Peter 2. 24 tells us that He "His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree," but assures us that He "did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth" (verse 22). 1 John 3. 5 tells us that He was manifested to take away our sins, and adds, "in Him was no sin." Surely nothing could be clearer than that no sacrifice but a sinless sacrifice could meet the claims of God's holiness against sin, and if Jesus had not been sinless He could not have stood in the sinner's place; He would not have survived the judgment, and we should have had no Saviour.

The necessity for this sinless offering was foretold in the types and shadows of the Old Testament. The passover lamb had to be without blemish, a male of the first year" (Ex. 12); and every sacrifice that was offered to God had to be of the same unblemished sort. "If there be any blemish therein, as if it be lame, or blind, or have any ill blemish, thou shalt not sacrifice it unto the Lord thy God" (Deuteronomy 15. 20). "But whatsoever hath a blemish, that shall ye not offer: for it shall not be acceptable for you" (Leviticus 22. 20). If God could not accept the blemished sacrificial
fice as foreshadowing the sacrifice of Christ, how abhorrent is the thought that He who was the Substance of all the shadows and the Fulfiller of all the types, had a blemish or the taint of sin in Him! And that such a thought might have no place in our minds, we are told that when the time for the offering up of the sacrifice came, He “through the Eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God” (Hebrews 9. 14). Was that offering accepted? It could not have been if it had not been a sinless offering. It was accepted. The Word of God declares that “it is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats should take away sins,” but that this Man’s one offering hath “perfected for ever them that are sanctified.” That one offering was so free from all taint of sin, so essentially, inherently and intrinsically holy and excellent, that He having made it has sat down at the right hand of God, never to arise again for such a work; and so complete and efficacious is it, that the Holy Ghost can bear witness that God will remember no more the sins and iniquities of all those that believe, and that through it they have the title now to enter into the very presence of God (Hebrews 10).

NOT SINLESS ONLY BUT WHOLLY GOOD.

Now absence of sin would not have been enough, and we cannot stop at the fact that there was no sin, either in the nature or acts of the Man Christ Jesus; we look for positive good, for we read, “To him that knoweth to do good and doeth it not, to him it is sin” (James 4. 17), and we find this positive goodness in Him at all times and in every circumstance; it was His glory. “He went about doing good, for God was with Him” (Acts 10. 38), and for this He was anointed with the Holy Ghost. He was conceived by and anointed with the Holy Ghost. There is a beautiful type of this in Leviticus 2, where the unleavened cakes mingled with and anointed with oil tell of the life of Jesus, permeated and empowered by the Holy Ghost, of which the oil is a well-known type; the absence of leaven teaching that there was no evil in Him, for leaven is everywhere in Scripture a symbol of evil. But our subject is what He was more than what He did, though we cannot separate the one from the other. Where every other man transgressed and revolted from the known will of God, He could say, “I do always the things that please Him” (John 8. 29). Where every other man had sinned, and missed God’s mark, He could say to His Father, “I have glorified Thee on the earth, I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do” (John 17. 4); and where every other man had loved iniquity and turned out of the right way, it is said of Him, “Thou hast loved righteousness and hated iniquity” (Hebrews 1. 9). And there was no guile in Him, He was even the same that He said from the beginning (John 8. 25).

The more deeply the life of Jesus is studied, the more impressive does His holy dependence upon God and His obedience to His Word and will appear, and He was obedient without murmuring, though the will of God involved Him in a life of suffering and a death of shame. His heart went with all that He did. This is beautifully set forth in Isaiah 50, where the Spirit of Christ speaks in the prophet saying, “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 smitters, and My cheeks to them that plucked off the hair: I hid not My face from shame and spitting.” And in this connection I would quote a beautiful series of the Lord’s own sayings that we might contemplate them with wonder and joy.

“My meat and drink is to do the will of Him that sent Me, and to finish His work” (4. 34).

“I seek not Mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent Me” (5. 30).

“I came down from heaven, not to do Mine own will, but the will of Him that sent Me” (6. 38).

“The living Father hath sent Me, and I live by the Father” (6. 57).

“I and My Father are One”

“Father, I thank Thee that Thou hast heard Me. And I knew that Thou hearest Me always” (11. 41).

“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: whatsoever I speak therefore, even as the Father said unto Me, so I speak” (12. 49, 50).

“That the world may know that I love the Father: and as the Father gave Me commandment, even so I do” (14. 31).

“I have kept My Father’s commandments, and abide in His love” (15. 10).

“I have glorified Thee on the earth; I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do” (17. 4).

“It is finished” (19. 30).

I might quote many more of these sayings of His, but these are enough to prove to us that He was the blessed Man of Psalm 1., that walked not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stood in the way of sinners, nor sat in the seat of the scornful. But His delight was in the law of the Lord, and in His law did He meditate day and night. In nature and life, in thought and word and deed, in spirit, soul and body He was always and altogether the holy One of God.

“The Temptations of the Lord, and their meaning” God willing, in our next issue.

How wonderful it is that Christ ever liveth to make intercession for us; this is never interrupted, nor does it ever cease, even if we are walking in a careless way. This ceaseless intercession secures uninterrupted mercy for us; none can estimate how much we owe to this present service of Christ for us.

Self-denial is where self is most felt, not where it is least felt, and all the light of Scripture cannot promote growth without self-denial.
CORRESPONDENCE.

The Renewing of the Mind.

Dear Friend,

I have your promise to give all the help you can in any spiritual difficulty, I may have, and I am now asking you to make that promise good. There are many references to the mind in the Epistle to the Romans, which I have been reading. The one that most interests me, is in the 12th chapter, "transformed by the renewing of your mind." That sounds both desirable and wonderful; explain it please; I want to understand it.

What would you say to one whose thoughts ran on one line of things that did not help his spiritual growth and joy in the Lord? Take football, or cricket for instance, the air seems full of sport, and it gets into a fellow's mind most villainously and jostles out those better things that would make him a better Christian and servant of the Lord. There are worse things, I am sorry to say, evil things that crawl into the mind, bringing their loathsome slime with them, sometimes at most sacred moments. I have been feeling that the mind is the key to all this, and to have the mind renewed would meet the difficulty, but how is that done? I have read in the Bible somewhere, "Every man shall kiss his lips that giveth a right answer." I won't do that, but you will win my thanks and that of others too, who are interested in this question, if you will bless us with an answer that will give us both help and hope.

Enquirer:

Dear Enquirer,

Perhaps the word in modern English which most nearly gives the thought of 'mind' in the New Testament is interest. We speak of man's interest in his garden, that is, his garden largely occupies his thoughts.

The renewing of the mind in Romans 12. 2 is by its occupation with a new object, the new object having such a transforming power that the mind is quickened into fresh interest and zest as it is occupied with it.

We become like the object with which we are occupied. If the object is a debasing one, our minds become debased. Whatever commands our interest and receives our attention, gains a transforming effect over us, for good or for bad.

When, by God's grace, we are attracted to Christ, we instinctively study Him and are transformed, in measure, into His likeness. If a girl is saved from drowning by some young fellow who plunges into the water for her rescue, she does not necessarily fall in love with him, though she will, of course, be grateful. It is to be feared that some of us are content to be saved by Christ. Of course we are grateful, but there is no falling in love with Him who is our Deliverer.

Our minds are occupied with other objects; our outlook in life lacks that which would make us Christ-like.

Paul's earnest desire for the Roman believers was that their lives might be transformed; that there should be something about them that would make them utterly different from their moral, decent, but non-Christian neighbours. This could only be brought to pass by their mind
being fixed on an object that could transform them into its own likeness. The mind would be renewed when it found this new Object.

The Christian’s battles are largely fought out, first of all, in the arena of the mind. Discipleship is, in the first place, an attitude of the mind. Levi did not rise up and leave all, he left all and rose up (Luke 5. 28). That is, his mind moved in renunciation first. A new Object had presented itself to him; he had felt the thrill of the summons: “Follow Me,” and his mind withdrew itself from the daily activities of the tax-gatherer’s booth and was renewed after such a fashion that Levi was absorbed with Christ: he followed Him.

Yes: the lips of him who gives the only possible answer to the enquiries of our heart are worthy to be kissed! But Christ alone can do this. Is He not the very wisdom of God?

If our minds are absorbed with football, fashion, or baser things, we shall move on the plane to which these things belong. But if Christ gains our affections, our mind (that is, our chief interest) will follow. They will be renewed by being engaged with a new Object, and the new Object will have its transforming power over us.

Friend,

Dear Friend,

I thank you for your helpful letter; I intend to consider it and that right prayerfully. But may I pursue the subject of the mind? I have been reading “Spiritual Songs” by J. N. Darby. In them there are several references to the mind; one of them went to the very heart of me.

“No infant’s changing pleasure
Is like my wandering mind.”

I had to sigh and say, “That’s just it.” Now he was a very eminent and devoted servant of God, and I am surprised that he wrote like that, but it fits me exactly and I don’t think it ought to somehow. Another reference to the mind is,

“And filled with Thee, the constant mind
Eternally is blest!”

But that has reference to heaven, and of course there will be no fickle, wandering mind there. Still I feel there ought not to be here. We had a meeting the other day at which we sang,

“My heart is fixed, eternal God,
Fixed on Thee.”

Some of these hymns bother me a good bit, anyhow I prayed, “That’s what I want.” Now the fixed heart and the steadfast mind seem to me to be about the same thing. How can they be gained? Looking over your letter, I am sure you will answer, ‘You must have an adequate object.’ I see that. Now how can Christ become that to me? It seems to me that something must be done in me, and that something seems to be the “renewing of the mind” that it may not be wandering but steadfast. If you can spare the time to answer further, I shall be grateful to you.

Enquirer.

Dear Enquirer,

In detailing your experiences, you might be describing those of almost any Christian who lays these things to heart. Hymns are good if they serve, not only to express what the Spirit of God has wrought in the soul, but to produce new exercises and desires. But I think the “fixed heart” is hardly the same idea as the “constant mind.” In the hymn,
“My heart is fixed,” is the expression of a sinner’s decision, the utterance of his newly begotten faith in a Saviour; in the Psalm where the words occur, they are the expression of the Psalmist’s unwavering confidence in the delivering power of Jehovah.

Fickleness of mind is one of the results of our fallen estate. Our Saviour-God has made provision in view of this by presenting an Object that shall rivet and attract our minds. But the truth is that our fallen, fickle minds will not be attracted or rivetted by an Object, however glorious that Object may be. So God has graciously bestowed His own Spirit. This is an axiom of Christian doctrine, but, while emphasising the fact that He indwells us, we too often forget that He is given to us that He may work in us, to displace in our affections the objects that once attracted us, and to produce in us a quality that is not found in us apart from His gracious work, the quality of response to the attractiveness of Christ.

It is not that He does this once for all, but that day by day He works, often hindered by our grossness of heart and coldness of affection, to keep Christ before our souls, and to produce a response within us to that glorious Object. The result is that our minds, once wandering and fickle, become in some measure “constant,” even as they will be perfectly so in heaven.

Then have we nothing to do in the matter? Does the Holy Spirit do everything? The very enquiry is a fruit of His working; the desire to be delivered from fickleness of mind is the outcome of what He works to produce. But all this is what has been called subjective truth. Our wisdom is to keep our eye on the Object set before us, Christ Himself. It is this that has the transforming effect upon our souls that even others can take note of. And thus God is glorified in us, for He has saved us, not merely that we might be safe and happy, but that we might be Christlike.

Friend.

“Grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ,” wrote Peter. “Increase in the knowledge of God,” was what Paul desired for the saints, and the proof that you have abandoned self, and abhor self, as Job did, is that you are engrossed with God, who is the Source to you of every blessing, and apart from whose grace you would have been for ever ruined and lost.

It is on this line that you become of use to others. You will be the first ripe grape hasting to maturity, in order that it may minister to and refresh the weary; or like the ear of ripe corn declining downward, to supply the want of the needy. Your soul will be deepened in the perfection and resources of Christ; you will have confidence towards God and whatsoever you ask you will receive of Him. From the highest point to the lowest you will be watered in your soul with the grace of Christ.
ADORNING THE DOCTRINE.

All are not gifted to preach, but all are privileged to testify. Every child of God can shine in the darkness around, and bring light and blessing to all with whom they come in contact. They need not go outside of the particular sphere of life in which they are found; just where the providence of God has seen fit to leave them, they can show forth the virtues of Him Who has called them out of darkness into His marvellous light.

There are many of the Lord's hidden ones who are often tempted to think that their testimony is of little account. When they see the prominence into which some of their brethren are brought, in the exercise of their brilliant gifts in public service, and compare this with their own obscure existence where nobody sees anything in them to appreciate or adore, they are apt to be discouraged and doubt if their life is to any serviceable purpose. It is well for them to remember that some of the Lord's best gems are hidden in caskets; that some of His brightest lights are set in dark places; that some of His loveliest flowers are found in the lowest valleys, where the eye of man has never penetrated. And, after all, the life is lived before God as something for His pleasure, though others cannot fail to get the benefit of it, when it is really pleasing to Him.

When one is satisfied that one is in the place where God would have one, suffice it that one shine there. When one is assured that one is using such talent as one possesses for His glory, there is no need for occupation with what others may have. Each has his individual sphere and talent; and the privilege is given to each to use all to the glory of God. For what other purpose can any of us expect to be left in this world?

God has given to each of His own both natural and spiritual gifts. He has also taken account of their position in life in relation to others. As He has distributed to each one, and as the Lord has called each one, so let him abide. This was the apostolic rule laid down in all the churches (1 Cor. 7. 17). To seek a change of circumstances, simply because these are uncongenial, or because one might think one would shine to better advantage elsewhere, is tantamount to saying that one's position in life is a matter of one's own choice, and not a matter of God's wise providential ordering.

If we take the case of a Christian wife with her pagan husband, we might ask, Ought she to live with him? The Word of God is decisive; she dare not depart from him. God has not annulled the natural relationships which He Himself has instituted. "Let not the wife depart from her husband." Her position in that natural bond is one of subjection. Her testimony for God must be compatible with it. In her position she does not need gift to teach or preach the doctrine, but grace to adorn it. Her privilege is to be so adorned by all that Christianity signifies that her husband will see it in her, and thus be drawn himself to the Saviour that saved her. This is setting forth the grace of our Saviour-God. God would have His people to act to-
wards all, with a view to the salvation of all. And His word to the believing wife, who has an unbelieving husband, is this: "For what knowest thou, O wife, whether thou shalt save thy husband?" Her presence and quiet influence were to produce such effect in him, as to lead to his salvation—a worthy end to have in view, by living with him, and adorning the doctrine before him. It was the doctrine of a Saviour—God she adorned, and it had in view the salvation of her husband. She had to look for this, and count on God to bless her silent testimony. Far from leaving him, because of any personal inconvenience, she had to think of his salvation, and adorn the doctrine of a Saviour—God, Who wills all men to be saved and to come to the full knowledge of the truth. And in doing this quietly, and hidden in the secret of her home, she was following the example of pious women who had so testified for God in like circumstances (1 Peter 3. 1–6).

In the case of the Christian slave, the position was also that of subjection. By coming into the full blessings of Christianity he did not cease to have the place of slave. According to the flesh, he served his master, as his slave, and not only that, but also as a Christian. It might have been thought that his relationship to his master would cease on his becoming a Christian; but it was not the case, for he is plainly commanded in the Lord to obey his master. And as to his testimony before his master, it was to be that of adornment, as was the case with the believing wife before her husband. An adornment was in keeping with their position of subjection. They were to be seen, and not heard. Their testimony was to be directed to the eye, and not the ear. In brief, they were to "adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things" (Titus 2. 9).

An adornment is worn for the benefit of others. It is not intended to be seen by the one who wears it. The one who wears it should be as unconscious of it as of his own physical appearance. People do not think of how they look, unless altogether vain; they appear naturally before others, like a child, and others take cognizance of their appearance. Thus is an adornment worn. Anything feigned, anything artificial, anything redounding to the glory of the wearer, would spoil the adornment. In fact, as far as the Christian is concerned, it is Christ Who is seen; for it is Christ Who is set forth in the life of the one who adorns the doctrine. This constituted true testimony for Him, and it became them who were in the place of subjection. They were not talkative, nor given to argument; what they had to say they said in life, and not in words. This language was all-effectual, because it could neither be misunderstood nor gainsaid. There was nothing in it that could possibly give offence. Unbelieving husbands, and unbelieving masters, looking daily upon a life that personified goodness and every other commendable quality, could not fail to take cognizance that there was something in the one thus adored that called for admiration. This, in turn, might lead to inquiry. Inquiry might end in conversion. In this way, the adornment did the work for which it was intended.

Then it is to be observed that the adornment is but the reflex of the life—the outward evidence of
the inner life. In this respect it is like the plumage of a bird. Outward beauty will be in perfect harmony with inward sanity. Is a bird healthy? Its plumage will indicate this. Is the Christian healthy within (that is, in the hidden citadel of the heart)? His outward comportment will show it. In fact, the one is the evidence of the other. How important, therefore, to keep the heart, for out of it are the issues of life.

Though the apostolic exhortation to adorn the doctrine was primarily given to those in the subject place (believing wives and believing slaves), yet it is applicable to all Christians, in every sphere and relationship. And, strange as it may seem, the fact remains, that they may not always get the ear of those whom they desire to address, but they can always get the eye, and it is to this avenue of the heart they have to direct their testimony.

**HIS POSSESSION.**

_W. M. Comer._

_God formed me for Himself, and placed my life_  
_Under the charge of Christ that I might be_  
_Filled with the Holy Ghost, and thus become_  
_An habitation for the Trinity._

_And my Lord Jesus pledged His life for mine,_  
_And under condemnation took my place,_  
_Doing His Father's will that I might be_  
_Found to the praise and glory of His grace._

_Then from the Heavenly Court the Spirit came_  
_And knocked at my heart's door persistently,_  
_Until I went, to see Who stood without,_  
_And sought an entrance there so patiently._

_"Daughter," He said, in gracious, royal tones,_  
_"To win thy love thy Saviour shed His blood._  
_Now I am come to teach thee all it means_  
_To be beloved of the Son of God."_  

_And so into my life the Spirit came,_  
_Revealing all its emptiness and sin._  
_Then through my being poured His own desire_  
_That I from all defilement should be clean._

_And Christ rejoicing met this need of mine_  
_With words of comfort sweet, "Be glad in Me._  
_Thou art My own, and I am thine—be still._  
_Thy God will perfect all concerning thee."_  

_Lord, keep me still in Thine eternal arm,_  
_And fill my heart with Thine unchanging Word,_  
_Until my life becomes a gracious psalm,_  
_Expressing here the character of God._
"PART WITH ME."

John 13. 8.

James Green.

HOW mysterious must these words have been to those men who surrounded their Master on that eventful evening long ago. He had been telling them that soon they would see Him no more; no more would they have the company of Him they loved, their Counsellor and Guide. No more would they hear the voice which told them of coming glories in accents which thrilled their hearts, though they understood not the full meaning of His words; all this was to be theirs no longer. He was about to die. No wonder that their hearts were filled with sorrow, but how then could they have part with Him? It would appear that they thought He referred to suffering with Him a martyr's death, for not only Peter but all expressed their willingness to follow Him to prison and death. Then He told them that one of their number would betray Him. They knew not which, and wondered whether any of them could perpetrate so dastardly a deed. He told them also that by Gentile hands He would be insulted, spit upon, condemned, scourged, crucified, but that after all He would rise again. What did He mean? for in their then state of mind this afforded them no comfort. They questioned one with another what the rising from the dead could mean. Did He refer to a time far distant? for they were not sceptical regarding the fact of a coming day when God would raise the dead. They were not Sadducees, but the form of His words perplexed them, for His speech implied that He alone would leave the realms of death, His grave be empty whilst others retained their occupants.

Yet in the understanding of this lay the solution of the pregnant sentence, "Part with Me." He had greatly desired to eat once more with His disciples the supper which was the constant remembrance of deliverance from Egyptian bondage. A night so eloquent of redemption by the blood of a slain lamb, and how much it must have meant to the heart of the Saviour who was about to turn the shadow into substance by the giving of Himself an offering for sin, in order to accomplish an eternal redemption. He knew all that would accrue from this; the glory of God; the overthrow of the powers of darkness; the opening of the gates of righteousness that the justified might enter. For this He was ready as the true passover lamb to be bound with the cords of an inflexible purpose to the horns of the altar. "Having loved His own which were in the world, He loved them to the end." The constancy of the love of Christ is wonderful. Everything around was calculated to turn aside His love, had that been possible; but His love was of a character that many waters could not quench, neither could the floods of indifference and misunderstanding drown it. Even the betrayal of Judas which awaited Him, was not the chief thing to His mind, it was love to His own.

Often have the incidents of the last supper been meditated upon, but let us once again try to picture the scene. The meal with all its significant detail was in progress (not ended as v. 2, A.O., comp. v. 26), and with hushed voices these men of sorrowful hearts are speaking one to another of that which is upper-
most in their minds, when their attention is called to notice that their Master has risen from His place, and is in the act of laying aside His garments, and as they watch they see Him gird Himself with a towel as lowest household servant. They look and wonder as He pours water into a basin, and stoops to wash in turn the feet of each. In silent surprise they submit to His action, until at last He comes to Simon. It would appear from his remonstrance that he had held back in diffidence from that which seemed to his mind to be far below the dignity of His Master to do. “Lord, dost Thou wash my feet? Thou never shalt.” This brings from the Lord the reply which shows how significant is His action in regard to the present service He must needs perform for each of those whom the Father has given to Him, if that which He so greatly desires is to be effectuated for them: “If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with Me.”

The Lord’s movement in rising from table was also significant that no longer would He be in association with His own in this world, but that though He could not have part with them thus, He would not cease in His service for them, for His heart was set on their having part with Him in the new condition He was about to enter as man.

This was why in prospect of the eternal joy in the Father’s presence which He was about to enter, He washed His disciples’ feet. It was symbolic of the only way in which He could minister to their joy and happiness until the day shall come when in the Father’s Kingdom He will gird Himself, and make them to sit down to meat and will come forth and serve them. Then He will serve His own with the same love as when He gave Himself upon the cross, or in lowly grace stooped to wash their feet. Then indeed shall He, the Lord of all power, the Source of all love, reveal and minister all that is needed for their perfect joy. It is this service for ever which is already begun, only at the present time there is defilement to be removed that our joy may be full in the communion of His love.

All this is heavenly, but the mind of Peter on that night could not rise to this, so in the impulsiveness of his affection, thinking that perhaps in some way he might retain the company of His Master, he exclaims, “Not my feet only, but also my hands, and my head.” In His reply the Lord uses the figure of one who has just left the bath and is perfectly clean, but his feet may become that moment defiled. “He that is bathed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit; and ye are clean, but not all.” Spiritually this was so; clean every whit in that they were born again, not of corruptible seed but of incorruptible; clean every whit because He viewed them in the light of the finished work of Calvary; clean every whit, because thereby they would be made meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light; clean as were the priests of old when inaugurated into their priestly office by a bathing which was never repeated. The difference between bathing and washing is the absolute abiding cleansing which never loses its value, and is true of every believer, and the practical cleansing of our walk through the world which needs continual repetition. The result of the first is that we walk in the light as God is in the light; but
by reason of our practice being so often inconsistent with this position, the second comes in as regards our feet so that we may enjoy the company of Christ though He is no longer in this world.

In the epistles we find many things which hindered the brethren from entering into communion with their true heavenly position. In the case of the Corinthians, sectarian strife, carnal thoughts, worldly advantage, evil associations which corrupted the manner of life which became them as Christians, bringing about the lack of consciousness that they were the children of the resurrection. With the Galatians there was the giving place to ritualistic observance which gave credit to the flesh, and so escaped the reproach of Christ. With the Colossians it was the subtle snare of the philosophy of the mind. All these and much more were really the rudiments of this present world, and were not after Christ in glory, in whom dwells all the fulness of Godhead revealed. In these epistles we may see the action of our Lord by the Spirit, seeking to cleanse the feet of His saints by the application of the word of truth, so that they might have part with Himself in His own joy. The water and the towel always go together, the one to remove in grace, the other to comfort in love.

When we turn from contact with the world to Christ, He removes from our minds and conscience all that prevents communion with His present joys. Thus may we know the manifestation of Himself, dwell in the Father’s love, and be lifted above the world with its strife and confusion, its emptiness and frivolity, its pursuits and aims, and all that men with futile labour strive to possess. Thus may we in spirit already dwell in the heavenly land of God’s purpose, and enjoy with the Beloved of God its precious fruits. Blessed indeed is His service of love by which He delivers us from the power of the world, and brings us into unhindered communion with the counsels of the Father, and the enjoyment of the inheritance of glory which awaits the revelation of Himself.

“Now there was leaning on Jesus’ bosom one of His disciples, whom Jesus loved.” A precious example of one who had found the place of perfect rest, and to that place His own are ever welcome, there to learn the secrets He communicates. Most likely it was John, but the very withholding of the name is an invitation to us to place our own there, for Christ never fails to answer to the utmost the claims upon His love which faith makes.

Unceasingly does our Lord carry on this service for the whole Church, that He may “Sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the Word.” The final result will be the presentation to Himself of “A glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing.” Every individual believer composing that church is the subject of His constant care, to form in each that character of communion with His love and mind, which enters intelligently into the purpose of His Father, and is formed in those affections which find their full and complete satisfaction in Himself. He removes the spots which mar the beauty He loves to contemplate in His bride; He effaces the wrinkles which speak of time and age, for already He would bring our hearts into the eternal youth which changing years are
powerless to mar. "Nor any such thing." The soil of earth, the cares and anxieties that becloud the soul's vision of His beauty. Yet strange it is that we are so slow to yield all into His hands and to let Him have His way with us. Often we try to remove this or that which we may think is hindering by our own methods, whilst He waits in patient grace, saying so gently, "If I wash thee not." If I personally do it not for you all is of no avail. "Ye also ought to wash one another's feet." In this He can associate us with His own service, if we on our part have been the subjects of it. The consciousness of the unsearchable love of Christ to all His saints produces that humility which will render the lowliest service, if only we can share with them the supreme blessedness of Himself. How inclusive of all saints is His love; how lowly in its grace; how tender in compassion; how longsuffering in patience. This is the example He has left us which covers the whole circle of service until He comes. "That ye should do AS I have done to you."

As we cast a backward glance upon the way He has led us, we can assuredly trace His gracious service. Many things that held our affections once do so no longer; the narrowness of our own thoughts have been expanded in the largeness of His love; things in which we thought to do God service have been found worthless; man has become smaller and God greater; earth is valued less and heaven more. All this He has been doing in order that 'Part with Him' may become an abiding reality. If perchance, dear reader, you should say, Alas! it is not so with me, the burdens of life seem increased, and it was better for me in former days than now; remember that He does not change, and still if you listen you may hear His words, "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear My voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with Me."

To be continued.

Every day we may see some new thing in Christ; His love hath neither brim nor bottom.

Next to the joy of seeing our Lord as He is in His glory, will be to see all His saints there, just what He would have them be—like Himself. What a joy it will be, yes, to Him, but also to us! Well, are we seeking their advancement in this now—the advancement of all the saints, whoever and wherever they are?

There is nothing (next to Christ and heaven) that the devil grudges believers more than their peace and mutual love: if he cannot rend them from Christ, stop them from getting to heaven, yet he takes some pleasure to see them go thither in a storm, like a shattered fleet severed from one another, that they may have no assistance from, nor comfort of each other's company all the way. One ship is easier taken than a squadron.
"CHRIST LIVETH IN ME."

THAT Christ who is our Saviour should be our Life, that He should live in us, is one of the most profound truths of Christianity. Well may the hymn-writer exclaim,

"Oh! what a salvation this,
That "Christ liveth in me"?

This is a part of the salvation of God which is oftentimes overlooked. A few words as to it therefore may not be out of place.

Two transpositions of the letters of the words CHRISTIAN MAN may help to fix two truths in the memory. First of all let us note that altering their setting the twelve letters of "Christian man" may form the words

"A MAN IN CHRIST."

The apostle Paul writes of himself as being such. In 2 Corinthians 12. 2 we find the expression. And the passage shows the greatness of the Christian position and that we may rightly boast in it. The position "in Christ" is wholly that which God has given us. So we read, "If any man be in Christ he is a new creature (there is a new creation)... all things are of God" (2 Cor. 5. 17, 18).

Again, "Of Him (of God) are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption" (1 Cor. 1. 30). And again, "We are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them" (Eph. 2. 10).

"In Christ" we have fulness of privilege and favour. In Him, the Beloved, "we are accepted" (Eph. 2. 6). In Him we are "blessed with all spiritual blessings" (Eph. 1. 3). In Him we "are complete" (Col. 2. 10). "In Him" we are beyond the reach of the condemnation which attached to us in our natural condition as "in Adam." "There is . . . no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus" (Rom. 8. 1).

A Christian preacher would ask sometimes of young believers the question, "Are you in Adam or in Christ?" The answer would often be, "I suppose I am in Christ." Then the query would be made, "How often are you in Christ?" and falteringly the reply would be, "Not very often, I am afraid." They meant that they were not often acting as in Christ.

The glorious truth is that the believer on the Lord Jesus Christ—yes! every believer—is "in Christ," and always "in Christ." God Himself to the praise of the glory of His grace has given to us this wonderful place of nearness to Himself—and He never takes us out of that position. To be assured of this is our privilege. To answer to it is our responsibility. God would have us to think His thoughts after Him in this matter and to reckon ourselves "dead indeed unto sin," but alive to Him "in Christ Jesus."

"In Christ is as Christ" was the brief expression used by a well-known servant of God. How much is contained in those five simple words. God has been pleased to put us in Christ's place before Him. We had no part in it. The work was altogether beyond our powers. But God chose that every Christian
should have this nearness and dear-
ness. We were in the distance and in
the darkness of sin and alienation
from God, “but now in Christ Jesus, we who sometimes were far
off are made nigh by the blood of
Christ” (Eph. 2. 13). We are be-
fore God identified with Christ, are
risen together and seated in the
heavenlies in Christ (Eph. 2. 6).

The statement of another servant
of God, “Christ’s place is our place”
is a further five-worded expression
well worth remembering as convey-
ing the truth we have been con-
sidering.

Nothing of merit had we. We
had no claim upon God for bless-
ing of any kind. We were exposed
to His just judgment. But He in
His grace (His love acting in the
presence of our sin), has chosen for
His own glory to heap upon us the
richest blessings which heaven’s trea-
sury afforded.

Now transposing again the twelve
letters of the word CHRISTIAN MAN,
let us occupy our thoughts with

CHRIST IN A MAN.

It is God’s gracious thought that
Christ should be expressed in us
who believe upon Him. That some-
things of the graces of Christ should
be exhibited in our lives. We are
in Christ for acceptance before God,
as we have seen. Christ is in us
for manifestation before men.

These are the two sides of Chris-
tian blessedness. Just as there are
an upper side and a lower side to
a Bank note or Treasury bill, so
these two truths are parts of the
same whole. “A man in Christ”
and “Christ in a man,” go together.
We must not put asunder that which
God hath joined.

“If Christ be in you,” says the
apostle, “the body is dead because
of sin: but the Spirit is life because
of righteousness. Now if any man
have not the Spirit of Christ, he is
none of His” (Rom. 8. 9). “I am
crucified with Christ, nevertheless I
live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in
Me” (Gal. 2. 20). These Scriptures
bring before us from different angles
the side of truth we are now con-
sidering.

Martin Luther is reported to have
said, “If someone comes to my house
and asks, ‘Does Martin Luther live
here?’ I ought to answer, ‘Martin
Luther has died and Jesus Christ
lives here now.’” So should it be;
and so may it be if we walk in the
power of an ungrieved Holy Spirit.
Something of the character of Christ
will be displayed in us. His love,
His gentleness, His consideration for
others, His graciousness, His
patience, His goodness, His faith-
fulness, His truth, His kindness, His
mercy, these and others of His moral
excellencies will come out in measure
in our pathway. Our lips and our
lives will express Himself.

One who went to a mission field
was to be sent home. He was un-
able to acquire the native language
and so seemed to be disqualified for
the position he had sought to fill.
But his fellow-workers and the native
converts all begged that he might
remain because he was, as they said,
“so like Christ.” His life spoke
what his lips could not convey
right. Shall we ask ourselves how
far those around us would have such
a judgment of ourselves? How
much do we magnify Christ in our
bodies so that He is glorified in us?

Another illustration occurs to me
which will show in some detail what
is sought to be presented. A child
was asked, "Where does Christ live now?" The answer expected to be given was, "In heaven." But another and unlooked for reply was forthcoming. It was, "He lives in our court now." What was meant? Well, a young woman named Bessie had been converted a little while before. And now she was seeking to do everything in her power for the help and comfort of others. She would light the fire and sweep out the room for a sick woman. She would run an errand for a lame mother. She would read the Word of God to a blind man. She would care for a dying child. In these and other ways she would succour the needy. And not for the sake of gain, but for the love of Christ. Thus in that dingy, dirty, dilapidated court Christ was shining out through Bessie.

What an honour is this! That in the world where our Lord lived and has been rejected, His holy, gracious life may be continued in measure in us in the power of the Holy Spirit.

"A man in Christ" and "Christ in a man" make up the CHRISTIAN MAN. May we know what it is to be in Christ and may others see Christ in us. So will His name be honoured and so will blessing come to those around us.

**PEACE.**

"I will both lay me down in peace, and sleep: for Thou, Lord, only makest me to dwell in safety" (Psalm 4).

Ridley's brother offered to remain with him during the night preceding his martyrdom, but the bishop declined saying, that "he meant to go to bed, and sleep as quietly as ever he did in his life." He knew what God's personal care in the still chamber was. He could rest in the everlasting arms, and leave tomorrow with God. It was so with David, and it may be so with every child of God. He may give up the guardianship of himself and let God take care of him, and in the absence of all care sleep, pillowed upon faithful and unchanging love. We heard of a Christian who said, "The doctor says I must have sleep, but how can I while care hovers over my bed?" What did he need? He needed to know that God was greater than his care and closer to him than his circumstances, and that he was an object of personal interest to Him. "Easily said," says some one. Yes, but the Word of God encourages us thus to trust in Him, to stay our minds upon Him and be at peace. And what can we have more sure than the Word of God?

The more you impart to others what you have received, the more will be committed to you. The lapidary increases his wealth, not by acquiring diamonds only but by setting them to the best advantage. In the same way you increase your possessions in Christ the more you discover the value of each of His own, and devote yourself to making them brilliant.
CORINTHIAN ARCHITECTURE.

ARCHITECTURE is defined as the harmonious arrangement and ornamentation of buildings according to definite principles as a work of beautiful art. There were three styles of Classic Greek architecture which were characterised by a particular form of column, viz., Doric the simplest, Ionic more ornate, while the Corinthian had the most elaborate detail. The Greeks built their temples with columns for external effect.

Of a totally different order was the spiritual architecture which the apostle Paul sought to initiate at Corinth in the year A.D. 59. "According to the grace of God which is given unto me as a wise master builder (lit. architect), I have laid the foundation and another buildeth thereon" (1 Cor. 3. 10). He laid the foundation with masterly skill since commissioned, empowered and guided by God to do so. Nevertheless, he watched over the growing superstructure of Corinthian building in a yearning way. He was not interested in the capitols of their elegant temples, but in the lives of those who had been won for Christ by his preaching of the gospel.

In the previous part of the Corinthian epistle the apostle had shown very clearly that the preaching of the grace of God was the great discriminant which determined the character of materials suitable for God's use. Therefore he warned everyone who essayed to build on his foundation to examine their materials and methods very critically.

There are two ways in which spiritual building is viewed in Scripture, and they are found side by side in the chapter under consideration. Verse 9 speaks of the Corinthians as God's building (lit., masterpiece). Verse 11 says that no other foundation can be laid than what has been already laid, viz., Jesus Christ, i.e., beyond man's responsibility altogether. But in the second sense, man is a builder and he is responsible to observe the principles of God's work so that they may not be found marring the lines of the spiritual capitols.

As to God's work the saints are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ being the chief corner stone or coping stone of the pyramid. The building grows into a holy temple in the Lord in one aspect, and the saints are builded together for a habitation of God through or in the Spirit in the other aspect (Eph. 2. 20-22). This spiritual habitation is the dwelling place of God, founded deep on the substratum of His eternal counsels. The great Ionic temple of Diana at Ephesus was considered the finest example of Greek architecture, and described as one of the seven wonders of the ancient world. It has crumbled and vanished, but the foundation of God and the building thereon stand sure on the rock of Christ's faithfulness, combined with the perfect work of Christ.

Proud man is busy building cities and temples with much noise and display, but the growing temple in the Lord proceeds silently in the hearts of men and women and is unknown to the world, of which in the physical world, the work of the coral polyp in producing great islands in the sunny Pacific Ocean is a beautiful illustration.
The city is a consummate product of "Man's Day," yet the amenities of the modern city does not evoke the admiration of the Christian. Like Abraham of old he looks for another kind of city which has foundations, the architect and constructor of which is God. The splendour of that city eclipses the glory of all that man has produced. Sir Christopher Wren and his disciples never touched the surface of the sphere in which the streams or tributaries of the river gladden the hearts of the saints composing the City of God (Psalm 46). The design of the city is not competitive like those characteristic of the procedure of man. The plan was prepared in the studio of past eternity and is on eternal lines for a glorious future untarnished by man's effort.

On the side of responsibility the apostle displays jealous care as to what man essays to build on the foundation which he had laid. He insists on the maintenance of godly principles of building and of suitable materials. Gold speaks typically of righteousness as silver of redemption, and the precious stones refractive and reflective of the perfect light of Christ. The diamond is the most sparkling of all gems because of its possessing the highest index of refraction and consequently the largest angle of total reflection of light. However, the Koh-i-noor and Cullinan brilliants fade away in the mists of time compared with the precious stones of spiritual significance shining with eternal brilliance.

Then man often inserts materials of specious appearance, yet essentially comparable with such combustible substances as wood, hay and stubble, all of non-fire resisting quality. This is wasted effort, since every man's work will be tested by fire, reward only attaches to what will survive the fire of judgment. We should not be misled by the trivialities of man's device. The apostle esteemed as a small thing that he should be judged of "man's day." Therefore let us put a premium on what Scripture shows will merit approval at the judgment seat of Christ.

"Thy testimonies have I taken as an heritage for ever: for they are the rejoicings of my heart" (Psa. 119. 111).

What a heritage, what an estate to possess are these testimonies of God! And the one who makes them the rejoicing of his heart can make many rich. Think of the comfort of the Scriptures for those who are in sorrow, the encouragement that they give to those who are like to faint in the way; think of the grace, the love and the unfailing compassion of the God who is revealed to us in them; "They testify of Me," said our Lord, and in them are the things concerning Himself. And these testimonies are given to us as our heritage. God's testimonies, whether in Creation, or in His providential dealings with us, or most of all in His Word, are given to us as our heritage. What wealth is ours; pray let us not neglect it, let us prize it; let us make these testimonies the joy of our lives, then shall we boast in God through our Lord Jesus Christ.
IN using the expression, "The Gospel by John," let us ever remember that John was the PEN. The Holy Ghost was the WRITER.

This Gospel begins with eternity, "In the beginning was the Word," and it carries into eternity. In it we have brought to us what belongs to that home of love, that once empty hearts may be filled with the light and joy which that heavenly Messenger, the Son, brought, that we might have His joy fulfilled in us.

"The Father's Name Thou hast declared, The Father's love with Thee is shared."

In this Gospel there are only twelve hours in the day, and the sun is shining in its strength all the time; hence the Lord says to the Jews, "Walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you." "I am the light of the world." This light is for our hearts, not for our heads. For us everything hangs upon four words, "If ye love Me." What is this light? "In Him was life; and the life was the light of men." "For the life was manifested and we have seen it, and bear witness, and show unto you that eternal life which was with the Father and was manifested unto us."

Two thoughts run through this Gospel, "Declaration" and "Revelation." What was declared was heard; what was revealed was seen. "The only-begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father (this never had a beginning, and has no end, and was never interrupted), He hath declared Him." "The Word which ye hear is not Mine, but the Father's who sent Me."

To Philip He said, "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father." Again, "This is the will of Him that sent Me, that everyone which seeth the Son and believeth on Him, may have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day." Hence the apostle says, "That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son, Jesus Christ."

This is the climax of the wondrous mission of the Son who said, "For I have given them the words which Thou gavest Me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from Thee, and they have believed that Thou didst send Me."

There are two statements of the utmost importance to notice. The frequency with which the Lord says, "I am come," "I came down from heaven," "I came forth from the Father," "I came out from God." These statements, so often repeated, tell us from whence He came. The other is the still more frequent remark, that He was "sent of the Father." "The Father which hath sent Him," "This is the Father's will which hath sent Me," "As the living Father hath sent Me," "For I am from Him, and He hath sent Me," "He that hath sent Me is with Me," "Thou didst send Me." Hence the Apostle says, "We know that the Son of God is come," and "In this was manifested the love of God towards us, because that God sent His only-begotten Son into the world that we might live through Him."

It is important to note that in this Gospel there are certain things omit-
ted which are found in the others. Here there is no virgin birth. In Luke the Holy Ghost delights to linger over the story of His incarnation, employing about 2,500 words to tell us about it. In John he sums it up in four words. "The Word became flesh." Here we have no baptism, no mount of transfiguration, no supper, no forsaking, no account of His ascension. To introduce either one of these would be to bring in confusion and mar the beauty of the whole. They are perfect in their own place and setting.

Another thing, it may be said of this Gospel, unlike Luke's Gospel, no one is called a sinner, except the Lord Himself (ch. 9. 24). Sinners need forgiveness and justification by His blood, but these are not the subject of this Gospel. It is not the guilt of men, but their state and how God meets that state.

Take the case of the blind man, he cannot see, therefore cannot appreciate Him who has come, hence the necessity of the Pool of Siloam (the water aspect of the death of Christ which deals with a man's inward state or condition rather than with his guilt) to get his eyes opened in order to see and believe on Him. "He went his way therefore and washed and came seeing." A figure of one "born of water and of the Spirit." "Dost thou believe on the Son of God?... and he said, "Lord, I believe, and he worshipped Him." To believe on the Son in this Gospel implies that I find in Him an object for my soul. It is not the same thought as faith in the Saviour; which is blessedly true in its place; but it is, that in Him, the Son, I have life and He becomes the object of that life and the satisfaction of my heart.

This is the subject of chapter 4, a restless, unsatisfied (in her affections) woman, knowing nothing but Jacob's well, "Whoso drinketh of this water shall thirst again." There was nothing wrong with the water, Jesus said, "Give Me to drink." God put it there in His providence, but God is not revealed in His providences, therefore we cannot live upon them. God is revealed in His nature, which is love, in His Son. This is living water, and becomes a well within, in the power of the Spirit given, "springing up into everlasting life."

The great question for every believer is, "Have I seen the Son, and believed on Him?" It is this alone which will cause anyone to relinquish the waterpot, and Jacob's well and every earthly means for gaining satisfaction, and drink of Him and thirst no more.

"Jesus... Who for the joy that was set before us endured the Cross."

"How good is the God we adore,
Our faithful, unchangeable Friend:
Whose love is as great as His power,
And knows neither measure nor end!
"'Tis Jesus, the First and the Last,
Whose Spirit shall guide us safe home;
We'll praise Him for all that is past,
And trust Him for all that's to come."
WEARY, hungry and thirsty, He sat at the well side. He, whose power upholds the stars in their tireless processions, and whose bountiful hand satisfies the need of every living thing, sat thus at the well, waiting and alone. Waiting, for at that hour came a solitary sinner to that place, weary, hungry and thirsty in another sense, and it was His Father's will that He should meet and bless her there. Alone, for He had sent His disciples away to buy meat, thus giving them the opportunity of serving Him, and at the same time preventing them from obtruding their unsympathetic presence upon the sacred interview that was to be. Such was His gracious and considerate way with them.

He was to reveal Himself as the Christ who had come into the world, to that lonely sinner that day, and to many others also, but who amongst them conceived what it meant to Him to be there, and how feeble is our conception of it? He was the Lord of glory, infinite in His holiness; His eternal dwelling place was the Father's bosom, yet He came and dwelt among us to bring God near to us who were so far away from Him. The world into which He came reeked with moral putrefaction and offensive pride, and He saw it all, knew it all, felt it all according to the holy sensitivity of His nature. He changed His circumstances when He came into the world but not His abhorrence of sin. He was just as holy when He moved amid the noise and tumult of those filthy Eastern streets as He was when He sat upon His glorious throne and made the worlds; and because of that unchangeable holiness He was the Man of Sorrows in a world of sin. We hide the most offensive men and repulsive sights behind frowning walls and closed doors, but nothing was hid from His eyes. We see only what is external, and cannot look into the hearts of others to discover the corruption that is there, nor plumb the depths of evil in our own, but He knew all men and needed not that any should testify to Him of men, for He knew what was in every one of them.

It is impossible that we should understand or illustrate what it meant to Him to come from unsullied light to a sinful world, but I recall an experience that may help. I was invited to a leper colony in the West Indies, to preach the gospel to the pitiable wretches within it whose only door out of their prison was death. One hundred and forty of them gathered to hear the preaching in the little meeting house of the colony. It was a moving sight, the faces of many of them were distorted and rotted out of all human semblance, and the atmosphere was foul with their corruption, producing in me violent nausea. I wondered greatly at the heroism and love and pity that could have moved the Christian doctor and matron to live and labour there and to give their lives for the sake of those dying negroes. But from them my thoughts turned to the Lord who came to live amongst men, a race of moral lepers, and what is physical corruption in comparison with spiritual and moral corruption? It was Divine love that made Him do it, love that transcends all human speech and thought; it alone brought
Him here not to be ministered unto but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many. And this love calls not for admiration as we might justly yield to fellow mortals who do great deeds, but for adoration, for worship such as only ransomed souls can give to the God of all grace.

He was full of grace as the world was full of sin, but the grace in Him was greater than the sin that was in the world, and so it showed itself to be when the Samaritan woman arrived at the well. He was there to give to her, as only He could give, if she would but ask of Him, but she did not know Him and so she did not ask. Then He took the place of the suppliant and begged a drink of her. That was within her power to give Him, and He needed it! It is a marvellous thing to contemplate. He who could change the water into wine for the joy of others would put forth no power to meet His own necessities. She marvelled that He, a Jew, as she supposed Him to be, should condescend to ask a favour of her, and His disciples marvelled also when they came and found Him talking with her. They had only known the pride that was in the heart of the Jew that would not demean itself to talk with a despised Samaritan, they had yet to learn what that grace was that could go down to the deepest depths of the sinner's degradation to meet and remove it!

The result of the interview was as marvellous as the interview itself. The sinner was changed by it, completely changed, as every soul is changed to whom the Lord reveals Himself as He revealed Himself to her, and she ran to tell the news and bring back others to Him. What He had done for her He could do for all. So she cried, "Come, and see." This knowledge that she had acquired was not for herself alone, it was for all, for was He not the Christ?

It is not difficult to imagine what she would say to those who were drawn together by her enthusiasm. "You men of the city shunned me, and no Jew on earth would have had dealings with me, but He talked to me, He sat by my side and unfolded wonderful things to me of which I had never heard." And they would reply, "Ah, but He did not know you. If He had known you as we know you He would have shunned you as we have shunned you." "Not know me!" she would answer. "Why He knew me through and through and yet He did not spurn me. He told me all things that ever I did, and yet did not make me afraid. He exposed my sin to me as I had never seen it, but He revealed Himself to me. Is not this the Christ?"

It was all grace. Grace that looks for no merit in the objects of it; that only looks for needy, empty hearts to display what it is in itself; and no need is too vast, no sin too great, no sinner too far away for this grace of God that is in Christ, it is grace abounding. The grace of God that bringeth salvation. Yet let none think that grace makes light of sin, or that God is ignorant of the depths of evil in the soul that He blesses. No, grace shows sin to be exceeding sinful, but shows that God knows the worst but blesses in spite of all He knows. And this Samaritan sinner, a typical case, for there is no difference, for all have sinned, was made to realize in the presence of the Lord, that
He knew all, for He told her all that ever she did. She was searched before she was saved; but the One who searched her did so in order to save her. The disclosure of what she was prepared to appreciate the revelation of Himself. And what a joy it must have been to Him to say to her, “I am He.”

When first He spoke to her, she only saw a Jew in Him, and marvelled that He should talk with her. She could have no hope from a Jew, or from any other man; all in whom she had trusted had failed her, and all who knew her shunned her; to whom could she turn, poor, harried, deceived, disappointed, degraded, unsatisfied woman? Now her conscience had been searched by the light, and with the conviction of sin, a new hope had sprung up in her soul; it is always so while grace reigns, and she cried, “When Messias cometh which is called Christ, He will tell us all things.” Her hope was in Him, her weary heart cried out for Him, He only could speak the words that her now repentant soul longed to hear; there was none other than He. When He appeared all darkness, doubt and difficulty would disappear. Christ was all she needed, for Him she looked. Amazing fact, He was there, and waited no longer to make Himself known. “I that speak unto thee am He,” He said.

Then her eyes were opened, and she saw, she was saved and satisfied. And as she passed from darkness to light He was compensated for all the weariness and toil, then He ate of the meat of which His disciples knew nothing, and His joy was full in the midst of sorrow and grief.

The revelation of Himself was salvation to her as it is to all to whom He reveals Himself. But that was only the beginning. He was full of truth as well as full of grace, and all the truth came out in Him. God was to be known and worshipped as Father, and Christ the only-begotten has revealed Him as such; the Holy Ghost was to be given to be a spring of Divine joy and satisfaction within the hearts of those who believe—the power of a new life that should find its never-ending joy in God; and Christ it is who gives the Spirit. All depends upon Him. Yet before this could be He had to die and rise again and ascend to His Father, and our Father, to His God and our God, for the new life and endless satisfaction into which He brings those whom He has searched and saved, is not of the flesh but the Spirit; it is not of the earth, it belongs to heaven.

A wonderful story is this that is unfolded for us in John 4. It is grace and truth brought livingly before us in the Person of our Lord, and the effect of that grace and truth in the sinner whom He SEARCHED, SAVED, AND SATISFIED.

Everything depends upon being before God. It is the light of God, and Christ is that, that fully exposes what we are, and yet in that light we find refuge and delight, for God is there, revealed in grace. It is then that a man abhors himself but rejoices in God. His heart turns to God, and in Him it rests, who is the Source of the new life.
OF what character were the temptations that the Lord Jesus endured? This question arises definitely out of the fact of His sinlessness, which was our subject in our last issue of Scripture Truth.

There are some who do not seem able to understand any other sort of temptation than the incitement to do evil, which is the modern meaning of the word, and they argue that temptation can have neither force nor meaning to a man unless there is within him the desire, or at least the liability to yield. Now we are all familiar with that character of temptation, and it is recognised in the Scriptures, where we read, "Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth He any man: but every man is tempted, when he is drawn away by his own lusts and enticed" (James 1. 13, 14). Yet we are also told in the same Scriptures, "God did tempt Abraham" when He bade him offer up Isaac (Genesis 22. 1). This must have been some other kind of temptation than that of which James speaks; it was certainly not an enticement to do evil; it could not have been, for it is as impossible that God should tempt a man in that way, as it is impossible for Him to lie. It was a testing of what was in Abraham; his faith was put into the crucible and it came out of it, as we know, as gold tried by the fire. And this character of temptation is spoken of more often in the Scriptures than that of enticement to sin.

THE TWO KINDS OF TEMPTATION.

Peter speaks of both. He says, "He that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin" (1 Peter 4. 1). That means that when the enticement to sin assails the christian, instead of gratifying the desire within that answers to the temptation without, he resists it, and suffers in the flesh. He says, No, Christ suffered for my sins. I will not allow and gratify that which caused Him to suffer the Just for the unjust to bring me to God. But in ch. 1. 6, 7, he speaks of "manifold temptations;" these are not enticements to do evil, but the trial of the christian's faith. They are tribulation, distress, persecution, famine, nakedness, peril, sword, pain, bereavement, tears and other burdens and vicissitudes of life (Rom. 8. 35), by which christians are tested, and which discover whether God is greater to them than their sorrows and adversities, and nearer to them than their circumstances, and whether they can wholly trust in Him at all times. Plainly then, temptation is often used in Scripture when enticement to do evil is not the subject at all. Enticement, if yielded to, betrays the bad that is in us, but this other kind of temptation tests us and brings out the good if we really rely upon God, or it may reveal to us our self confidence and folly, as it did in Peter's case.

Because people do not distinguish between these two kinds of temptation they argue that—since the
Scripture says that the Lord Jesus "was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin" (Hebrews 2. 18; 4. 15)—He had to resist the assaults from without, and to watch a traitor within, though He ever fought this twofold battle successfully. We have heard it said by earnest though unenlightened christians that in their conflicts with evil they have been comforted by the thought that the Lord had to struggle as they struggle, and that because He overcame in the struggle so may they hope to do. He did indeed overcome in every temptation, but the temptations were entirely from without and never from within as ours so often are; and they certainly may be more than conquerors through Him that loved them, but it will be on other ground entirely from that that they suppose.

THE LORD TEMPTED APART FROM SIN.

I impugn this popular teaching; it is a lie. It means that there was liability in the Lord to sin even though He did not yield. Such a view of Him is not found in Scripture; it is false; it is derogatory to His holy person and damaging to the faith of His saints. Our Saviour, High Priest and Leader was and must ever be beyond the possibility of sin. The idea is chiefly built upon the passage already quoted from Hebrews 4. 15; but there is no doubt on the part of those who are able to judge in these matters that the words, "Yet without sin" in the Authorised Version, are a faulty translation and should be "sin apart," or "apart from sin." (Those who have a Scofield Reference Bible will find it so given in the margin; see also J. N. Darby's New Translation.) He was tried by every kind of temptation except that kind. He was never enticed as we are, for there was nothing within Him that answered to sin without, except holy suffering because of it. This is the truth that must be emphasised. From the first breath that He drew until He committed His spirit into His Father's hands, He was holy unto God; no adverse will within Him ever warred against God's will for Him; no sinful thought or selfish desire ever spoiled the fragrance of His life; there was no fly in that sweet ointment. He was the well-beloved Son in whom was the Father's full delight, doing always the things that pleased Him. He was in the world that reeked with moral putrefaction, surrounded by sin, hated by sinners, assailed by the devil and tested by every trial and He suffered as no other man had suffered or could suffer because of it all;

"Yet spotless, undefiled and pure
Our great Redeemer stood;
While Satan's fiery darts He bore,
And did resist to blood."

The difficulty that some find of understanding any other sort of temptation than enticement to sin may be because they have known no other. Their conflicts have only been with the evil that is within them, the conflict described in Romans 7, and they have hardly started on the heavenly pilgrimage, and know little or nothing of the trials of the way: of the discouragements and difficulties of it, and the assaults of Satan in his endeavours to drive them back from it or turn them aside into an easier path. But it is this that is in view in the Hebrew Epistle where we read so much of the way the Lord endured temptation. Christians are not there viewed as struggling in the Slough
of Despond, they have got beyond that, and are pilgrims, and warriors, and worshippers; partakers of the heavenly calling, leaving the world behind them and pressing onward to the city that hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God. Now Jesus is the Author and finisher of this way of faith. He began at the beginning of it and trod every step of it to its completion, and He knows every trial and difficulty in it, and how Satan besets with many wiles and threatenings those who are following Him in it, for He has experienced them all, and was tempted in all points on that road and in that life of faith, apart from sin, and consequently He is able to sympathise with, and succour them in their hours of weakness and distress and in every time of need.

I quote from Lectures on Hebrews, by S. Ridout. "We read of one of John Bunyan's characters that at the close of his life he said, wherever he had found the footprints of the Lord Jesus, there he had coveted to put his feet. How beautiful that! but sweeter far is the thought that our blessed Lord, when here on earth, searched wherever the feet of His weary saints would have to tread, and He not only coveted to do it, but He did put His feet just there. He has gone through all the circumstances of the wilderness, He knows what all the testing and trials of it mean in a way infinitely beyond the experience of the ripest saint, for He has passed through it, apart from the deadening, dulling, wasteful experiences of sin. We pass through the wilderness, alas, too often yielding to sin. Our blessed Lord passed through never yielding in thought for one moment to a thing that was not in accordance to His Father's will."

The Lord Jesus led the way in this path of faith and testing and suffering; and this is the meaning of such statements as, "In that He Himself hath suffered being tempted, He is able to succour them that are tempted" (Hebrews 2. 18). And again, "Though He were Son, yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered" (ch. 5. 8). That does not mean that He learnt to obey, He never needed lessons of that sort; His very nature was wholly subject to God, but He learnt what obedience entailed in a world that was ruled by the devil, the Prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience. He who is the Lord of hosts, came down into a life of obedience and dependence on God and faith, and He was thoroughly tested in it. As every girder in a great bridge is tested before it is put into its destined place in the bridge, so was our Lord tested under the utmost pressure and He was never found wanting. There was no resistance to God's will in Him, no resentment, no murmuring, no fault, no flaw; the yoke of God did not chafe His holy soul, He delighted to bear it both day and night, and having passed through every test, and graduated in the school of suffering, He has fully qualified to be the Author of eternal salvation unto all who obey Him. (Hebrews 5. 9.)

THE TEMPTATIONS IN THE WILDERNESS.

But now leaving that phase of temptation in which we have a part and in which we may have the succour and sympathy of the Lord, we come to the great conflict in the wilderness, when He in whom was all goodness, and who was the God-
ordained Leader of the forces of Light met the spirit of evil, the Prince of the powers of darkness. We may learn many lessons as we contemplate these temptations of the Lord; and as we watch His ways we may see how we may overcome, though we must always remember that if we meet Satan at all we meet a defeated foe. Jesus met him when he was flushed with four thousand years of triumph over men. But our subject is not what He was as a pattern for us, but rather what was involved in the conflict for God and men, for Himself and the great adversary.

The Lord had appeared according to the ancient word to “preach the gospel to the poor, to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, and to preach the acceptable year of the Lord” but these whom He had come to bless were the devil’s captives. He held them as prisoners in his palace, and was “the strong man” who was determined to keep his goods from all molestation. Moreover he trusted in his armour and thought himself invincible—it is all described by the Lord in a few terse sentences in Luke 11. 21, 22—for forty centuries he had bound men as captives; he had forged many weapons to effect this and apparently he had done as he wished among them, no one had appeared who could spoil him of his armour or dispute his rights to the children of men. The question had been asked by the prophet in former days, “Shall the prey be taken from the mighty? and shall the lawful captives be delivered?” so hopeless did it all seem to be. But Jehovah had answered, “Even the captive of the mighty shall be taken away, and the prey of the terrible shall be delivered . . . and all flesh shall know that I the Lord am the Saviour” (Isa. 49. 24-26). But this deliverance of the devil’s captives awaited the coming of the One who was “stronger than he,” and against whom his most subtly forged weapons would utterly fail. That JESUS was He, we know, but He had to prove Himself in direct conflict with the devil. Before He could do one public work of mercy or speak one public word of grace this issue had to be tried.

Then further the devil had claimed the kingdoms of the world; he dominated them and arrogated to himself the right to dispose of them as he pleased, but Jesus was the destined and rightful Heir, and the devil knew it; could he out-maneuver Him and deceive Him and bring Him under his dominion as he had done Adam? He was to be permitted to try, and to tempt the Lord to the utmost of his power, and by his efforts bring into manifestation what was in the heart and mind and will of the Lord, and prove whether He loved righteousness and hated iniquity or not, and whether He was able and worthy to wield the universal sceptre.

And there was still another matter at issue, this second Man had come as the image of the invisible God: as His representative; could He hold the ground for God against all attacks where the first man had basely surrendered his trust? Was God to be glorified in and through man? Was He to look upon One, who would sacrifice every worldly advantage and Himself also for His will, and overcome the adversary by complete dependence and absolute, un-
questioning obedience? This was a great issue, everything in the age-long conflict between good and evil, depended upon it.

In this encounter with Satan, Jesus was alone and wholly dependent upon God; no disciple was near to cheer Him and no angel ministered to Him until the fight was finished. This isolation from all aid from others is emphasised by the fact that He was carried into the wilderness by the Spirit to meet the foe: away from the abodes of men to the haunts of the wild beasts. And the fact that the temptation is recorded in the Synoptic Gospels and not in that of John, would teach us that it was in His manhood weakness and dependence upon God that the fight was waged, and not by the Godhead power that dwelt in Him; for John's Gospel is the Gospel of His divine glory, the glory of the Son brought down to Manhood, while the Synoptic Gospels shew us, the same Person, truly, but as "the woman's Seed," the lowly Man of sorrows, who had no resources but in God.

The First Temptation.

It has often been said that in these three temptations of the Lord "all that is in the world, 1. the lust of the flesh, 2. the lust of the eyes, 3. the pride of life" appear; and I have no doubt that this is true, for these three phases of the world are the weapons in which the devil trusts in his enslavement of men, and it is in this order that they are recorded in Luke's Gospel, which gives us the moral and not the historical order of them.

In the proposal that Jesus should make the stones into bread there was a subtle suggestion of kindly interest in His welfare as well as a reflection upon God, as there had been when he tempted Eve in Eden. Are you the Son of God and hungry? Surely God has forgotten you, or is indifferent to your need! Use the power you possess and relieve your hunger. Thus might the temptation be paraphrased. It was met by a perfect answer. "It is written that man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of GOD." God and His word were all to Jesus, He would not use His power on His own behalf or to take Himself out of the place of dependence upon God. He could endure hunger but not independence of God. He sought no ease or comfort for Himself, His meat and drink were the will of God and to finish His work. The lust of the flesh had no place in His heart nor was there a joint in His armour where a doubt as to God's goodness could be thrust; and where Adam and Eve were overthrown and wounded to death, Jesus stood firm and unscathed.

The Second Temptation.

In the second temptation the world's kingdoms were set before His eyes, with all the power and pomp and splendour of them, which dazzle and fascinate men, and for which they will sell their souls and deny their God. And these kingdoms all belonged to Jesus, but God's way, and the only way by which He could secure them in everlasting righteousness was by suffering and death. "You shall have them," said the tempter, "by an easy way. I will give them to you if you will but worship me; acknowledge me as greater than yourself and God; take them from my hand and all shall be yours." But those glittering king-
doms had no attraction in that hour for the holy One of God. He would not take them from any hand but God's hand, He could trust God to put all things beneath His feet when the due time came, but that time was not yet. His eyes were upon God, and He met the temptation with an uncompromising answer, "It is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God and Him only shalt thou serve."

The Third Temptation.

The third temptation was the most subtle of the three, and the devil backed it up by a partly quoted text. He proposed that the Lord should cast Himself down from a pinnacle of the temple, and by such an exploit gain a double advantage—Put God to the test, and prove Him, as to whether You are the special object of His care according to the word quoted, and at the same time convince the multitude in the courtyard of the temple that You are the Messiah, the Son of God. The trap was laid in vain, and His answer, "It is written, thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God," shewed how thoroughly Jesus perceived the devil's purpose. It was no business of His to put God's word to the test to see whether God would honour it or not, no doubt as to it ever entered His mind, it did not need to be proved to Him; nor was it His business to vindicate Himself before the people. "My times are in Thy hands" was the whole spirit of His life and activities, and He would not take them out of God's hands.

God was the answer of this ever dependent and so ever victorious Man. He looked to God for His sustenance; God filled His heart to the exclusion of all other glory; His whole confidence and trust was in God; God's will was His law, God's way was His delight; He set the Lord always before Him and He was not moved. It was thus that He was tested and came through the testing stronger than the foe. By resisting all the efforts of "the strong man" to turn Him from His devotion to God, He bound Him fast and went forth in the power of the Spirit to make His goods His spoil; for the grace and mercy of God shewed themselves in Him and He went about doing good and delivering all that were oppressed of the devil. He was in the midst of men as a living Deliverer, the Master of Satan who had oppressed them so long.

How miserable and inadequate and dishonouring to the Lord is the teaching, that He met no personal devil in the wilderness, but merely retired into it to consider various schemes by which He might press His claims upon men and prove His Messiahship to them, and that the temptations were nothing more than plans of campaign that He considered and rejected. It is by such teaching that the devil would hide from men the fact of his defeat.

The Final Temptation.

But the overcoming in the wilderness was not the end of the conflict, the devil wielded the power of death and by it kept men in bondage all their lifetime for fear of it. And Jesus had come to wrench that power from him, and He could only do this by dying. It was not a living Deliverer that could emancipate men from the tyrant's power—blinded by the devil they rejected Him in that character—but a dying Redeemer. He had
come to die, this only was the way of obedience to God and of love to men. And it was as the shadow of that death crept darkly over His path that Satan returned to the attack, to tempt Him to draw back from that way of suffering. The horror and shame and woe unspeakable that lay before Him pressed heavily upon the spirit of the Lord, and He began to shew to His disciples that it was to a cross and not to a throne that He was progressing. And Satan seized the occasion and using the impetuous and unwary Peter as his spokesman, he endeavoured to turn the Lord from His fixed purpose to do the will of God even to death. “This be far from Thee [pity Thyself] this shall not be unto Thee.” But the Lord detected the foe in that friendly guise, and the temptation to think of Himself was met with stern rebuke, “Get thee behind me, Satan,” and then to Peter, “thou savourest not the things that be of GOD.”

As in the wilderness before He entered upon His public service so now at the end of it, GOD was the sole object of His life.

It was in this same spirit of dependence and full subjection to the will of God that He went through the agony in Gethsemane, when Satan marshalled all the powers of darkness to appal Him and drive Him back from making the great sacrifice; but He came out of the trial saying, “The cup which my Father hath given me shall I not drink it;” and so onward to the cross. In the days of His flesh He “offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto Him who was able to save Him out of death, and was heard in that He feared,”—or, for His piety—His whole-hearted dependence upon God and His trust in Him (Hebrews 5. 7). Satan was utterly foiled, he was beaten at every point in the field, and Jesus, whom he could neither decoy nor drive from the path of God’s will, by dying has destroyed his power and has become the Author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him. He went down into death, committing Himself into His Father’s hands, and the Father’s glory has raised Him from the dead, and now He can say to all who bow down before Him. “Fear not; I am the first and the last: I am He that liveth and was dead, and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death.” And the devil is a defeated foe. He has no authority or power over the saints; he

“trembles when he sees The weakest saint upon his knees.”

They have but to resist him and he will flee from them, for they are no longer his prey, but the blood-purchased possession of the Saviour who has delivered them, and they are to share in all the results of the great victory of the Lord over him for “the God of peace shall shortly bruise him under their feet” (Romans 16. 20).

“The Deity of our Lord, and the Necessity for it,” will be our next subject, God willing.

Your troubles may be many and great: yet not an ounce-weight beyond the measure of infinite wisdom, nor beyond the measure of peace that He will bestow. Our Lord never breaks the backs of His children.
CALEG AND HIS LOYALTY.

CALEG was one of the less prominent men in the Old Testament, yet he presents one of the most striking examples of loyalty to God, and the Scriptures show that his reward was substantial.

From the 14th chapter of Joshua, we learn that Caleb was the son of Jephunneh, a Kenezite who had probably migrated from the mountains of Southern Canaan and had become attached to the tribe of Judah, and consequently was a stranger to the covenants of promise. He was one of the first fruits of the Gentile harvest of which there were many samples in the Old Testament. However his birth barrier did not hinder him from being an Israelite in spirit. The apostle Paul writing to the Ephesian Christians addressed them as formerly aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, but now in Christ Jesus they had been made nigh by the blood of Christ, therefore they were no more strangers and sojourners but fellow-citizens with the saints. (Eph. 2. 12, 13, 18).

The name Caleb means "hearty." Achievement in every path of life depends on willing energy or heartiness, so it is not surprising that Caleb's history is written as if it were traced out by a sunbeam. He reminded Joshua of their association in spying out the land of Canaan forty-five years before, that they had the temerity to present a minority report thereon, which was full of encouragement and cheerfulness because they had viewed the land with the eyes of God. "God loves a cheerful giver" (2 Cor. 9. 7). The word "cheerful" is literally "hilarious" which denotes whole-heartedness.

The majority report of the spies was full of discouragement and gloom. Caleb strove to annul the ill effect of that report upon the hearts of the people by stilling their excitement. Blessed indeed is the peacemaker who introduces restful influences. Caleb's associates had melted the courage of Israel. He strove to reinforce them in the sense of the greatness of God's power.

The mob vote in the power of majority is seldom right, but the majority in Scripture record was never right. So it is well to sift the moral value of a contention rather than to be guided by desire for mere popularity of the crowd.

At eighty-five years of age Caleb was as strong as he had been in his youth. It is the end which tests the strength of a persuasion. The apostle Paul could say at the end of his course, "I have fought a good fight, I have kept the faith." Many young Christians make a good start in the "Marathon" race of faith but they fail to last the pace. It is good to see a flourishing old age marked by courage and spiritual fervour. The Christian is not normally going on to spiritual decrepitude but to the brightest and the best moment. Eternal life is a state of perennial youth!

Caleb speaking of the Lord having kept him alive attributes his vigour to the mercy of God. At sixty years of age the apostle Paul spoke of himself as aged but he was very vigorous in soul experience to the end. Caleb's request was for the mountain of Hebron. The mountain in Old Testament type speaks of the faithfulness of God.
“All the promises of God in Christ are Yea and Amen, unto the glory of God by us” (2 Cor. 1. 20).

Caleb expressed complete confidence in God to enable him to drive out the giants. Martin Luther once said that God and he were more than a match for all the opposition in the world when his friends sought to convince him of the futility of striving against such odds alone. Hebron means fellowship. Its former name Kirjath Arba means city or stronghold of Arba, one of the Anakim giants. That reference forcibly reminds us that Saul of Tarsus was head and shoulders above his contemporaries in a moral sense, while after his conversion he became Paul, a nobody in the world’s assessment, yet an assiduous worker in strengthening the bonds of fellowship.

Caleb had wholly followed the Lord and his reward was the mountain of Hebron. He had rich compensation in this life but required patience in waiting forty-five years for it. So whole-hearted discipleship leads to fellowship.

Caleb received blessing of Joshua who confirmed him in the esteem of the new generation of Israel. A faithful life can stand review in retrospect. So at the judgment seat of Christ the whole panorama of life will be unfolded to our wondering gaze and above all we shall be impressed with the majesty of the mercy and patience of God. To anticipate the judgment seat by subjecting our lives to scrutiny now is good policy.

Twenty years later we find Caleb still going strong in the Lord’s work as evinced by the record of Judges 1, he offered the hand of his daughter Achsah to the conqueror of Kirjath-Sepher, which means the “city of books.” In these later days the printing press has been used in God’s service, but perhaps it has been a more powerful agent in the opposition to God’s work. There is not much ground to be gained by arguing with infidels. “Casting down imaginations (lit. reasonings or logic) and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ” (2 Cor. 10. 5), is more relevant to the annulling of reasonings which arise in one’s own mind, tending to reduce the spiritual fervour. And so the provision of an antidote to the fruits of intellectualism is a very important element in the equipment of every servant of the Lord.

Subsequent to this episode, Achsah sought a blessing or a present from her father who had given her a south land and she desired springs of water and Caleb gave her the upper and nether springs. The Christian has got a rich land of inheritance in Christ on which the sun of God’s favour ever shines. It is well watered by the Word of God which shows our spiritual blessings in Christ Jesus as the upper springs and the counterpart of the nether springs in Christ being in us as the sure pledge of future glory made good in our hearts by the Holy Spirit.

So it is good for an aged Christian to be passing on the blessings and responsibilities of Christianity to the next generation. One of the greatest of 17th century lawyers said that a good lawyer never died in imporles (i.e., without issue). He sought to
transmit faithfully his ideals to his successors and so it is in Christianity. Such spiritual legacies never add any sorrow, but transmit soul prosperity. Achsah's request was for a blessing or present. These are not necessarily synonymous. Many material legacies or presents result not in blessing but prove curses to the recipients. Let us put increasing stress on the importance of spiritual legacy!

The New Testament counterpart of Caleb is to be found in the short epistle of Jude, whose other name was Lebbeus which means "heartly." In verse 3, he exhorted his readers to contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints. In verse 20, he addressed them in endearing terms, "Beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life." In spite of the success of the great apostasy, he encouraged the people of God to maintain a straight course!

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Christ is All.

"He is the way if any be misled; 
He is the robe if any naked be, 
If any chance to hunger He is bread, 
If any be but weak, how strong is He."

"Why are we ever overborne with care, 
Why should we ever weak or heartless be, 
Anxious or troubled when with us is prayer, 
And joy and strength and courage are with Thee."

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Concerning the Mind.

Till the heart be touched the mind will not be fixed. Therefore you may observe, it is said, God opened the heart of Lydia "that she attended" (Acts 16. 14). The mind goes on the will's errand; we spend our thoughts on what our hearts propose. God said to a prophet, "They sit before thee as thy people but their heart goeth after their covetousness." And we shall hear and read the word in vain unless the heart is set upon Christ.

When the truth of God becomes precious, when the heart is set upon it, the mind becomes steadfast, and a man's whole being is affected by it. Just as sugar dissolved in tea permeates the whole, so it is a man's mind becomes permeated by the truth when he loves it and it comes out in his ways and speech and steadfast purpose. He is no longer like a weathercock, his heart is fixed.

If any man feel himself to be a spiritual dwarf, let him feed himself on the Bread of God that he may grow thereby.
PEACE.

H. Wilson, Inkongo.

"Peace!" a trembling world is saying; "Peace" exclaim the nations,
"War must be abolished, and all civil strife must cease."
But the dove men follow with noisy adulations
Has eagle's beak and talons, and is NOT the Dove of Peace.

"Peace!" exclaim the prophets, "let each man love his brother;"
But jealousy and hatred are increasing every day.
How can peace be settled when nations hate each other,
And from the Lord, the Prince of Peace, in folly turn away?
Though aloft the flag of peace the world is proudly bearing,
Hearts of men are failing them with awful fear and dread.
"Peace!" they say, yet secretly for war they are preparing,
And on to Armageddon do the Nations madly tread.

* * *

PEACE! Oh joyous wondrous word, to those whose hearts are lifted
Far above this world of woe to know the Prince of Peace.
He alone, the risen One, our blessed Lord, is gifted
To redeem the sons of men and cause all woe to cease.

Many think of Him to-day as seen in Bethlehem's stable,
Many sing of 'Peace on Earth' who never peace have known.
We, His own, have peace with God, and through His grace are able
To behold and worship Him, exalted on the Throne.

Waiting, watching daily, we long for His appearing,
For His word assures His own that He will quickly come.
Signs abound on every hand which shew that day is nearing
When our Lord will call us up to our eternal home.

Israel's sons, repentant, will then be brought to own Him,
Though through tribulation they must surely wend their way.
Once they crucified their Lord, but soon they will enthrone Him,
Finding lasting peace and joy beneath His righteous sway.

Rebels will be punished all, and Satan bound in prison,
No more able to deceive, inciting men to sin;
Opened be th' eternal Gates, and like the sun, just risen,
Clothed with splendour will the King of Glory enter in.

Then, and not till then, will end the groaning of creation,
Famine, hatred, strife will cease and be for ever o'er;
Righteousness and Peace will reign, and every tribe and nation
Will obey the Prince of Peace, and learn dread war no more.

Come then, blessed Saviour, come; we long to see Thy glory,
Long to see Thee as Thou art and share Thy heavenly home,
Long to hear the ransomed earth spread wide the wondrous story
That the Prince of Peace doth reign for ever—Come, Lord, come!
THE 13th chapter of John’s Gospel indicates the action of our Lord in removing that which if it remained would hinder the present joy of communion with Himself. In the conversation which followed recorded in ch. 14, explanation is afforded of the words which at the time they were uttered, were so obscure to His disciples, “Part with Me.”

Over this most precious theme which our Lord unfolded on the same night in which He was betrayed, might be written the utterance of Solomon the preacher, “The words of a man’s mouth are as deep waters, and the wellspring of wisdom as a flowing brook” (Prov. 18. 4). Here are depths to swim in, and here is the sparkling refreshment that weary souls need, and quiet waters by which we may lie down in the green pastures of His own peace.

What healing balm must the words of the Saviour have brought to the hearts of the men who on that night were so sorely troubled and perplexed. Their hopes concerning the glorious kingdom which prophet and seer had foretold seemed to be fast fading, and He whom they trusted was to redeem Israel, was speaking to them not of a crown but of a cross. Yet at this distressful moment there falls upon their ears His words of rest, “Let not your hearts be troubled.” Then He tells them of wonderful things that they should see by faith, when their eyes should no longer behold Him in their midst. Things which they would possess in the new day beyond His death, which would banish from their hearts all trouble, perplexity, uncertainty and doubt, and reveal to them the meaning of His words, “Part with Me.” We too may listen, for the day which He spoke of has come, and His words tell of things which whilst still His own possession are the portion of all who love Him until His promised return shall be fulfilled.

These communication are conveyed in the replies of our Lord to the four questions addressed to Him respectively by Peter, “Lord whither goest Thou; why cannot I follow thee now?”; by Thomas, “Lord we know not whither Thou goest, and how can we know the way?”; by Philip, “Lord shew us the Father and it sufficeth us?”; by Judas, not Iscariot, “Lord, how is it that Thou wilt manifest Thyself unto us and not unto the world?” To these our Lord answered in relation to the following,—

1. The house of His Father. Verses 1-3.
2. The way to His Father. Verses 4-7.
3. The knowledge of His Father. Verses 8-11.
8. The peace of His Father. Verse 27.

1. The house of His Father. Verses 1-3.

Firstly He tells them of the many abiding places therein, where the many families in heaven and earth,
which constitute the universal “All things,” have their portion assigned to them by the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. (Eph. 3. 15. N.T.)

Secondly He speaks of a period during which He would not be visible to mortal vision, a space of time which would be characterized by faith in Himself unseen, just as in former times God the invisible was trusted in and obeyed. This period would begin by His leaving them to go to the Father, it would close with His return, not even then to remain on earth with them, but to take them to have part with Him in the heavenly place prepared in the Father’s house by His entrance there as the glorified Man. For His presence as the Forerunner in heaven left nothing undone as regards the preparation of the place, whilst the blood He was about to shed would secure the title of all His redeemed church to it. Meanwhile the application of His present service, indicated by the feet-washing of ch. 13 would fit them for the present enjoyment of it before they should actually enter it, at His return. Truly blessed is this goal of the heavenly calling. The glory of Messiah will be great when according to the sure word of prophecy He will sit upon the throne of David, all nations serving Him, all kings bowing down before Him. But before all this a transcendent glory awaits His own, whom He shall receive to Himself that where He is they may be also.

It is the fact of this that He here speaks of, the revelation of the manner of its accomplishment waited until He had entered the glory, and from thence He also made this known to His servant Paul. (1 Thess. 4. 15-17.) “I will come again and receive you unto Myself.” Such is His precious and as yet unfulfilled promise. It is His own personal return of which He speaks. It did not take place at Pentecost, for that was the coming of the Holy Spirit whom He had sent from the Father. Neither is it fulfilled in the hour of death, for that is the departure of the believer to be with His Lord. But as He came in person at His first advent, so again will He come, “I,” “Myself,” words could not be more distinct. Departed saints are waiting for this, living saints are expecting it. Before the day of wrath shall break upon this Christ-rejecting world; before the final form of wicked rebellion shall be consummated in the Antichrist; before the opened heavens shall reveal Him as King of kings and Lord of lords; He is coming to catch up His saints sleeping, waking, to meet Him in the air, that they may have part with Him in the blessedness of His own place in the eternal joy of the Father’s house.

Such will be the close of this waiting time, and if we are to know the special character of that which fills the interval for our hearts, it is in the first case necessary that this most blessed hope should have its true place in our affections. It will purify our manner of life, it will cause us to hold lightly the things of earth, it will set our minds on things above, and it will give the Lord the place He desires in the love of our hearts, causing an earnest expectation to be our continual attitude. No, He has not revealed the day nor the hour, He has fixed no date, but we have His word and it is enough. In the strongest terms He has assured us of its certainty of fulfilment, “If it were not so I would have told you.”

“Let not your heart be troubled.” If we are to know the present joy
which belongs to eternal life, the first thing is that the heart should be at rest. Not burdened with uncertainty and anxious care and apprehension of the future, but finding the rest of faith in the three provisions of His love.

1. Believe in Me though unseen.
2. Believe that My place in heaven is for you.

1. Gather up in the Old Testament all that the unseen God was to Israel, in faithfulness, loving kindness, mercy, goodness, support; this is now what Christ is for His own, yea and more also.

2. For all is enhanced by the place of sonship and acceptance that is ours in Christ; the fulness of spiritual blessings in the most blessed place, and in the most blessed way, in the Beloved.

3. Surely is He coming, then shall faith be exchanged for the sight of Himself, then

“We shall behold Him whom not seen we love, We shall be with Him whom we long to see.”

2. The way to His Father. Verses 4-7.

This the Lord introduces by a statement which awakened in Thomas a desire which he voiced for the others. The statement was “Whither I go ye know and the way ye know.” They did not think they knew, yet in these words was the summary of His life’s work. He had come from the Father and had often told them so, and of the way by which He was returning in which they would follow Him afterwards. Still they had not comprehended, neither had they entered into the meaning of all He had said and done, nor had they understood that the way to the Father lay through His death, and that beyond it stretched the path of life and the fulness of joy, which He would share with His redeemed. So He tells them the three great facts concerning Himself.

1. I am the way. Not I am the way as meaning example, as if to reach God all that was needed is a copy of the Christ-life, to live after His fashion and do as He did. Vain is indeed the attempt for the children of Adam’s race, yet such a thought is alas only too common. For this leaves out the great necessity of the cross, and denies that man is a fallen creature who needs a Saviour, a new life and a new power. “Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, ye have no life in you.” The appropriation of His death is the only way to the Father, and this also involves a moral exit from the world. Life is not found here where Christ has died, and all that is in this world of lust and pride is not of the Father.

Again that pure and spotless humanity which came out of heaven is now on the resurrection side of death, and if we would have part with Him, this is the way our faith must travel.

2. I am the truth. He is it, and in Him only is the truth of God revealed and known. “This,” says John, “is the message we have heard of Him and declare unto you, that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all.” The truth does not admit of anything being hidden. God has declared in truth, and in that declaration is the whole truth, so that no suspicion of ought in God that will contradict it can ever have place. Lastly this revelation contains nothing but the truth, it is without admixture of erroneous thought of the least kind. To know Him is to know the truth, not as
continually seeking after it, but ever desiring to be more filled in the knowledge of Him who is the truth.

3. I am the life. This is founded on the way and the truth, for through His death a sphere of heavenly glory has been opened, in connection with which the Son of God imparts, sustains and provides all that is truly life. No shadow of death rests upon this life. The believer lives because Christ lives and consequently lives in the love of God from which nothing above, below or on earth can separate.

"No one comes to the Father but by Me." An absolute exclusive statement spoken with His divine authority and knowledge. Neither through angel, spirit or saint can life be found; not by human effort, culture or education; not by religious sacraments, penance or self-abnegation, but by Him alone, whom the Father has sanctified and sent into the world. All others must stand aside in this matter. World teachers, religious leaders, universities and schools of thought, natural philosophy and the science of men; one and all are utterly unable to bring a sinner to God. Christ alone in virtue of His redeeming work upon the cross is all sufficient to lead into life by the new and living way which He has opened through the veil, that is to say His flesh laid down in death, from which He has risen triumphant. To know Him is life eternal; not to know Him is to be without hope, and without God. All centres in a person, and He the Son.

(To be continued.)

FRUIT BEARING.

"He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper" (Psalm 1).

An alternative reading to the last sentence of this verse is, "Whatsoever he produceth shall come to maturity." A lovely thought and worth careful consideration.

The bearing of fruit is put first, for fruit is really first of all for God, while the leaves are more particularly for the healing of men. The fruit shews the true life of the tree; the reason for its existence is its fruit, though the leaves in a Christian's life have an important place. Notice, "Jesus began both to do and to teach" (Acts 1. 1). "He was a prophet mighty in deed and word" (Luke 24. 19). And He was even the same that He said from the beginning (John 8. 25). The fig tree that had no fruit came under the Lord's curse.

All the Lord's trees are evergreens. No winter cold can destroy their verdure; yet unlike many evergreens that we know they are fruit bearers as well.

You may be suffering for your own folly, and God's hand may be upon you in chastening love, but that same hand is under you and you cannot sink.
THE GLORY OF GOD AND THE FATHER'S PURPOSE.

James McBroom.

IT is a conception worthy of the blessed God that He will one day have the whole universe filled with love and light and glory and through the MAN of His right hand. Even now it captivates the hearts of all who have drank from the river of His grace. It is fitting that the humbled Christ, should be glorified, and that the creation which beheld His sorrow, shame and woe should witness His glory and join in the Hallelujahs that will fill the vast creation of God.

This blessed theme covers a large part of Scripture and is fruitful of anticipatory praises. “For the earnest expectation of the creature waits for the manifestation of the sons of God. Because the creature itself shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.” But there is another side to the glory which is yet deeper, fuller and richer and which connects more vitally with the counsels of eternity as well as with the very heart of God. There is an inside to this vast scene of promised glory, where the sons of the Father’s richest and eternal thoughts shall rest in the joy of that love which purposed them for that place long ere time began.

Within the depths of the glory, in that home of love, the family of many sons will dwell, and in their praises the Father shall live for ever more. For He has chosen them that they should be before Himself in love for ever. (Eph. 1 3, 4.)

In that eternal life which ever was with the Father, every movement is in perfect concert with the Father’s will and yet governed by the perfect law of liberty; divine life cannot be fettered. The life of hopes, fears and desires that belong to this world will have gone for ever, and His redeemed sons will be at home in the love of the Father who is at once the origin, source and governing power of all that heavenly bliss.

There the Father’s well beloved Son will find His deepest delight. He, the eternal Object of the Father’s delight, came forth to declare all that was in the Father’s heart, and this could not be done apart from the Cross with all its depth of woe. But having died and risen again He has many brethren, the sons of the Father’s choice, who had been given Him by the Father. Conformed to His own image in nature, relationship and affection they will enter as holy brethren with Him into all that He has won. Not only subjects of sovereign grace, wondrous as that is, but with the Son before the Father in the life, love and joy proper to the relationship into which He has brought them, and loved with the love wherewith the Father loves the Son.

This inner glory is the source from which all the publicly displayed glory in the millennial kingdom will flow; all the splendour of the celestial and terrestrial glory must take character from this. The long continued chaos of sin, sorrow, tears and woe will be turned into an ordered system of divine delight, and all filled and upheld from that inner home of paternal and filial delight.
The inconceivable wealth of love and glory native to the Holy Trinity and reciprocated within the Godhead no creature can tell, but we know that the Lord spoke of both the love and the glory in John 17. It is beyond our comprehension, but we can rejoice in the thought of it, and see how wonderful a character it gives to the Father's love-gift to the Son. The sons of eternal choice were that gift, but whatever wealth of blessing that choice means for them, they were first of all a gift from the Father to the Son. These glorious communings and operations within the Godhead before time began, speak to us of the holy nature and character of God in love's divinest ways. Instead of an inert and dim and distant God who could only be known in relations taken in time, when, one of the Divine Persons came to bring Him within our range, we are led to contemplate Father, Son, and Holy Spirit in the activities of eternity choosing sons, promising eternal life and administering wisdom for myriads not yet in being. (Eph. 1. 4; Titus 1. 2; 1 Cor. 2. 7).

In the way taken to fulfil the eternal purpose of God is seen the supreme exhibition of unfathomable wisdom. The Cross is its centre (Acts 2. 23). It is the grand unifying power of the universe of bliss. By becoming Man the Son brought an eternal relationship into Manhood, for He did not cease to be the Son when He became man. But the heirs who were predestinated to sonship were then in a condition far beneath their original created state, they lay under the power of death. For these in that state the Son went into death. The Son in nature and relationship eternal became a Man to die, that the claims of Divine holiness might be met. The Son of the Father's bosom came forth from that eternal splendour, the sent one of the Father. As dwelling in that bosom, He knew by nature and essential being all that was there. He has died, and as risen from the dead He is declared Son of God according to the Spirit of holiness by resurrection from the dead; and now being glorified on high He is the Firstborn of many brethren, the many sons that God is leading home to glory.

Were it conceivable that God could have had a family of sons in glory that had never fallen He could not have been known in the deeper depth of His being as He is now known in redemption. A heaven filled with men in the state Adam was previous to the fall could not have given intelligent response in adoring worship to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. The enemy could have said, You have fenced them in, let them be tried. This is exactly what has been done and after trial, sin and death, all heaven's resources have been displayed in the redemption and recovery of men.

By his fall man gained an immense range of knowledge, a knowledge which but for the intervention of God must have condemned him to everlasting misery. That intervention was the full revelation of God—Father, Son and Holy Spirit—in the counsels of eternity. And the issue of those counsels is, that those whom the Father gave to the Son, fitted and formed by the Holy Spirit, as sons in company with the eternal Son, and in the full blessing of knowing the Father shall raise suited praises which shall delight that Father for evermore. The full revelation shall secure a full response.
In the glories of the millennial kingdom we reach the consummation of the ways of God in time. The purposes of eternity meet and combine there to make known in the creation God's appreciation of His Son. We are now in the Spirit's day and eternity to come is called the day of God, but between these comes the day of Christ. In that day the Church, the bride of the Lamb, is seen as the holy city in which both the counsels of eternity and the resources of God in His times-ways are set forth in display. All that which in principle Abel, Enoch, Noah, and all the others stood for is found there, while at the same time in her own peculiar heavenly calling and constitution she abides the witness to the eternal purpose of God.

This is God's glorious answer to all the sin and sorrow of the ages, yea it explains as nothing could the wondrous riddle of Calvary. But yet it is not the end. The Millenium with all its extent of glory, and when a delivered creation will shout its hallelujahs and pour all its treasures around that glorious MAN whom men despised and slew, is but a means to an end, but what an end? Every question solved, the eternal supremacy of God established and put upon an unalterable and unchallengable basis in a scene where breakdown can never come. There the Father, Son, and sons in full Holy Spirit power will abide in the incorruptible blessedness of the glory which is proper to the paternal and filial relationships which existed before the world was made.

The glorious blaze of Christ's day in which He was seen as the centre of the throng of worlds will have passed away, but this deeper, calmer, fuller and everlasting joy and glory will continue. This must, as standing in the Father's love, abide for ever for the Father's eternal delight, it is the fruit of the Father's counsel which alone is the true manifestation of the Father's heart.

Concerning Thoughts.

Let a wicked man set up a lust for his thoughts to dally with and the devil will soon be at his elbow to assist him, and if he can stir up the flesh that is in the christian to harbour thoughts of evil, he will not be long in bringing some fuel to increase that inward fire. And shall the Holy Spirit be less ready to encourage thoughts of good and of Christ? We may be sure that He is ever ready to feed our thoughts with Christ, to take of His things and shew them to us.

"As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he." How essential it is that our thoughts should be directed towards God. Read Phil. 4. 8, 9. and learn the great fact that as you roam in that paradise of thought, God, the God of peace, will walk with you. Cherish evil thoughts and the devil will be with you, cherish thoughts of good things and God with be your companion.
IT was a day of darkness in the history of Israel. A remnant had returned from the captivity. Under the prophets Haggai and Zechariah the work of God in the temple had prospered. Alas the recovery had been of short duration and Malachi, the messenger of the Lord, was sent to present before the people the desperate condition in which they were found. They were calling the proud happy, and they who wrought iniquity were set up. Yet they did not feel their true need and so did not acknowledge their sinful state. They were satisfied with that which was merely external. Their moral condition was overlooked entirely.

"Wherein have we despised Thy Name?"
"Wherein have we polluted Thee?"
"Wherein have we wearied Him?"
"Wherein have we robbed Thee?"
"What have we spoken against Thee?"

These were some of their insolent questions, when, by His servant, Jehovah sought to arouse their consciences, in order that they might return to Him.

Their state was much like that which prevails among those who profess the Name of Christ in these days. Of the Church, in its Laodicean condition, the Lord says: "Thou sayest, I am rich and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable and poor and blind and naked."

Thus history is repeating itself. Man has failed in every dispensation. And—let us not forget it—each one of us has had a share in the breaking down of the church in the present period of God's grace.

In the midst of the failure and sin which marked the returned remnant there were those who loved the Lord, and they knew one another and lamented over the condition of things which existed. Of them we read,

"Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another; and the Lord hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before Him for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon His Name" (Mal. 3. 16).

These formed a remnant as it were amid the remnant of Israel. They had no title to leave the rest, but, in the midst of all the weakness and wickedness which surrounded them, they sought to answer to the Lord's mind for His people.

The fear of Jehovah and the Name of Jehovah have repeated reference in this short prophecy. Fearing His Name it became a centre for them and drew them into communion one with another. It has been suggested that the adverb "often" in the sentence, "They that feared the Lord spake often one to another," should be omitted. What characterised them was that they spake one to another. They found common delight and expressed it openly to those who were of kindred feeling with themselves. And should not this be so with His loved ones to-day? Should we not speak together of our gracious Lord and of His interests freely when we meet together day by day.

"And the LORD hearkened and heard," He listened, He bowed His
holy ear to hear and He heard in detail that which was the subject of their conversation. The doubled expression would seem to carry this. He hearkened with interest and He heard their words with pleasure. His delight in their communications was such that "a book of remembrance was written before Him" on their behalf. "For them that feared the Lord." Their names were enregistered in heaven. We know not their names. Earth published them not on its rolls of fame. But on high they were enrolled among the mighty who overcame all the influences of the time in which they lived. They were the overcomers of the hour.

The words, "And that thought upon His name," many encourage any who, being shut in, or banished for the Name's sake from the midst of other believers, cannot speak with kindred souls. Such can have high honour equally with their more favoured brethren. They can think upon His Name.

Attention has been called to the fact that in the Greek version of the Old Testament (called the Septuagint), the word translated thought is used for "Taking an inventory." These lovers of Jehovah took an inventory of His Name. The revelation He had given of Himself under that Name of grace and power was dwelt upon in detail by them. They pondered over all that it meant. The self-existent One, who was and is and ever will be. The faithful-to-promise, covenant-keeping, unchanging Lord occupied their attention. Their meditation of Him was sweet and was appreciated by Him. Speaking of, or thinking of Him were alike valued in His sight.

It is said that a well-known servant of God stated that he would at times make what he termed a necklace of pearls of the names and titles of the Lord Jesus. Taking the letters of the alphabet he would link one of His names or titles with each of the letters. (Some one hundred and thirty of these distinctions and designations may be found. Almost every letter of the alphabet may be supplied with at least one of them). Doing thus he had and we may have our thoughts profitably engaged as the manifold graces and excellencies and glories of our Lord come before us. Thinking of Him in His various beauties and offices will lead us to speak of Him to others, for, as we read, "While I was musing the fire kindled and at last I spake with my tongue." May it be so with us, increasingly!

"And they shall be Mine, said the LORD of Hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him." What encouragement is here! For us, as Christians, the day is near when the Lord's special treasure will be made up. He is coming to take His own, all of them, to be for ever with Himself. Meanwhile He will care for them in all the details of their lives and goings, making all that seems most contrary turn out for their blessing. Then will be seen the result of serving God in the midst of all that was opposed to His glory. The portion of the overcomer will be to eat of "the tree of life which is in the midst of the Paradise of God;" to receive the "white stone," a mark of His personal approval; to eat of "the hidden manna;" to "inherit all things," and much else of everlasting blessing and enjoyment. May we so act as to gain these indications of our Lord's approbation!
ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

The Hardening of Pharaoh's Heart.

“I heard recently a pulpit comment on Exodus 9, 12, the speaker stating that the author was mistaken in supposing that God hardened Pharaoh's heart. I do not accept that explanation; but the verse is a puzzle to me. It has been suggested to me that the translation in the A.V. is inaccurate; but on looking up the R.V. and J.N.D.'s translation, I find they seem to agree. Can you tell me if the translation is at fault—or, if it is correct, what the statement really means?” WELLS.

THERE can be no doubt that Ex. 9, 12, and all the ten passages where it is said that God hardened the heart of Pharaoh are correctly translated in the A.V.; and to say that the author of Exodus was mistaken as to this act of God is to deny the divine inspiration of the book, and to overlook Paul's comment on this solemn episode in Roman's 9. Paul there cites God's dealings with Pharaoh as an outstanding instance of His sovereignty—“He hath mercy on whom He will have mercy, and whom He will He hardeneth” (Romans 9. 17. 18). But let no one suppose that God is unrighteous in this, or that He acts in an arbitrary way, or that He needs any sentimental defence for His acts. We have only to consider the story as it is given in Exodus to see how just and righteous He was in this as in all His ways with men.

Chapter 1 shews us the sort of men these Pharaohs who knew not Joseph were, and how determined they were to exterminate God's chosen people, or failing that to make their lives most bitter by a cruel bondage. They were most willing tools of the devil in this. In chapter 2, the cry of His people came up before God and He heard their groanings and rose up to deliver them. He had "endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath" that had oppress them, but He had not overlooked their wicked brutality and now the time had come for the recompense. "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay, saith the Lord" (Romans 12. 19).

God knew what sort of man Pharaoh was, He did not make him what he was, his own wickedness did that, but He dealt with him as He found him, according to Ps. 18, "With the merciful Thou wilt shew Thyself merciful ... and with the froward Thou wilt shew Thyself froward." Pharaoh had shewn no mercy, and now he is shewn none; he had oppress the people of God with a heavy hand and he has now to feel the weight of God's hand, and God knew from the beginning that he would defy Him for He said to Moses, "I am sure that the king of Egypt will not let you go" chapter 3, and yet He bore with him long and still gave him opportunities for repentance.

In chapter 4. 21, God says for the first time, "I will harden his heart." This does not mean that He would make a soft heart hard, or act unrighteously towards a guiltless man, but, knowing what his heart already was, He would declare it and shew how unyielding it was and how determined Pharaoh was to continue in his defiant course. God "left him to his own obstinacy and rebellion, and withdrew the favour or benevolence by which alone he might have been brought to relent." This attitude on Pharaoh's part towards God comes clearly out on the first
appeal that Moses makes to him, he says, “Who is the Lord, that I should obey His voice to let Israel go? I know not the Lord, neither will I let Israel go?” (chapter 5. 2); and he went out and commanded the taskmasters to increase the miseries of the people whom God claimed as His own. That was the commencement of the long conflict between God and Pharaoh, behind whom were the “gods of Egypt”—evil spirits in opposition to God;—and then God sent him this judicial hardening, so that he continued his chosen career without fear of consequences, for God would shew that He was against such a man and his conduct, and that none could oppose His merciful designs and succeed.

Chapter 7. 13 tells us that Pharaoh’s heart was stubborn (New Trans.), chapter 18. 15, 32 and so on, that he hardened his heart, and thus by his own wickedness he became a vessel of wrath in contrast to Israel who were at that time vessels of mercy. These are the two sides of God’s dealings with men. He endures with much longsuffering the rebellious, but at last He manifests His power and wrath against them, while He shews mercy to those whom He has before prepared unto glory. This is the subject of Romans 9. God was not responsible for the hardness of Pharaoh’s heart, but He controlled it and made it result in His power and Name being declared throughout all the earth.

Are men responsible to believe God?

“I should be very grateful if you could deal with the following statements that I find are frequently used by people when dealing with them about their need of salvation through “Scripture Truth.”

1. What is to be, will be. I cannot alter this.
2. If I am to be saved, I shall be. Not otherwise.
3. God orders all lives and I can do nothing against His ordering.” LEARNER.

These objections, we believe, generally spring, not from a merely fatalistic cast of mind, but from a heart, that being enmity against God, declines to even consider His gracious advances. And this must be borne in mind in dealing with them. There may be some of course, who are sincere in such an attitude through confounding God’s sovereignty with man’s responsibility, but if these truly desire to know God’s will they shall know the doctrine, and it is certain that no one ever sought after God, humbly and sincerely in vain.

It is true that the Lord Jesus said, “No man can come to Me, except the Father which sent Me draw him” but He also said, “him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out” (John 7). He had already said to the Jews, “Ye will not come unto Me, that ye might have life” (chap. 5. 40). He did not say, “Ye cannot come.” And he gave the reason why they would not come. “Had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed Me; for he wrote of Me. But if ye believe not his writings how shall ye believe My words?” (verses 46, 47). The Lord’s lament over Jerusalem shews the falseness of this reasoning. He said, “I would . . . and ye would not!” And again we read, “God will have all men to be saved, and to come to the
knowledge of the truth” (1 Tim. 2. 4). The offer of salvation to all in the gospel is a bona-fide offer.

If men have no hand at all in their destiny why should God command them all everywhere to repent, (Acts 17), and why should He beseech them by His servants to be reconciled to Him, (2 Cor. 6), or why commend His love to them in that Christ died for them while they were yet sinners” (Rom. 5)? Clearly they are responsible to obey His command, to listen to His beseeching and to respond to His love. And those who refuse will most surely be lost. The Scripture never speaks of any being ordained or predestinated to damnation, but it does say, “That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness” (2 Thess. 2). And the same Scripture shews, that, “because they received not the truth, that they might be saved” they shall believe the devil’s lie. It must be one or the other: either God’s truth for the soul’s salvation or the devil’s lie for the soul’s damnation.

God orders the lives of those that obey Him. He is not ordering the lives of those who “turn everyone to his own way,” though He most certainly restrains them, and in long-suffering mercy holds them back from destruction, as many passages of Scripture prove.

“Will you please explain through Scripture Truth an apparent contradiction in Exodus 33—Verse 11. The Lord spake to Moses face to face, as a man speaketh to his friend. Verse 20. He (the Lord) said to Moses Thou canst NOT see my face for there shall no man see me and live. Verse 23. My face shall not be seen. Confirmed by 1 Timothy 6. 16. Whom no man hath seen nor can see?

NORWICH.

THE meaning of the Lord speaking face to face to Moses, is, we should say, that there was no mediator, it was neither by angel, prophet nor vision, but by direct speech that God communicated His will to him. But the Scriptures are clear that neither man nor any other creature, can see or approach unto God, in what He is in His own essential, eternal Being. In addition to the Scripture quoted, there is John 1. 18, “No man hath seen God at any time.” It must be so since God is God; He must ever be in His own Being beyond the comprehension of His creatures or they would be equal to Him; but He has found a way by which He can reveal Himself to them, “the only begotten Son which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him.” The Son has come forth from that unapproachable light and dwelt among us, and the declaration of God that He has made is entirely suited to our condition, first as fallen sinners—He was full of grace, and then as those, who, saved by His grace are brought to Him as His children—He is the truth. According to the revelation God has made of Himself in Christ we may know Him and have fellowship with Him, and we shall dwell in the light of that revelation for ever. But at the same time, it will always be true that God will dwell in light which no man can approach unto; Whom no man hath seen nor can see: to Whom
be glory and power everlasting." J. N. Darby commenting on 1 Tim. 6. 16, says, "Nowhere else is the inaccessible majesty of God, as God, thus presented. His character is often the subject of instruction and manifestation. Here He alone has essential immortality, He dwells in inaccessible light. He is ever invisible to the eyes of men. He alone has power. He has dominion over all that reign. It is God in the abstraction of His essence, in the proper immutability of His being, in the rights of His Majesty, veiled to men." (Synopsis vol. v. p. 158). And since He is so infinitely beyond us we need to serve Him acceptably with reverence and godly fear; and adore Him that He has revealed Himself to us in the love of His heart in His beloved Son.

Commenting on Exodus 33, J. N. Darby says, "God cannot shew His face to Moses. He will hide him while He passes by, and Moses shall see His back parts. We cannot meet God on His way as independent of Him. After He has passed by, one sees the beauty of His ways. Who could have been beforehand in proposing such a thing as the Cross? After God of Himself has done it, then all the perfectness of God in it overflows the heart." (Synopsis, vol. x. p. 119).

What is Sin?

Sin is transgression. It is the deliberate climbing of the fence. Sin is intention. We sin when we are wide awake. There are teachers abroad who would soften words like these. To alter the label on the bottle does not change the character of its contents. Poison is poison, give it whatever name you choose. Let us guard against the men whose pockets are filled with deceptive labels. Let us vigilantly resist all teaching which would chloroform our conscience. Let us call sin by its right name, and let us tolerate no conjuring either with ourselves or others.

Sin is not merely that we break some impersonal law of nature or go against some abstract propriety, but that we rebel against a rightful Sovereign. It is rebellion against God.

Man was made in the image and likeness of God, to be His representative in the world, and it is as though a ruler of a province declared war upon the central authority, and used against it the very weapons with which he had been entrusted. Such is sin: in the very members of the body of a man which should be instruments of righteousness, this rebellion works.

We cannot cast the blame upon our circumstances, temperament, bodily organisation, and what others do. It is the "I" that sins, the "I" is responsible. It may be that all these things combined to lead me astray, but they would not have led me astray if I had been right, and where, and what I ought to be.
The Deity of the Lord Jesus, and the necessity for it.

We can understand the envy with which the kings of Egypt would view the rise and progress of Israel. They had held that nation as slaves for many generations but had been compelled by the will of Jehovah to release them, and had seen Jerusalem become the most magnificent and wealthiest city on earth under the rule of David and Solomon. Small wonder that at the first evidence of weakness Shishak came up against that city with a great army and pillaged the Temple and the king’s house, and took away the priceless treasure of them, including the shields of gold that Solomon had made. Then Rehoboam, that feeble and foolish son of a great father, does not appear to have put up any resistance; he let the glory of the city go without protest. What did it matter? He could substitute brass for gold, and brass looks like gold, almost; peace seemed cheap at the price. And so it was when he went up to the house of the Lord, brasen shields went up before him instead of shields of fine gold, and when his religious duties were done they were committed to the guard for safe keeping as though they were the real thing.

What the king of Egypt did to Jerusalem, the devil, who is the god and prince of the world, has done for Christendom. For ages he had held mankind in darkness and bondage, but deliverance came at the advent of the Lord Jesus, who lived among men and died and rose again. Then God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory. Multitudes were delivered from the kingdom of darkness and translated into the kingdom of the Son of the Father’s love, and there was established on earth the kingdom of heaven which was enriched by heavenly treasure: the pure gold of God’s truth concerning His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

But with the decline of living faith and the rise of profession without reality in these modern days, the devil has seen and seized his opportunity, and has laid his envious and ruthless hands upon these treasures and has robbed Christendom of its shields of gold. He could not have done it if there had not been traitors within who were pledged to hold and fight for these treasures—“the faith once for all delivered to the saints.” They have been his allies in this.

The truth as to the person of the Lord is the finest of the gold of our faith; what He is in His own eternal being gives character to it all—“God was manifest in the flesh,” not, “Jesus was a manifestation of God,” as some say, but that He is Himself, in His own person, God. “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. . . . 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. 1-14). But this fine gold has been surrendered at
the devil's bidding; and leaders in Christendom, who ought to have defended it to the death, have surrendered it with other priceless treasures for popularity with the world and in fear of "modern scholarship." Indeed they seem to be well pleased to let these great truths go, for their insubject minds prefer their own investigations to God's revelation, and man's effort to uplift himself is more to them than God's intervention for his redemption, and they have seized the opportunity to substitute their own base brass for God's fine gold. A Christ of their imagination is more to their liking than the Christ of God, a Christ who is stript of the glory of His eternal Deity, and being stript of that supreme glory is stript of every other glory that could be acceptable to God and of use to men. And they think that they are the gainers by the change. "We are rich and increased with goods" they boast, "and have need of nothing," and they know not that "they are wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked" and need to turn again to our Sovereign Lord and buy of Him gold tried in the fire that they may be rich (Revelation 3. 17, 18).

The pretence of approach to God is kept up, but the brasen shields go before them instead of shields of gold, and God will not have their counterfeits. "I am the way, the truth and the life; no man cometh unto the Father but by Me," are our Lord's own words, and they are recorded for us in that Gospel which reveals to us the glory of His divine and eternal being, which indeed is not absent from any part of Scripture; and nothing less than this will do for God. The brasen imitation may suit and fascinate men, but it is an abomination to God, nothing but the pure gold can He accept, and in vain is their worship of Him as long as they teach the doctrines and opinions of men for the gospel of God concerning His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. And nothing but the pure gold of this gospel will satisfy the soul of a man when he is fully awakened to his deep need. When the light of God streams into his conscience and he sees the exceeding sinfulness of his sin, and the greatness of his peril and how far his sin has removed him from God, he will spurn the brass of man's imaginations as a mockery and a sham and confess that there can be for him no salvation in any other Name, but the Name of JESUS—Jehovah the Saviour. As to this, the late Handley Moule wrote, "The human soul, once fully awakened to its needs, to its mysterious greatness and to its mysterious but awfully real sinfulness, can find rest only in the Saviour, who is, in equal truth, one with man and one with God. Such a Saviour bridges as with living adamant the gulf of doom and sin which severs creature from Maker. A saviour who is not quite God is a bridge broken at the farther end."

It is here I would begin; before endeavouring to shew that all Scripture bears witness to the fact that Jesus is the eternal Word, "the Christ, who is over all, God, blessed forever," I would urge the necessity for it. It is a necessity to God, if He is to be known by His creature, and to find His delights in the sons of men, redeemed from all iniquity and purified unto Himself as a peculiar people, zealous of good works; and a necessity to man if he is ever to know God as His God, to be forgiven, and at peace, and find his soul's everlasting satisfaction in Him. The human soul
would grope in vain for light if it were not so; it would cry out hopelessly in its misery, for there would be none to help; there would be "neither voice, nor any to answer, nor any that regarded," as it was when the prophets of Baal cried all the day long to their false god (1 Kings 18. 29). We should be a lost race, wandering stars cut off from our central Sun without hope of restoration to our true orbit and with no outlook but the blackness of darkness for ever, if Jesus were not God; "the only begotten Son which is in the bosom of the Father."

Consider the cry that broke out of the awakened soul of that pagan jailor at Philippi, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" What answer could satisfy that bewildered man, trembling on the brink of a lost eternity? There was but one answer that could satisfy him. Suppose instead of that one and only answer Paul had said, "Believe in Adam, or Abraham, or Moses or John the Baptist." What a mocker of the man's misery he would have been; or suppose he had said, for he was a greater man than them all, "Believe on me and thou shalt be saved." Would not the soul and conscience of the jailor have revolted against the outrage and have turned from him as a blasphemer and an imposter? But how fitting, how satisfying was the answer that he did give, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved and thy house." The whole gospel of God was involved in that answer; it put that seeking sinner into vital contact with Him who of old had said, "Look unto Me and be ye saved all ye ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none beside Me" (Isa. 45. 22), it satisfied him, for it gave him a perfect, because a divine, Saviour.

The necessity for the Word to become flesh did not arise only when that great event took place, it was there from the beginning when sin entered into the world. The patriarch Job felt the necessity and voiced it in memorable words when he said, as he searched for a way by which a man could be just with God. "He is not a man as I am, that I should answer Him, and we should come together in judgment. Neither is there any daysman between us, that might lay his hand upon us both. Let Him take away His rod from me, and let not His fear terrify me: then would I speak, and not fear Him; but it is not so with me" (Job 9). It is not difficult to interpret what his feelings were, for they are the feelings of all who are awakened by God's Spirit to their need. He said in effect: "I know that I have sinned against Him, and if He were a man as I am, I could, having the feelings of a man, understand how I have offended Him; I could go to Him and make restitution for the wrong I have done to Him and so be at peace. But He is not a man as I am, and I cannot measure the demands of His justice against me. The gulf between us is unmeasurable from my side; He is almighty, holy and just, and I am weak, sinful and unholy, and there is no one that I know of to stand betwixt us, who could speak from Him to me, and from me to Him." See how accurately his awakened conscience had gauged the situation: he desired one who could stand betwixt God, infinitely holy and just, and the sinner, guilty and afraid, and put his hand upon them both; He must be equal to God and equal
to men. And says Job, "I do not know such a one. I have felt the need for Him, I have longed for Him and sought for Him but I have not found Him." And Job, be it noted, who expressed his soul's deep longing in these words, was the man who came nearer to perfection than any man of his day; and if he was hopeless and despairing because he had no Daysman, it is plain that the Daysman, the Mediator could not arise among men. If He is to come at all He must come from above and when He comes, He must be able to put His hand upon God; He must be God's equal; pure as God is pure, holy as God is holy, great as God is great: no one less could intervene, or be of any use in this supreme matter to Job or to any other man. Yet He must come low enough to put His hand upon men. He must pass by angels and be one of us, yet sinless, or His touch would defile the throne of God and be unavailing for us. He must represent God and yet be able to identify Himself with us and to take up our vast indebtedness and speak for us. He must be God and man.

Man's extremity is God's opportunity, and the One whom Job could not find on earth has come from heaven, and Jesus, the Virgin's Son, is Emmanuel: God WITH us. Being God, He knew according to God's perfect estimate what the effect to the universe of man's sin was. He knew how the majesty of God was challenged by man's disregard of His will, and what the demands of the eternal throne were in regard to the violation of its just decrees. He knew how man's pride and self will had made him the lawful capture of Satan, and how great was the gulf that separated him from his God, and how powerless he was to right the wrong. He knew the penalty that had to be paid and the work that had to be done and knowing all this He came, saying, "A body hast Thou prepared Me... Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of Me) to do Thy will, O God" (Hebrews 10. 5-7). He became the Son of Man, that He might stand in the place of men, and be lifted up as their substitute and representative and meet the bill of their indebtedness. This involved Him in all the sorrows of Calvary, and there "He gave Himself a ransom for all." If He had not become man He could not have died, if He had not been God His death would have been without value, but now His death accomplished and the ransom paid, He is "the one Mediator between God and man, the Man Christ Jesus."

He stooped from His eternal glory and was made in the likeness of men and being found in fashion as a man, He put His hand upon us, degraded though we were, and He did it tenderly, graciously, so that we are not afraid. He is full of grace and truth and there is no terror for us in His hand; we do not shrink from Him, for He has touched us with the hand of a man, yet He was never less than God, and God has touched us in Him. He has put one hand upon us and the other He has placed upon the throne of God. With the one hand He has offered the fullest satisfaction to every righteous claim of God and with the other He bestows fulness of grace upon men. He brings us to God and gives us a place in His presence without fear, and in everlasting peace, a place established upon an infallible and immovable foundation of divine righteousness.
Things surely believed laid down by Him who is God and Man in His own blessed person.

But if the necessity on man's side was great, it was even greater on God's side: the fulfilment of His purposes and the revelation of the deep love of His heart towards men as well as the glory of His Name all depend upon the Deity of the Lord Jesus. How could God reveal Himself to men who were cut off from Him by their sins? How could He win their hearts from their fear and hatred of Him and deliver them from the darkness in which they groped? How could men love God if they did not know Him, and how could they know Him, since "no man hath seen God at any time unless the only-begotten Son which is in His bosom come forth to declare Him?" It was certainly necessary that these things should be done if ever that great word was to be fulfilled, "And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying. Behold the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain, "for the former things are passed away" (Rev. 21. 3, 4). Before all this could be an accomplished fact the sin of the world must be borne away, and who could do that? It is recorded that, "John (the Baptist) seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1. 29). We are familiar with the words, so familiar that we are but lightly impressed with their immensity and meaning, "The sin of the world!" Think of it! Think of the sin of one city, what man could take that away? or of one street in a city, or of one house in that street, or of one man in that house? Could any man take away his own sin and stand before God, "holy and without blame before Him in love"? for nothing less than that will suit Him. The questions have only to be asked to prove to all who are not wilfully blind that this work could only lie in the hands of the eternal God. Yet as John saw that lowly Stranger from Nazareth moving towards him among the multitudes of Israel, he proclaimed Him to be the taker away of the sin of the world and in that word he proclaimed His Godhead power and worth. No wonder that he was compelled to add, "This is He of whom I said, After me cometh a man which is preferred before me: for He was before me."

That which is written in Revelation 21 shall come to pass for "the words are true and faithful" verse 5. The same voice that cried, "It is finished" on the cross at Golgotha shall be heard saying, "It is done" and God shall rest with the multitude of His redeemed sons, in His own love that has been declared by the Son, and shall be all and in all. Meanwhile He declares, "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life." God Himself is the Fountain, and the thirst of the human soul can only be assuaged and satisfied with God, and God is fully revealed to us in JESUS. For "God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world received up into glory."

"The Deity of Lord" will be continued in our next issue, God willing.
"THE HOUR IS COME."

John 17.

At the close of John 16 the hour had come in which the work should be finished that would bring to a close the sojourn of Jesus on this earth. He has before Him now His departure out of this world to the Father. He has told His disciples in a plain way about it, He says, "I came forth from the Father and am come into the world; again I leave the world and go to the Father" (chap. 16. 28). In another place He speaks of His way there as "the path of life," but it is "In Thy presence there is fulness of joy," and it is "At Thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore" (Ps. 16. 11). It was a rough journey for Him to that fulness of joy, and to those everlasting pleasures, but rough or smooth it was the path of life for Him.

To this home our Lord was now about to take His departure, and His one concern seemed to be about His disciples, who were being left by Him in this world; but He says, "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." The world was not a foe to be dreaded, except we felt inclined to give it a warm corner in our most foolish hearts. Should we feel inclined to do that, instead of overcoming the world we should be overcome by it. It would be the victor and we should be the vanquished. Let us have no dread of it; neither let us have any love for it. The love of the world is not to be harboured in our hearts, but let us see to it that the love of the Father is there. These two cannot exist together in one heart. "If any man love the world the love of the Father is not in him" (1 John 2. 15). The Lord delights to establish our hearts in the love of the Father. He tells us, "The Father Himself loveth you, because ye have loved Me, and have believed that I came forth from God."

And all these things He has spoken for the joy and peace of our hearts, as He spoke them in the first instance for the joy and peace of the hearts of His disciples who were filled with sorrow because they saw He was leaving them. And how could it have been otherwise with them? Had He not been everything to those few who for His sake had lost the world, and now were about to lose Him also? He says, "I will not leave you orphans: I will come to you. Yet a little while and the world seeth Me no more; but ye see Me: because I live ye shall live also. At that day ye shall know that I am in My Father, and ye in Me, and I in you" (John 14. 18-20).

"These words spake Jesus, and lifted up His eyes to heaven and said, Father, the hour is come; glorify Thy Son, that Thy Son also may glorify Thee." All that was necessary for Him to do on the platform of this world was done, and now He looks up to heaven where He may glorify the Father in a way in which He could not glorify Him on earth. He says, "I have glorified Thee..."
The hour is come on the earth; I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do. And now, Father, glorify Thou Me with Thine own self with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was.” His desire is to return to the glory that was His before He took the form of a servant and became in the likeness of men. He glorified the Father upon earth, and now He desires to be glorified by the Father, but with a glory that was His in the past eternity, if we can speak of eternity as having a past character, an unbegun or unbeginning condition. This was a glory that He laid aside when He emptied Himself, taking a bondman’s form, being made in the likeness of men. Nothing other than this could have been suitable for Him in His bondman condition. But now He goes back to the Father to resume that glory that He had before the world was. In Manhood He desires to be brought back to resume the glory that He had with the Father before the beginning of time.

Power over all flesh has been given to Him of the Father that He should give eternal life to as many as the Father had given Him. And this is the life eternal, that they should know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent. This is a life in which lies the true, knowledge and blessed character and power of this that never had beginning. And which never can end; a life now possessed by men, who know and enjoy it as the Father and the Son do.

How infinitely blessed this life is! We know that the Son of God has come, and has given us an understanding that we should know Him that is true; and we are in Him that is true, in His Son Jesus Christ. He is the True God and Eternal Life. How wondrous that we should be able to take account of ourselves as possessors of this divine life; to be able to say that we have it; that we have it by the quickening power of the Father and the Son, that we have it by the indwelling Holy Spirit of the living God; and that we have it by the power of the revelation given to us from the Father through the person of the Son; and in the Son this life is. Therefore he that hath the Son hath the life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life. (1 John 5. 11, 12).

By the voice of the Son of God the one that hears, even though he be in moral death, without life toward God, is made alive. He says, “The hour cometh, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and they that hear shall live.” His voice is the testimony which in this world He rendered in the ears of men. And here He says, “I have manifested Thy name unto the men which Thou gavest Me out of the world; Thine they were, and Thou gavest them Me; and they have kept Thy word. For I have given unto them the words which Thou gavest Me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from Thee, and they have believed that Thou didst send Me.” And for these He prayed, not for the world, “but for them which Thou hast given Me; for they are Thine.” How dear therefore they were to the heart of Jesus, seeing they were the Father’s, and the Father’s gift to the Son. But He says, “All Mine are Thine, and Thine are Mine; and I am glorified in them.” And thus were they of double interest to both the Father and Son. The disciples of Jesus

...
were the gift of the Father to Him, and they were also His own, and He adds, “I am glorified in them.”

And now He was no longer in the world, but His disciples were in it, and He was coming to the Father. And He addresses Him as Holy Father, and says, “Keep through Thine own name those whom Thou hast given Me, that they may be one as We are.” They were not to be in this world as so many units, but in one eternal bond in unity, as the Father and the Son; He says “as We are.” In that name, the name of Holy Father, the Son had kept them, and not one of them had perished, but the son of perdition, that the Scripture might be fulfilled.

And now He was coming to the Father, but speaking these things in the world, that His disciples might have His joy fulfilled in them. They were allowed to hear the words that broke from the heart of the Son, and which came with all the love of His faithful heart into the ears of the Father, and also into the ears of His disciples.

“I have given them Thy word.” In verse 8 He says, “The words which Thou hast given Me I have given them, and they have received them, and have known truly that I came out from Thee, and they have believed that Thou didst send Me.” These words were, I think, more the various communications received from the Son to set before His followers for their observance and growth in the mind of God; but “Thy Word,” as we have it here is I have no doubt His Testimony, and therefore does He say, “I have given them Thy Word; and the world hath hated them; because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.” It was that which separated them entirely from this world, and therefore have they the hatred of the world. He does not pray that they should be taken out of the world, but that the Father should keep them out of the evil. They are not of the world, He says, even as I am not of the world. Sanctify them through Thy truth; Thy word is truth. And this word was the separating power between them and the world. But this awoke a storm of godless wrath against those who had received that word. As a great power used to bring this separation to pass He says, “For their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth.” He leaves this world altogether and ascends into heaven, that their hearts should follow Him into that home where He had gone.

But if He did not pray for the world, He did for all them who would believe in Him through their word; “that they all may be one; as Thou Father art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in us, that the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me.” It is here, and in this, that we have so miserably failed. That the Son will give eternal life to all that the Father has given Him cannot be questioned. But this is that which He does, not that which He may use us to bring to pass by our faithfulness, or by any other means; but as no one can come to the Son, except the Father who has sent Him draw each individual soul by His own almighty power, it is also true that “They shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard and learned of the Father,
The hour is come unto Me” (John 6. 44, 45). The operations of Divine grace are Sovereign. It is Jesus who gives eternal life, and it is to as many as the Father has given Him that He gives it. New Birth—Eternal Life—and Salvation, are of the free-giving of God. Were it not so, it were not found in the possession of one single soul. We cannot therefore wonder when we see souls wandering in their crooked and blind way in the black and dark night of their unbelief, as though the light and salvation of God had never visited them, and not one footprint of Christ had been left on this naked earth, and as though the earth was but a playground for hell and for death, a rendezvous for all fell, invisible and infernal spirits, but though things we see may appear like this, it is not true. It is all the result of man’s natural hatred of God, and of his hatred also of every one who cleaves to Him as the One Holy and True God. Christ was refused, persecuted, cast out, crucified, and slain of men. Of course they keep Christmas, but with the devil himself as master of ceremonies. But after all these have but a name to live, and are morally dead, dead in their sins. They are believers in name only, but as to the life of God, there is not a pulse of Divine life in their whole moral being.

As to those who believe on Him through the word of the apostles, He says He prays for them, “That they all may be one; as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in Us; that the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me.” “As Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee.” This is, I think, in life and nature, aim and object. One in us, without one divergent thought, one mind, heart and nature. John says in his first epistle, that what they had seen and heard in Jesus they reported to the disciples, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ (1 John 1). That these may be one in us, that the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me. One in the Father and the Son in the unity of the Spirit. This we should have been, and had we been faithful it would have had a great effect upon the world. Whether the world would have believed had believers given it this mighty evidence, or whether it would not we cannot say. The world did not get that mighty evidence, but the unfaithfulness of the many who had but a name without one pulse of divine life spread abroad their corrupting influence, so that Christendom has become like to Israel in the days of the prophet Malachi. “Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another; and the Lord hearkened and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before Him for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon His name. And they shall be Mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in the day when I make up My jewels; and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him.” All the others shall perish without mercy.

“And the glory which Thou gavest Me I have given them; that they may be one, even as We are one; I in them, and Thou in Me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that Thou hast sent Me, and hast loved them, as Thou hast loved Me.” And the world that can only be onlookers as to the place the saints
shall have in the Father’s love, only onlookers, not participaters, shall see the greatness of the blessing that shall be theirs who are partakers of the same love wherewith the Father loves the Son. And the desire of the heart of Christ is that those given to Him by the Father, might be with Him where He is, “That they may behold My glory, which Thou hast given me; for Thou lovedst Me before the foundation of the world.” Here the Son’s existence with the Father is declared—Son of God and Son of Man, one Person and loved by the Father before the world’s foundation!

And now His appeal is to the righteous Father, and He has to say, “The world hath not known Thee.” He had been in it, had passed through it, and it had seen Him, but all He has to say of them is, “They have seen and hated both Me and My Father.” But of His followers He can say, “These have known that Thou hast sent Me.”

The rivers of water that keep the Christian fresh and fruitful cannot fail; they are described in Zechariah 14. 8, “In summer and winter shall it be.” That is, the drought of summer does not diminish the flow of them, nor does the cold of winter freeze them. And this is the secret of the fruitful bough and the ever green leaf.

What an unspeakable blessing it is to be a tree planted by the Lord in His garden—“Ye are God’s husbandry” (1 Cor. 3), there to be watered by the rivers of His grace, to bring forth the fruit that He purposed we should produce when He planted us! Let us be subject to His will, glad to be in hands that our fruit may come to maturity for His praise.

JESUS! to whom each knee shall bend
And every voice be praise
To Thee shall joyful hymns ascend
Through everlasting days.
3. The Knowledge of His Father.
Verses 8-11.

The request of Philip, "Lord shew us the Father and it sufficeth us," was occasioned by the statement with which our Lord followed His assertion of Himself as the way to the Father. He added, "If ye had known Me ye should have known My Father also, and from henceforth ye know Him and have seen Him." The presentation of the moral character and excellence of God was perfect, but the reply of Philip shows how little they had understood of this. They knew and they did not know. They had the outward acquaintance and they loved Him, but the inward perception of the true meaning of His presence was lacking. It came to them later when they received the Spirit, then indeed they contemplated His glory, a glory as of an only begotten with a father, full of grace and truth. But the natural man has no eyes for this and prefers some display that will appeal to the vision, and this would seem to underlie Philip's exclamation, "Lord, shew us the Father and it sufficeth us." Gently and tenderly does the Lord turn their minds from the material to the spiritual. "Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known Me, Philip?"

In all that wondrous path of deeds done and words spoken, they had not discerned the one essential end of which these were the signs and witness, that in Him God was manifested in flesh, the Father, the only true God was revealed. A revelation which makes all other conceptions of God incomplete. Yet the inner consciousness of the emptiness of the heart without the finality of this is evidenced in Philip's words. There had been seen in former days partial glimpses of the glory of God, rifts in the thunder clouds of His power; parts of His ways seen in creation and law, but how little a portion heard of Himself, c.f. Job 26. 14. A longing heart could cry, "What is His name, and what is His Son's name if thou canst tell?" (Prov. 30. 4). But still God remained hidden, until in full orb'd splendour, to the opened eyes of those born blind, He stood manifested in Him who was with the Father and eternally one with Him. "The only begotten Son who is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him." "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father." Reader, believest thou this, and hast found thine everlasting joy in Him? for this is the fundamental basis which underlies His words, "Part with Me."

"I am in the Father and the Father in Me." In the faith of this absolute oneness is found the full satisfaction, the unending blessedness of all that God can bestow, even to know Him, and Jesus Christ whom He has sent. In Him the Father dwelt, in Him bodily is the fulness of Godhead revealed, and to know Him is to reach the finality which eternal ages will not exhaust. The words He spoke, the works He did, gathered together by the Spirit in the Gospel records, were not from Himself, all was from the Father abiding in Him, acting, speaking through the Son. How precious are these Scriptures when thus we read them with opened eyes to the glory so manifested in the Son of God.
Grace, tenderness, forgiveness, compassion, love; marvellously blended with the hatred of evil, because it kept men from knowing Him. Then with sin He would make no promise, even though its removal involved the suffering of the cross. Such was the declaration of the Father who was in Him, evidenced in power by His works, and in love by His words.


The importance which our Lord attached to this is evident by the words with which He commenced, "Verily, verily I say unto you," thus emphasizing the place He would have with the Father, and the far reaching consequences of this to His own. He was leaving them on earth, but the glorifying of His Father would be continued by them in His absence. At the same time He would still be working with them for the same object, but that which He would do through them, would be connected with a higher purpose than that with which He had been concerned hitherto. His Messianic mission had been to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, and regarding this, the prophet Isaiah had said of Him, "I have laboured in vain, I have spent My strength for naught, and in vain" (Isa. 49. 4). But there was a greater work for Him to do, so the answer of Jehovah follows, (ver. 6), "It is a light thing that thou shouldest be My servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and restore the preserved of Israel: I will also give Thee for a light to the Gentiles, that Thou mayest be My salvation unto the end of the earth." This greater thing was connected with matters kept secret from the foundation of the world. In those far-off ages, Christ had seen the church in the Divine purpose, and and to Him it was a pearl of great price. He saw how great its value for the glory of God; its beauty so fair as His own counterpart; that for love of it, He was willing to part with all, and to pay the ransom price to possess it, in blood and death upon the cross. Until He had accomplished this He was straitened. He could neither reveal the purpose, nor manifest the power for its formation, which His resurrection and the gift of the Holy Spirit would provide. This being brought to pass, and Christ ascended to the Father, He is fitting and preparing the Church, His bride for presentation to Himself. At the same time He has given gifts to the members of His body so that they may be associated with Him in this greater work connected with His place with the Father. Thus ascended in glory Christ becomes the source of greater works than He had done in His humiliation.

How great then must be the privilege of such service in the knowledge that there is no lack of supply, no straitening of resource for those who walk in absolute dependence upon Christ the Head, and are unhindered by sectarian bias, which limits the scope of this service.

The outward profession of Christianity lies in ruin, and amongst those who love the same Lord in truth there are great searchings of heart for the divisions which keep them asunder. Still our Lord's assurance given here to His disciples holds good, "If ye shall ask anything in My Name I will do it." This is the resource of faith such as prompted the Spirit-given petitions of the prisoner of the Lord, in Eph. 1. 17-23 and 3. 14-21.
So praying in the Spirit, the answer of the Head for the members is infallible in providing the work of the ministry for the edifying of the body of Christ, and which sanctifies and cleanses by the separating power of the word. It is this which keeps the heart in the love of God, and continues to build up in our most holy faith until He come.

In the passage before us, we may see how "Part with Me," consists in the continuation of the witness of grace begun by the word of reconciliation to God in Christ, when upon earth, but now carried on in connection with His place in glory, in the vessel, His church, through which shall finally be displayed the glory of God, then shall the whole universe become vocal with the praise of the Father who sent the Son.

"Whatsoever ye shall ask in My Name, that will I do." This involves representation and identity of interest. That the one asking, desires simply the will of God, or to use the words of Paul, (Phil. 1. 20),

"According to my earnest expectation and hope, . . . Christ shall be magnified in my body whether it be my life or death." Such was the desire of the man for whom to live was Christ, and to die, gain.

"If ye shall ask anything in My Name, I will do it." "Anything" for no detail of our path and circumstance is unimportant. In such things, if the eye is single, occasion is afforded for the formation in us of His own moral character in which the Father ever found delight. Thus in the most commonplace life, and in matters which seem to us so insignificant, there may be wrought that which shall be to praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ. But let us not forget the condition which is expressive of real heart desire, "Ask;" and the object which is involved, "In My Name." For as His representatives before the world, we are called to walk as He walked in love and obedience, for the glory of God and the Father by Him.

(To be continued)

NOT PROVING BUT ENJOYING THE TRUTH.

"THERE are those who by God's mercy, have no doubt on the subject of our Lord's Godhead. To mere dialecticians their case may appear to be one of sheer intellectual stagnation. But the fact is, that they possess, or at least that they have altogether within their reach, a far higher measure of real 'life' than is even suspected by their critics. They are not seeking truth; they are enjoying it. They are not like Alpine climbers still making their way up the mountain side; they have gained the summit, and are gazing on the panorama which is spread around and beneath them. It is even painful to them to think of 'proving' a truth which is now the very life of their souls. In their whole spiritual activity, in their prayers, in their regular meditations, in their study of Holy Scripture, in their habitual thoughts respecting the eternal Future, they take Christ's Divinity (Deity) for granted; and it never occurs to them to question a reality from which they know themselves to be continually gaining new streams of light and warmth and power." (Liddon)
DIVINE STRENGTH.

HE giveth power to the faint: and to them that have no might He increaseth strength... They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary: and they shall walk and not faint. (Isaiah 40.)

A man is not half alive if he is not conscious of a need of Divine strength. But many who have developed the sense of need do not know how it is to be met.

On the one hand, there is the inner life. We find, warring against the soul, bodily appetites, mental and physical laziness, temptations to luxurious living and fierce recurring attacks of ill-temper and selfishness, or the spirit of meanness, to speak only of a few. On the other hand, there is a very real external warfare, which calls out insistently for strength of heart and the spirit of power and love and of a sound mind. How earnestly does the Christian warrior pray for strength as he buckles on his armour for the fight with the enemy of souls! There are times when every Christian and perhaps specially the one who has been truly called by God to the work for Him, senses the depths of his weakness, and lifts his hands in an agony of prayer for strength. It is because of this sense of need in those who are fighting upwards often in the dark, that Isaiah's words have become so famous, and have a sure attraction for the saints of God.

The focus of the passage seems to be the words, "They that wait upon the Lord." How the truth of that phrase throbs through the Scriptures! It proclaims the fact that there is no strength in hurry. Indeed, hurry is a spiritual disease akin to fever, and it leads to the deepening exacerbation of fever. Strength is only conceived in the soul of the man who has been disciplined into patient waiting.

"Waiting on the Lord," is not praying exactly. Certainly it is not that half hour at the bedside in vague languor, nor yet an emotional hour at the prayer meeting where earnest words (how often counterfeit, alas!) are poured out in the hope of inducing God to back up our rosy dreams. How I thank God that He has graciously treated some of my prayers with silence!

Prayer, obviously, is involved in waiting; but waiting on the Lord is an attitude of the whole being which enables God to plough our stubborn hearts and send His rain and wind and sunshine until He has brought us to a state of soul where His purposes can come to harvest in us. An electric tram (to change the thought rather abruptly) with the current turned full on before the points were set would be rather a dangerous machine; and so would we be, if God poured His strength into our souls before we were properly adjusted to His thoughts and ways.

Waiting time is the testing time, the time for meditation and prayer, the time for disappointments and pain and discipline and chastening.

It is folly to try to hurry God. "Tarry thou the Lord's leisure" is

*Probably God was listening to those prayers with a fuller interest than ever the writer knew and will answer them according to His own wisdom.
David's advice in an old version of the Psalms. God moves as quickly as our dulness and stupidity will allow.

The moment a man begins to wait upon God, the divine work begins in his soul, and as the days of waiting go by the whole character is changed by it. What a glory lies in the words of Paul the Apostle, "Most gladly therefore will I glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me." He changed his strength.

In days of depression, when finances go askew, and long cherished hopes are thrown to the winds, or when bereavement and pain cast their black shadows across our threshold, or when the work languishes, and the faithful seem but few and the heart is dismayed by difficulties and misunderstandings, Isaiah's promise—God's promise, gives renewed hope to those who will cease from themselves and wait upon Him: "They shall mount up with wings as eagles." It speaks of the glory and freshness of the morning, the keen air of the mountain, the birth of new hope. Then for days of strain, when you have to do more work than you feel equal to, and carry more burdens than you seem to have strength for, and you are tempted to sit down by the wayside and give it all up, Isaiah says with the conviction of one who has proved it: "They shall run and not be weary."

Last of all, for us, the folk of the common rut who have no great depressions and no "mountings up," for us, who carry no great strains, who do not run, but only walk through paths of sameness and drudgery, with today like yesterday—for us comes the strength to plod on, serving God in our measure in the common paths. What comfort it is to know that those who wait upon the Lord, "shall walk, and not faint." Perhaps the last and greatest lesson of life, involving the sternest discipline of all, is the lesson of plodding on.

I think, of all the epitaphs that could be written over the life of any saint, one of the finest would run something like this:—

"Here lies a man who entered into the secret of Divine strength and patiently plodded on when nothing much happened!"

SPIRITUAL PROGRESS.

Spiritual progress lies not in a more extensive knowledge of Scripture, but in self being displaced by Christ. We ought to know the Scriptures better, and if we read them rightly and come under their searching power we shall abandon self confidence and cleave to the Lord. But mere knowledge puffs up and hinders progress, and not only our own progress but the progress of all those to whom we would impart this knowledge.

Progress does not lie in self-condemnation but in self-repudiation. A man might dwell for ever on his sinfulness and shame and never reach the ground where God's favour could greet him. If a man will turn his back on self and look wholly to Christ, he will find God's favour to be greater than he ever could have conceived.
ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Prayer and fasting.

"Are the words of the Lord to His disciples, 'Howbeit this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting' Matt. 17. 21 to be taken literally? I have been making requests and agonising in prayer for things that I know to be according to God's will but they are not answered yet after years of asking, and I have been wondering if the Lord's 'howbeit' applies to me, and I cannot work myself up into an ecstasy about the Lord's coming when my loved ones are not ready. If the fasting is really abstention from food, and I take it to mean that, the difficulty is great for me, because my men folk come home to all their meals every day and as they have no sympathy or understanding how should I act (Matt. 6. 17, 18)?"
• MILDMAV.

We should not advise you to fast from food, for it is evident that if you did you would be compelled to do it publicly, and the Lord is Matthew 6. 18, definitely said that fasting, whatever it may mean, was to be done in secret and unto the Father, and it is probable that it would annoy rather than help those whom you desire to bless. The case in Matt. 17 which you quote, was a very difficult one; the power of the demon that possessed the lad was great and when the disciples attempted to cast him out they found that they were not equal to the task; they had lost touch with the Lord, the source of all power. They had become self-important and had neglected prayer, as what followed, as recorded in Mark, shews. It was not fasting from food that was necessary in their case but fasting from their own self-importance and desire to be great. Consequently that passage does not appear to fit your case, though it may well fit many a servant of the Lord who is conscious of the absence of power in his service for the Lord.

There may be times when the desire for the blessing of the Lord becomes so great that the meal time becomes a distraction, or one may make a determination to have to do with the Lord about certain things, and meanwhile refuse food so as to continue in prayer, and in such cases fasting would be right, but there is no merit in abstention from food. Again one might decide to spend a night in prayer, or a few might agree to do this together and that would be very real fasting. Any way, in fact, in which one may deny oneself legitimate things in order to wait upon God would come under this head; and then there lies under it the deeper thing, the shutting out of self and self-importance to make way for God.

But to come definitely to your own case. Your desire for the salvation of those who are bound to you by precious ties is certainly right and according to God's will, and you may be sure that He has heard every prayer for them that has gone up to Him from your heart. We gather from Revelation 5. 8 that the prayers of the saints yet unanswered are like fragrant incense to God and are preserved in heaven before Him. Consequently we should say, Do not grow weary in your praying. Consider Luke 11. 5-13 and 18, 1-7, where there are principles of great importance in regard to this matter. We would suggest that you set aside a little while each day for the special purpose of waiting upon Him for their salvation. At this special time your fervent supplication might well merge into calm intercession and
communion with the Lord, in which you would be instructed how to act towards them; and you would find that your heart would be enlarged not to think of them only, but of others also who need salvation as much as they do; and you would view things more truly from the Lord's standpoint rather than your own, and all would result in a deeper work in your own soul and more glory to Him. Meanwhile consider prayerfully 1 Peter 3. 1-6.

The mammon of unrighteousness.

"Could you kindly explain St. Luke 16. 9? What does our Lord mean when He says in that verse, 'Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness; that when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations'? In verse 8 it reads, 'And the lord commended the unjust steward, because he had done wisely; etc.'"—STAFFORD.

NOTE specially that this parable of the Unjust Steward is for disciples, and in it the Lord does not commend to their notice the unjust ways of the man, but states that the lord of the unjust steward commended his prudence in using the present with the future in view. For the disciples of the Lord, there could scarcely be a lesson of greater importance than this. Everyone of us, before we became disciples had wasted our substance, of which we were only stewards, and we are under "notice to quit," which has not been reversed. If we are true disciples we have heard the invitation to the great Supper (ch. 14) and have returned from our wasted lives in the far off country, and have been welcomed by the Father (ch. 15) and now for a little while we have, the opportunity of acting wisely in regard to anything that has been entrusted to us with the future in view.

J. G. Bellett commenting on this wrote, "The Lord gives to His disciples a word to stir their diligence and encourage their hopes. He tells them to aim high in their expectations, and to lay out their energies to sure and eternal profit. Being disciples, they are to be regarded as having already come back as prodigals, and their business now was to value the hopes which grace had set before them, and to make to themselves friends of every talent and opportunity, as knowing that their labour should not be in vain in the Lord. Whatever is expended on selfish gratifications perishes in the using. Money and things of this life are called "the mammon of unrighteousness" because the rights of the rightful Owner of all are refused God says, "The gold and the silver are Mine," but how much of it is poured out in selfish pleasure, and how little of it is used for His work and glory!"

Another quotation from J. A. Trench may help, "But why is it called the mammon of unrighteousness? Because all accumulation of property in one man's hand, more than in another's, belongs to man's fallen state in this world since sin entered into it—a condition of unrighteousness. Hence in verse 11, the Lord speaks of it as "unrighteous mammon." Can what is thus solemnly characterised be possibly fit to be turned to profitable account by the christian? It can; he can,
use it in view of where he looks to find his eternal home. It is "that which is least" (verses 8, 10) in the estimate of God. But how many have found the possession of wealth to be the most crucial test. Only by all the grace revealed in ch. 15 can any of us know "how to abound"—to be abased is not so testing—and be faithful in it. Possessions here wind themselves round the heart, and give a man a false place among his fellows, ministering to his pride and shutting God out. Hence it is impossible to make both God and mammon the object of the heart—impossible to make the best of both worlds; either one or the other, but not both. Grace teaches us to sacrifice the one in view of the other, the present in full view of the future."

Now to come to the Lord's application of the parable, He stresses not so much prudence in these matters but faithfulness, (verses 10, 12). A selfish motive might lie behind the prudence, but faithfulness has in view the One for whom these things are held and used. The disciple's own true riches are what he has as God's gift of grace in Christ, and not wealth in this world; wealth is spoken of as "Anothers" (v. 12) to be used for the true Owner's benefit, as faithful stewards should. The results of this faithfulness will meet those who have practised it in those everlasting habitations which are their's through grace alone. This is the meaning of the "friends." This use for God's glory and the good of others of what may lie in our hands does not secure the everlasting habitations for us, but it will meet us and welcome us there. The opposite of all this is seen in Dives at the end of the chapter; he left God out and lived for the present only and gratified his own desires; he had not been impressed with the relative value of this life and the next, or realised that because of his unfaithfulness he had notice to terminate his stewardship; he did not recognise that he was a steward at all, but used what he possessed as though it was all his; and "he died and was buried, and in hell he lifted up his eyes being in torments." Ch. 14, 15, and 16 hang together and give a remarkable sequence of truth.

The two blind men of Matthew xx. 29, 30.

"How do you reconcile Matthew 20. 29, 30, where it is said that two blind men were healed with Mark 10, and Luke 18 where only one is given?"—PORTUGAL.

It seems to be consistent with the character of Matthew's Gospel that a twofold witness should be given to the healing power and grace of the Lord Jesus; this occurs also in the cases of the demoniacs in ch. 8, and the blind men in ch. 9. In each of these miracles only one is mentioned in the other Gospels. We know that Matthew's Gospel is the Gospel of the King; and His progress to Jerusalem in this character started from Jericho in ch. 20. It was a fitting beginning to that progress that two blind men should receive their sight: at the mouth of two witnesses, which was according to Jewish law, the evidence that He was the One of whom the prophet had spoken was given, (see Isaiah 42). And those two men would be typical of the remnant of Israel that
shall receive their spiritual sight when He comes again in His glory, and shall follow Him to the establishment of His kingdom. We do not see any contradiction in the fact that only one man is mentioned in the other Gospels. Bartimæus was probably the more prominent of the two, and so he was specially mentioned; and the teaching may be more on the line of the work that is done in individual souls and the way it is done than their testimony to that work. In Mark we learn the perfection of the Workman, and in Luke the perfection of the work. For this it was only necessary that one man should be noticed.

Is baptism for the kingdom or the Church?

"Is baptism in Matt. 28. 19 for the kingdom or for the church? Are we to understand v. 19, 'Make disciples and baptise them' as two imperatives, or make disciples by baptising them?"—PORTUGAL.

BAPTISM is for the Kingdom rather than for the Church, and the commission in Matt. 28, particularly so. It is the baptism of the one Spirit that brings souls into the one body of Christ, which is His Church. Baptism by water is submission in an outward way to the authority of the Lord Jesus; it means more than that, as we learn from the teaching of it in Romans 6, Col. 2; but that is the outward aspect of it.

The commission in Matthew was to disciple all nations; this has not yet been carried out, but it will be by the successors of the Apostles when they go forth with the Gospel of the Kingdom, (see ch. 24). And they will make disciples of the nations by baptising them, i.e. that will be the way by which these nations will openly acknowledge the Lord as King. Of course those who submit to this baptism will have first accepted the gospel that the "brethren of Christ," (see ch. 25. 40; 28. 10) have carried to them.

Is it right to speak of the burial of the Lord as vicarious?

"I am sending you a paper in which it is taught that the burial of the Lord Jesus was vicarious. Is this right? Would the Lord’s cry on the cross, ‘It is finished’ have bearing on this question? Was not all that was called for vicariously met by His death? There would be many in this district who would be helped by some clear words on the subject."—S. WALES.

THERE is no scripture that we know of that speaks of the burial of the Lord Jesus as vicarious; that is, that He was buried for, or instead of sinful men; but all Scripture shews that it was His suffering and death upon the cross that was vicarious, and all sufficient to meet every claim of divine justice against the sinner. It is scarcely necessary to quote individual texts, but Romans 4. 25, Galatians 1. 4, 1 Timothy 2. 6; 1 Peter 3. 18; 1 John 4. 10, amongst many others, come readily to the mind. This teaching seems to us to detract from the glory of that all-sufficient death of the cross by which God was glorified and
sinners saved. It was when suffering on the cross that the Lord was bruised for our iniquities; there He was made sin for us; it was unto death that He was delivered for our offences; as the Son of Man He was lifted up as our representative and substitute. And we judge that if One died for all then are all dead: not the offences only, but the offender has been removed from before God's eye in judgment by that vicarious death. It is by death and not burial that this has been accomplished. What every work had to be done, or judgment borne, or price paid, was completed by His death; a man's work ceases at death; if what was vicarious was not completed when the Lord died, it never could be completed.

Vicariously the Lord became on the cross what we were for our deliverance, but this ceased with His death. In the grave we see corruption, but He saw no corruption; our bodies are sown in the grave in dishonour, we should shrink indeed from saying this of Him. His burial was a necessity, not because His body had to be put out of sight as ours must be, though Genesis 25. 4, is quoted and applied to the Lord in this connection in this teaching—but to shew the reality of His death, and make manifest His victory over the grave by resurrection. It is in the resurrection chapter (1 Cor. 15) that emphasis is given to it, but while it says there that “Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures,” it does not say that He was buried for us, but the fact is simply stated with His resurrection in view.

The three companies of the redeemed in Revelation xiv. and xv.

“I wish you would let me know what you make of the three companies in Rev. 14 and 15.

1. The 144,000 associated with the Lamb on Mount Sion.
2. The company in heaven with harps, singing the new song (verse 2).
3. Those who sing the song of Moses and of the Lamb (ch. 15. 1-4).

—AYLESBURY.

I. The hundred and forty-four thousand of this chapter are very near to heaven in spirit and character, yet they have an earthly and not a heavenly portion.

J. N. Darby says, “they are the remnant of Israel whose exercises are given in the first book of the Psalms (1-41).” They are associated with the Lamb on Mount Zion. The second Psalm comes immediately to the mind. “Yet have I set My King upon My holy hill of Zion” and this follows the statement that the kings of the earth have set themselves against the Lord and His Anointed, which must have special reference to the rising up of the Beast and the false prophet in ch. 13. But it is the LAMB who is seen in Zion—the One who has trodden the path of suffering,” for He is Lord of lords and King of kings” (Rev. 17. 14)—and this company follow Him whithersoever He goeth, they have suffered with Him and they are to reign with Him.

We suggest that they answer to the six hundred men that clave to David during the period of his suf-
ferring and rejection by the nation of which he was the anointed king. 2 Samuel 2, 3, tells us that when Saul was dead David went up to Hebron...“and his men that were with him did David bring up, every man with his household.” They were the firstfruits of David’s kingdom, as these in our chapter are called “the first fruits unto God and the Lamb” in the kingdom of which Zion is the centre. They had owned his kingship before it was publicly acknowledged and had faithfully shared all the vicissitudes of his rejection. So these will be true to the Lamb during the reign of Antichrist. Instead of the mark of the Beast, they will bear His Name and His Father’s Name in their foreheads, and in contrast to the lie in the mouth of Antichrist, there will be no guile in theirs. “Behold an Israelite indeed in whom there is no guile” (John 1. 47). They are to have the chief place in the kingdom on its earthly side.

Notice in 2 Samuel 2, David went up with 1. his wives, 2. the men that were with him, 3. the men of Judah came to him; then later all Israel came to own his kingship, and finally the nations were subdued under him. So it will be when the Lord comes into His Kingdom. His church will come with Him; this faithful and preserved remnant will have a special place in relation to Him; Judah and Jerusalem will acknowledge Him (Zechariah 12. 9—13. 2), Israel will be gathered (Matthew 24. 31), and finally all nations of earth shall own His righteous sway.

2. The company in heaven harping with their harps—(which does not belong to the company of the elders, who have the nearest place to the throne)—and who sing a new song which these hundred and forty and four thousand can sing, are, we venture to suggest, those from amongst the Jews, who because of their faithfulness to the Lamb will be slain during the reign of the Beast and Antichrist, and in consequence will have a heavenly portion. We can understand how close the affinity will be between these two companies. They will pass through the same sorrow, and suffer for the same Name and Saviour and King, some of them martyred and some preserved in the great tribulation. Their song will be the same, though one company will be in heaven and the other on earth.

3. As the seven vials are to be poured out upon the whole earth and are God’s judgments upon all mankind on the earth at that time, and not upon Jerusalem or upon any special part of the earth, we conclude that the company that stand on the sea of glass and sing the song of Moses and the Lamb are all those of all nations who have gotten the victory over the Beast by refusing to submit to him, and have been martyred. We must not conclude that because they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, that they are Israelites. Their deliverance from the power of the Beast will be as great as that of Israel from Pharaoh and his hosts. The song of Moses had for its great theme the triumph of the Lord over the might of the enemy, and this will be the theme of the song that these victorious souls will sing, but a sweeter note will enter into it; they will sing of the Lamb and the way that victory has been gained. “They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and the word of their testimony and counted not their lives
It was through suffering that the Lamb triumphed, and they too, being accounted for His sake as sheep for the slaughter and killed all the day long shall be more than conquerors through Him who loves them (Psalm 44. 22, 23; Romans 8. 36). The outlook of their praise is to all nations, for they celebrate God as "King of nations," as the end of verse 3 should read.

Old Testament saints and their destiny.

"Who are embraced in the term 'old Testament saints.' I notice that 'all these died in faith' is only said of those mentioned up to the 13th verse of Hebrews 11?

Will all these saints who lived before Christ be included in 1 Thess. 4. 14, 'them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him,' and if so will they be part of the church, His Bride? If not will their blessing be earthly or heavenly?

We read of blessing on the earth during the Millennial reign of Christ over it, who will enjoy these earthly blessings?

From the time that the law was given by Moses until the coming of the Lord Jesus, millions lived and died, some would be indifferent to the law and others whose intention was to keep the law but who failed would bring the required sacrifice. When will these be raised and what will their blessing be?

Would the souls of all those who fell in the wilderness because they did not mix the word with faith, (Hebrews 3 and 4) be lost?"—CHEDDAR.

"All these died in faith" would be true of all the saints of God from Abel to the first coming of the Lord. It is particularly said of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, because that phase of faith which makes a man turn his back upon all that seems substantial in this world with nothing but the word of God to hold on to was particularly seen in them. They did not receive the promises but their faith in God's faithfulness was not shaken, they with all who followed in their footsteps will have a heavenly portion, which will be a better one than that which was promised them, as verse 16 shews. They will enter into this at the coming of the Lord, for they without us cannot be made perfect, verse 40. They will be raised at the coming of the Lord, for they are Christ's. (1 Cor. 15. 23), though we are not prepared to say that that specially comforting and blessed phrase, "them also that sleep through Jesus" applies to them, we are inclined to confine this to those who have fallen asleep in this christian period. Nor do we know of any Scripture that would prove that God will bring these with the Lord when He comes into His kingdom. They are certainly not in the church, the Bride of the Lamb; for the church's existence began at Pentecost and not before. But they will be raised up and glorified at the
coming of the Lord and have their part in the heavenly country and city for which they looked.

Those who will enjoy the blessings of the earthly side of the Kingdom will be those who will be saved through the great tribulation, and who will yield to the claims of the Lord Jesus as King (Romans 11. 26, 27); first Israel and then the saved from among the nations (Matt. 25. 31~46).

We may be sure that God had those who had faith in Him throughout all the days of the law, like the seven thousand whose knees did not bow to Baal nor their mouths kissed him, (1 Kings 19. 18) and those who feared the Lord in Malachi 3. 16, 17. Theirs will be heavenly blessing; there is no scripture which would lead us to suppose that any who have died will return to their natural bodies, and to natural blessings which those enjoyed on the earth will be. On the contrary all Scripture plainly shews that—in "the resurrection they neither marry or are given in marriage but are as the angels of God in heaven" (Matthew 22. 30). "It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body, etc" (1 Cor. 15. 44).

We cannot say what the final fate of all those that fell in the wilderness was. Certainly those who were rebellious against the word of God would be finally lost. All we know is that only two who came out of Egypt entered Canaan, even Moses, Aaron and Miriam were shut out of the land.

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Ye are the Temple of God.

Temple is from templum—a portion cut off, a separate place. The fundamental idea is separation for God, whether applied to the church (1 Cor. 3. 16), or to the bodies of believers (1 Cor. 66. 19). This demands our consideration. And surely every christian desires to be what God has called him to be.

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The Word of God.

It is our Guide—"When thou goest it shall lead thee."

It is our Protector—"When thou sleepest, it shall keep thee."

It is our Companion—"When thou wakest it shall talk with thee" (Proverbs 6. 22).

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Divine Love, 1 John iv.

The love of God is towards us for life and propitiation, verses 9, 10.

It is in us for brotherly love and communion, verse 12.

It is with us for boldness in the day of judgment, verse 17 (margin).
MISSING OUR AIM.

Very solemn and terrible thought of what sin is, lies in the meaning of the word, it is "missing an aim." How strikingly that puts a truth which siren voices are constantly trying to sing us out of believing! Every sin is a blunder as well as a crime. And that for two reasons, because first, God has made us for Himself, and to take anything besides for our life’s end or our heart’s portion is to divert ourselves from our true destiny; and because, second, that being so, every attempt to win satisfaction or delight by such a course is and must be a failure. Sin misses the aim if we think of our proper destination. Sin misses its own aim of happiness. A man never gets what he hoped for by doing wrong, or, if he seem to do so, he gets something more that spoils it all. He pursues after the fleeing form that seems so fair, and when he reaches her side and lifts her veil, eager to embrace the tempter, a hideous skeleton grins and gibbers at him. The siren voices sing to you from the smiling island, and their white arms and golden harps and flowery grass draw you from the wet boat and the weary oar; but when a man lands, he sees the fair form end in a slimy fish, and she slays him and gnaws his bones. "He knows not that the dead are there, and that her guests are in the depth of hell." Yes! every sin is a mistake, and the epitaph for the sinner is "Thou fool!"

THE OBEDIENCE OF FAITH.

The balance of Scripture is destroyed where the mind is occupied alone with privilege and grace and is impatient to the aspect of duty and obligation. And it is to be feared on the part of those who profess to be separated from the general corruption of Christianity, but whose separation is a thing of nought if it be not a separation to God and holiness, that there may be springing up amongst them a new and subtle kind of Antinomianism in constantly looking at the church’s abstract position and perfectness in Christ, as if the mere mental recognition of that secured to each individual a position and acceptance with God which could never be forfeited, and beyond which it was impossible he should be advanced. Every word of God is true, but it is true in application only so far as it is truly applied. Truth is not truth to me until it is reduced to living act. Every distinct proposition of the Word of God asks for itself a definite reception by faith, "faith which works by love." The ends of a divine revelation are not accomplished in us except as it brings the soul and God together, in the harmony of truth communicated and truth obeyed. This, and not a light kind of second-hand dealing with the terms in which truth is expressed (either in Scripture or by men whose hearts have felt its power), is the obedience of faith."—Girdle of Truth, 1865.

Parley not with that in thy thoughts, which thou meanest not to let into thy heart. Thy locks are bound to be cut if thou layest thy head in the lap of temptation.
THINGS MOST SURELY BELIEVED.
The Deity of the Lord Jesus.

IN the history of the church on earth no greater theologian than Athanasius ever arose to champion the truth of God against error, yet great and faithful as he was, he confessed that “whenever he forced his understanding to meditate on the Divinity (Deity) of the Logos (the Word) his toilsome and unavailing efforts recoiled on themselves; that the more he thought the less he comprehended; and the more he wrote, the less capable was he of expressing his thoughts” (Gibbon). We do not wonder at that when we consider the immeasurable greatness of the Subject and the limited capacity of man’s understanding.

This inability of the human mind by its own effort to discover and know God was clearly recognised by men of intelligence in ancient times. Zophar the Naamathite challenged Job as to it, when he asked, “Canst thou by searching find out God? Canst thou find out the Almighty to perfection?” (Job 11. 7). And Agur the son of Jakeh appealed to Ithiel (whose name meant, There is a God) for help when he confessed his ignorance of God. “I have neither learned wisdom,” said he, “nor have I the knowledge of the holy. Who hath ascended up into heaven and descended? Who hath gathered the wind in His fists; who hath bound the waters in a garment? Who hath established the ends of the earth? What is His name and what is His Son’s name, if thou canst tell?” As far as we know Ithiel had no answer to that appeal.

The modern mind is not more capable in itself of grasping the things of God than were these great men of old, for “It is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him.” And if the things of God are outside man’s range how infinitely above him must God Himself,—the Father and His Son—be! And yet we must know Him; the awakened soul is conscious that all its blessing lies in the knowledge of God, and pants for this knowledge as the hart pants for the water brooks.

When “the Word became flesh” and dwelt among men, He revealed the great secret as to how God was to be known when He said, “I thank Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent and has revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Thy sight” (Matthew 11. 25, 26). These words from the lips of the Lord Himself, declare that the knowledge of God cannot be gained by laborious and brain-wearying investigation, no matter how sincere the labour may be, but only by revelation; they strike at the root of the pride of the human intellect and prick the bubble of those who “vainly puffed up in their fleshly minds” reject the revelation and think to find out God by their own searching; they shut out the reasonings and imaginations of the self-confident mind, which always, alas, since man is fallen, and “alienated in his mind by wicked works” exalts itself against the true knowledge of God (Col. 2. 18; 1. 21; 2 Cor. 10. 5). And they shew that there are two sides to the fact of
revelation. There is activity on God's part and receptivity on ours. God is revealed, and the babes receive the revelation; the light shines and there are eyes that admit it; the truth is declared, but it is also believed; God must speak and men must hear, for "faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the word of God." And we are as dependent upon God for the babe-nature and the opened eyes and the believing heart, and the listening ears, as we are for the revelation that these perceive, appreciate and appropriate.

In old Testament times there were certain limited revelations of God's attributes and ways. The heavens declared the glory of His power, and the firmament shewed His handiwork. The law given at Sinai announced the uprightness of His kingdom and the justice of His throne. He shewed Himself often in His providential care for men and as the covenant-keeping God; and proclaimed His name, "The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth." But these partial revelations, rays from the eternal splendour, only served to make those who received them cry out for a fuller, a complete knowledge of His heart and nature, as when Moses said, "Shew me Thy glory" (Exod. 33) and David pleaded, "O send out Thy light and Thy truth; let them lead me, let them bring me unto Thy holy hill and to Thy tabernacles" (Ps. 43). Those soul longings have been answered in a manner that neither Moses nor David could have conceived; the glory has appeared and the light and the truth have come in the Son of God, for "God who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in times past unto the fathers by the prophets hath in these last times spoken unto us by His Son (lit. in Son) . . . Who being the brightness of His glory, and the express image of His person" (Hebrews 1. 3). "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). And the Son in whom God has spoken and who has declared what God is in His very nature and has glorified Him on the earth, said, "I am the light of the world" (John 8. 12), and "I am the truth" (John 14. 6).

We are dependent upon the Holy Scripture for all our knowledge of this full revelation, for we were not on earth when the Son of God dwelt among men, but we are thankful indeed, that the Father sent forth the Holy Spirit to inspire and guide the men who companied with Him, to bear an infallible witness to what they heard and saw. "That which we have heard," wrote one of them, "which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled of the Word of life . . . declare we unto you" (1 John 1. 1-3). There is a peculiar dignity and authority about the Scriptures. It could not be otherwise, since they are the words of the living and almighty God. For instance, they do not set out to prove that God is, they state the fact and shew the effect of His presence and power, and they tell us that it is only the fool—the man void of all understand—that says in his heart, "There is no God" (Psalm 14. 1). They open with that majestic statement, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." But the New Testament is more than the equal of the Old, in this dignity and authority. It does not
set out to prove that the One we
know as Jesus is God, equally with
the Father and the Holy Ghost, it
states the fact and shews the effect
of it. So that the Gospel, which
I think may be justly called the
greatest book in the New Testa-
ment, opens with the sublime state-
ment, “In the beginning was the
Word; and the Word was with
God: and the Word was God.”

The “beginning” of Genesis signi-
fies the moment when the voice of
God called the worlds into being,
and the pendulum of Time began
to swing, but the opening words
of John’s Gospel carries us further
back than that and tell us that when
the first creatorial word was uttered
the Word was there. Whatever may
have been the activities of the God-
head anterior to creation, He had
His part in them, for then He was
with God, His delight and com-
panion (Proverbs 8), and He was
God, God’s equal, “His Fellow,” in
all things purposed and done—“In
His existence, eternal, in His nature,
divine; in His person, distinct”
(J.N.D.) “All things were made
by Him.” His was the voice that
commanded and it was done; that
creative life-giving energy which
abides only in God, wrought with
divine power and wisdom through
Him; “and without Him was not
anything made that was made.” Two
other passages in the New Testa-
ment definitely and fully predicate
the creation of all things to Him.
In one of them, words are taken
up from the Old Testament (Ps.
102) as having been addressed to Him
by God Himself, “And Thou, Lord,
in the beginning hast laid the foun-
dations of the earth and the heavens
are the works of Thy hand: they
shall perish; but Thou remainest;
and they all shall wax old as a

The opening of the Gospel accord-
ing to John could not be plainer in its
statements than it is, and they are
framed by the wisdom of the Holy
Spirit to meet every opposition to the
truth that might arise in the human
heart; and interest is awakened by
these statements as to whether any
on earth would believe and confess
the truth of them as they were
known and confessed in heaven, and
we may be sure that heaven was
engrossed in this same question. As
we pass from page to page of the Gospel, we see a ray of the light break first into one heart and then into another; here a man and there a woman is brought to bow in worship at the feet of the Sovereign Lord of all, and so to tacitly confess that He is indeed God; but it is not until the end of the Gospel is reached, (ch. 21 is a beautiful postscript to it) that His disciples behold Him and own Him in His full glory. It was on that second “first day of the week” when the disciples were gathered together, and Thomas the unbeliever with them; in disposition and temper he was a veritable materialist and had declared that he would believe nothing that he could not see and handle—that Jesus stood in the midst, and shewed to the astonished eyes of His obstinate follower the wounds that He had sustained and which remained in His incorruptible body. It was enough for Thomas; he was an infidel no longer, but falling down before His Master, he voiced the faith and adoration of all his brethren, in those true and memorable words, “My Lord and My God.”

If the Lord Jesus had not been what Thomas confessed Him to be, but only a good and true man He would have rebuked him for uttering foolish words, for it would have been an unspeakable wickedness for one man to accept from another man that adoration which only belongs to God; but He did accept it, because it was His right, and He went further and declared the blessedness of all those throughout the ages who should perceive His glory and confess it and render like homage to Him: saying, “Thomas, because thou hast seen Me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen yet have believed.”

In this great and convincing incident we see how the end of the Gospel answers to the opening words of it.

The place that the Lord Jesus, the Son of the Father, has in the thoughts and affections of the Father and the Holy Ghost is instructive. I will quote certain passages from the Gospel of John which shew that He was the worthy and adequate Object of the Father’s love when on earth and the One for whose glory the Holy Ghost labours now. “We beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father” (ch. 1. 14); “the only begotten Son which is in the bosom of the Father” (1. 18); “The Father loved the Son, and hath given all things into His hands” (3. 35); “The Father loveth the Son, and sheweth Him all things that Himself doeth” (5. 20); “The living Father hath sent Me, and I live by the Father” (6. 57); “The Father hath not left Me alone” (7. 29); Therefore doth My Father love Me because I lay down My life” (10. 17); “I and My Father are One” (10. 30). And that we might know that this love that the Father had for Him and the delight that He had in Him were not confined to His life on earth, but that they were eternal in their duration, we hear His words, “Father... Thou lovedst Me before the foundation of the world” (17. 24).

But now that He has gone back to the Father we learn that the Holy Ghost has come from thence to bear witness to Him. As the Father once looked down upon Him, so now the Holy Ghost looks up to Him, and would turn the eyes of all His disciples in the same direction. We read, “But the Comforter, which is
the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in My Name, He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you" (14. 26). “But when the Comforter is come, Whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, He shall testify of Me” (15. 26). “Howbeit when He, the Spirit of truth is come, He will guide you into all truth: for He shall not speak of Himself; but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak: and He will shew you things to come. He shall glorify Me: for He shall take of Mine, and shall shew it unto you. All things that the Father hath are Mine: therefore said I. that He shall take of Mine, and shall shew it unto you” (16. 13-15).

The revelation of God is complete, and we know God now as Father, Son and Holy Ghost: three Persons yet one God. It was this that came into full manifestation when Jesus was here, for “in Him all the fulness [of the Godhead] was pleased to dwell” (Col. 1. 19, see also 2. 10. Darby’s N.T.) and “God was manifest in the flesh” (1 Timothy 3. 16).

The Father is the source of all blessing for men.

The Son has brought the blessing to men.

The Holy Ghost makes the blessing good in men.

And each person in the Godhead is engaged in making the revelation a reality in the souls of men for we read, “No man knoweth the Father save THE SON and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal Him” (Matt. 11. 27).

“Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed this unto thee, but MY FATHER which is in heaven” (Matt. 16. 17).

“God hath revealed them unto us by HIS SPIRIT: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God” (1 Cor. 2. 10).

The Holy Spirit dwells within the believer. A power commensurate with the love that moved the Father to send the Son, and works in the hearts of those who have humbly yielded to the Lord, so that they are not now groping in darkness, or wearying themselves in a vain search after God by human effort, for the true light is shining and “the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost.” “And we know that the Son of God has come, and has given us an understanding that we should know Him that is true; and we are in Him that is true, in His Son Jesus Christ. He is the true God and eternal life. Children, keep yourselves from idols” (1 John 5. 20, 21. N.T.).

“A kick from the world does a believer less harm than a kiss.

We must recognise that if we have been saved by the grace of God we are all one in Christ, members one of another. Every member in a body subserves the body. In a healthy body every member fulfils its proper function and does not interfere with any other member.
"NEVER MAN SPAKE LIKE THIS MAN."

Hudson Brook.


The early part of Luke's Gospel brings before us the longings and rejoicings of the godly remnant of Israel. Longings for redemption and rejoicings of heart when they saw the Child Jesus with their eyes, the long promised Messiah.

The days were at hand in which the prophetic word was to be fulfilled and many in Israel be turned to the Lord their God by the message of John the Baptist. But our attention is quickly drawn to One greater than John the Baptist. John was sent from God, and named the "prophet of the Highest." Jesus was announced as the "Son of the Highest" and therein were their relative positions set forth. John was the servant, Jesus was the Son, the Master and Lord, the one was to decrease, the other was to increase until "of His Kingdom there should be no end."

The Spirit of God operated in the hearts and minds of one and another, lowly in position socially they ranked high in spiritual intelligence and apprehension of the thoughts of Jehovah and were in harmony with the mind of heaven. Well it is for us if the grace and favour of God has brought our spirits into harmony with the scene set forth in the 2nd chapter of Luke's Gospel, and to apprehend what is involved by the advent of the Son of Man. God was to be glorified in a Man, and the heavenly hosts could set this forth with the greatest confidence in words of praise.

It is no small favour to be able to join Simeon in his apprehension of the Lord's Christ or to have the "tongue of the learned" like Anna, to speak of Him as the One of whom all the promises connected with redemption would be fulfilled. May our spirits be so occupied with Him, that we perceive the moral excellencies of the Son of Man in His sayings and actions, recorded in the Gospel of Luke, for by them, the prophetic announcement of the heavenly hosts, "Glory to God in the highest," was fulfilled to the letter.

He keenly felt the pangs of hunger and yet He was morally great enough in the perfection of His obedience to the Father's will to withstand and repulse the tempter who would suggest a way out of that trial. He entered into the temptation in entire dependence upon God and full of the Holy Ghost and came out of it in the same power, not having swerved from the path of obedience.

In the power of the Spirit He proceeded to show the delivering grace that was in Him for needy men, for having overcome Satan, He could deliver men from his thraldom, having bound the strong man He could spoil his goods.

But men seemed utterly insensible to the graciousness of His message, or the greatness of His person, but the "powers of evil" which were in the synagogue, recognised who He was and confessed Him, probably having learned by His victory over Satan in the days of His temptation that the tabernacle of flesh and blood was but the "veil of flesh" which hid to unopened eyes the glory, power and greatness of "the Holy One of God."
To the crowd He might be known as "Jesus of Nazareth," a name and place of little or no consequence, but to the devil and to evil spirits, He was known and confessed in His true relation with God and as the One who would bring the kingdom of evil to a complete end, and in the meantime deliver man completely from their dominion. Truly He had "authority and power."

For a season He is the Object of the people's desire and they would fain keep Him to benefit by His healing power, but the need of others presses upon the Spirit of this lowly Son of Man and He must pass into other districts with the delivering word of the Kingdom of God.

He borrows Simon Peter's boat from which to preach to the multitude and knowing that he had spent fruitless hours in seeking fish, He supplies this lack and shews plainly that all created things were under His command, and makes the miracle speak to Simon after such a manner, that the deep springs of his moral being are laid bare and he knew himself to be a sinful man in the presence of the Lord.

When the multitude makes demand upon His services, He readily and freely gives of His inexhaustible supplies, for He came not "to be ministered to but to minister," shewing the perfection of His obedience and the source of His strength.

His compassions are stirred at the sight of a widow taking her only son to burial and His power being the servant of His compassions, He bids her "weep not" and justifies His bidding by removing the cause of her tears. A man truly but also "Son of God with power . . . by resurrection from among the dead."

How great her joy and how signal the proof that He had power over death and yet how tender His courteous consideration, for it was He who "delivered Him to His mother."

He was so accessible and without pride that He accepts the invitation of a Pharisee to eat with him knowing that the ordinary courtesies of the day would be denied Him, as being too lowly and obscure a person. He accepts in humility the place given to Him at the Pharisee's table, that it might give opportunity for the woman with the alabaster box of ointment to draw near to Him, and He brings out the innermost thoughts of the cold hearted host, as he exposes his lack of common courtesy in contrast to the woman's love of Him, and He deals with her, penitent sinner as she was, with such grace, that our hearts are moved thereat and we worship Him. For has He not dealt with us in such a way as to enable us to answer the querulous question of those who sat at meat, "Who is this that forgiveth sins also." Surely; God is there in the Man Christ Jesus, and manifestly so in the grace of forgiveness.

He is a Man wearied with His labours so that when opportunity affords He falls asleep, but arises at the call of fear and expressed need and commands the winds and the sea to be still, filling His disciples with wonder. We are not surprised that they asked, "What manner of man is this."

Again and again, in the perfection of His place and position as a dependent Man He is found in prayer, and we may perhaps learn a lesson from the fact that on some of the occasions it is when He seems to
have had the multitude pressing around Him clamourous with their needs that He leaves them for the privacy of prayer.

He was the One who could speak of Himself as “Son of Man,” and at the same time give counsel to His disciples of the “gain” of not being ashamed of either Him or His words and encourage their hearts by speaking of a threefold glory in contrast to the then present day of suffering. “His own glory, His Father’s glory and the glory of the holy angels” (Luke 9. 26.), and that this should be confirmed in their souls He takes them apart into a high mountain and permits them to see Him in His own proper glory, transfigured before them. What a lesson to learn, that this Man despised and rejected on the plain below—a man of sorrows and a grief-acquainted one—was in reality Son of the Father, whose words they were commanded to hear by the Father’s voice.

He came down from the mountain with them knowing well the pride of heart and self-seeking which characterised them, but with gracious consideration would speak of it only in the privacy of the house. (Mark 9. 33.) As Son of Man He would—in the perceptions of His spirit, deeper and wider than they knew—rebuke the spirit of Vengeance evident in them and declare that He had come for salvation and not for destruction of men. A Man around whom the clouds of hatred and rejection were gathering even in the cities where His mightiest works had been done, but, weighing events according to the balances of the sanctuary could therefore counsel His disciples—the Seventy—that it was a better thing to joy over their names being enregistered in heaven than to boast in the fact that evil spirits were subject to them through His Name.

And then, we are permitted to retire with Him into the sphere where He could “rejoice in spirit.” In that hour—when events were heading towards His rejection, He could in spirit occupy Himself with the purposes of the Father and be subject to the Father’s will. And yet, whilst being subject and remaining as ever in the path of obedience and dependence He knew “all things are delivered to Me of My Father.” It is blessed to dwell upon the thought that it was the purpose and will of the Father that the Son—here in lowliness—should declare and reveal the Father’s name unto babes.

It is indeed in Luke’s Gospel the “face of a man” we are engaged with, but a man having deeper perceptions and greater power than any man of Adam’s order. Truly man and truly Son of the Father. Man unique, man according to God and for His glory. How varied the circumstances and how varied the actions in which the Spirit of God by the evangelist sets Him forth. Man in the circumstances and surroundings connected with His lowly birth. Man in the sphere of obedience; unswervingly dependent, doing those things always which pleased the Father. Man in the circumstances of the cross—enduring the cross and despising the shame. Man greater than the power of death. Man in resurrection gathering in active grace his scattered disciples.

Man in companionship with them for forty days and then taken out of their sight and received up into heaven. Man exalted and set by God at His right hand to be there for salvation, “that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His Name among all nations.”
WHEN?

R. C. Westcott.

It may be in the stillness of the night
(When mind and body, free from mundane care,
Rest undisturbed) the promised "Shout" will come,
In tones that nought of love or longing spare.
O joy untold! O wondrous, boundless love!
My Saviour wants me with Himself above!

It may be as I mingle with the throng,
Or quietly do what task the day affords,
That on my ears that long expected call
Will burst like music, touching answering chords
Within my heart, and at that known behest
The pilgrim rises to eternal rest!

It may be as I sit in quietude,
Snatching a moment from the daily round,
To read the Word, or at the Throne of Grace
In sweet communion with My Lord am found,
That He will bid me, in that voice so fair,
With all His saints to meet Him in the air.

It may be—but O blessed Lord forbid—
That this poor fickle heart of mine should grow
Lukewarm or cold in love to Thee and Thine,
Too much engrossed with transient things below.
Thou, Lord, alone canst keep me by Thy grace
Waiting and longing to behold Thy face.

'Tis not for me to know the day or hour,
Else gone that constant bright expectancy,
'Tis better that, in wisdom infinite,
I'm left to feel His coming near to be.
PERHAPS TO-DAY, before the sun has set,
Redeemer and His ransomed will have met!

It is a new experience for me, to be laid aside, and gives me time to reflect.
Someone has said that memory serves to give us "June roses in December." In
my case it serves to recall "the way the Lord hath led me," in which there
have been many proofs of His Goodness and Mercy.

I know that to every Christian is given that well of water which, like a foun-
tain, springs up to Eternal Life. God is its source and to Him it returns in
worship and praise. Hence whatever the circumstances of the Christian may
be, he is thus able to rejoice in the Lord alway.

W.T.
CORRESPONDENCE.

“Glory” as it appears in the Epistle to the Romans.

My dear Quartus,

There is a great word of frequent occurrence in the Epistle to the Romans, as to which I should appreciate your help; the word GLORY. What does it really mean?

In chapter 1, 23, we read of “the glory of the incorruptible God.” Does this simply mean God’s greatness and majesty, or is there a further thought?

In chapter 2, 7, 10 glory is mentioned along with honour and immortality as something to be aimed at by patient continuance in well-doing, and as a reward for all who work good (if such can be found), whether Jew or Gentile. There is not much difficulty in understanding what glory means there: a state of unending joy when every right desire will find its fulfilment.

In chapter 3, 23 it is stated that all have come short of God’s glory. What exactly is the thought of glory in this passage?

In chapter 4, 20 it surely means something quite different. But what? What was it, precisely, that Abraham gave to God? Was it praise? That that glory is not quite the same as honour appears from chapter 2, 10.

Chapter 5, 2 is evidently an important Scripture. Our hope is defined to be “the glory of God.” This surely goes beyond the thought of chapter 2, 7: what does it suggest to your mind? Is it the fruition of all the Divine purposes? or is it the display of all that has been made known to faith?

Chapter 6, 4 gives us a rather unique expression: “the glory of the Father.” I shall greatly value any help you can give as to this. Would you connect it with the similar phrase in Matthew 16, 27? How is it connected with the raising of Christ from the dead?

Chapter 8, 18 speaks of “the glory which shall be revealed IN us.” What is this? The fact stated in verse 30 seems to suggest that that glory has a present aspect. Do you think so?

Chapter 9, 23 presents two thoughts. “Prepared unto glory” is not difficult to understand. But what is meant by “the riches of His glory”? Is it a thing to be viewed now in connection with such people as those referred to? or is it something entirely future?

It is plain from chapter 15, 7 that the glory of God is connected with Christians receiving, rather than rejecting one another, and verses 5 and 6 teach us that our being able to give glory to God “with one mind and one mouth” depends on our being “likeminded one toward another” or having (as a New Translations puts it) “such harmony with one another.” Do you gather from this that God is robbed of glory when Christians maintain aloofness from their fellow-saints?

Finally we have the doxology of chapter 16, 27. Will not God in any case have glory through Jesus Christ for ever? Then why should Paul express a desire that it should be so? Was this not superfluous?
I trust that your replies to my many questions will be for the real edification of many others as well as of Your brother in Christ,
Tertius.

My dear Tertius,

Your enquiry opens up an illimitable range, for your texts reach from eternity to eternity, and all I can do in reply is to make a few suggestions. First it is necessary that we should understand the meaning of "glory;" for you must have found as I have, that many Christians have but vague ideas as to what it is. To some it is merely the shining out of a great splendour, "too bright for mortal eyes;" to others it is the home to which they are going; but I think you will agree with me when I say, that the chief thought in glory, when we think of God's glory, is the revelation of what He is, and when we speak of our "glorifying God," it certainly does not mean that we add anything to Him, but that we receive by faith the revelation that He has made of Himself and respond to it, and order our lives according to it. The glory of a man is his achievement, but his achievement is evidence of what he is, and by it he is distinguished from his fellows. The word in this sense may be used, I think, in regard to the Lord Jesus Christ and the renown that He has gained.

But now to your texts. "The glory of the incorruptible God," is a faith-strengthening word. His glory in this title is His incorruptibility. There can be no change, no decay in Him; He abides for ever in His own unsullied Being above the changing scenes of Time where everything waxes old and where moth and rust and thief and death destroy. And this lies at the basis of everything. If God were not this we could rely upon nothing, for nothing would be stable. You will appreciate this glory, coming as it does at the beginning of Romans, the Epistle that unfolds for us the gospel of God—"God's story"—His word is like Himself. Peter calls it "the incorruptible, living and abiding word of God" (1 Peter 1. 23. N.T.) and upon it we rest and have peace with God, and this is an unchanging peace, because God is the unchanging, incorruptible God. I thank you most heartily for this question, the consideration of it has been a blessing to me and I suggest that you should take as the subject for one of your Addresses: "The Gospel of the incorruptible God."

"To them... that seek for glory." May not the distinction, the glory that these are seeking, be the pursuit of the will of God to its very end in a world of contentious and disobedient men. The end for which God created them is their aim, and to achieve this will be glory indeed, a great distinction. Honour goes with it, not the honour that comes from men but from God; for their aim is not to be approved of men but of God," (John 5. 44), and "them that honour Me, I will honour" (1 Samuel 2. 30), and incorruptibility; a corruptible world does not detain them, their object lies beyond it. God will crown every such life, and they shall bear their honours in incorruptible resurrection bodies in eternal peace. I scarcely need add that only those who are "in Christ Jesus" and in whom the Spirit dwells could answer to this, for you know that as well as I do.

"All have... come short of the glory of God." If we adhere to the
thought that the glory of God is what He has revealed Himself to be, we shall easily understand how completely we have failed in all that is suitable to it. His holiness, justice, truth, purity, righteousness and perfect abhorrence of evil are some of His attributes that compose His glory, and who can abide in the presence of these? Well there is one Man who has answered as perfectly to that glory as every other man had completely failed to answer to it, and there is redemption in Him, for God has set Him forth a propitiation (a meeting place) through faith in His blood. The glory of God has been vindicated by His blood, and God can be just and justify all who believe in Jesus. The very glory of which we had come short is now for us, and we boast in God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

"Strong in faith, giving glory to God." Abraham gave glory to God by believing that He would do what He said. The promise He had made would have staggered everything but faith. Nature would have said, Impossible. Faith said, I believe God; and that was glorifying God as God. By the patient and grateful expectation of faith Abraham honoured God, for he treated Him as God, who had revealed Himself to him as the Almighty, who would fulfil every promise that He made.

"Rejoicing in hope of the glory of God." This Epistle looks on to what Hebrews 2. 5 calls "the world to come whereof we speak." This world to come is the millennium kingdom, which will be filled with the glory of God: "the glory of God will cover the earth then, as the waters cover the sea." Now the glory of God, what God is as revealed in His gospel, has blst us with great blessing and has changed us, and in the joy of it we long to see it blessing and changing everything. We know for certain that it will do this. Our hope in regard to this is a certain one, and we rejoice in the thought of it. The reign of sin will cease, the domination of Satan will be broken, the Sun of Righteousness will arise with healing in His wings; and "they shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, "Know the Lord: for all shall know Me, from the least to the greatest" (Heb. 8. 11). Our part will be the heavenly side of this kingdom, but our glad and certain hope is to see "disease and death and demon" swept away by the shining out of the glory of God in Christ. Is not your heart stirred at the thought of it?

"Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father." May not the glory of the Father stand out in contrast to the death of the cross that the world meted out to Christ? All that the Father is, demanded that He should be raised up from the dead. It was the Father's will and pleasure to raise Him up and honour Him, and it was not one attribute of the Father, say that of power, only that was active in the resurrection of Christ, but the Father Himself, in all that name meant to His beloved Son—His nature as well as His attributes, visited the sepulchre and raised up Christ from among the dead. The similar phrase in Matthew 16. 27, has the same glory in view, I should say, but in Romans 6, the Father's glory raised Christ up when no mortal eye was there to see, the Father had His own pleasure in it, but Matthew 16. 27 shews us that
that same glory will vindicate Him in public power before the whole world.

"The glory that shall be revealed in us." This glory will be the manifestation of what we are as the sons of God. "It doth not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that when He shall appear we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is" (1 John 3. 2). The glory will be likeness to Christ, and will be an incomparable compensation for all the suffering of the present time. As to "whom He justified them He also glorified," we are certainly not glorified yet, "for even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of the body," we shall be glorified then. But we know also that since Christ died and rose again no devise or power of the enemy can frustrate God's purpose; and from the foreknowledge in eternity past to glorification in eternity yet to be all is God's work; and faith can say, It is as good as done.

"The riches of His glory." Are not the riches of His glory, the resources that He has in Himself which exceed all creature conception, and which have been expended in bringing both Jews and Gentiles into the place of blessing. His great mercy and His longsuffering and patient work in the preparation of vessels of mercy would be part of His resources. He found these in no creature, neither angel nor men were His counsellors; in carrying out His purposes He had to draw on His own resources, His riches in glory, and all the redeemed shall be for ever the witnesses to these great riches.

"Christ also received us to the glory of God." How unspeakable is the grace that made Christ receive such as we are, but that very grace glorified God, for it shewed what God is. We acknowledge that it is all of God, for we had neither merit nor claim upon Him, so we praise Him. Now if those whom Christ has received do not act in the same grace towards one another they misrepresent God and so dishonour Him. From doing which may the Lord preserve us.

"To God, only wise, be glory through Jesus Christ for ever. Amen." God will indeed have glory through Christ Jesus for ever. But we can understand how full the heart of the Apostle would be when he reached the end of this letter, in which he had declared the glory of the incorruptible and everlasting God as it is revealed in the gospel of His grace, and it was fitting that he should close with this adoration and ascription of glory to Him, for glory all belongs to God, and it is His people's right and joy to recognise and declare this.

I shall be glad to hear from you, as to whether these few suggestions commend themselves to you and whether in considering them you can add any thoughts that would be helpful to us all.

Affectionately your brother in Christ,
Quartus.

In our next issue the word "Hope" in the Epistle to the Romans will be the subject of this correspondence.

One grain of godly grace in the heart is worth more than a headful of worldly wit.

The words with which our Lord prefaced His promise of the Comforter are arresting, "If ye love Me keep My commandments." In the first case this clearly shows that the measure of love lies in obedience without qualification, without hesitation, nor will the full blessedness of the presence of the Holy Spirit be enjoyed apart from this. But what exactly does our Lord mean to convey by the words, "My commandments"? There is surely the great commandment of ch. 13. 34 repeated ch. 15. 12, 17. "That ye love one another" and this is imperative if part with Him in loving His own is to be realized. It would seem however that in emphasizing the commandments which are Mine, the Lord would have us to share in the governing principle that controlled His own path, namely obedience to the Father's will. It is similar in thought to that which He had said, Matt. 11. 29, "Take My yoke upon you and learn of Me." Not a yoke I will put upon you, but rather yoke yourselves with Me. Put your necks under the yoke that controls My life. It is easy, it is light, for it is the will of My Father, and in so doing you shall learn in My company, the commandments that are Mine, and find rest to your souls. Now if you love Me let us be joined together under this command of love, and the same power of the Holy Spirit, by which I have done the works the Father gave Me to do, shall be yours also.

Then follows in v. 16. the gift of this enabling power, "Another Comforter." We must not let go the thought of the comfort of love that results from the presence of the Holy Spirit, indeed if He is to us the Paraclete, one undertaking for us, this will follow. "Another" because the presence of Christ on high for us coincides with the presence of the Spirit in us. Christ makes intercession in the heavenly place, the Spirit intercedes below. "Another but not a different One in loving care and gracious ministry. For this "I will request the Father, and He shall give." Previously He had told His disciples to ask in His Name, but He now uses a different word, for as it has been said, "This is not the entreaty petition which becomes the creature, but the request of a Son to a Father. This is exceedingly precious, for it reveals that the coming of the Holy Spirit is the result of communion between the Father and the Son, and hence the expression of their love. When He came His abiding would be for ever. There would be no break in His stay with them, such as was then filling their hearts with sorrow at parting with their Lord. The Holy Spirit would abide with them, but He would also be in them. It is this which gives special character to the present time during which Christ is unseen, and also gives great importance to the fact that He is the Spirit of truth. As such He guides into all truth, making it a living power, and formative of the character of Christ in those whom He indwells. Then also as the Spirit of truth He proceeds from the Father and so strengthens the inner man, that the presence of the Father and the Son are known in the heart in
abiding communion. This involves the knowledge of the fulness of redemption and relationship and at the same time the place that the saints have in Christ and Christ in them, giving all the joy of this until He shall come.

This would of necessity separate the disciples from the world. The world can only take account of that which appeals to the senses. The Holy Spirit has not become incarnate, and therefore has not been presented to the world in any way it can take account of. Neither can the world know His mission, but says our Lord, “Ye know Him.” The love of the Spirit and the teaching of the Spirit would be the same as His own. The Triune God is one, to know the Son is to know the Father, and the Spirit also, who proceeds from the Son and from the Father.

“I will come to you.” The Spirit would be the living connection between the disciples on earth and Himself in heaven, and thus they would not be left orphans without relationship or support. In that sense the coming of the Spirit would be His own coming, not to take them from earth, as will be the case when He comes again personally according to His promise in verse 3. That to which He now refers is His coming by the Spirit for communion in the fellowship of His own who are waiting for Him.

A few short hours and He would cease to be seen by the eyes of men, but those whose eyes were opened by the Spirit would behold Him by faith in the glory of the heavens, and they would have in them the power of life which would reproduce Himself in them, “Because I live ye shall live also.” They would have a sight of Him beyond all the possibilities of natural vision and the joy of sharing His life. “At that day,” for all was future on the betrayal night. Now by the coming of the Spirit, the true light of the day dawn shines, and the manifestation of the Father in Him is seen, and His oneness with the Father in absolute Deity revealed. All that is really life for His own on earth is hid with Christ in God. It belongs to a sphere that the world can take no cognisance of, nor will it recognise in any way until Christ who is our life shall appear, then shall we also appear with Him in glory. In the knowledge of the presence of Christ lies the present joy of the assembly. He is the centre of the fellowship of the church of God. This is realized wherever two or three are gathered unto His Name. Where such make a place for the supreme authority of Himself, there will His presence in the midst be most surely known. Such a coming of Himself is the most blessed anticipation possible of the moment when His ransomed church shall behold His face in glory.

“And shall we see Thy face, And hear Thy heavenly voice, Well known to us in present grace? Well may our hearts rejoice.”


This part of our Lord’s discourse on the betrayal night is of the most intense interest. He had been speaking in the plural of that which would concern His own collectively, now He changes to the singular in His address to each individual. If the power and unction of the Holy Spirit is to be known amongst those
who form the assembly of God, it can only be by a sustained personal acquaintance with Christ. The whole is made up of its parts, therefore it is only by the effectual working in measure of each one part that the whole increases with the increase of God.

The joy that belongs to the presence of the Lord in the midst of the assembly when come together depends on how far He is personally known in the individual path and life. It is of this that the Lord now speaks, and a great resource He thus provides for a day of departure from and betrayal of the truth. “He that hath My commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth Me.” It is the same thought of being yoked with Him in the doing of the Father’s will which He had before expressed. He now unfolds the wondrous blessedness which is open to such. “He that loveth Me shall be loved of My Father, and I will love Him, and will manifest Myself to him.” The personal love of the Father and the Son in Christ, reveals a realm of peace, joy and worship, the blessedness of which can only be surpassed by the moment when faith gives place to sight. Darkness and disorder may prevail around, but here is a sanctuary which is ever open to a faithful heart that keeps His commandments. In such individual experience lies the possibility of revival in any way amongst that which is collective in the assemblies of the saints, it must begin with obedience to His word in the joy of His love, and in personal contact with Himself. Paul speaks in Eph. 3. 17, of Christ dwelling in the heart by faith, for well he knew that if this were so, there would be the drawing, cohesive power of the Spirit’s unity, leading to such a rooting and grounding in love that there would be an understanding with all saints of the great purposes of God. Before the day of manifestation shall come there is the possibility of acquaintance with Christ, so real, so abiding, so near; revealing to the heart His moral beauty, His personal excellence, His ascended glory, and how truly in this lies “Part with Me.”

Yet it all seemed so strange to those men at the supper table on that night, and Judas (not Iscariot) with his mind still upon the showing of Messiah to the nation and the world, asks the Lord, what has occurred? Why not publicly to all? It is not exactly the “How” of possibility, but like all the rest his mind was perplexed with the problem of their Lord leaving them, and thus baffling all their hopes of the kingdom He had sent them to preach. The Lord does not directly answer the question, but emphasizes and enlarges His former utterance, revealing the deep secret of eternal life, the blessedness of which will fill eternity. During the Lord’s absence, this becomes by the Spirit the abiding portion of any man in proportion as the conditions of having His commandments and keeping them is fulfilled. Love to Christ is evidenced by this. It is the partnership on the part of the believer with Him in the path of the will of God, which the Lord answers by the joy of fellowship with the Father and Himself. Further such an one will keep His word.

Though inseparable from His commandments there is here a difference. His commandments are the principles of His life, which John calls in his epistle. (1 John 2. 7). “the old commandments” now become to us
a new commandment, true in Him and in us. In His life at the same time the Father was revealed, and this is the word, which becomes the supreme joy of a heart in fellowship with the Son. Will heaven hold a bliss of more wondrous character than these words of our Lord convey? Then it will be in far greater measure than is possible in present conditions, meanwhile it is the Father and the Son whose love will fill that heavenly place, who now come to make their abode in the heart. This surely involves communion and also the communication of the secret purposes which eye hath not seen nor ear heard, but which now are revealed by the Spirit. For it is the actual presence of the Divine Spirit, never apart from the Father and the Son in the unity of the Godhead, who makes these glorious facts real and abiding. Alas it is sadly possible to so quench in the assembly, or grieve individually the Spirit of God, that although He forsake not, yet He cannot give that which He desires, the consciousness of the blessedness of the abiding of the Father and the Son which is the fulness of “Part with Me.”

In how many cases with those who bear the Christian name and who may even be assured of the forgiveness of sins, the commandments of Christ which were the expression of what He was, and direct the life He gives in the same channel. The consequence is that the power and grace of the word of the sent One of the Father is unknown. It is this reality which we should covet in the presence of an outward profession which does not rise above its own material and selfish interests, and is not separated by the love of Christ from the world which crucified the Lord of glory.

“TAKE NO THOUGHT.”

Three times does the Lord speak these words in Matthew 6. verses 25, 31, 34. He gives us three reasons why we should not be burdened and fretted by anxious care. 1. Nature shews us the folly of it. The fowls of the air and the lilies of the field—the animal and the vegetable kingdoms—both rebuke our anxiety. 2. The revelation of God forbids it. The heathen who do not know God may worry, but what Christian would be a heathen in character and practice? 3. Our own limitations and God’s providence shew the folly of it. We cannot forestall to-morrow, it is not in our power to do that; it lies in God’s hand and not ours, and God is our Father. Notice verse 26, “Your heavenly Father feedeth them”; verse 32, “Your heavenly Father knoweth.”

In the death of Christ righteousness was accomplished.
In the resurrection of Christ righteousness was testified.
In the exaltation of Christ righteousness was celebrated.
That God would have us learn from the instinct that He, as Creator, has put into the human heart, as also learn from His ways in Creation is plain from the Scripture at the head of this article, and from the word given by the Apostle Paul in his second letter to the assembly at Corinth that "God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" (ch. 4. 6).

With such Scriptures as my warrant may I suggest that the story of creation given to us in the early chapters of Genesis, finds in the second chapter of the Ephesian epistle a remarkable and beautiful counterpart in the realm of the Spirit.

In answer to the question, "What is grace?" we often get the reply, "Grace is unmerited favour." But a prayerful perusal of the chapter above referred to, must convince us that grace is more than that. It is, "Wonderful favour when we justly merited judgment."

Are we ready to admit this without reserve? If so, we shall be amongst those who "rejoice [boast] in Christ Jesus and have no confidence in the flesh" (Phil. 2. 3). What rest of heart is the portion of those who thus recognize that they owe all to the sovereign grace of God and that their standing before Him is entirely and absolutely on the merits of Jesus Christ our Saviour and Lord.

When God took in hand to put the world in order for man's habitation, we read that it "was without form and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters" (Gen. 1. 2). What words could more vividly set forth the state of chaos into which the world had fallen? and could words more powerfully describe the utter spiritual chaos in the soul of unregenerate man, than those of the first three verses of our chapter? On the one hand, dead in trespasses and sins and on the other hand fulfilling the lusts of the flesh and of the mind and by nature the children of wrath even as others.

Just as an artist often paints a very dark background in order to the better display the beautiful subject of his canvas, so the Spirit of God describes man in his utterly lost and ruined condition before depicting in such lovely colours the wonders of "the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness towards us through Christ Jesus" (v. 7).

Just as the intervention of God so completely changed the chaos of the physical world into order and beauty, making the heart to rejoice in the glory of the first creation, so the heart is filled with praise to read, "But God, who is rich in mercy, for the great love wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead in sins hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved)" (verses 4, 5).

There is no mention of the love of God in connection with the works of creation, though surely when He acts, of whom we read in the first epistle of John, "God is love," we cannot but believe that love was behind the work of creation. But when God acts in new creation, then
His love is emphasized. Yes, praise be to God, it was love that impelled Him to interpose sovereign grace on our behalf, and had He not inter-vened, we would have been "without hope and without God in the world" (v. 12).

It is the intervention of God that makes all the difference and just as in the first creation God "spake and it was done; He commanded, and it stood fast" (Ps. 33. 9), so in new creation, God brings life out of death by His quickening power, manifesting His love and winning the heart for Himself.

Further, is not the way Adam got his help—meet anti-typical of Christ and the church? Adam went into a deep sleep and from his side was taken the rib from which the Lord God builded a woman, causing Adam to say, "This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh" (Gen. 3. 23). So Christ went into the deep sleep of death to obtain His bride—the Church—and the apostle Paul by the Spirit writes, "we are members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones" (Eph. 5. 30). Surely this is a striking example of how Scripture is inter-woven, the Old Testament antici-pating the New Testament by type and shadow whilst the latter inter-pretst the former. Thank God for the inspired Bible!

We have spoken of God’s work in quickening out of death those who are saved as new creation; is not that the way in which Scripture presents it to our minds, when we read, "For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before or-dained that we should walk in them?" (v. 10). And it is extremely interesting to note that the Spirit speaks thus in stressing the fact that it is "by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works lest any man should boast" (verses 8, 9).

And so we are once more thrown back on the sovereign act of God—by grace—through faith—not of yourselves—the gift of God—not of works—we are His workmanship. What a plethora of grace is unfolded to us! Happy are they whose faith lays hold of it all, enabling them to rest in the love of God, which moved His hand to work in new creation power and glory. What a God indeed is ours!

Adam was God’s workmanship and the Psalmist exclaims before God, "Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of Thy hands" (Ps. 8. 6). The believer, too, is God’s workmanship. Adam failed sadly in that for which God had created him. Shall we fail to manifest the "good works, which God hath ordained that we should walk in them?" The story of Adam was surely written for our admonition and learning; may we then seek daily grace to fulfil God’s purpose in new creation. But what are the good works unto which God hath created us in Christ Jesus? May I suggest that they can all be summed up in this, "That we reflect the moral glories of our Saviour God?" That is, that we arc towards others as God has been towards us, so that men may see Him reproduced in us, His work-manship.

That would suggest a further illus-tration from the material creation. God in His wisdom and power set lights in the firmament and so or-dered that the moon should reflect the light of the sun, so that when
in the night we see the moon shining in her glory we know that the light she gives is derived from the sun. When I see a full moon riding in her splendour on a clear night sky, I look up and often say to myself, "I cannot see the sun, but the moon in the sky does" and I rejoice in the light which she reflects.

The world is in darkness and cannot see Him who is spoken of as the Sun of Righteousness, but the believer can say in the language of Hebrews 2. 9, "We see Jesus... crowned with glory and honour." If therefore we maintain the up-ward look and by faith do not allow earth-born clouds to come between, then we in " beholding the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord" (2 Cor. 3. 18), and we shall reflect the "light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" (ch. 4. 6) to the blessing of saint and sinner. Thus shall we show forth to the glory and pleasure of God the good works for which He hath created us in Christ Jesus. His purpose will be fulfilled in us. What sort of reflection does the world see in our lives?

Are we quiet enough to be taught?

The parable of the Good Samaritan teaches us that the Lord will not only save us, but take care of us. Not until we learn this lesson are we freed from anxious care about ourselves, and we shall never sit at His feet to be taught of Him until we are free from anxious care about ourselves. The parable of the Good Samaritan precedes the story of Mary quietly sitting at the Lord's feet. That is the moral order of things, which is a feature of Luke's Gospel. (ch. 10).

The sufferings and sympathy of Christ.

To Editor of Scripture Truth,

I have been reading your article on "Two Kinds of Temptation" with which I surely agree. But Mr. Ridout, from whom you quote, suggests another kind of Temptation, even physical suffering. How it magnifies our apprehension of the surpassing love of Christ as we contemplate Him searching out the place where we would have to tread and did actually place His feet there!

Love brought Him down to the cross and His feet were nailed to the tree. If we think only of the physical suffering, how it fills His pilgrim saints with wonder and with praise! I have suffered intense pain in the feet and it has greatly encouraged me to think that my Saviour knows all about it. He has gone through the experience before me and now from the throne of Grace He is able to extend the helping hand. Touched with the feeling of our infirmities He can minister grace and mercy—grace to support me in the trouble or mercy to relieve the pain. May I also quote from another American writer, whose name is mentioned in your article?

"In everything but our sins and our evil natures He is one with us. He grew in stature and in grace He laboured and wept, and prayed, and loved. He was tempted in all points as we are, sin apart. With Thomas we confess Him Lord and God, we adore and revere Him, but there is no Other who established with us such intimacy, Who comes so close to these human hearts of ours: no One in the universe of whom we are so little afraid." (Scofield.)

Yours Faithfully in the Master's Service,

W. Taylor.

With Christ, April 19th.
ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Keeping the Sabbath.

"Will you say something in Scripture Truth on the keeping of the Sabbath? "Seventh Day adventists" are busy in this district and I am told that I ought to keep the Sabbath on Saturday. I should like to see something said that will help my friends."—LOWESTOFT.

THIS keeping of the Sabbath as
necessary to salvation is a turning back from the gospel to the law; it is a falling from grace, (Galatians 5. 4); it is giving up the substance for the shadow. Colossians 2. 16, 17 definitely calls the Sabbath, along with holy days, etc., a shadow of things to come. The things to come—the body, or substance, is Christ and the spiritual blessings that we have in Him. We do not want the shadow when the substance has come. Again to turn back to the observance of days is to go back to weak and beggarly elements and to be in bondage. (Galatians 4. 9, 10.)

The Sabbath was given to Israel as the sign of the old covenant, but they broke that covenant as soon as it was given, consequently they forfeited the blessing and rest of the Sabbath. So when the Lord was here, He worked as hard on the Sabbath day as on any other, and the Jews would have stoned Him for it, but He shewed them that there could be no Sabbath of rest for Him in a world dominated by sin and where the miseries of men in consequence were so great. Said He, "My Father worketh hitherto and I work" (John 5). Never once did the Lord commend the Jews for their Sabbatarianism, but whenever the question arose, as it often did, he condemned them in regard to it. And they, such was their blind and unregenerate condition, could be most careful as to the keeping of the Sabbath and yet hate and crucify the Lord of glory who had ordained it and was Lord of it.

The only Sabbath that the Lord had when He was here was in the sepulchre. But on the first day of the week He rose up from the dead, and from thence onward the first day of the week has been a hallowed day for those who love Him. As the risen Lord He has brought in a new Covenant, and has set the old covenant aside. (Hebrews 8.)

The old covenant said, "Six days shalt thou labour;" and if they had done their work well and without failure they would at the end of their week have had a true sabbath. They never did, nor has any other sinner gained the right to enjoy a Sabbath of rest by his labours. But the Christian begins with rest. The first word that the Lord uttered to His disciples when He came into their midst on the resurrection day was, "Peace unto you." He is the One who gives us rest, we are not able rightly to labour unless we enjoy it. Going back to the law denies this, and robs us of the grace that saves us without works. (Eph. 2. 8; Romans 3. 20.)

It was on the first day of the week that the Lord arose from the dead, and on two successive first days of the week He gathered His disciples together. (John 20). The disciples gathered together to break bread on that day. (Acts 20. 7.) They were exhorted to put by their
offerings to the Lord on that day. (1 Corinthians 16. 2.) And it is definitely said to be "the Lord's day." (Revelation 1. 10.) It is the Christian's privilege to devote that day to the things and service of the Lord, not as being under law, for we "are not under law but under grace" (Romans 6. 15), but being free from work-a-day activities, and finding both rest and refreshment in the Lord's presence and service, we can serve Him with gladness.

The meaning of the Lord's words, "The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath" is, that the Sabbath was given for man's blessing, and not to be an intolerable yoke, such as the Sabbatarian pharisees were making it.

Reading the Bible with Children.

"What is the best way for a Bible Class teacher or parent of young boys and girls to read the Bible with them? Some say to read from Genesis to Revelation. I have thought to do this, but have been so disturbed in my own mind by the things I read that I seemed to get no profit and the question arose in my mind, how can I read these things with my children, on the other hand how can I pick here and there? We must all be instructed with the word of God. Help would be greatly appreciated both for my own instruction and also for my children's sake." CASTLEFORD.

YOUR aim as a Christian mother is to bring up your children in the nature and admonition of the Lord, and for this you must instruct them in His Word. But you will surely begin with the New Testament, for it is in that part of Holy Scripture that He is revealed to us as our Saviour and Lord. But even in instructing them in the New Testament incidents and facts you will consider their age and capacity and give them "line upon line, and precept upon precept." Of course you will be continually turned back to the Old Testament; for instance at the very beginning of the New Testament story, in telling them of the coming of the Saviour, you will be obliged to shew them how the coming in of sin made the coming of the Saviour a necessity, and so in their minds the beginnings of the Old and New Testaments will be joined together. And as other references to incidents and characters from the Old Testament are made in the New you will have the opportunity of turning back to these and telling them those stories that make a never failing appeal to children.

"The Peep of Day" published by The Religious Tract Society, is useful in shewing how to present things simply to very young children; and "How to Teach and How to Reach the Young," by Geo. Goodman—Pickering and Inglis, Glasgow, Publishers, can be recommended as a good help in preparing Bible lessons for older children.

You have no need to be disturbed by what you read in the Old Testament. It gives us the Divine history of man from the time that God created him in His own image; and brings out the terrible corruption of his heart after he turned from God to go his own way and become the servant of sin. Nothing was written aforetime but for our admonition upon whom the end of the age has come, and "these things were our
examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted” (1 Cor. 10. 6, 11). They are the dark background that throws into bright relief the long suffering of God. They shew us what the flesh is even in saints of God, and warn us that there is no safety for us except in Christ, and in walking in the Spirit.

Angels clothed in pure white linen.

The angels to whom the vials were given in Revelation 15. 6, are clothed in pure white linen. What do you think is the significance of this in their case as contrasted with the clothing of the wife of the Lamb in ch. 19. 8.—WARRINGTON.

You will notice that the golden vials which were given to these angels were full of the wrath of God: the time of “the wrath to come” had arrived. In the former troubles that are to come upon men under the seals and the trumpets, chapters 6—11, we do not get this exactly, but what leads up to it. Under the seals, it would seem that the schemes and ways of men in their independence of God recoil upon themselves; under the trumpets men are made to feel the bitterness of being under Satan’s power, but the seven last plagues are directly from God, they are the pouring out of His wrath upon men. And this must necessary be according to His own divine righteousness which the golden girdles about the breasts would indicate. Further, notice that this wrath falls chiefly upon the Kingdom of the Beast (ch. 16), and Babylon the great (chapters 17, 18). The Kingdom of the Beast is Christendom and Babylon is the false church at the centre of it—the Christless religion of Christendom headed up in Rome. Fine linen, pure and white, is the righteousnesses of the saints, (ch. 19. 8), and this should have been the clothing of this false church, and would have been if she had been faithful to her profession; but she has denied this in her practice and long history, and has clothed herself instead in purple and scarlet, and decked herself with gold and precious stones and pearls, (ch. 17. 4). By her glorification of herself and her betrayal of the true interests of Christ; by her assumption of royalty during the time of His rejection by the world, and for the corruption of doctrine and morals that characterised her she has earned for herself the name which appears upon her forehead, “Mystery, Babylon the great, the mother of harlots and abominations of the earth.”

Her judgment will be according to what she ought to have been; God cannot lower the standard, and His standard of living for those who bear the name of Christ is the fine linen, clean and white. We suggest, therefore, that the clothing of the angels who execute this wrath indicate this. They come out of the temple of God’s holiness, clothed in that which indicates the standard by which God will judge Christendom and the false church which while bearing the name of Christ has made that name a byword for corruption and oppression in the world.
Inviting believers to the Lord's Supper.

"Is it right to bring to the notice of young believers and others who may not have thought about it, the fact that it is the Lord's desire that they should partake of His Supper? Is it right to say, It is the Lord's Supper therefore it is for Him to invite His own to it? and since we do not know the state of any soul therefore we ought not to mention it to any, and if it is the Lord's will for a person to remember Him in this way He will bring him there without our help?"

—BAKEWELL.

It is the desire of the Lord that all who labour and are heavy-laden should come to Him and rest, but it is surely the business of all those who serve the Lord to tell them this in the gospel, and invite them to come and assure them of a welcome when they do come. We do not say, "If it is the Lord's will that they should come, He will bring them," when sinners are in question, then why should we when it is a question of His will for His saints?

We know that it His will and desire that those who owe all their blessing to His death should not forget Him. "This do," He has said, "in remembrance of Me." Surely it is right that we should tell those who may not have realised it that this is their Lord's desire for them. The Apostle Paul, inspired by the Holy Spirit of God, told the christians at Corinth about it, and instructed them as to their conduct in regard to it. And if the truth as to the Lord's Supper and the Lord's expressed desire for His own were left out of the ministry of the servants of the Lord, they would not be declaring the whole counsel of God.

To press all and sundry without regard to their spiritual condition to take part in the Lord's Supper would of course be wrong, and would shew that those who did it failed to realise the sacred and solemn character of the feast. Unless the heart is right, the Supper cannot be taken except in a formal way, and this would surely tend to harden the conscience and heart and leave the partaker worse than before.

Yet it is the Lord's desire that all whom He loves should shew their response to His love in this way, and how shall they do it, except they hear about it, and how shall they hear about it if no one tells them? Nothing could appeal to the heart like the Lord's Supper; it is indeed a love feast, and yet there is a sacredness, a solemnity and lordliness about its very simplicity that subdues the spirits of all those who understand it. The Lord is the Host, and His saints are the guests at this feast. He invites His guests and welcomes them when they respond to His invitation, but He invites them through the ministry of His servants, both publicly and privately.

Our first obligation is the will of God; we often put the natural obligation before the spiritual and fail in both. If we put the spiritual obligation first God will help us in the natural. God has the first claim, and His will would direct us towards His interests on earth and He will not overlook our interests.
IT was not the business of earlier writers of the New Testament to prove that the Lord Jesus Christ is God. To them this great truth was not a matter of debate, it was their whole faith, and the standpoint from which they made their inspired-by-the-Holy-Spirit records. It has been said that just as the golden threads were inextricably woven with the blue and purple and scarlet and fine linen of the High Priest’s ephod and girdle (Exodus 18) so is the Deity of Christ woven into all that these men wrote; and that is true, yet the type is feeble and inadequate, as all material types of what is infinite must be. The Deity of Christ is more than interwoven into the Gospel records, it is the warp upon which all that is recorded in them is wrought; it is the root out of which all truth grows; it is the fountain from which all blessing flows. If it could be torn from these four Gospels they would be meaningless shreds, and the glorious faith of the Son of God would be compelled to take its place along with other vain, worldly philosophies, having some interest perhaps to scholars, but void of all saving value for sinners. Those who reject it, reject the only hope, the only way of deliverance for men, for all Scripture shews that if men were to be saved, God must come down to them to do it, and also, if God does come down to men, He must come as their Saviour. Naturally we should have thought otherwise but that is most assuredly the truth.

And it is with this that the New Testament opens. Upon the first page of it, in our Authorised Version, the Name of Jesus appears in capital letters, and it gives us the title and the great subject of the Book. That Name means Saviour, and He had come to save. The New Testament is the Book of God’s salvation, and it shews us that God Himself is the Saviour, and He only. He might delegate great works to His angel-servants, and speak in divers ways to men by His prophets, but this work of salvation He must undertake Himself, or it would never be done.

Let us now consider this, “Fear not,” said the angel of the Lord to Joseph, “to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit, and she shall bring forth a son. and thou shalt call His name JESUS: for He shall save His people from their sins.” He did not say that He would save sinners, Jew and Gentile, though that is most blessedly true, and comes fully to light as the truth unfolds, but in perfect keeping with this first Gospel, to “save His People.” The people of Israel were in view in the angel’s announcement, and the fulfilment of the Word of God by His prophets to them. They were Jehovah’s people, a people chosen of God as His own peculiar possession, even though they had departed far from Him. Their sins had separated them from Him, but He would not, He
could not abandon His rights in them, He would undertake their salvation. And Jesus was to appear to do this, because as the angel said, these people chosen of God were His people. There are many Old Testament passages addressed to Israel which bind up their salvation with God's personal intervention on their behalf and that prove conclusively that He only could save them. I will quote a few of them, “I am the Lord thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour” (Isaiah 43. 3). “I, even I, am the Lord, and beside Me there is no Saviour” (v. 11). “There is no God else beside Me, a just God and a Saviour” (45. 21). “All flesh shall know that I the Lord am thy Saviour, and thy Redeemer, the mighty One of Jacob” (49. 26). “I am the Lord thy God from the land of Egypt, and thou shalt know no god but Me; for there is no Saviour beside Me” (Hosea 13. 4).

It has often been said that the name Jesus carries divine glory with it; that it means Jehovah the Saviour; it is certainly clear from these great texts that none but God could save His people, and if any others pretended to be able to do this, their pretence only proved them to be thieves and robbers (John 10), but of Jesus, the angel said, “He shall save His people from their sins.” Then who else could He be but God?

THE FIRST QUOTATION FROM THE PROPHETS.

As we apprehend the force and meaning of the words of the angel of the Lord to Joseph we are prepared for the statement that follows, “Now this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet saying, Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call His name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us.” When Mary brought forth her first-born Son the Saviour-Messiah had entered the world. We who had said to Moses, “I AM THAT I AM: Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me to you” (Exodus 3. 14), was not now sending a servant with a message but He had appeared Himself to be their Saviour. We are not asked to fathom this mystery of God incarnate, it must ever baffle all intellectual investigation, but it does not stumble faith; for faith recognises that God will perform His word; if He had spoken of this by the prophet, what He had said must come to pass. And faith knows that when God moves He moves in a way worthy of Himself, to confound the wise and the proud and the mighty by that which is apparently weak and of no account. It was even so in this matter. He came into manhood and in great humility not to condemn and consume a sinful people, but to offer Himself to them as their Saviour-Lord, though we know well that where grace is rejected judgment must fall.

THE SECOND QUOTATION FROM THE PROPHETS.

The coming of the wise men from the East to enquire where He was who was born King of the Jews, gave Jerusalem the opportunity of not only beholding its King but of seeing its God manifest in flesh. The chief men of the city were gathered together by Herod, the Idumean usurper, and they shewed that they were well acquainted with the Scriptures that spoke of His birth. But in citing Micah 5. 2,
why did they omit that part of it that declares His eternal being and activities? The omission seems to indicate that they had no desire for a close acquaintance with their God, the idea was not acceptable to them; an alien tyrant seems to have been more to their minds than Jehovah their Saviour. But the prophecy which they quoted not only foretold the place of His birth and the dignity of His office, but the glory of His person. Micah wrote, “They shall smite the Judge of Israel with a rod upon the cheek”—an extraordinary prophecy; but actually fulfilled when they took the reed that they had put in His right hand as a mock sceptre and smote Him on the head, (Matthew 27. 30)—“But thou Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall He come forth unto Me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting [or the days of eternity]” (ch. 5. 1, 2).

Who could have conceived this great thing, that He whose goings forth were from eternity, who in divine, creative energy had cast the stars before Him as a golden path-way for His glorious feet, should have come forth in obscure Bethlehem, born of an obscure virgin mother, in all the apparent weakness of human babehood; to be the Servant of the Godhead and to tread the filthy streets of those eastern cities in His search for the diseased, and distressed and devil-possessed; and to go forth at last bearing His cross to Golgotha to save His people from their sins? What goings forth were these! Yet these were the ways of divine love, made known in the Son of Man, who came not to be ministered unto but to minister and to give His life a ransom for many. It was the only way if God was to be known as the Saviour, and if Jesus was to make good His title to that glorious name.

THE THIRD QUOTATION FROM THE PROPHETS.

Passing over other quotations from the prophets that do not bear on our subject we come to ch. 3. John the Baptist was a man full of the Holy Spirit, and by the guidance and power of the Spirit he bore testimony to Jesus. He refused to talk of Himself; his mission was to “prepare the way of the LORD,” according to the prophecy of Isaiah 40. 3. And of Him whose forerunner he was, he said, “He that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear, He shall baptise you with the Holy Ghost and with fire: whose fan is in His hand and He will thoroughly purge His floor, and gather His wheat into the garner, but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire” (ch. 3. 11, 12). With the Lord close upon his heels, this faithful forerunner declared his own limitations; he could baptise the people with water; he could bring them down into that which signified death, but at the same time he proclaimed the might of his Lord, He would lift them into the sphere of life and endue them with the power and intelligence that belonged to that life, or—dread alternative—baptise them with fire. He would gather His wheat into the garner and burn the chaff with unquenchable fire.

Israel was His floor, and He the Lord would discriminate between His wheat and the chaff. Who but the Lord could do this? It is written, “The Lord knoweth them that
are His." He had come in grace, the Lord in whom is salvation, but He had come to a recalcitrant nation, a remnant only of which would receive Him; and since He is a just God as well as a Saviour, His judgment must fall on the rebellious. "For the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, all that do wickedly shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up saith the Lord of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch" (Malachi 4. 1). 

The Father ... hath committed all judgment to the Son: that all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father" (John 5. 22, 23). "What a fact of immeasurable greatness was the presence of the Lord God in the midst of His people, in the Person of Him who, although He was doubtless to be the fulfilment of all the promises, was necessarily, though rejected, the Judge of all the evil existing among His people." (J. N. D.)

THE FOURTH QUOTATION FROM THE PROPHETS.

The next quotation from the prophets which has a definite bearing on our subject is in ch. 4. John had been cast into prison. He had been a burning and a shining light in the darkness, but as the stars fade away when the sun rises, so he passed out of sight that all eyes might be fixed upon the One who was greater than he; "that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, The land of Zebulon, and the land of Naphalim, by the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles: the people which sat in darkness saw a great light; and to them which sat in the region of the shadow of death light is sprung up." The quotation is from the 9th chapter of the prophecy and it declares the greatness of the One in whom this great light shone, and we must not fail to notice this. "Unto us," says the prophet, "a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be on His shoulder: and His Name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The Mighty God, The Father of Eternity, The Prince of Peace. 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 to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this."

How great are the glories of this five-fold name! too bright indeed for mortal eyes, if it were not in Jesus that they shine, but in Him they reach us as softly and sweetly as the dawn, "Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given." Here is meekness, gentleness and love. We are not afraid of a babe; we do not shrink in terror from a son. "Fear not," said the angel to the Shepherds, "for, behold I bring you 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. And this shall be a sign unto you: Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes lying in a manger." And His Name—the name of that Babe upon whom the Shepherds looked with wonder and whom the wise men worshipped—has a five-fold glory. Can we discern it in the Gospels? I think we can, indeed it pervades them and diffuses its fragrance from every page of them. His name shall be called WONDERFUL. The devil owned it
when he was compelled to leave Him, having utterly failed to allure Him from the path of righteousness, (ch. 4. 11). The people confessed it when they were astonished at His doctrine. (ch. 7. 28); the soldiers who were sent to take Him confessed it when they said, "Never man spake like this man," (John 7. 26); the people confessed it again when they said, "He hath done all things well" (Mark 7. 37); His disciple confessed it when they asked, "What manner of man is this?" (Matt. 8. 25); the devils confessed it when they said, "What have we to do with Thee, Jesus of Nazareth?" (8. 29); and the Father proclaimed it when from the excellent glory He said, .. Thou art my Son [even] the Beloved, in Whom I greatly delight."

COUNSELLOR. "Learn of Me," He said, "for I am meek and lowly in heart and ye shall find rest to your souls" (ch. 11. 29), and "Whosoever heareth these sayings of Mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house: and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock." (ch. 7. 24).

THE MIGHTY GOD. This is the name of God as the Omnipotent One, the mighty EL, the Most High, possessor of heaven and earth, Who disposes of men as He will and is the strength and refuge of those that trust in Him. This is the central glory of the five-fold name and it shone from the lowly Nazarene when He stilled the storm on the midnight sea (ch. 8. 26); thrust back and controlled the power of death (8. 23); multiplied the loaves and fishes to satisfy the hungry crowds (14. 15); claimed the undivided allegiance of the hearts of men (4. 18-22; 19. 21); forgave the sins of those that sought Him, (9. 2); and said "Come unto Me all ye that labour and are heavy laden and I will give you rest" (11. 28).

THE FATHER OF ETERNITY. Our minds can travel back through the ages of time, but they halt at the frontiers of eternity; it is too vast for us to scan, yet this fourth beam of this all-glorious name carries us into Eternity whether we will or not, and tells us that every age of it proceeded from Him, and that He controls them with all their issues. If I may be permitted to go outside our Gospel I will quote from Colossians 1 where it is said of "The Son of the Father's love" (verse 13), "For by Him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by Him, and for Him: and He is before all things, and by Him all things consist" (vv. 16, 17). And turning back to our Gospel I read of this Creator-Son, "No man knoweth the Son but the Father" (11. 27), and there shines a beam too bright for creature eye, a glory that no man hath seen or can see.

THE PRINCE OF PEACE. There is not much said about peace in Matthew's Gospel, it belongs more to Luke's and the latter part of John's, but the reason is not far to seek. As the Prince of Peace He sent forth His messengers preaching peace in every house into which they went, but the people were not worthy of that peace for they rejected the Prince of it, and the peace they would not have returned to those who carried it (10. 13), and
the Prince of Peace had to say in view of this stubbornness and blindness, "Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace but a sword" (10. 34). Nevertheless He was the Prince of peace, and Peter proclaimed this when He told the first Gentiles that ever heard the gospel, "The word which God sent unto the children of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ; (He is Lord of all)” (Acts 10. 36). And all who owned His Lordship entered into peace then as they also do even unto this day.

The glory shone in vain for Israel then, for they stumbled at the lowliness of their great Messiah, but the day is surely coming when it will dispel their darkness, and lift the veil that covers them and open their wondering eyes and they shall say in that day, “Lo, this is our God; we have waited for Him, and He will save us: this is the Lord; we have waited for Him, we will be glad and rejoice in His salvation” (Isa. 25. 9). Then of the increase of His government and peace there shall be no end, and He will establish His kingdom with judgment and justice for ever. And He will swallow up death in victory and wipe away tears from off all faces, for He is the Saviour of His people, JEHOVAH-JESUS.

Thus we see Him in the early chapters of Matthew, who is the Son in the glorious Trinity (ch. 28. 19), co-equal with the Father and the Holy Ghost, enter into the world as man, yet Emmanuel, to be the Saviour of His people, and their Ruler, who was not a child of days, but the Lord of Eternity; and as their all-discerning and righteous Judge, and the One who will drive before His victorious feet all darkness and the power of death and fill His kingdom and the whole earth with the light of the knowledge of God which shines even now in His face for all who believe.

(To be continued)

"Unthankful, Unholy."

A man unthankful man is an unholy man, he is a man who does not acknowledge his dependence upon God, and does not recognise the goodness of God. These two things are put together in 2 Timothy 3. 2, and they go together in every life where either of them is. One of the charges that God brings against the heathen is that they were not thankful,” and the depths of unholiness and degradation into which they sank was a consequence. It is one item, and by no means the least, in the heavy indictment that God brings against an apostatising Christendom in 2 Timothy 3. There could be no greater insult to God than this. For a man to be receiving unnumbered benefits from the hand of God, and never to say, “Thank you,” for one of them, is a sad disclosure of the state of his heart: God the giver of all good is nothing to him.

Now let Christians beware of this spirit that permeates the world. Let us put far from us all discontent and murmuring, and greet each day with thanksgiving, for our God is good and doeth good. If we are to glorify God as God, we must give thanks unto Him, and most of all for His unspeakable gift. To fail in this is to fall into unholiness.
“TREES OF RIGHTEOUSNESS.” Isaiah 61. 3.

FROM my window I can see two trees. They were planted at the same time in the same soil. One is a noble tree, a thing of beauty, spreading and free. The other, though its branches have reached up as high as its mate’s, is slower in putting forth its leaves, and has neither symmetry nor grace. What is it that has made the difference between these trees? To my inexpert but observant eye it is one thing only. Years ago ivy had fastened itself upon the trunk of the second tree and spread upward to its branches and they have been crabbed and spoiled in their growth and the very life of the tree threatened. Yes it is the ivy that has caused the mischief.

I am glad that someone seeing the plight of the tree has taken an axe and cut the root of the parasite, and so relieved it of that that was robbing it of its vitality and beauty. It will live, and develop more freely now, but will it ever reach the perfection of its mate? I fear not.

I turn from contemplating these trees to my New Testament and I read, “Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings” (1 Peter 2. 1). These are the things that cling to Christians and hinder their growth and mar their grace. More deadly parasites are they than ivy. If they fasten themselves upon any soul and are allowed and indulged in, how ugly they make the life. The axe must be laid to the root of them, for they spring up out of the evil flesh. What beauty there is in “loving one another with a pure heart fervently” (ch. 1. 22), and in the “meek and quiet spirit which in the sight of God is of great price” (ch. 3. 4). In these things are shown “forth the praises of Him who hath called us out of darkness into His marvellous light” (ch. 2. 9). It is in these things that Christians develop according to God’s own design and can be called “trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that He might be glorified” (Isa. 61. 3). But let us be vigilant and watch against these deadly parasites that will surely spoil our growth, and mar our grace and grieve the heart of our God; at the first knowledge of them thrusting their evil tendrils into the soul let us be unsparing in our judgment of them.

Some lives have been greatly spoiled by them; what was indulged in with a bad conscience at the beginning has become a habit and they who ought to have been attractive in the life of Christ, have become crabbed and ugly, miserable and unattractive. What then! The Lord is gracious and we may all taste His grace; and what we have no strength to accomplish He can do if we get near to Him and ask Him. He can lay the axe at the root of the ivy and set us free from its grip upon us, and it may be that there is yet time for the tree to put forth its true beauty to be a tree of righteousness indeed.

If we delight in the will of God as He has expressed it in His word, it becomes our guide and our guard. Psalm 119 shews this very clearly. How sure of foot is the man who walks in God’s ways, how safe is the man who uses the word as his shield and buckler.
"NOT WITHOUT BLOOD."

THE value of the precious blood of Christ is written large and plain everywhere upon the sacred pages of Holy Writ. It is declared in the law, in the prophets, in the Psalms, in the Gospels, in the Epistles, in the book of Revelation.

Descriptive, in one brief sentence of the teaching of the whole book of God, the solemn truth is told

"WITHOUT SHEDDING OF BLOOD IS NO REMISSION" (Heb. ix. 22).

"WITHOUT . . . BLOOD" the sinner is left exposed to the righteous judgment of God.

"For the life of the flesh is in the blood and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls; for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul" (Lev. 17. 11).

"Given" by God Himself, as the only way of blessing.

"Upon the altar," the blood shed—the life given.

"To make an atonement." To meet the righteous claims of the holy throne of God.

* * * *

Abel's offering "of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof" (Gen. 4. 4).

Noah's sacrifice of clean animals upon the altar (Gen. 8. 20).

The sprinkling of the blood of the Passover Lamb (Exo. 12. 6, 7).

The Jewish sacrifices day by day and year by year (Heb. 10. 11).

All these pointed on with unmistakable clearness to the one atoning sacrifice of our Lord at Calvary—to the redemption—not by "corruptible things . . . but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a Lamb without blemish and without spot" (1 Peter 1. 18, 19).

The sacrifices of bulls and goats and lambs had but a typical value—they pointed on to a sacrifice yet to be offered. They were a constant remembrance that sins were not put away, that the awful debt was not yet paid. The great Antitype was in view. Christ the Son of God must come—He must live His spotless life. But He must die. The sinless must suffer for the sinful. His life must be given. His blood must be shed.

As another has said, "The value of the 'life' is the measure of the value of the 'blood.' This gives the blood of Christ its inconceivable value. When it was shed the sinless God-man gave His life. 'It is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats could take away sins' (Heb. 10. 4). It is not the blood in the veins of the sacrifice, but the blood upon the altar which is efficacious. The Scripture knows nothing of salvation by the imitation or influence of Christ's life, but only by that life yielded up on the cross." And again "The meaning of all sacrifice is here explained (Lev. 17. 11). Every offering was an execution of the sentence of the law upon a substitute for the offender, and every such offering pointed forward to that substitutional death of Christ which alone vindicated the righteousness of God in passing over the sins of those who offered the typical sacrifices (Rom. 3. 24, 25)."

* * * *

WITHOUT . . . BLOOD there would be no gospel, there would be no forgiveness, there would be no
redemption, there would be no nearness to God in righteousness, there would be no song, in the glory of God, to the "Lamb as it had been slain."

* * * *

Just as the blood of the Passover lamb pointed onward, even onward to the blood of Christ—which was yet to be shed, so the cup at the Lord's Supper points back to that blood having been shed. And this Supper is the appointment of our Lord that the constant remembrance of His death may be before us.

Take away the truths which cluster about the sacrificial death, the atoning blood of Christ and what have we left? Meaningless offerings upon the altar, false testimonies by prophets and apostles and (above all) of Christ Himself, the claims of the throne of God would be still unsatisfied and the believer would be still exposed to everlasting judgment.

Let us look at some of the passages of the New Testament which bear upon the matter.

Matthew 26. 28. "This is My blood of the New Testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins." The words of the Son of God, Himself. "Without . . . blood," then, no remission.

John 6. 53. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you." (His words again). "Without . . . blood," then, no life.

Rom. 5. 9. "Much more then, being now justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him." "Without . . . blood," then, no justification.

Eph. 1. 7. "In whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins." "Without . . . blood," then, no forgiveness, no redemption.

Eph. 2. 13. "But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ." "Without . . . blood," then, no nearness to God in blessing and privilege.

Col. 1. 20. "And having made peace through the blood of His cross, by Him to reconcile all things unto Himself." "Without . . . blood," then, no peace for the throne of God, or for the conscience of the guilty sinner, and no reconciliation to God.

Heb. 9. 14. "How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?" "Without . . . blood," then, no service for the living God.

Heb. 10. 19. "Having therefore brethren boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus." "Without . . . blood," then no entrance with boldness into the holy presence of God.

Rev. 1. 5, 6. "Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and His Father to Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen." "Without . . . blood," then no praise to Him who freed us from sin's bondage, and no kings and priests unto God.

If, in the glory of God, the Apostle Paul were asked, "How is it that you the chief of sinners are here? You were an overbearing insolent blaspheming man. What has fitted you to be in the courts of
light?" His answer might be, "I have 'redemption through' Christ's 'blood even the forgiveness of sins'" (Col. 1. 14). If the Apostle Peter were asked, "Did you not own that you were a man full of sin, how then are you able to tread the street of gold?" might he not reply, referring to a verse already quoted, "I was redeemed 'by the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot'" (1 Peter 1. 19). If the Apostle John were asked, "Was it your devoted service for Christ that brought you here?" "No! a thousand times no!" he might reply, "It is 'the blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, which cleanseth . . . from all sin.'" (1 John 1. 7).

If, on earth, the white-robed multitude, which no man can number, who came out of the great tribulation, were asked how they came into their place of service to God and nearness to Christ, they might one and all reply, "We 'washed' our 'robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb'" (Rev. 1. 14).

"Without . . . blood," there is no gospel for the sinful.

John's Gospel.

IN the four Gospels, says St. Augustine, or rather the four books of the one Gospel, the Apostle St. John, deservedly compared to an eagle, by reason of his spiritual understanding, has lifted his enunciation of the truth to a far higher and sublimer point than the other three, and by this elevation he would fain have our hearts lifted likewise. For the other three Evangelists walked, so to speak, on earth with the Lord as Man. Of His Godhead they said but 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 earth, and the whole compass of the air and heaven, but even above every angel host, and every order of invisible powers, and has reached even to Him by whom all things were made, in that sentence, "In the beginning was the Word."
CORRESPONDENCE.

“Hope” as it occurs in the Epistle to the Romans.

My dear Quartus,

I am going to follow up my questions on “Glory” with a few as to “Hope,” also in the Epistle to the Romans.

From my earliest years I heard it taught that the Coming of the Lord (according to John 14. 3 and 1 Thess. 4. 16), is the true and proper hope of the Christ and is what is called in Titus 2. 13, “that blessed hope.” This expression, however, must be taken as referring to “the glorious appearing.” Perhaps the most intelligent way to read the verse is this: “Awaiting the blessed hope of the appearance of the glory of the great God” etc.

But in our Epistle which has much to say about our Hope, I find no reference to the Lord’s Coming, though Paul speaks of the salvation that will be ours when He comes; nearer, thank God, than when we believed, and nearer now than it has ever been before.

Do you think that Abraham, in Romans 4. 18, is quoted as shewing the nature of our hope? It must be a hope built upon the foundation of faith, for with us, as with him, there is nothing visible upon which we can build it. Abraham, when all natural ground for hope had gone, hoped on in faith: faith that had for its foundation the promise of God.

But when we come to chap. 5. 1-5 we have certain doctrinal statements about hope, as to which I should like to ask a few questions. The immediate hope of those who are “justified by faith” is stated to be “the glory of God,” which you have kindly explained when treating of that subject. But in verse 4 hope is spoken of as something produced in us by a chain of agencies of which “tribulations” is the first. “Patience” follows then “experience.” Do you think Paul means by this last word just what “experience” means to the English reader? Is it not rather the result of experience, a quality best expressed perhaps by the word “character”? How does this work hope in us? In some, though tribulation may work patience, and so on, the eventual outcome seems to be disappointment rather than hope.

I know a bright and aged Christian whom I think I remember your describing as one who “lives in the sunshine of heaven.” Through a long life she has eagerly hoped for the coming of the Lord. But this has now become an object of faith to her rather than of hope. Her hope is more and more “the glory of God,” and the thought of soon being with Christ. Is this her patience and “experience” work? As patience has her perfect work in us, do you think we are led to lay greater stress on the ultimate than on the immediate? on the glory of God rather than on the means by which we shall reach it?

In my own part, the chief element in my hope is to see Christ Himself. You will probably say the same. But to see Him for ever in glory will transcend the first sight of Him “in the air.”

Now please explain the teaching of Rom. 5. 5 in contrast with that of Col. 1. 4, 5. In this latter passage, “love to all the saints” is
My dear Tertius,

I am sure that you do not intend to abandon the great truth of the coming of the Lord FOR His saints, as it is revealed in John 14. and 1 Thessalonians 4. 16, 17, as the true and proper hope of the church; for while that hope in its full extent embraces the whole glory of God which is yet to be revealed at the manifestation of the Lord in His universal kingdom, and reaches on into Eternity, yet everything depends upon this movement from heaven, and it has been rightly called the "immediate hope." It involves our being glorified with Christ and entrance into the Father’s house and the presentation of the beloved Church for which He gave Himself to Him, a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing. (Eph. 5. 25-27). And great as will be His glory when He comes into His kingdom, this heavenly side of our hope, I venture to think, will be more to Him than all beside. He will not take the glory of the inheritance apart from the fellow-heirs, "when Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory" (Colossians 3. 4). This will be His Coming WITH His saints, and has its place in our hope undoubtedly the result of the hope. ("For" in verse 5 has the force of "because of"). But in Romans 5 the opposite seems to be stated: hope is the result of love. God's love, shed abroad in our hearts is the reason why our hope does not put us to shame, or disappoint us. Some might point to this as a "contradiction." It cannot be that: some helpful thought must underlie the different viewpoint. Please make it quite clear.

Now turn please to Romans 8. I read of two things there:

Subjected in hope. verse 20.

Saved in hope. verse 24.

"Creature" in verse 20 means "creation," of course. How is this subjected in hope? Is it while it is "subject to vanity"? What does "vanity" mean here. Is it in contrast with "hope"?

And in what sense are we "saved in hope?" Is it that we do not receive at the time of our conversion all that God has in view for us? Patience comes in again here, but while in chap. 5. it is one of the factors which produce hope, here it seems to follow. Do you deduce any helpful lesson from this?

In chap. 15. 13. God is "the God of hope." I am anxious to read what you have to say as to this. Whatever the God of hope does for us, it is evidently that we may abound in hope, or "be overflowing with hope."

I believe the result of your answers to all my questions will make it easier for me to obey the apostolic injunction of chap. 12. 12: "rejoicing in hope," or, as another translation puts it, "Let your hope be a joy to you."

It is that; and it is also an anchor that connects the heart with all that lies hidden "within the veil," where Jesus is, and that keeps the soul from drifting. But do you regard this (Rom. 12. 12) as the hope presented to us objectively, or the quality of hope produced in our souls by what God has promised?

Yours in the Lord,

Tertius.

My dear Tertius,

I am sure that you do not intend to abandon the great truth of the coming of the Lord FOR His saints, as it is revealed in John 14. 1-3 and 1 Thessalonians 4. 16, 17, as the true and proper hope of the church; for while that hope in its full extent embraces the whole glory of God which is yet to be revealed at the manifestation of the Lord in His universal kingdom, and reaches on into Eternity, yet everything depends upon this movement from heaven, and it has been rightly called the "immediate" hope. It involves our being glorified with Christ and entrance into the Father's house and the presentation of the beloved Church for which He gave Himself to Him, a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing. (Eph. 5. 25-27). And great as will be His glory when He comes into His kingdom, this heavenly side of our hope, I venture to think, will be more to Him than all beside. He will not take the glory of the inheritance apart from the fellow-heirs, "when Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory" (Colossians 3. 4). This will be His Coming WITH His saints, and has its place in our hope undoubtedly the result of the hope. ("For" in verse 5 has the force of "because of"). But in Romans 5 the opposite seems to be stated: hope is the result of love. God's love, shed abroad in our hearts is the reason why our hope does not put us to shame, or disappoint us. Some might point to this as a "contradiction." It cannot be that: some helpful thought must underlie the different viewpoint. Please make it quite clear.

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most surely, but the coming for His saints must precede this.

There is, as you say, no direct reference to the Lord's coming in the Epistle to the Romans, yet the hope of which it speaks so much could not be realised without it. For instance, what about "the redemption of the body" (ch. 8. 23). That will certainly be effected at His coming for us, and is a very blessed part of our hope (see Phil. 3. 20, 21).

You have certainly seized upon one of the key words of the Epistle; the gospel that it unfolds might well be called "the gospel of hope"; and your remarks on ch. 4. 18 are good. What a pattern and encouragement for us this man Abraham is; when, as you point out all human hope had faded and died he hoped in God. He built upon the word of God, he had nothing else to build on and he asked for nothing else. He believed with an expectant faith and he was not made ashamed for God did not disappoint him; He fulfilled His word in His own time. And Abraham's God is ours. Let us also be strong in faith giving glory to God, and the brightness that true hope brings into the soul will be ours. Faith and hope are evidently twin graces.

You do rightly emphasise the importance that "hope" has in the chain of experiences in ch. 5. 4. The whole passage is so full of instruction and each link in the chain dependent upon each that I propose to test your patience while I make a few remarks on them.

Who glories in tribulation? most of us would run miles to escape it; yet when it comes, if we know what it is to "have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand," we can boast in it, and we do. The divine favour shines upon us, and the love of God fills our hearts. The One who loves us has supreme control of all things, and if so, what then? Well, we reason, if HE permits this tribulation then it must be for my good and blessing and in view of what's to come; I'll go through it with Him.

R. C. Trench in his "The Study of Words," has a very interesting explanation of the word tribulation. He says, "The word 'tribulation' is derived from the Latin "tribulium" which was the threshing instrument or roller, whereby the husbandmen separated the corn from the husks; and the 'tribulatio' in its primary significance was the act of this separation. But some Latin writer of the Christian Church appropriated the word and image for the setting forth of a higher truth; sorrow, distress and adversity being the appointed means for separating in men of whatever in them was light, trivial and poor from the solid and the true, their chaff from their wheat."

"Till from the straw the flail the corn doth beat, Until the chaff be purged from the wheat, Yea till the mill the grain in pieces tear, The richness of the flour will scarce appear."
So till men's persons great afflictions touch
If worth be found, their worth is not so much,
Because like wheat in straw, they have not yet
That value which in threshing they may get.
For till the bruising flails of God's corrections
Have threshed out of us our vain afflic-
tions:
Till those corruptions which do misbe-
come us
Are by His sacred Spirit winnowed from us;
Until from us the straw of worldly treas-
ures,
Till all the dusty chaff of empty pleasures,
Yea, till His flail upon us He doth lay,
To thresh the husk of this our flesh away,
And leave the soul uncovered: nay, yet more,
Till God shall make our very spirit poor,
We shall not up to hightest wealth aspire;
But then we shall; and THAT IS MY DESIRE."

And I am sure that George Wither's desire is yours and mine, dear Tertius, and that is why I have give you his lines to con.

Tribulation tests the mettle of the soul, it does more, it tempers it as steel is tempered; it works endurance within us, and "blessed is the man that endureth temptation, for when he is tried, he shall receive a crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love Him" (James 1. 12); and you will agree with me when I say that that is not only a cheering word but it gives a comforting hope. It runs on the same line as our Epistle which tells us that, "I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us" (ch. 8. 18). It is not difficult to see how hope springs out of tribulation.

But we must have things in the divine order. Tribulation worketh patience, and patience experience and and experience hope. As we endure in tribulation we come to an experimental knowledge of ourselves, of God's wise ways with us, of the end that He has in view in it all, and of the compensating grace that He pours into our souls as we are subject to His holy will. We are not like Job in this respect, he, poor fellow, went through the tribulation without knowing the "why" of it, or seeing the end of it, but we who have heard of his patience, have also seen the end of the Lord (James 5. 11). He has not kept us in ignorance as to our destiny. He has "predestinated us to be con-
formed to the image of His Son, that He might be the First-born among many brethren" (ch. 8. 29). And does the tribulation work to that end? It does. It separates us from the world in which we can expect nothing but tribulation. (John 16. 33). It turns our thoughts to heaven where our true home is; it teaches us that our portion is not here and now but above and in the future, and in view of this it stirs up hope within our hearts. Moreover we experience in it the loving kindness of God, for those who have passed through tribulation with God will tell you that they have learnt more of Him and His grace and mercy in those days of stress than ever they did in their hours of ease. It is the storm that makes the mariner hope for the haven. Tribulation purges the soul from earthly mindedness so that eternal things become more real, and in the midst of it our hope becomes strong, because we know the love that has promised and provided the glory yet to come, and we are assured by the indwelling Spirit that it cannot fail. The earnest of it
all has been given to us even the Spirit of God who assures us of God's love.

If tribulation works disappointment instead of hope in some, as you suggest, and I have met many such cases, it is because hope has been wrongly placed; the expectation has been an earthly one and not an heavenly, they have supposed that they were to be free from all trouble here and seem to have had hope in Christ in this life only and of course, were of all men most miserable. They have had but a feeble sense of their own demerit and that all God's ways are ways of grace with them. God's end for them has not yet arrested their souls; they do not sing,

“The glory shines before me,
I cannot linger here.”

or if they do, they do not mean it. The immediate is greater than the ultimate in their eyes, to use your own impressive words, and naturally they are disappointed.

Really hope lies behind this rejoicing in tribulation, the hope that the Gospel gives. If the hope that faith awakens in the heart were not in a man he could not rejoice in tribulation; but hope is strengthened and enlarged as we progress in the way that our text indicates. Can we separate faith, hope and love from one another? I think not. They spring up together in the soul and they grow and develop together as we go through tribulation with God.

As to the difference between Romans 5. 5. and Colossians 1. 45—The first speaks of God's love to us, the second of our love to all saints. The one is the inflow, the other the outflow. It is the inflow of that unchangeable, eternal love that makes our hope sure, but we have that sure hope in common with all saints and that is a bond that binds our hearts together in one bond.

But now I have spent so much time in my endeavour to explain this important text that I am compelled to ask you to exercise further patience and wait a little while for my thoughts on the remaining references to "hope" in the Epistle.

With sincere love in the Lord,
Quartus.

The Head and the Body.

Do not forget that Christ has no place in this world. He is in heaven, and He is there because He was rejected by the world. You are a member of His body, and that means the closest possible oneness with Him. Can the Head be rejected and the members accepted? Impossible! But if Christ is in heaven the Holy Ghost is on earth, and He is in the members of the body of Christ; it is thus that they are in total oneness with their Head, and it is by the Spirit that they can set their affections on things above, where Christ is. A member of Christ who is worldly or earthly-minded is a denial of the truth. But how can one be heavenly-minded? Only by being carried to heaven in spirit, because your Saviour, your Head, is there, having been rejected by the world that makes a bid for your affections.

As a member of His body, you are left here to express Him, that His life—the life of your Head—may be manifested in you.
“PART WITH ME.” Concluded.

James Green.

7. The Communications of His Father.

How blessed to have "Part with Him" whose ear was opening morning by morning to hear as the learner. Such communications would be connected with the eternal purposes which all centre in the Son. Hence the Holy Spirit sent by the Father in the Name of the Son, to represent Him during His absence, is the expounder of the system of glory which will be expressive of the character of Christ, the detail of which will be reproduced in the manifestation of the children of God.

All obscurity vanished for the disciples with the coming of the Holy Ghost. The Father sent Him with this purpose that the Name of the Son might be glorified. He came to be the Divine instructor concerning all that the Son had done and said; to be the living power by which His words should become formative of the Divine purpose in those who believe. Nothing of that precious life lived on earth was to be lost, all was gathered up by the Holy Spirit, so that brought to the remembrance of the men who had companied with Him, they might become the channels by which the communications of the Father given to the Son, might be available to those who should believe on Him through their word. "These things (said the beloved John) we write unto you that ye also may have fellowship with us, and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ, and these things we write unto you that your joy may be full." (1 John 1. 3, 4).

At the same time the teaching of the Holy Spirit is a constant daily necessity if the knowledge of the Father and the Son is to be an abiding reality. Very precious is the unfolding to the heart of the records the same Spirit has caused to be written in the Gospels, so that the glorious perfections of the Son of God are seen in the facts related and their Divine intention is discovered. Such is the chain of living grace by which the communications of the Father become immediate and personal, and the blessedness of "Part with Me" becomes fully established. The result follows in one great word "Peace."

8. The peace of His Father. Verse 27.

Peace! It breathes the very atmosphere of the Divine Presence, and envelops in its embrace those who have the knowledge of the eternal life in which "Part with Me" consists. For the Son, the Father's peace was eternal, for us it follows as the result of the cross. On the resurrection day He came into the midst of His own with the salutation of peace. Every foe had been silenced; the power of death shattered; the sceptre wrenched from the usurper's hand; the victory won. "Peace be unto you" peace absolute, unchanging. But in the Father's peace there is even something more than this. It is the peace which results from the abiding presence of the Father and the Son, known by the Spirit. The Lord speaks of it as His own peace, for it was that in which He ever lived in Divine communion, and which in bestowing He does not part with as the world needs must do in its giving, and even then can only bestow that which finally the receiver must lose. It is
His, it is ours; He gives, He shares; He lived in it when here, it is His in glory. Nothing can disturb His peace, no enemy assail, no opposing power invade. It is that which received into the heart, in the love of Christ which passeth knowledge, dismisses every fear. In the home of His peace He would have our trembling hearts to rest. What could trouble the peace of Jesus? He felt everything, the sin of man against God, the rejection of His words, the indifference to His works of goodness, but nothing of this distracted the peace of His soul in His walk with God. His life flowed on in uninterrupted communion with the Father. Perfectly sensible of all, the circumstances that met Him only brought into evidence the deep spring of His peace, “Even so Father, for so it seemed good in Thy sight.” His calm majesty, His quiet answer, the absence of all hurry, distraction and fear in the presence of danger, revealed the perfection of His peace. Walking as calmly on the storm tossed waves of Galilee, as He rested in communion on the mountain top. As unperturbed amidst the false accusations of His enemies in the hall of Caiaphas, as in the quiet friendship of the Bethany home. Asleep upon a pillow amidst the storm which caused His panic stricken disciples to abandon all hope. Such was the peace of Jesus, and such the legacy He has left for His own. To be received by believing His word, and known as He knew it, blessed Son of Man, in the abiding of the Divine presence. The character of His peace was that of God’s peace who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will, against whose supreme control the forces of evil dash themselves in vain.


In this peace our Lord went forward to the cross. Neither the world nor its prince could move Him from the purpose of fulfilling the will of His Father. In the twin principles of love and obedience which can never be separated, our Lord has revealed in His own person, demonstrated in His ways, glorified in His death, the secret, the true elixir of life that men have sought in vain without God. In their mad folly, accrediting God with the very opposite of love, and thinking that the way of happiness lay in the path of disobedience to His commands. Oh! thou sweet beloved will of God, can we ever doubt Thee after the gift of Thy Son. Here let us rest in thee and be still of heart, following the steps of Him who said, “That the world may know that I love the Father and as the Father gave me commandment even so I do.”

The full bliss of eternity will consist in God being all in all. Then shall the world know that the Father sent the Son; then shall come into display the meaning of the cross; while ransomed hosts shall proclaim to a wondering universe the love of the Son to the Father. All creation shall voice the glory of God in the exhibition of the obedience of the Son unto death, on the basis of which sin shall be for ever abolished, never to rise again through the eternal ages, during which the excellence of God shall be fully known in the church of His redeemed through Christ Jesus.

“Arise let us go hence.” For Him it meant the cross, and well did He know all that should come
Then shall the meaning of His words "Part with Me" be truly known. Meanwhile there is something exceedingly gracious in the provision the Lord made on the night of His sorrow; so that by His present service on high and the gift of the Spirit, His own might know the foretaste of eternal joys in the unspeakable privilege of abiding in the Father and in the Son.

"Keep yourselves in the Love of God."

LET us give personality to these two flowering plants, and let us learn something from their talk. "I stand in this window," says one, "from month to month, and I declare that every possible attention is paid to me; as regularly as the morning comes my roots are watered and not a day passes without the window being opened that I may be revived by fresh air; if ever a plant ought to be contented, I am that plant, but I am not like you, what is it that makes the difference?"

Now the second plant speaks, "Look at the difference between us. I am of the same stock as you, and am called by the same name, and you have the same attention as I; yet I am strong and blooming and you are weak and colourless. Why? There is only one reason for difference. You are living in a sunless window, and I am in the sunlight all the day long. It is the sun's rays that makes the difference."

The Love and Righteousness of God.

NO thoughts of God's love are to be allowed that would interfere with the demands of His righteousness. His love is without measure, but it is not a mere emotion. It has at an unutterable cost, provided redemption for the guilty. And if we think of love without believing the provision that it made for the claims and exactions of righteousness, we are dealing with a mere sentiment of our own mind, and not with the revelation of God. Poor are the best conceptions of man's religion—something different indeed from the moral grandness and perfections of the gospel of Christ, where God is just, while He justifies the sinner; where we learn that He has brought back His banished ones, and received His prodigals all the while upholding the full glories of His throne of righteousness, and providing in and from Himself an answer to all its demands. The cross of Christ is the secret and centre of all this.
CHRIST'S LOVE FOR HIS OWN.

CHRIST'S hour had come when He should depart out of this world and go to the Father (John 13. 1-17). It was His hour, by His own providential and infallible ordering, and not a moment imposed on Him by force of circumstances. Evil, doubtless, portended that the end of His life in the world was near; gathering clouds indicated that the crisis had come; the storm was ready to burst upon Him; but in nothing did this accelerate His hour. The determining of it was with Himself. When it had not come, His enemies could do nothing; when it had come, His friends could not dissuade Him from acting in it. John, it is well to remember always views Him as Son of God. No man could take His life from Him. If it has to be laid down, then He, Himself must lay it down. He was the Word, and the Word was God. In every act and word He proved it.

Then it is said that He was about to depart out of this world. We place emphasis on the significant word "this." It was not enough to say "the" world; for this would give too general an idea of it. It had to be particularized by a more demonstrative word, for it had proved itself to be wholly under the power of Satan, a vast evil system wholly opposed to the Father and the Son. To speak of it as being "this" world was to single it out in its true character, and was tantamount to saying "such a world as this," in contradiction to the world of bliss in which the Father and the Son ever were, and into which the Son was about to introduce His own.

But if He was about to depart out of this world, and go to the Father, there were those in the world whom He claimed as His own. They were not of the world; they belonged to Him. They were the Father's gift to Him. In eternal counsel they were the Father's, and the Father gave them to Him, the Son. Them He loved, and loved unto the end. He takes cognizance of two facts concerning them: (1) they are His own; and (2) they are in the world. As His own He loved them; as being in the world He makes provision for them. Though they were not of the world, even as He was not of it, they were passing through it on their way home to the Father, even as He, Himself had gone. But being in the world they were liable to contract its defilement. Their hearts might be in the other world where the Father and the Son were, but their feet were on earth, and needed to be washed, in order that they might have part with Him, the Son. Who would render to them this service?

In condescending grace, the Lord Himself, stoops to this lowly service. Love loves to serve; has its own joy in serving. It encircles the objects of its choice; delights to minister to their comfort. It cannot rest, or enjoy anything of its own, if they are not sharing in its bounty. Yet it must be, Thy love had not its rest
Were Thy redeemed not with Thee fully blest;
That love that gives not as the world, but shares
All it possesses with its loved co-heirs.

They must be with Him, and have part with Him. If feet-washing is necessary, in order to their having part with Him, then He does this lowly service for them, because He loves them. Precious Lord!
Having part with Him meant their being in spirit where He is with the Father. He goes to the Father, and He takes His own in spirit there with Himself. Presently He will return and take them to Himself actually, that where He is there they may be also. But meanwhile they are in the world, though in spirit they have part with Him. It is a marvellous truth, that even now they have part with Him while they actually wait for His coming again to take them to Himself. This, of course, implies that the Spirit is come again to give them the power to enter into, and enjoy, that world of bliss with the Father and the Son.

Hence He speaks of the expediency, on their account, that He should go away to the Father. So long as He was on earth, the Spirit would not come. And since everything depended on the Spirit's presence and power, to lead them into all truth, forming that relationship between Himself and them on resurrection-ground, the expediency of His departure was evident. He must go, in order that the Spirit might come, and that a relationship might be formed between Himself and them beyond the touch of death. While He was on earth, this relationship was impossible. The Cross had to be endured; judgment had to be borne; atonement had to be made for sin; death had to be overcome; and in doing all this, He was alone—none could have part with Him in it. But risen from the dead, ascended up into heaven, glorified at the right hand of God, He could send the Spirit down on them, to unite them to Himself where He is, and communicate to them the secrets of love that lay pent up in His bosom—to tell them of the Father's love, manifest to them the Father's name, disclose to them the treasures that were His from all eternity, as Son of the Father's love. How wonderful it is we should know Him as risen! How wonderful too we should receive from Him the revelation of the Father! Now in glad song we can say as we contemplate Him there—

'Tis as risen, Lord, we hail Thee, Shadows passed away; Love has triumphed, Thou hast made us Thine for aye.

Now the Father's name Thou telllest, Joy is in Thine heart: In His love in which Thou dwellest We have part.

The relationship is formed between Himself and His own. His God is their God; His Father is their Father. In condescending grace, He can call them His brethren. And as the risen and ascended Lord, He secures everything for them. As He is, so are they. Their identification with Him is complete. What rests for them is to have part with Him in all that which His love has secured for them.

Keep Thou my feet, O Lord, lest I should stray From the straight path which Thou wouldst have me tread; Hold Thou my hand lest I should miss the way By which my wandering feet are Homeward led.

Faith is just leaning upon God. It calls for no strength on our part. It is really cessation from our own strength, the confession that we can do nothing but that God can do everything.
"FALLING ASLEEP."

From "Pilgrim's Progress."

We know of many of our readers who have been lately bereaved, and thought that Bunyan's vision of the home-going of some of the saints of God would be a comfort to them. But let them ever remember that no words could possibly describe the welcome they received in heaven when the Lord Jesus received their spirits or their joy in the presence of their Lord.

Now the day drew on that Christiana must be gone. So the road was full of people to see her take her journey. But behold, all the banks beyond the river were full of horses and chariots, which were come down from above to accompany her to the city gate. So she came forth, and entered the river, with a beckon of farewell to those that followed her to the riverside. The last word she was heard to say here was, "I come, Lord, to be with Thee and bless Thee!" So her children and friends returned to their place, for that those that waited for Christiana had carried her out of their sight. So she went and called, and entered in at the gate with all the ceremonies of joy that her husband Christian had done before her. At her departure her children wept; but Mr. Great-hearted and Mr. Valiant played upon the well-tuned cymbal and harp for joy. So all departed to their respective places.

* * * * *

In process of time there came a post to the town again, and his business was with Mr. Ready-to-halt. So he enquired him out and said, "I am come to thee in the name of Him whom thou hast loved and followed, though upon crutches; and my message is to tell thee that He expects thee at His table to sup with Him in His kingdom, the next day after Easter; wherefore prepare thyself for this journey." Then he also gave him a token that he was a true messenger, saying, "I have broken thy golden bowl and loosed thy silver cord."

After this Mr. Ready-to-halt called for his fellow pilgrims and told them, saying, "I am sent for, and God shall surely visit you also." So he desired Mr. Valiant to make his will. And because he had nothing to bequeath to them that should survive him but his crutches, and his good wishes, therefore thus he said, "These crutches I bequeath to my son, that shall tread in my steps, with a hundred warm wishes that he may prove better than I have done." Then he thanked Mr. Great-hearted for his conduct and kindness, and so addressed himself to his journey. When he came to the brink of the river he said, "Now I shall have no more need of these crutches, since yonder are chariots and horses for me to ride on." The last words he was heard to say were, "Welcome life!" So he went his way.

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Then there came forth a summons for Mr. Standfast. This Mr. Standfast was he that the rest of the pilgrims found upon his knees in the Enchanted Ground. For the post brought it him open in his hands; the contents whereof were, that he must prepare for a change of life, for his Master was not willing that he should be so far from Him any longer.
Now there was a great calm at that time in the river; wherefore Mr. Standfast, when he was about half way in, stood awhile, and talked to his companions that had waited upon him thither. And he said, “This river has been a terror to many; yea, the thoughts of it also have often frightened me; but now methinks I stand easy; my foot is fixed upon that upon which the feet of the priests that bare the ark of the covenant stood while Israel went over this Jordan. The waters indeed are to the palate bitter, and to the stomach cold; yet the thoughts of what I am going to, and of the conduct that waits for me on the other side, cloth lie as a glowing coal at my heart. I see myself now at the end of my journey; my toilsome days are ended. I am going to see that head that was crowned with thorns, and that face which was spit upon for me. I have formerly lived by hearsay and faith: but now I go where I shall live by sight, and shall be with Him in whose company I delight myself. I have loved to hear my Lord spoken of; and wherever I have seen the print of His shoe in the earth, there have I coveted to set my foot too. His name has been to me as a civet-box; yea, sweeter than all perfumes. His voice to me has been most sweet; and His countenance I have more desired than they that have most desired the light of the sun. His word I did use to gather for my food, and for antidotes against my faintings. He has held me, and hath kept me from mine iniquities; yea, my steps hath He strengthened in His way.”

Now while he was thus in discourse his countenance changed; his strong men bowed under him; and after he had said, “Take me, for I come unto Thee,” he ceased to be seen of them.

But glorious it was to see how the upper region was filled with horses and chariots, with trumpeters and pipers, with singers and players on stringed instruments, to welcome the pilgrims as they went up, and followed one another in at the beautiful gate of the city.

Turning our capital to account.

If a man of the world has capital he does not let it lie idle; he puts it to account. God has enriched us with spiritual capital, He has given us salvation, now we must work it out: “Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.” Bring it out into manifestation, shew the great advantage of having this salvation over all that is of the world, shew the superiority of a man who has God for him in every trial. We do this by being obedient, subject to God’s will. He works in us the willing and the doing, and we in obedience to God shine as lights in the darkness, and hold forth the word of life to benighted and death-doomed men. The greatest benefactors to mankind are obedient, vigorous christians.

The Lord asks for the faith of the heart before the confession of the mouth, and the faith of the heart is the response to the revelation of Himself in grace. He wins the heart and the confession of His Lordship, His supreme claim is easy then and a delight.
ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Micaiah and the false prophets. 2 Chronicles 18.

"Why did Micaiah, a prophet of the Lord say the same thing at first to Ahab as the false prophets, knowing it to be false?" CORK.

The time had come for the judgment of God to come upon Ahab for his long reign of wickedness, and God sent him a strong delusion through the four hundred false prophets. They prophesied as he desired, ministering to his pride, and at the same time hardening his heart against any warning that might reach him. Micaiah knew his man, and how unavailing anything that he might say would be in view of the words of the false prophets, and it was as though he said, "Go on, do as you wish, you will, no matter what I say." But when adjured in the name of the Lord the truth came out, and the word of God as to his doom, most probably for the benefit of Jehoshaphat, who was a true child of God in spite of this godless alliance with Ahab. Ahab refused to recognise the word as the true word of God, and even Jehoshaphat failed to do so, warning us that association with the ungodly dims the vision of the child of God. This we think explains the incident.

The whole event illustrates for us Thess. 2. 11. A strong delusion will seize upon apostate Christendom just as Ahab, the Apostle Israelite was deceived, and though they may try many schemes to escape their certain doom these will all fail as did Ahab's plan, and just as God watched over Jehoshaphat and delivered him so will he deliver His true saints out of the wrath that is to come. The story is an instructive one.

Love in the church at Thyatira.

I observe that "love" is mentioned several times in the letters to the seven churches. (Revelation 2. 3). At Ephesus they had left their first love; in the last two letters the love of Christ is emphasized (Chap. 3. 9 and 19). But the Lord says to one church, and one only: "I know thy love." I should have thought this would have been to Smyrna or Philadelphia. But it is, of all the churches, to Thyatira!! Please explain.

I thought Thyatira represents that phase of the church's history when Romanism was in the ascendancy, with Jezebel (the Papacy) in the seat of authority, and continuing so to the end. Is not Rome synonymous with apostasy? Is it possible that the Lord can see there a love which He sees nowhere else? PAIGNTON.

We are sure that you are right in interpreting Thyatira as representing the Popish church of Rome, and perhaps specially that period of its history some centuries before and up to the Reformation when it had sunk into the deepest depths of infamy, when instead of being a light for God in the world, it darkened the minds of men by its corruptions and blasphemies. Yet even in those dark days the light did shine in individuals and persecuted communities.
We learn from Mrs. Bevan's "Hymns of Ter Steegen and Others" 2 volumes, how deep and true was the love of these men and women to the Lord and what a treasure they had found in His love. His great love and their response to it are the themes of these beautiful hymns. Her well-known books, "Three Friends of God," "The Quiet of the Land," etc. also bring these facts to light and are well worth reading. These were surely "the rest . . . who have not known the depths of Satan" (v. 24), and they suffered most terribly for their faithfulness.

It is encouraging to see that when the light had utterly departed from the public professing body, and when "the depths of Satan" had taken the place of "simplicity as to Christ," the light still shone in obscure places, and all the machinations and rage of Rome could not extinguish it. In these true men and women, the true Church continued and "the gates of Hades did not prevail against it." And further the searching eye of the Lord saw it all and fully appreciated it, has recorded it and will reward it.

We can understand how precious their love to Him would be in His sight, for faithfulness in days of departure calls for more grace than when all goes well; and to have clung to the Lord, and loved His Name and held fast to His word when the world, the flesh and the devil held high revelry in the church, must have called forth His approval, as indeed it did, when He said, "I know thy works, and love, and faith, and service, and thine endurance, and thy last works to be more than the first" (v. 19. N. T.). It proves to us that we have a faithful Lord, who overlooks nothing, and rejoices over those to whom He is everything, and who will maintain a light for Himself in the world even in the darkest days.

Members One of Another.

If we understand that saying we shall see how necessary we are to one another; we shall realize the greatness of our privilege and the corresponding responsibility. We are privileged beyond all the saints of God in former dispensations. We have the power to help one another as they never had, for if one member be honoured all the members rejoice. If I am in concert with the Lord, I shall be a blessing to my fellow members. The one who is truly devoted has the power of rallying others. We help or hinder; it must be so if we are members one of another. Before Pentecost this was not so, for Christ had not then been revealed, and His body could not be on earth, but at Pentecost the Holy Spirit came down from Him from the place of His exaltation at the Father's right hand, and as we hold the Head, Christ, we have our part in that very wonderful truth—"from whom the Head in heaven all the body by joints and bands, having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God" (Col. 2. 19). We should not care to hinder or spoil that, then let us seek grace to hold the Head intelligently and care for our fellow members.
The Deity of our Lord in the later Epistles

IT is not in Paul's later Epistles only that the truth of the Deity of our Lord is emphasised, it is the fountain from which all his ministry flowed. "It is taken for granted all through his Epistles, and is the very soul and marrow of the entire series of doctrines. When this is lost sight of, all is misshapen and dislocated, but when this is recognised all falls into its place as the exhibition of infinite power and mercy clothed in a vesture of humiliation and sacrifice, and devoted to the succour and enlightenment of man" (Liddon). The Divine glory of his Lord was everything to Paul. We surely realise this as we read of his heroic life of labour and zeal and endurance and sacrifice, and consider his burning words. From the hour when he saw Him in the glory and heard His voice as he lay stricken by His power on the road to Damascus, the enthroned Jesus was the object of his faith and love and life, and he yielded to Him an allegiance that only God could claim. He delighted to speak of himself as His bond slave; to count the greatest prizes that the world could give as dung and dross and well lost for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus his Lord. He preached Him as the subject of the gospel of God, and called upon men to repent ward, and to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ for their soul's salvation as they would believe in God. He charged the princes of this world with crucifying the Lord of glory, and boldly declared, "If any man love not our Lord Jesus Christ let him be anathema." He spoke of Him as our "great God and Saviour Jesus Christ" and as the "Judge of the quick and dead." How awe-inspiring are his words in 2 Thessalonians 1. "The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ; who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power." Of whom could such words have been written but of the eternal God?

But it is not difficult to see how necessary it was that the truth should be stated in definite terms in the later epistles not only for those to whom they were first addressed but for us also. The Deity of Christ is the central fact of our faith; it is the glory of it and that gives stability to our souls and enables us to endure when persecuted and tried; and it is that which is the object of the most persistent attacks of Satan, that and the truth of His holy manhood. Fierce was the war that raged about it in the early centuries of the Christian era, and to this day the test of everything is "What think ye of Christ, whose Son is He?" If He is David's Son, "How then doth David in spirit call Him Lord?" How good it is that we are not left to the vagaries of the Fathers, or to the opinions of modern theologians, or to our own deductions and conclusions, but
we have the clear, definite, unequivocal words of Holy Scripture for what we believe.

THE HEBREW EPISTLE.

The faith of the Hebrew Christians was being sorely tried; they had hoped that their nation would have accepted Christ as the Messiah, but only a feeble remnant had done so, and they were between two fires, persecuted by pagan Gentiles and reviled by their own countrymen. And just ahead of them lay the destruction of Jerusalem and their dispersal to the ends of the earth. The time had come for a complete and final break with all that they had held most sacred—priests, sacrifices, temple, city. What could carry them through this time of sore trial and maintain them steadfast in the faith? One thing—the transcendent glory of their Lord and Saviour. Hence their need was the occasion for the Spirit of God to take of the things of Christ and shew them to them, and to glorify Him (John 16. 14), and to clothe Him with distinctions and glories which belong only to the eternal God. How wonderful are the opening words of the Epistle, “God who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in times past unto the fathers by the prophets hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son, whom He hath appointed Heir of all things, by whom also He made the worlds; who being the brightness of His glory, and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the majesty on high.” Lack of space and time prevent me from attempting to say anything about this range of glories that could belong to no creature however exalted, but surely the contemplation of them must bow every believing heart in wonder and worship at His feet and especially so as we realise that it is Jesus, who died for us, to whom these glories belong.

But there is one passage in the chapter that we must consider. It is a quotation from Psalm 102. “And Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth and the heavens are the works of Thy hands. They shall perish; but Thou remainest; and they all shall wax old as doth a garment, and as a vesture shalt Thou fold them up, and they shall be changed, but THOU ART THE SAME, and Thy years shall not fail.” Who can this be who creates for His own glory, and who, when what He has created has served His purpose, folds it up and sets it aside like a worn out garment, but who abides Himself in His own eternal, immutable, unchanging Being? Who can He be? Let the end of the Epistle answer the question. “JESUS CHRIST THE SAME yesterday, to-day and for ever.” But consider this declaration of His glory: the words were addressed to Him when as a man on earth His strength was weakened in the way and He drew near unto death. It was one Person in the Godhead addressing another, and addressing Him as the words indicate, as the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last, the One whose creatiorial voice called time into being and who will have the last word about every thing; who when former things have passed away and time has ceased to be, will say, “Behold I make all things new.” “It is done” (Rev. 21).
Consider what the effect of the contemplation of this glorious Lord must have had upon these sorely harassed Hebrew Christians; and shall we be less affected? It is He who has said, “I will never leave thee nor forsake thee.” As He said of old to Jacob the wanderer (Genesis 28. 15) to Joshua the warrior (Joshua 1. 5), and to Solomon the worshipper (1 Chronicles 28. 20), so He says to us, and what strong consolation His word gives, for it is impossible for Him to lie. So that we may boldly say, as those Hebrews could say, “The Lord is my helper, I will not fear what man shall do unto me.”

COLOSSIANS 1.

I have been impressed with the fact that those Scriptures in the Epistles that make reference to our Lord’s preincarnation being, present Him to our faith as the Son and as the Creator. As the Son He stands in relation to the Father and as the Creator He stands in relation to time and all that He has created. And I am sure that it would be right to say, that the universe was made and is upheld by His power that He might fill it with the blessedness of that love wherewith the Father loved Him before the foundation of the world.

In Colossians 1. 13 it is said that the Father “hath delivered us from the power of darkness and hath translated us into the kingdom of the Son of His love” (New Trans.). This is the only time that the Kingdom is spoken of as the Kingdom of the Father’s Son, and there must be a great reason for it. I suggest that the reason for it and what follows of the divine glories of the Son is to be found in the danger that menaced the faith at Colosse. A subtle foe was bent upon seducing the faithful brethren in that church from Christ. He was insinuating that while it was well enough to have Christ they would be none the worse off for a little of the world’s philosophy, Christ and Plato would make an admirable mixture; and if they would borrow from Jewish ordinances and curb their Christian liberty by a discreet ascetism they would be gainers in every way. The best of Judaism, and the best of Greek thought would enrich their faith. But the whole effort was to displace Christ in their souls and blind them to His eternal oneness with the Father, and to reduce Him in their thoughts to the level of a created being. And this, also is the trend of modern thought in Christendom. Even the missionary is told that he must no longer go forth proclaiming the Name of Jesus as the only name in which there is salvation, for there is good and truth, say they, in all religions, and the Moslem and the Hindu have also got messages for mankind and they should meet together with the Christian on equal terms and pool their respective wealth. In view of this how necessary to us is the Epistle to the Colossians.

How necessary it was that Paul should arise in his loyalty to his Lord, and in bold, God-given words declare the peerless unassailable glory of Christ, for only that could preserve the saints of God from this deadly error in his day, and nothing else can do it in this. The truth of God does not change, Christ does not change: the Son of the Father’s love is from everlasting to everlasting, and He is the Head of His body the Church, and must have no rival. In all things He must have preeminence.
We read that "by Him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by Him and for Him; and He is before all things, and by Him all things consist." "By Him. The force which has summoned the worlds out of nothingness into being, and which upholds them in being, is His; He wields it; He is the one Producer and Sustainer of all created existence. For Him. He is not as Arianism afterwards pretended, merely an inferior workman, creating for the glory of a higher Master, for a God superior to Himself; He is the End of created things as well as their immediate Source, and in living for Him every creature finds at once the explanation and the law of its being. For He is before all things, and by Him all things consist" (Liddon).

We surely realise the infinite character of His glory and wisdom as the Creator, yet as the Son He has a greater glory, a glory that surpasses all creature comprehension. As the Creator He is supremely above every creature that He has made and that supremacy will yet be confessed by every creature in heaven, on earth and under the earth; but the Name of Son declares what He was to the Father before any creature existed. "The Son of His love;" "the only begotten Son which is in the bosom of the Father." "Thou art My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased." "Having one Son, His well-beloved." How these words move the heart, and bow us down before the Father, especially when we read that it is into the kingdom of His Son that we have been translated through grace.

Some have endeavoured to explain the mystery of this eternal relationship between the Father and the Son, and have made deductions and arrived at conclusions which have been neither wise nor helpful. I will not do that, it is better to accept what is written without asking, How? For "no man knoweth the Son but the Father."

"The higher mysteries of His fame The creature's grasp transcends. The Father only that blest Name Of Son can comprehend."

What is beyond all controversy is that He, the Son, was loved by the Father before the world's foundations, and that the Father sent Him forth, made of a woman. He gave His only-begotten Son, that the love of the eternal relationship might be revealed to us, who without it would have remained in the power of darkness for ever.

The Kingdom of His Son is a Kingdom of light, and outside of it is darkness. It is a Kingdom of light, because "He is the image of the invisible God," "the brightness of His glory, and the express image of His person." "The only-begotten Son which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him." He is the One who represents God to the universe He has created. Adam was created in a minor way as in God's image, but he was but a figure of Christ. It is THE SON who is the true image, and God is fully revealed in Him, not as Father only, though that surely is the most blessed part of this divine revelation, but all that the eternal God is has found its expression in Him, for "all the fulness [of the Godhead] was pleased to dwell in Him"—the despised Nazarene, and now "all the fulness of the Godhead dwells in Him bodily" (Col. 1. 9; 2. 9.
New Trans.). All the light of God for His universe streams from His beloved Son. All else is darkness whether it be Judaism, Grecian philosophy, Hinduism, Mohammedanism, or that Modernism that while holding to the christian name denies the Father and the Son. For “whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father” (1 John 2. 22, 23). And John, inspired by the Holy Ghost uses strong language of such, in saying they are liars and antichrist. He is the true Light, the Light of the world, and shineth for every man, but “the god of this world hath blinded the the minds of them that believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ who is the image of God should shine unto them” (2 Cor. 4. 4).

Great and varied are the glories that He bears in this chapter, glories upon which no creature could lay his hands, or claim a title to. He is the Redeemer; the Image of the invisible God; the Creator of all things, and the End for which they were all made, and He sustains the universe that He has made by His almighty and undiminished power. In Him the fulness of the Godhead was pleased to dwell, and by an infinite sacrifice He has made peace so that He will as a result of it, and by His own divine power, reconcile all things on earth and in heaven to God, and bring them into harmony with the central throne. But these are glories that belong to Him because of who He is; they are names and renown that none but He could have gained, but before He rose up and went forth to glorify God in any of them He was the Son of the Father’s love. He is this in His own eternal Being.

And those who have believed have been brought into His Kingdom, into subjection to Him, and as being in that Kingdom they are indwelt by the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of God’s Son; and they are loved with the love wherewith the Father loved Him, for said He, “I have declared unto them Thy Name, and will declare it: that the love wherewith Thou hast loved Me may be in them and I in them” (John 17. 26).

“Beware,” then, since such a glorious Lord and Saviour and Head is yours, O Christian, lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ. For in Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. And ye are complete in Him, which is the Head of all principality and power” (ch. 2. 8, 9, 10).

Christianity is conformative, nor reformative. We belong to an entirely new thing; every particle of power comes from Christ in glory.

“We are His workmanship created in Christ Jesus” (Eph. 2. 10).

The tradition of men is never faith—truth or error, it is never faith; it is natural, and belongs to man. Faith is the reception of a divine testimony in the soul. So that God Himself is believed; and further it is founded on His testimony alone.
GRACE FOR SALVATION, SERVICE AND STRENGTH.

Such was the Apostle Paul's epistle of Christian life and service. Grace towards him. Grace on him. Grace with him.

Grace has been defined as "Unmerited free favour." And it is this towards its objects who merited only judgment. Another has said of it, "Grace is the love of God working in the presence of evil." Both were true in the apostle's case.

Knowing all that we were in our sinful state and desperate need, God has come out in righteous grace.

The earlier verses of the chapter tell of the gospel—the same gospel—which Paul calls "the gospel of the grace of God." He, as Saul of Tarsus, was the full expression of what that grace for salvation in its exceeding abundance is able to do. As a proud, insolent, over-bearing persecutor of Christ in His saints, he was met on the road to Damascus. Converted and commissioned there he became a pattern of what the grace of God could accomplish. From the lowest depths of evil to the heights of apostleship and testimony he was raised. Thus he rejoiced in being what the grace of God had made him. And so it is with Christians in all the centuries.

John Newton, the erstwhile "African Blasphemer," was plucked as a brand from the burning. From the vilest degeneracy, from the very gutter of moral guilt he was lifted to the position of Christian poet and preacher and pastor. The grace of God reached even to him.

GRACE FOR SERVICE.

The same grace that cleared the sinner, Saul, commissioned him for the service of his Saviour. This grace, or free favour, for service was bestowed upon him and it was "not in vain," he "laboured more abundantly than" all others. He spent his life in telling the story of salvation and in ministering to the needs of the saints whom he had sought to exterminate. In his instance it was grace for apostleship and distinct service of important character.

With us today this is not the case. And, yet grace for service has been bestowed upon each one—"To every man," his work has been committed, and each of us should see to it that this grace is "not in vain."

Privilege it is for each of us to carry the light of God in this world—by the word of mouth—by the tract—by the distribution of the Scriptures and in other ways to pass on to others what has been communicated to us.

Seek, then, the Master's presence and learn from Him what form of service He would have you engage in. Then go on and "make full proof of" your ministry. Do not leave the work for others. You have your niche, fill it. You have your mission, perform it. You have your service, fulfil it.

The words of the apostle to Archippus, echo down the years to us, "Say to Archippus, Take heed to the ministry which thou hast received in the Lord, that thou fulfill
it” (Col. 4. 17). Those words were written for you and for me, as well as for Archippus.

Finally we find

**GRACE FOR STRENGTH**

in our verse. “Yet not I but the grace of God which was with me.” It was not his own power which enabled him to serve so continuously and eventually to lay down his life in martyrdom. It was the constant, unchanging supply of the grace of God. So we hear of Paul declaring what things God had wrought among the Gentiles by him. He was but an instrument in the hand of God for His service.

What can a set of carpenters’ tools do as they lie in the bag? Nothing. But what can a competent carpenter do *through* them? So our God chooses to pick up this one and

that one for varied forms of service for the carrying out of His gracious purposes of grace.

It is for us to be ready for His use—“prepared unto every good work.”

Let us remember

1. That it is “the true grace of God in which we stand” (1 Pet. 5. 12).
2. That to “Every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ” (Eph. 4. 7).
3. He “giveth more grace” day by day for the fulfilling of His will (James 4. 5).

In the strength He affords we may be efficient servants while we wait for the hour when the top-stone of glory shall be placed with shoutings of “Grace, grace unto it.”

**Acquaintance with God.**

It is strange that we who have such continual use of God, and His bounties and mercies, and are so perpetually beholden to Him, should, after all, be so little acquainted with Him. And from hence it comes that we are so loath to think of our dissolution, and of our going to God. For naturally, where we are not acquainted, we like not to hazard our welcome. We would rather spend our money at an inn, than turn in for a free lodging to an unknown host; whereas to an entire friend, with whom we have elsewhere familiarly conversed, we go as boldly and willingly as to our home. I will not live upon God and His daily bounties without His acquaintance. By grace I will not let one day pass without renewing my acquaintance with Him, giving Him some testimony of my love to Him, getting from Him some sweet pledge of His constant favour towards me.

“Truth makes the metal; but it is prayer, exercise of heart with God which tries it in the fire and makes it ductile. How many a one is strong and cogent who is not ductile.”
**OIL FOR THE LIGHT.**

James Green.

"Ye call Me Master and Lord, and ye say well: for so I am, If I then your Lord and Master." Such were the words with which the Saviour indicated to His disciples, the two great offices He would fill for them during His absence; and in the understanding of which would lie for them all His resources of power and grace. They were to be His light bearers, passing on the light to others that they also might shine as lights in the world. For this the recognition of His Lordship must have the first place, otherwise they would not benefit by the teaching which His priesthood imparts. In the coming day of His glory the offices of King and Priest will be displayed for the joy of Israel and the blessing of the world when Christ shall reign in Melchisedek splendour as Priest upon His throne, King of righteousness and King of Peace. Meanwhile for us who are awaiting His coming to receive us unto Himself, the authority of His Lordship and the sustenance of His priestly ministry are made available. The power by which these two offices, for which He is already anointed, reaches us is the supply of the Holy Spirit by which we have been sealed in view of the day of redemption.

In the 4th chapter of Zechariah a vision is vouchsafed to the prophet which while it will have its proper fulfilment during the Millennial reign of Christ, illustrates for us the present supply of the Spirit which maintains that which answers to the Royalty and Priesthood of Christ, His direction in regard to the will of God, and priestly ministry in respect of worship in the sanctuary.

In v. 1. The prophet is awakened as a man out of his sleep. An important indication of the needful arousing of heart from a condition of lethargy, to the realities which are resident in the risen Christ. "Awake thou that sleepest and arise from among the dead and Christ shall shine upon thee" (Eph. 5. 14). His opened eyes are directed to an object of exceeding beauty, "A lampstand all of gold."

On five occasions is such a symbol used as the witness of the light of God maintained on earth, and in each case it is a figure of Christ risen. In Ex. 25. 31 the golden lampstand in the Tabernacle standing in the sanctuary, expresses the shining forth of His present grace. In 2 Chron. 4. 7, the ten lampstands which Solomon made for the temple, display the glory of fulfilled responsibility in respect of government. In Dan. 5. 5, the light of Divine rule over the nations is seen in judgment. In Rev. 1. 12, the seven lampstands show the responsibility of the churches to maintain the light of the truth concerning Christ risen. In Rev. 11. 4 which is in connection with Zech. 4, we are shown how the witness of God concerning the rights of the risen Son of God will be sustained in face of every effort of Satan to usurp His royalty and priesthood. Satan will do this by means of the beast and the false prophet, through whom he will seek to attach to himself the worship which belongs alone to God. The unseen power of the Spirit will energise
witnesses in that dark hour so swiftly drawing near, and uphold a light destined to survive all semblance of defeat. Nought can alter God's decree to set His King upon His holy hill of Zion, and nothing can set aside the oath of God concerning His priest after the Order of Melchizedek. (Ps. 2. and Ps. 110). The former will establish the will of God on earth as it is done in heaven, the latter will lead all nations to worship at His footstool.

In the vision of Zechariah it is the source of supply which is prominent. The prophet is bidden to behold two olive trees, two pipes, a bowl upon the top, and seven pipes to the seven lamps. A perfect system of administration, the interpretation of which is given in v. 6. "Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit saith the Lord of Hosts." The Spirit of One whose resources are unlimited. The first thing then is that a living power is needed if there is to be light for God, two olive trees. The olive is the tree of fatness wherewith honour is given to God who is worshipped and to man who renders the act of homage. (Judges 9. 9).

When Christ took His present place in heaven, not only did He enter in the power of His own blood, not only as the witness of His finished work on earth, but to receive also the place and right of universal supremacy as the anointed Man, Lord of all. He was by the right hand of God exalted and received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost. This was His anointing as the glorified Man who shall reign for ever, and His salutation as the Priest who shall never be superceded. Once before when on earth He had been anointed by the Spirit at His baptism, to fulfil as Messiah the promises made by God to the fathers; now again in heaven for a far wider sphere of blessing and authority over all things. To use the symbol of the prophet, the golden oil from the living source flowed into the golden bowl upon the top, and this for the double office which is indicated by the two golden pipes.

Kings and priests were inaugurated under the Old Testament by the act of anointing, answering to the two sons of oil, and as the apostle Peter expressed it on the day of the Spirit's coming, "God hath made that same Jesus whom ye crucified both Lord and Christ." It is the fulness of all that is involved in this fact, which the Spirit supplies for the maintenance of the light, to all who are brought into union with the Head by the same Spirit.

The seven pipes show the distributive energy which divides to every man severally as He will. But this carries us from the illustration in the prophet Zechariah, to the wonder of the new administration which was kept secret until the precious ointment was poured upon the Head in heaven constituting at the same time a body on earth, in which there is reproduced by a new creation, the character of Christ. In Eph. 4. 7-16, as in Zech. 4, the perfection of the administration is set forth, and no hindrance is seen to the flowing of the golden oil. Does it not however call for godly exercise as to whether or no there may not be something that on our side does obstruct this gracious provision which is all sufficient to bring into evidence the Lordship and Priesthood of our adorable Lord and Master. The Holy Spirit would pour into our
hearts the golden oil of His authority and love, and supply to us His priestly grace. Doing this, that on the one hand we may be led in the path of the will of God, and on the other that there may be produced the worship which the Father seeks.

The lamps are not seen as self-contained reservoirs of oil; apart from their constant drawing upon the supply at the top, their light would soon fade away. Grace for present shining is never separated from a vital source of supply. It is never known apart from living contact with the Giver. We often ask for grace but sometimes forget "Without Me ye can do nothing." It has been well said, Grace, is the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ, (Phil. 1. 19). Grace, is the power of Christ resting upon you, (2 Cor. 12. 9). Grace, is the Lord standing by and strengthening, (2 Tim. 4. 7). Grace, is the "I am with you always" of the risen Lord, (Matt. 28. 20). Hence to be drawing from and abiding in Christ is to continue in the grace of God. Only in personal contact with Him can we shine as lights in the world.

We can never lose the presence of the Holy Ghost, nor can the union He has formed be severed, but His supply may be greatly hindered and this for three reasons. 1. A lamp may fail to give light because the wick is not touching the oil, in other words we may hold the fact as doctrine that we have been sealed by the Spirit, but are not in conscious contact and dependence on His presence. 2. There may be a foreign matter in the wick which prevents the free flowing of the oil, making the light intermittent. The cares, the riches, the pleasures of this life often choke the channels through which the Spirit would pour His energies. Or it may be that matters which may be very pleasing to the eyes and ears of the natural man are introduced into the service of God, things which being of the world do not savour of a rejected Christ, then it is no wonder that so little results for His glory, though much may accrue to man. 3. A lamp may not burn well because the charred portion which has done good service is not removed. There are golden snuffers in the hand of our Priest, and well He knows that for present shining there is need of constant renewal. He knows how to appreciate that which has given light and been consumed in so doing. He has a golden snuffbox for its preservation. Not the using of that which we used yesterday, nor the repetition of the service He so graciously blessed in the past, but a renewal under His hand for the fresh living supply of the golden oil. A day of small things to all appearance but not to be despised because of that. It is a day of encouragement and supply for all who recognise in Christ the true Joshua the high-priest, and Zerubbabel, the builder of the house of God. If we are willing to submit to the plummet of right measurement that He holds, what cannot God accomplish by His Spirit. "Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit saith the Lord of Hosts."

If we go through a difficulty with God, all that bound us will be destroyed; and all that is of God will stand. (Dan. 3. 24, 25.)
CHRISTENDOM has divided itself into two classes, the priests and the laity, but God has made no such distinction neither does He recognise it. Priestcraft is a great force, but it is man's religion; priesthood is a great privilege and it is ordained of God.

It is a relief to turn from man and his religion to God and His word and consider His ordained priesthood, whether Aaronic or Christian, for both alike were of Him, the former the shadow of a great present spiritual reality. And may the Spirit of Truth give us the guidance we so ardently desire. Let us observe therefore that they both alike were "CHOSEN."

Levi as a Tribe, represented by Aaron's rod, which was chosen, and therefore "budded" and "bloomed" Num. 17.—and the Christian, chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world (Eph. 1. 4) and "chosen to salvation" (2 Thess. 2. 13). Both alike were "BORN" into the Priesthood. Priests by birth and not by merit, neither by human appointment. In Israel one must be of the tribe of Levi, (Num. 3. 6-10—14. 40) with the death penalty for intruders; whilst Christian priests are "Begotten again unto a living hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from among the dead" (1 Pet. 1. 3, and verse 25), "Being born again . . . by the Word of God."

These born again ones are seen in chapter 2. 2, as "newborn babes" turning to the milk of the Word—their natural food—thus tasting His grace, verse 3 and 4, coming to Him, God's tried and precious corner Stone and sure foundation laid in Zion they are seen as "living stones" built up a spiritual house—not into a spiritual house, for they are the house of which the Lord is both sure foundation and Head Stone. They are seen further (v. 5) as a "holy priesthood to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ." Thus

Every new-born person even though a just-born, or "babe" is a priest—not ought to be, but is—unto God.

The House of Aaron were priests by natural birth, we by second birth. There is not one word in support of a Priesthood other than that of believers, in the New Testament. The Greek word Kleros from which "clergy" is derived (1 Pet. 5. 3), is used of all believers.

The covenant promise to all Israel (Ex. 19. 5) that they should be a "kingdom of priests and a holy nation" was broken almost as soon as made, (chapter 32) as all covenants depending on man ever have been—therefore the Lord set apart Levi. But what Israel failed to be under law, every believer is, through grace, in Christ. This is made unmistakeably clear in 1 Pet. 2. 9, where the Holy Spirit declares, "Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people: that ye should shew forth the praises—or excellencies—of Him who hath called you out of darkness into His marvellous light." Marvellous light, indeed, and marvellous grace that has brought all believers into
it. This “preciousness” is to “you who believe” (verse 7), to the “chosen” (9), and

“CALLED.”

Aaron and his sons (type of Christ and the Church) were called directly by the Lord, Num. 18. 1; and Heb. 5. 3-5, speaks of our Great High Priest as “called of God, as was Aaron.” Every believer therefore is “called” for “Whom He predestinated He also called” (Rom. 8. 30). What a calling is this! “Foreknown”; “predestinated”; “called”; “justified”; “glorified”; such are God’s priests. Further the whole tribe of Levi was

“BROUGHT NIGH”
as we have it in the Lord’s word to Moses. (Num. 3. 5). Moses not Aaron. Moses, type of Christ as Mediator, for Christ is both “Mediator” and “Great High Priest.” “Bring the children of Levi near,” saith the Lord, and our Moses replies, “Behold I and the children which Thou hast given Me” (Heb. 2. 13). But every blessing must be on a blood basis. Therefore the christian priest, like the Levitical, must be

“CLEANSED BY BLOOD.”

“Made nigh by the blood of Christ” (Eph. 2. 13). “Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus” (Heb. 10. 19). In Lev. 8. everything was based on the blood of the sin offering, (v.v. 14, 18). And the “oil”, type of the Spirit, was put upon the blood. No blood of Christ, no gift of the Spirit. And so, in this amazing Lev. 8, the priestly house had a sevenfold outward and typical ritual, but every Christian has, in Christ,

THE SEVENFOLD SPIRITUAL BLESSING TYPIFIED. (Lev. 8).

PURIFICATION

or purging by water and blood; (vv. 6-21). John 15. 3 by Water, i.e., the Word, and by Blood, Heb. 10. 10.

IDENTIFICATION.

14. Compare offerer and the offerings in Lev. 1. 4. In each case identification with the offering means acceptance in it. Accepted “for” in Lev. 1. 4, and accepted “in” Eph. 1. 6. Oh glorious grace!

SANCTIFICATION.

15. 30. i.e. Setting apart, as in Heb. 10. 10, 14 and 13. 12. Oh the blood! “Perfected for ever” is the word. Rest in it—revel in it—rejoice in it.

RECONCILIATION.

15. Compare Heb. 2. 17 and 2 Cor. 5. 17-21.

CONSECRATION.

22. 26. In v. 33 the consecration of the priests had an end, but that of the Christian priest should never end,—compare Rom. 12. 1-3.

ASPERSION

or sprinkling, v. 19. 30, and Exod. 24, where Moses sprinkled the “altar” the “book” and the “people.” “And almost all things are by the law purged with blood, and without shedding of blood is no remission” Heb. 9. 22. Solemn words for the bloodless crowd! Woe be to all who count “the blood of the Covenant an unholy thing.” “Woe! Woe! unto them” (Heb. 10. 26, 30).

SATISFACTION.

5. 31. “As the living Father hath sent Me and I live by the Father, even so, he that eateth Me shall
live by Me” (John 6. 57). Life in the Son, and living—daily sustenance—by the Son. He is truly our great Melchisedec “made after the power of an endless life” (Heb. 7. 16).

Now this sevenfold blessing is ABSOLUTE AND UNCONDITIONAL. This priesthood is absolute and unconditional and therefore true to every believer, but there is much to be said on the subjective or experimental side. Here a variety of conditions and disqualifications impose themselves (vide Lev. 21. 16, 24), and every word is profitable for spiritual instruction; yet grace meets every need. The dwarf (20) could not offer the Bread of God, but (22) he could eat it. As one has said, “A dwarf could not attend upon the Altar of his God, but the God of the Altar took care of the dwarf.” The Corinthians were spiritual dwarfs and consequently were failing in their priestly privileges and responsibilities.

Now collective worship—in the Word—is always in the plural, because it is true of every believer; whilst individual experience should always be in the singular (as it is in the Word) because it is not true of every believer.

Therefore Paul in Phil. 3. 8, says, “I count” not we count, “all things but loss, and pour contempt on all our pride,” or “Our hearts are full of Christ and long their glorious matter to declare”? One cannot speak for another in such matters. Each must sing for himself if it is true.

The student will note that I have not distinguished in this brief study between “Priests and Levites,” which would call for a separate study, but I may note in conclusion that THE LEVITES WERE A “GIVEN” PEOPLE.

As we read in Num. 3. 9—8. 19. “I have given the Levites as a gift to Aaron and to his sons.” Hath not the Father given us to Christ? Hath not our Lord, our Great Aaron, in His priestly prayer in John 17, spoken of us as “given” Him by the Father, no less than seven times in verses 2, 6, 9, 11, 12, 24? “By Him therefore”—as His own “given” ones—“let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His Name” (Heb. 13. 15). That is our holy priestly service. “But to do good and to communicate forget not, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.” That is our royal priestly service.

One hand outstretched to God in worship, and the other to man in deeds of love—“Specially to those who are of the Household of Faith.” Let us pray that the purpose of God in this rich endowment of His vast priestly family may be fully realized in the power of the Holy Ghost, so that each one of our lives may be spent in the double priestly sacrifice of praising God and “doing good” to man. Amen.

Our difficulties should be food for faith—not material for failure.
IS THERE ANY GOOD IN MAN? J. N. Darby.

Now is there really any good in man? The remains of what God created are found in that which is beautiful and pleasant; that which comes from God's hand is often beautiful and should be recognised as coming from Him. Nature around us is beautiful; it is God who created it though thorns and thistles are found in it. We find that which is lovely sometimes in a man's character: there dwelleth in him no good thing. There is nothing for God; but all is against Him; and this was manifested in the rejection of Christ.

This is the lesson we learn in the account of the young man who runs and kneels at Jesus' feet, asking Him "Good master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" He was amiable, well disposed, and ready to learn that which is good; he had witnessed the excellence of the life and works of Jesus, and his heart was touched by what he had seen. He had all the fine ardour of youth, he was not depraved by the habit of sin, for sin depraves the heart. Outwardly he had kept the law, and believed that Jesus could teach him the highest precepts of the law; for the Jews believed that some commandments were of greater value than others.

The young man neither knew himself, nor the state in which man really was before God. He was under the law; and Jesus sets forth the law first as the rule of life, given by God as the measure of righteousness for the sons of Adam. The young man does not ask how he may be saved, but how he may inherit eternal life. The Lord does not speak of eternal life, but takes up the young man at the point where he places himself; the law said, "Do these things, and thou shalt live." The young man declared that he has kept all these things from his youth up: the Lord neither denies nor disputes it: and we read that that He looked upon him, and loved him. We see here that which is amiable and loved of the Lord. But what is the true state of this young man? The Lord draws aside the veil, and man stands before God in his nakedness; and God stands before man in His holiness. Doing anything is out of the question: how to be saved is another thing.

Let us examine what the Lord says about the state of man. The young man addressed the Lord not as Son of God, but as a Rabbi, that is, a teacher in Israel: he calls Him "Good master." The Lord will not admit that man is good; not one righteous man can be found amongst men—no, not one. He says, "Why callest thou me good? No one is good except one: that is God." Certainly Christ was good, but He was God, although He made Himself man in His perfect love. He was always God, and God became man without ceasing to be, or being able to cease being, God; only He had hidden His divinity in human nature (at least His glory) in order to come nigh unto us; for to faith, divine power and love are more clearly manifested than ever. But here the young man comes as to a human teacher, a rabbi; and the Lord answers him in the same manner as he asks; but He establishes this important principle, that no one amongst the sons of fallen Adam is good; it is a humiliating truth, but one of immense weight. We cannot now find a man who
is good by nature; we have seen that certain qualities remain of the first creation; but that which God had created good and declared to be good has been corrupted by the fall. Man goes in quest of his own pleasures, of his own interests, and not of God and His glory; he may seek these things honestly or dishonestly in the quagmire of sin, but he always seeks to satisfy his own will; he has lost God, and looks after himself.

Then the Lord, after having presented to him the commandments of the law, in which a man has life whilst he keeps them, adds in an exhortation the commandment which made Paul feel what the law produced, in the state in which man was in death. "One thing thou lackest," says the Lord: "Go, sell that thou hast, and come and follow me." Here we see the lust of the heart exposed, the young man's true state laid bare by the Lord's power, but simple word, which knows and tries the heart. The fine flowers of the wild tree are worth nothing; the fruits are those of a heart alienated from God: the sap is the sap of a bad tree. The love of riches ruled this young man's heart, interesting as it was as to his natural disposition: the base desire of gold lay at the bottom of his heart; it was the mainspring of his will, the true measure of his moral state. If he goes away grieved and leaves the Lord, it is because he prefers money to God manifested in grace.

How solemn a thing it is to find oneself in the presence of Him who searcheth the heart! But the thing that governs the heart, its motive is the true measure of man's moral state, and not the qualities which he possesses by birth, however pleasing these may be. Good qualities are to be found even in animals; they are to be esteemed, but they do not at all reveal the moral state of the heart. A man who has a hard and perverse nature, who tries to control his bad disposition by grace, and to be amiable to others and pleasing to God, is more moral and better before Him than a man who, amiable naturally, seeks to enjoy himself with others in a pleasant way, but without conscience before God; that is, without thinking of Him; loved by men, but displeasing to the God whom he forgets. That which gives moral character to a man is the object of his heart; and it is this the Lord shews here in so powerful a manner, that it touches to the quick the pride of the human heart.

But the Lord goes farther; the disciples, who thought that men could do something to gain eternal life, like all the Pharisees of every age, and that man ought to gain heaven for himself, although they recognised the need of God's help, were astonished. What! a rich man of very good disposition, who had kept the law, and who only sought to know what was the most excellent commandment from their Master in order to perform it. Could it be extremely difficult for such an one to enter into the kingdom of God? If we do not understand that we are lost already, that we need to be saved, that it is a question of the state of the heart, that all hearts are naturally at a distance from God, and that they seek an object, the object of their own desire far from Him, that they do not wish Him to be present, because the conscience feels that His presence would hinder the heart in following this object;
if we do not learn this truth by grace, we are altogether blind.

At the moment at which we have arrived in this passage, it was too late to keep concealed from man (at least from the disciples) the true state of his heart. This state had been manifested; man had been unwilling to receive the Son of God. Thus it had been proved that with the best natural disposition, man, even whilst preserving outward morality, preferred to follow the object of his own desire, rather than the God of love present upon earth, or a master whom he had recognised as having the highest knowledge of the will of God. Man was lost; he had shewn this fact in rejection of the Son of God; and he must learn it, and that with all his most excellent qualities he cannot save himself. "Who then can be saved?" The Lord does not hide the truth: "With men it is impossible." Solemn words, pronounced by Him who came to save us. He knew that man could not save himself, that he could not emerge from the state into which he had fallen, without the help of God. With men it is impossible; but then God comes in His boundless love to save us, not to conceal our state, and the need of this free salvation.

We must know our state; it is not a thing to be lightly esteemed that the glorious Son of God should have made Himself of no reputation, and have died upon the cross: the only means of redeeming and saving lost man. We must know ourselves, and know in our hearts that we are condemned, in order to be able to understand that Christ has borne this condemnation in our place, and that He has accomplished the work of our salvation, according to God's glory: let the state of condemnation and sin be proved; and let the love, the perfect righteousness, and the holiness of a God who cannot tolerate the sight of sin (however patient He may be) be brought out clearly and glorified. "With men it is impossible . . . with God all things are possible." By the work of the Lord Jesus Christ, and by this work alone, a work which the angels desire to look into, all this can be done; salvation is obtained by faith —by faith because all is accomplished. To God be the praise! The Lord is glorified as man in heaven, because this work has been done, and because God has recognised its perfection; it is on this account that He has placed Christ at His right hand, because everything has been done. God is satisfied, glorified, in the work of Christ.

"With men it is impossible, but with God all things are possible." But what an immense grace which shews us what we are and what God is! "Grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." Think of this, brethren. This means that we must expect a cross in this world. Be ready to receive the Lord's words, to take up the cross, in order to have the true knowledge of yourselves; that is, that you are lost in sin, that salvation is purely of grace, impossible for man; but that the work of salvation is perfect and complete, and the righteousness of God is upon all men who believe in Him who has accomplished it. In no part of scripture is the fundamental truth of the need of God's salvation and of man's state more clearly stated.

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CONTEMPLATION OF CHRIST AND OF ONESELF.

J. B. S.

THERE is nothing like retirement for the soul, if one is occupied with Christ, and not with oneself. Occupation with Christ results in my being more like Him, and more apart from myself. Occupation with myself is like the serpent’s eye, that lures its victim to destruction. The more I am occupied with myself, the more important I make myself in my own eyes, and the more I am interrupting the growth of Christ in me. It is not that I am to be indifferent about my own state, but how am I to judge of it? Is it by feeling and fumbling over everything in the dark, examining the whole case of the patient, without either knowing the state of one in health or how to produce it; or is it by bringing in One who is the true measure of everything and who, as He gets place in me, displaces and condemns everything displeasing to Himself? In the latter case there are two things: there is the introduction of One who entirely and transcendingly preoccupies the heart, and who supplies to it, as He does, strength and fulness of joy; the other is, He rebukes and repels all the lumber and selfishness which He finds in my heart.

Now when I am occupied with myself, I never get rid of anything, however I may condemn it. All the lumber and incongruities remain as before. I may traverse them dolefully as one does gravestones, but there they remain, registers of sorrow and vexation. I may very truly mourn over them, and afflict myself because of them; but that does not clear my heart of any of them; they meet me at every turn; nay, more, the more my eye rests upon them, the more grievous and painful they become to me.

When the stronger comes in, he takes away the goods in which we naturally trusted. The true converse of the heart is with its object, and if I make my own heart the object of my heart, I am like the fool that foldeth his arms, and eateth his own flesh. But if I have Christ in His own place, then the more I am in converse with Him, the more I am capable of being in converse with Him, and the more do I seek to return to it, and continue it; whereas, in the other case, I am never drawn into it without sorrow.

I like contemplative souls, but the more contemplative we are, the more we betray what we are occupied with. Is it with myself, or with Him who imparts Himself to me, and exposes and drives away all the noxious weeds which would occupy and damage me? Hence while the contemplation is most desirable, it is of all importance that there should be a true object before the mind, for whatever the object is will be disclosed in the act.

If Christ be the object of your contemplation, you will find that you are made ready for acting for Him; whereas, if it is yourself, you will be less and less ready; your gun will be unloaded, and you without energy or inclination for action.

Contemplation with a true object gives a readiness and power for action; the gun is loaded and ready. But when the object is oneself, one is enervated, inactive and silenced, the gun is spiked and the courage gone.
THE MAN, CHRIST JESUS.

Our Deliverer and Great High Priest.

If we are to build ourselves up on our most holy faith, and to earnestly contend for it in the face of the widespread indifference to it, we must "consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession;" we must realise afresh that all truth hangs upon the truth as to His person; to this we must "give the more earnest heed" for if we let this slip we lose everything.

THE Son of Hebrews 1, is Jesus of ch. 2, who being made a little lower than the angels, is now through the suffering of death crowned with glory and honour. Angels who are pure spirits, cannot die, but to fulfil God's counsels, the Son took part in blood and flesh and entered upon a pathway, which involved the settlement of man's broken responsibilities, and every avenue of that path led directly to death for Him, as leading to deliverance and glory for His own. For this the absolute perfection and glory of His Person as Son, with the completeness and sinlessness of His humanity, are necessary. Man now, therefore, in the Person of the Son, fills the place God purposed for Him from eternity.

We see Him, the Son, diminished as to His Godhead glory to a position lower than the angels, that in His humiliation He might taste death for everything; satisfy God's claims; sanctify the people by His own blood, destroying thus also the power of the devil.

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

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

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

By grace, He was made like unto His brethren (sin apart) who were involved in the circumstances of the fall; like them in all difficulties and
exigencies; like in all trials and temptations. In all these things He accepted the obligation to endure the result of the sin of others, Himself without sin. "He hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows" (Isa. 53. 4). He sighed when He healed and groaned as He raised the dead. These things involved His own death, they bowed His form and marred His visage! He suffered that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God.

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

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

Once allow the thought of sin in any way in connection with the Lord Jesus Christ, save as being "made sin," and "bearing our sins in His own body on the tree," for the satisfaction of God's claims and the destruction of the devil's power, and all truth is surrendered. His holy body was without sin, His pure and holy human soul and spirit were clear of all defilement of sin even in thought. Scripture affirms that "His soul was not left in Hades, neither did His flesh see corruption" (Acts 2. 31). His spirit was committed to the Father. (Luke 23. 46). Infinitely pure and holy He came from God, and He went to God as pure and holy as He came from Him. (John 3. 3.)

Passing on to ch. 4. 15, we see that as He was in all things made like unto His brethren, so He was TEMPTED IN ALL THINGS LIKE UNTO HIS BRETHREN. Here the Holy Spirit vigilantly guards in words unmistakable, the glory of the sinless One. In all His temptations He was "sin apart." He was as absolutely apart from sin in His temptations as He was pure within and without. In His Being, holy! In His flesh, sinless! As apart from sin at His first coming as when He shall appear the second time apart from sin unto salvation. (ch. 9. 28). The words "sin apart" appear in these two passages and only here in the New Testament although involved everywhere in connection with the Lord Jesus; without them all the glory of His Person would be vitiated.
All the temptations of our Lord Jesus were from without; the devil could not get at Him from within. No unholy lust was in Him yet He was tempted from without in every way. The desires of the flesh, of the mind and the pride of life are all illustrated in the temptations in the wilderness.

1. He was hungry and it was not wrong to desire bread. He had power to make bread of the stones and Satan tempted Him to do so. “Command,” said Satan! Ah! but He was Man now and had come to obey. He had no word from God, and this was more necessary to Him than bread. There was no movement of will in the obedient One. The temptation was “sin apart.”

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

3. Display God’s care of you and shew it openly, said Satan! Cast Thyself down from this pinnacle, —God says, His angels shall bear Thee up lest Thou dash Thy foot against a stone. Prove it now! Christ knew God’s care, He did not need to prove it. He would not tempt God. The written Word directed Him in this also, He desired no display of self but only God’s glory. This temptation was also “sin apart.” But He suffered being tempted. Then the devil left Him for a season and the angels came and ministered unto Him.

After a time of respite from such personal temptations, the devil returns in Gethsemane. The blessed Lord’s special sufferings there are exhibited in Hebrews 5. 7. Though Son He learned obedience by the things He suffered. In Gethsemane it was man’s hour and the power of darkness. These were arrayed against the Holy One. He offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears and was heard for His piety.

Here death—the death of the cross—would immediately ensue if He did not yield. Christ was prepared! He had already said to the Father, “Not My will, but Thine.” And as He would not receive the kingdom at the devil’s hand, so would He not receive death at his hand nor at man’s, but said, “The cup which My Father hath given Me shall I not drink it?” He went into death in the power of,—“Thou wilt not leave My soul in Hades neither wilt Thou suffer Thy holy One to see corruption” (Psa. 16.10). Having waited patiently upon Jehovah, He came up out of that horrible pit with a new song in His mouth, even praise unto our God. (Psa. 40.1-5.)

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

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

CLOUDS are physically, aggregations of small spheres of water resulting from the condensation of vapour. The drops are very minute, thus presenting such a large surface compared with their weight that they can be supported by the atmosphere.

In this article we shall not treat of clouds with relation to human circumstances. The Holy Scriptures frequently give to clouds an additional spiritual import. It is with one phase of the latter significance we would seek to engross readers.

The Israelites in coming out of Egypt were guided and protected by a cloud which was no other than the Shekinah glory of the presence of the Lord. The same cloud continued with them throughout the wilderness journeys showing when and where they were to encamp and disembark. The cloud enlightened and protected them and was the constant pledge of the Lord's presence, guidance and protection. The apostle Paul writing to the Corinthian believers linked them up with the Israelitish history in the expression: "Our fathers were under the cloud and all passed through the sea and were all baptised unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea" (1 Cor. 10. 2), thus showing the spiritual import of the Lordship of Christ.

Subsequently how oft recurrent is the mention of the cloud throughout the Old Testament, and almost invariably relevant to the presence of the Lord and the direct consequence of that in enlightenment and protection of His people.

When we come to the New Testament we are arrested by the intrusion of the cloud closing the scene on the Mount of Transfiguration when its splendour was in danger of carrying the ardent disciple into a wrong channel of thought. A bright cloud overshadowed them. Not the dark nimbus cloud of judgment, but the cloud to enlighten the disciples as to the truth of the person of Christ. It was the same cloud which in pillar form was the constant attendant of the people of God in the wilderness and now the mount rendered glorious by the display of the irradiation of Christ became the culminating point of His pathway.

How fitting that Moses should have been there. That he who prefigured Christ in leading the people through the wilderness and the channel of communication of the Law should be associated with Elijah who shone forth in his day as a star of first magnitude in the prophet firmament was singularly appropriate. Never was there a darker day in Israel's history than when the ten tribes cut off from God's centre by selfwill and wicked perversity had followed their rulers' lead in wholesale apostasy and idolatrous practice. But even in such unsatisfactory conditions, God did not forget Israel.

At first consideration one might have thought the conversation on the Holy Mount would have related to the glory, but that was not the case. The Lord Himself in the wonderful exposition to the two disciples on the way to Emmaus subsequent to His resurrection, showed that His suffering was a necessary antecedent in order that He should enter into His glory. In that passage of Scripture suffering is not linked with
entrance to glory as a circumstantial statement, but as the elements of a logical chain. There was no other solution to the proposition but that He should suffer to have the sequel of the glory. So Moses and Elias discussed with the Lord His decease (lit. “exodus”) which He should accomplish. But the disciples had to learn that the greatest men of the Old Testament could not be put on a level with the Minister of the New Covenant. Yet how blessed was the disclosure from out the enveloping cloud in the voice of God testifying to the unique character of the Son and of His full delight in Him. May we be spiritually alert to apprehend the Spirit’s testimony to the glory of Christ which will shortly make the whole universe radiant with the knowledge of Himself.

In the beginning of the Acts we read of the ascension of Christ that a cloud received him out of their sight, as distinctive from the statement at the end of Luke where He was carried up into heaven. The apostle Peter adds that He is at the right hand of God, where every dignity and agency is made subject unto Him. The Mount of Transfiguration was not high enough to be the permanent seat of authority of the Kingdom. It was necessary that the focus of interest should be transferred to heaven. However, even as this statement indicates the character of the upper hemisphere of the kingdom, so the statement of His reception by the enveloping cloud is indicative of the lower hemisphere of the kingdom, so characteristic of the Book of Acts in which it occurs. That Book supplies samples of the Holy Spirit’s work in souls by the agency of God’s servants discharging their responsibility in the gospel. So the delivery of spiritual goods throughout the dispensation has essentially corresponded to the samples in the Book of Acts. Then this dispensation of “grace reigning through righteousness unto eternal life” is going to be terminated in an atom of time by the Lord’s personal return with a shout and the accompaniments of victory. The erstwhile dead and changed living will be reunited in the clouds in the joyful meeting with their Lord in the air. How appropriate is the reference in this connection to the clouds!

On turning to the Book of Revelation we see in chapter 10 a mighty angel with a cloud for his garment, a rainbow crown, a face of solar glory, supported on pillars of fire. To whom could that radiant picture apply but to the Lord Himself, come as God’s solution to the age-long chaos of earth conditions? The Tryian purple and flowing Toga were considered fitting envelope for the Roman Caesar. But for the King of Glory no humanly devised envelope could be found, and so Scripture writers refer to clothing and attributes of heavenly splendour. Well might the Psalmist contemplating the scene exclaim: “Lift up your heads, O ye gates, that the King of Glory may enter in” (Psa. 24:9).

In Revelation 14 the writer’s gaze pierces the future to see that a white cloud is the throne of the Son of Man bearing the sharp sickle of Judgment. So the world’s rejection of Christ must inevitably lead to the execution of judgment by the Man appointed by God who has given adequate testimony of that contingency unto all in raising Him from the dead (Acts 17.31).
“Hope” as it occurs in the Epistle to the Romans.

My dear Tertius,

It seems to me that if we are to understand the meaning and force of “hope” in ch. 8. 19-25, we must see it in relation to the fact that we—all God’s children—are “heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ,” and that the “groaning” creation—translated “creature” in these verses—is part of the inheritance into which we are to come. The whole creation belongs to God who made it, and Christ is the Heir to it all and He is to share it with us, His co-heirs. But the inheritance is not ready for the heirs, nor are the heirs ready for the inheritance, for both it is the time of hope.

God set Adam as head over creation and made him responsible for its well-being and when he departed from God he involved it in his fall, hence the condition in which it is, in the bondage of corruption, groaning in travail and pain, “red in fang and claw.”

Being “made subject to vanity” seems to imply that all its efforts to free itself from its bondage and produce what is perfect and permanent are in vain: “thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth.”

“Change and decay in all around I see.” And yet hope mingles with all its travail. God has given it this hope along with its travail, a sure pledge of its deliverance. Who has not felt that optimism and thrill of hope that fills all things, “When spring runs jocund in the year,” as well as the pessimism that broods over everything in “the fall,” the time of “the sere and yellow leaf”? If this travail and hope go together in the material and animal creation, much more are they seen in man.

“Hope springs eternal in the human breast.” Sad it is that with the majority of men hope has no sure anchorage, it is not directed towards God and His word, so that the word itself has taken on the meaning of uncertainty. Hope and disappointment alternate in their lives and the Book of Ecclesiastes is a fit comment on it all, “Vanity and vexation of spirit.” But it is otherwise with the christian. He has his part in the travail and groaning of creation, for his body is part of it, but buoyant hope goes along with his groaning, and keeps him from grumbling and grousing. He is saved in, not by hope. Does not hope stand in contrast to possession here? The children of God know that the inheritance is theirs, but as yet they possess nothing of it, it doth not yet appear what they shall be; but they have no doubt as to their destiny. The earnest of the inheritance, the Holy Spirit, already possesses them, and like the heir to a vast estate who cannot inherit until he comes of age, yet may learn a great deal about it meanwhile, they may learn much of the greatness and glory of their inheritance from the word and enjoy it “in hope” or in anticipation. “The glorious liberty of the children of God,” which is our hope here, is a thrilling word.

Patience, as you indicate must have its place in relation to this time of hope; it is continually connected with it in the New Testament and
is one of those Christian qualities that must be developed in our souls. God is called “the God of patience,” or endurance, in this very Epistle and we, His children are to be like Him. One great present blessing of this patient waiting in hope is that the Christian is preserved from the frenzied efforts of men to possess what they cannot hold.

The God of hope ch. 15. 13 is a beautiful title for God to take, and calls for grateful and happy contemplation. It shows us that He too is looking forward to the hour when He will present His beloved Son in His glory as the great Deliverer, who shall bring to an end the reign of sin and Satan’s power, and hush the groaning of this oppressed creation and fill it with the glory of His goodness. To know God as the God of hope, enlarges our hope, and lifts our thoughts out of just what may be our portion in that day of glory, and puts us into communion with God’s thoughts as to what He will secure for Himself when the kingdoms of this world become the kingdoms of God and His Christ.

But further these saints to whom Paul wrote had been disappointed Jews and hopeless Gentiles. The Jews had forfeited every claim to blessing, chiefly because they had crucified their Messiah, and the Gentile’s outlook had been one void of all hope. But God had been revealed in His gospel, offering an inheritance and blessing to both in Christ risen from the dead, beyond all fear of forfeiture, and while they had to exercise faith in the meanwhile, yet so real could He make Himself and this inheritance to them that they might be filled with all joy and peace in believing, and abound in hope—be filled with joyful expectation, through the power of the Holy Ghost, whose indwelling is the sure pledge of what is to come, and the one by whom we anticipate what is ours and rejoice in it before being put in actual possession. “Rejoicing in hope” would cover this and make us “patient in tribulation.”

I suggest, my dear Tertius, that we dwell more upon the coming glories, and sing more about them, and turn the attention of our brethren towards them, and more continually “look sunward, and with faces golden speak to each other softly of our hope.”

Your affectionate brother in Christ,

Quartus.

“Thou shalt call His Name Jesus.”

It cost Him dear to put on this name and be called Jesus. It cost Him His life and blood. He had before many great and glorious names. The name Jehovah was His; the “Wonderful Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace,” “the Word” that was “with God” and “was God.” He had the worship of angels, and glory with the Father before the world began. But if He will wear the name Jesus among the rest, He must pay for it; and He did so—the price of His most precious blood, as of a “Lamb without spot;” and so He became our Saviour: at the same price by which He bought our souls, and heaven for us, He bought this name for Himself.
I Invite you to a meditation upon the sufferings of our Lord Jesus Christ and the grace that was in Him as expressed in the words that He uttered when upon the Cross. An address might appeal to your minds and exercise them, and that would be perfectly right if they were exercised in the truth, but a meditation will appeal to the heart, for when we meditate it is the heart that is engaged.

"Father forgive them, for they know not what they do."

The first word I will read is in 23rd Luke, v. 34. This prayer did not break from the lips of our Lord Jesus Christ when He began His ministry amongst men and when they first of all wondered at the gracious words that proceeded out of His mouth and then, moved with anger when He applied the truth, led Him to the brow of the hill upon which the city was built to cast Him down headlong. It was not then that He 'prayed this prayer, but after He had ministered among them for three and a half years; after he had told out His most wonderful love to them in unsurpassable words; when He had blessed their children and fed them when they were hungry, and healed the sick and cleansed the leper, opened the eyes of the blind and raised the dead. When He had gone about amongst them doing good "for God was with Him"; and when, in answer to all that heavenly grace that had been poured out without reserve amongst them, they cried, "Away with Him! Crucify Him!" When they had spat on His scarred face and seamed His back with the scourge and crowned His head with thorns and nailed Him to a gibbet and, not satisfied with that, had sat down to watch His sufferings, to gloat over His anguish and to mock Him, it was then, when the tide of man's hatred rolled upon Him, wave upon wave, that His voice was heard above the storm praying, "Father forgive them, they know not what they do." He might have prayed another prayer. When one of His disciples drew a sword in the Garden of Gethsemane to protect his Master, as he thought, the Lord said, "Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to My Father, and He shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels?" He did not pray that prayer, if He had it would have meant damnation, it would have meant the blackness of darkness for ever for them and for us. He did not pray that prayer, He waited until they had done their worst and then He prayed, "Father forgive them for they know not what they do." It was the answer of invincible love to implacable hate. It was the answer of absolute goodness to incorrigible badness, and it was a prayer that was not only made but heard and answered, and the gospel as it goes forth in this world to-day is the answer to that prayer. In this He expressed His will. I would speak of some of these words at least as the last will and testament of our Lord Jesus Christ, and in this prayer He expresses His will to God—His will for mankind at large. For not only was the Jew there at that Cross, but the Gentile was there as well. Mankind was represented there. The thoughts of many hearts were revealed there and
the heart of man in its enmity
against God, in its determination
to be rid of God was fully de-
clared, and when it had declared it-
self so absolutely, so conclusively
the voice of Jesus answered in divine,
heart moving love, “Father forgive
them for they know not what they
do.” When the Lord prayed that
prayer He not only looked upon
that seething mass of godless men
that surged about Him, He looked
down through the ages upon man-
kind to the very uttermost bounds
of the earth and He prayed for
mercy, for the salvation of men,
and the gospel is going forth to-day
as the result of that prayer. And
if we have believed it and if
we know God as our Father and Jesus
as our Saviour and the Spirit of
God as our abiding Comforter
we owe it to that prayer that Jesus
prayed when men had done their
worst to Him.

“Verily I say unto thee, To-day
shalt thou be with Me in paradise.”

The next saying is in the same
chapter, verse 43. You will notice
that His first prayer had men in
general as its burden but the second
saying had one particular individual
sinner as its object. From the mul-
titude surging there the Lord turned
to this poor wretch, agonising and
dying at His side. The heart of
the man had been awakened, his
soul had been enlightened and he
had turned his dying eyes upon
this One Who hung by his side and
he saw in Him not only glory but
grace. He saw glory, for he spoke
of His coming kingdom and owned
Him as Lord. This Person who
hung by his side, put to shame,
execrated, mocked and crucified was
the Lord, and the dying malefactor
recognised that, and he looked be-
yond the clouds that had gathered
so darkly upon Calvary’s hill, be-
yond it all to the Sun rising, to the
time of His Kingdom. But if he
had only seen the glory how hope-
less he would have been. He not
only saw the glory, he saw the grace
and so he was emboldened to say,
“Remember me.” What a “me” he
was! Poor drudge of the devil,
hanging over hell fire, saturated from
top to toe with sin, with nothing
to commend him but his need. Yet
he presented himself in all his foul-
ness and his guilt and his need
to the Lord. Presumption, was it?
Nay, it was faith, and it honoured
the Lord. Listen to the answer,
“Verily I say unto thee, this day
shalt thou be with Me in paradise.”
What an answer! An answer of
grace to that cry of faith.

I don’t know which to marvel at
the most, the prayer that was uttered
for the multitude or the concen-
tration of grace upon this one poor
wretch. What grace! And this is
the grace with which the Lord meets
every individual who cries to Him.
This world is but a speck in the
midst of the mighty universe and
there are two thousand millions of
people upon it, yet if one sinner
cries in faith to Jesus this is the
sort of answer He will give. It
seems to me that that poor sinner
must have felt that he had the
Saviour all to himself, and that is
what the Saviour means every sinner
to feel. But, such a man, so foul,
so guilty, having served the devil
so long, having to be cast out of
the world for his crimes, that man
in Paradise! Paradise is a spotless
place, holy, stainless! That man in
Paradise! Well, of course, if the
Lord said, “To-day shalt thou be
with Me in paradise,” if He pledged
His word to put that sinner there
He would see to making him fit.
That goes without saying. Yes, a
sinner may feel deeply his guilt,
his sins. So that when Jesus passed
into Paradise with this trophy of
His grace in His arms, so spotless
was he, so fit for that place that
not an angel in heaven could chal-
lenge his presence there. “The blood
of Jesus Christ, God’s Son, cleanseth
from all sin.”

“Woman behold thy son.” “Behold
thy mother.”

The third saying is in 19th John,
v. 25-27. It is not now the mul-
titudes of godless men, nor the poor
sinner needing grace, but here we
have the two people who above all
people on earth loved the Saviour,
His mother and the disciple whom
Jesus loved. And as the Lord had
expressed His will in regard to men
and had expressed His will in regard
to one sinner who believed on Him,
now He expresses His will in re-
gard to those that love Him. I have
no doubt if we look at the passage
dispensationally we can see in Mary,
the mother of Jesus, the representa-
tive of the old dispensation, of that
remnant that had looked for the
glorious Messiah; and in John we
may see the representative of the
new dispensation, the Church. That
remnant of the old dispensation that
had looked earnestly for a glorious
Messiah, were they to lose by His
death on the Cross? No, they were
to be merged into a better dispen-
sation, they were to have their place
in the Church, and so John took
Mary, the mother of Jesus, to his
own home and there she rested and
there she dwelt. The chosen rem-
nant of Israel that had faith passed
into the Church to share her great
and glorious destiny.

But there is something more than
that in it and something that should
appeal to every one of our hearts.
It is as though Jesus said, almost
with His last words to those two
that loved Him so well, “You love
Me, love one another. My will for
you is that ye shall love one another.
Your love to Me has brought you
into relationship with one another.”
“Woman, behold thy son: “Son,
behold thy mother.” And respon-
sive to that last will and desire John
took her to his own home and there
she dwelt. They dwelt together in
love. Oh, my beloved Christian
friends, my own heart is sad as I
think of the feeble response those
who profess to love the Saviour have
made to this declaration of His will.
He has said to you and to me
“If ye love Me love one another.
If ye are the disciples whom I love
don’t forget to care for one another.”
John received Mary to his heart and
to his home. He cared for her.
Are we caring for one another with
a love begotten in our hearts by the
Lord’s own love to us? Are we,
as those who profess to know Him,
caring for one another? Let us
stand by the Cross and consider
this. We will not stand with the
mocking multitude, we will stand
with Mary and John, the beloved
disciple, and we will look into the
face of our Saviour and hear Him
speaking words like these and we
will remember that it was prophesied
of Him that He should die to gather
together in one the children of God
that are scattered abroad. Oh, consider those sufferings! Consider that Cross! Ask yourself the meaning of that Cross and hear its answer. "To gather together in one the children of God that are scattered abroad." Alas, alas! how lightly we think of division amongst the saints of God! We need the Cross in its appealing power in regard to this question that we may be found more in the spirit of John, who took Mary to his own home. But whatever we think or feel about it we have the Lord's last will and testament here, His expressed desire in regard to those that love Him.

As He hung upon that Cross He was just as holy as He was when He sat on the Throne and created angels. Just as holy in His perfect manhood as He was in His Godhead glory. Then if Jesus is holy, and if God is holy, what is the meaning of this cry? Oh, my friends, we owe our salvation to it! It is because we were unholy, because we were sinful, because we were far from God and unfit for His Presence. It was because of this that Jesus was forsaken for there in that darkness He was made sin for us. He was wounded for our transgressions, bruised for our iniquities, the chastisement of our peace was upon Him and with His stripes we are healed. He was taking up questions that had to be taken up if we were to be blest. If we were to be received into everlasting favour He must suffer in the darkness. Only by His stripes, by His bruising could we be healed—and when we read in the Scriptures of His bruising, don't connect that with the blows that He received from the fists of men or of the nails that pierced His hands and feet. He was bruised physically, but His soul was bruised also. His soul was made an offering for sin. He was there beneath the stroke of Divine justice that God's throne might stand in everlasting rectitude and that His grace might pour out in salvation to you and me. And no tongue of mortal can tell what those sufferings meant to Him, no heart can conceive them. But He suffered there under the weight of God's judgment. God hid His face from Him, He sank beneath those waves of judgment, down, down into depths beneath which there is nothing; down into the ocean of divine wrath against sin that we might be saved, that we
might be "brought to God" that we might be made fit for the Father's presence. Thus He suffered. Oh, yes, our Christianity will have no foundation if we pass over this. Any change brought about in our lives that leaves this out will be but a temporary, a superficial change. But if we understand this it will go right down into the very roots of our being and change us there. Oh, my beloved friends, what a consideration, almost too sacred for human comment is that cry that broke from the soul of the suffering Jesus amid the darkness of the Cross. Throughout all Eternity we are going to bless Him for it. He is to be the theme of the ransomed saints throughout those countless ages. We shall never exhaust the theme, we shall never be able to tell out the greatness of it, but blessed be God for the grace that has anointed our eyes and given us to see in that Sufferer upon the Cross the very salvation of God. At that price He has won us; that was the cost. He gave all for us. Oh let us bow this night at the feet of this great Saviour saying, "Lord, I am Thine, I am Thine."

"I thirst."

The next cry is in 19th John, v. 28-29. I think sometimes we forget that the Lord suffered physically, probably as no other could suffer. I remember speaking to a suffering Christian and I referred to the sufferings of the Lord Jesus Christ and how patient, how submissive He was in the suffering, and the answer I got was this, "Oh, yes, but He was God." But there is one thing absolutely certain, He never used His Godhead power to alleviate His human suffering, and when He cried, "I thirst," we see the suffering Man. The suffering Man in His perfection expressing the fact that He suffered. Was there any relenting in His foes who heard that cry? That cry of distress. Did they relent? Was there any pity, any mercy in any of them? He tells us in the 69th Psalm, that they gave Him gall for His meat and in His thirst they gave Him vinegar to drink; and that that Scripture might be fulfilled, though they did not know they were fulfilling Scripture, with mockery, the sponge was pressed to His mouth. No pity, no mercy for a suffering Saviour. But, may we not see something else in that cry? For what did the Saviour thirst? He thirsted for the love of our hearts—for your love and mine. May we refresh Him this day. May we give an answer to that cry. Has He been thirsty for our love? Are there rivals to Him in our affections—the world—self? Oh, let this cry from the Cross search our hearts. He died because He thirsted—because He wanted us. He died because nothing would satisfy His love but having us for Himself for ever. What shall the answer to this cry be?

"It is finished."

The next cry is in the 19th chapter also, v. 30. Now we enter into the triumph. Now we reach the upward way, the shining way. Every word that had spoken of His sufferings finished, and, though He still had to bow His head and the blood had to flow from His spear-ripped side, as Lord He could speak of it all as done. So we have His triumphant cry, "It is finished." We bow at His feet, who left nothing for us to do who could do nothing. He undertook Himself to accomplish the mighty work and has done it
in absolute perfection so that Almighty God can find no flaw in it.

It is finished! Yes, indeed.
Finished every jot.
Sinner, this is all you need
Tell me, is it not?

"It is finished." Triumphant cry! Glorious Saviour! Oh, wonderful Jesus! It is finished! The power of hell vanquished, the work of redemption accomplished, God glorified, salvation open for sinners, blessing for you and for me. It is finished!

"Father into Thy hands I commend My spirit."

The last cry is in Luke 23, v. 46. It is very beautiful that that final cry should be recorded in Luke's Gospel. It is only there, and it is only in Luke's Gospel that we have those first words recorded as having come from the Lord's lips. In Luke's Gospel as a boy of twelve we read He said, "Wist ye not that I must be about My Father's business?" And that Father's business is unfolded for us in Luke's Gospel. It was a business of grace, pardoning sinners and giving peace and rest to the weary and heavy laden. A wonderful Gospel unfolding the Father's business. And now the Father's business is finished and the One who had accomplished it so blessedly could say, "Father into Thy hands I commend My Spirit." Oh, what must have been the feelings of the Father then? What must have been the joy of heaven then! The suffering over now, the work accomplished and the blessed Workman passing into absolute rest and peace, into the Father's presence. We can rejoice that Calvary closed as far as His words are concerned like that. It is true the soldier had to pierce His side and the blood flow forth from that pierced side, but oh what joy! doesn't it move our souls, to consider Him with His last words commending Himself to the Father? Thank God, we know that He is raised from the dead. We know that the Father Who was so glorified by His suffering on the Cross, raised Him and has seated Him on His right hand in heaven and this we can realise and exult in now, that if He died that His last will and testament might come into effect, He has been raised up from the dead to administer it. His will would have been of no effect if He had not died. It is necessary that the testator should die. But He has been raised up again from the dead that it might be administered, not only in the letter of it but according to its spirit, and that is what He is doing now in the glory and that is what He is going to do when that day of glory dawns for this world and He is owned as universal King, and that is what He will do for ever and for ever. He is the blessed Administrator of the will of God.

The Lord grant that we may linger more often by the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ and learn more of the depths of that love which was made manifest there.

"There is no beauty that we should desire Him."

The crucifixion of Christ proved that there is really no taste in man for what is divinely beautiful. To see it, there must be a taste, a capacity for it; and this is the new mind.—J.B.S.
ROOT, AS WELL AS SHOOT.

"And there shall come forth a shoot out of the stock of Jesse, and a branch out of his roots shall be fruitful... And in that day there shall be a Root of Jesse." (Isa. 11. 1, 10. N. Trans.)

The raising up of David to be King marked a distinct epoch in God's dealings with Israel. It was an extraordinary manifestation of His grace when everything had been forfeited and lost through national apostasy. Let verses 56 to 72 of Psalm 78 be read attentively and this will become very plain. The divine action is likened to a giant waking from sleep and mightily roused. The ark had been carried captive by the Philistines but, "He chose David also, His servant," and through him He rolled back the tide of disaster, and there was safety, food, and guidance for His people. Now that intervention of about three thousand years ago is typical of the far greater intervention of God, through Christ, which is yet to come.

David was of course a "rod" or "shoot" out of the stem of Jesse, the last and least of the eight shoots that appeared in Jesse's lifetime. He soon however, became the pre-eminent shoot of his day and generation. He is wholly eclipsed by the Shoot of whom Isaiah prophesies.

As "the seed of David according to the flesh," our Lord Jesus is "a Shoot out of the stock of Jesse." He is the supreme "Branch out of his roots," that has been fruitful to the glory of God. He is the Man of the Divine purpose, in whom the whole will of God will be accomplished. If verses 2 to 9 of Isaiah 11 be read there unfolds before our view the delightful picture of the earth as it shall be beneath His righteous yet beneficent sway in the coming millennial age.

It is clear that as the "Shoot" He is contemplated in His Manhood. Hence in verses 2 and 3 He is seen in the strength of the anointing of the Spirit of the Lord; but here not so much "doing good and healing" (Acts 10. 38.) for that was connected with His first advent. Here it is, "judging," "reproving," and even "smiting," and "slaying" evil and evil men, in righteousness.

As the supreme Judge, He is to be invested with the Spirit in His sevenfold character and might. The golden candlestick in the Tabernacle typified the Spirit from this point of view. There was the main shaft of the candlestick—the Spirit of the Lord. There were the three pairs of arms—(1) "the spirit of wisdom and understanding," (2) "the spirit of counsel and might," (3) "the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord." It is in keeping with this that when we open the book of Revelation, which is the book of judgment, we at once encounter a similar presentation of the Spirit of God:—"the seven Spirits which are before His throne" (1. 4). And again the Son of man, taking the judicial place in the midst of the seven churches, speaks of Himself as "He that hath the seven Spirits of God" (3. 1); and taking His place as Judge of all the earth, He, though standing "a Lamb as it had been slain" has "seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God.
sent forth into all the earth.” (5. 6.)

This consideration alone—that He is the “Shoot” out of the stock of Jesse,” invested with the sevenfold Spirit of God—assures us of the Divine impartiality and rightness of every act and every edict; as the result of righteousness, peace will ensue.

In Isaiah, as generally in the Old Testament, the earth as the scene of God’s righteous dealings is in view. Hence the prominent thought as to the coming Messiah is this which we have just indicated, and which is so marvellously portrayed in the first nine verses of Isaiah 11.

Yet we are not permitted, even in the Old Testament, to be in ignorance of the fact that still larger purposes of God lay in the background, and that there were still richer aspects of, still profounder depths in, the wondrous Being, who should in due time appear as the Messiah. Hence verse 10 of our chapter. As the Shoot out of Jesse He is the true King of Israel. As the Root of Jesse, He is an ensign for the rallying of the peoples, even Gentiles, and His rest shall be glory.

As the Root of Jesse He is the One from whom David originated. He is not the product, but the Producer. And this He is not by reason of His Manhood, but by reason of His Deity.

It could indeed be said of Him “come of David’s seed according to flesh” (Rom. 1. 3. N. Trans). But of whom was this affirmed? “concerning His Son,” as the same verse states. Inasmuch as it was God’s Son who thus came, He was “the Root.”

We beg our readers to let this truth sink well into their minds and hearts. It cannot be stressed too strongly in view of the erroneous philosophic notions, which are revived in our day as though they were deep truth to be the glory of the select and spiritual few. It may be urged—with much philosophic reasoning to back it up—that the correct presentation of the matter is to say that a Divine Person, unnamed, and unidentifiable save by a number, became the Son in the act of coming of David’s seed. The Scripture simply states that the Gospel is concerning God’s “Son, come of David’s seed according to flesh.” We have not a moment’s hesitation in making our decision. He did not become the Son in becoming flesh: the Son became David’s seed in becoming flesh. Scripture is right, and the philosophic reasoning is wrong.

When we turn to the closing chapter of Revelation, we pick up the thread from Isaiah 11. “I Jesus . . . am the Root and offspring of David, and the bright and morning star.” (v. 16.) The thought enshrined in “offspring,” is so close to that of “shoot” as to be practically identical. Only notice that the order of the two thoughts is reversed. In the Old Testament “shoot” comes first. The main theme is the coming King of David’s line, in whom all God’s purposes for Israel and the earth will be made good. The fact that He is also the Root whence proceeded all David’s power, success and glory, is mentioned but not developed.

In the New Testament we have a far wider range of vision. We are not allowed to forget that Jesus is the offspring of David, and con-
sequentI y holds, even in His Man-
hood, all kingly rights on the earth; yet the fact that He is the Root of David becomes of surpassing im-
portance. From Him David sprang. All that David was he owed to Him. He brought to pass David and all that David represented for Israel. He who did this can origin-
ate and bring to pass all blessing for both the heavens and the earth. Not only earth, be it noted, but heaven also.

And, so, He is the bright morning Star. We look up to the heavens to see Him. In the heavens is He set, and from the heavens we await Him, before He shines forth as Sun of Righteousness. There have been luminaries on earth. A Moses, an Elijah, a Paul, shone each in their day, as a lighthouse casts its beams into the darkness. Jesus, and Jesus alone, is the bright morning star.

And the morning star is the com-
ing King as offspring of David, the Shoot out of the stock of Jesse. He is also the Root of both David and Jesse—the Originator of their power and glory, and of all glory and blessing for heaven and for earth. So,
“Let him that heareth say, Come!”

The Glory of the Lord in Hebrews 1.

H E is the Lord of all, as He was the agent in the creation of all; and exists as the radiance of the uncreated splendour, and the exact impress of the Father’s sub-
stance. The universe which He has created He sustains and controls by His omnipotent word; and to the oblation which He presented to God, since it was by Himself, He imparted an infinite worthiness. Hence, upon its completion, He assumed His place on the right hand of the Eternal Majesty. In His mediatorial kingdom He is far exalted above the angels, as His pre-existent nature and hereditary dignity exceeded theirs. The source of this dignity is His Sonship; which is not to be understood as descriptive of office or rank, but of nature; and so transcendent was the glory of this filial relation, that even in His condition of lowest de-
basement it procured the homage of angels.

The Son is the true God, seated on a throne of divine perpetuity, and maintaining a moral govern-
ment of matchless and inflexible rectitude. Thus, and with especial respect to His immaculate purity, is He designated to the works and triumphs of the mediatorship. Him-
self immutable and eternal, He must remain in peerless majesty when the material universe shall have passed away for ever; through all inter-
mediate periods insuring the tri-
umphs of His church, until every enemy shall bow down at His feet.

To think badly of ourselves is not true humility. True humility is never to think of ourselves at all—and that is so hard to come to. If you only begin a sentence with I, there is nothing that a person will not put after it.—(Girdle of Truth.)
A WORD OF CHEER.

W. Bramwell Dick.

"Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on Thee; because he trusteth in Thee. Trust ye in the Lord for ever: for in the Lord Jehovah is the Rock of Ages." Isaiah 26. 3, 4. (Marginal readings).

THAT we have been, and still are living in days of much pressure is only too apparent. In the homeland there are troubles, in commercial life, in industrial life, in professional life, in fact in every department. In many homes there is anxiety. The difficulty to make ends meet. The cloud of sickness; the heart-break of bereavement; the burden of domestic trial known only to those thus afflicted—and to God.

In the Dominions and in foreign countries, things we judge are similar, with the addition in some foreign lands of suffering persecution for Christ's sake.

While things may be the worst known in living memory, and we each naturally think that our case has no parallel, we find, as we turn to the Holy Scriptures, that in all ages suffering has been the portion of the people of God.

As we run our mind back over old Testament history, name after name occurs to us. What a record we have in Hebrews 11. 36-38 of nameless, unknown Warriors, men and women, "subject to like passions as we are," James 5. 17 ; whose lives were marked by unspeakable suffering ending in cruel death. We remember that our Lord Jesus said to His disciples. "In the world ye shall have tribulation" (John 16. 33). We read of the sufferings of Paul as epitomized in 2 Corinthians 11. 23-28 and what he has to say about it all in 2 Corinthians 4. 16-18.

Some reader may say "That is all very well, but to know that others have suffered, does not lighten my burden, lessen my sorrow, nor make my trial more easy to bear." That is conceded at once. It does help us however to learn in whom they found an unfailing resource, and by what means they were sustained. This brings us to our text, and we affectionately invite our tempest tossed fellow-believers to weigh every word. May we be permitted to reproduce it as it is rendered in the very excellent New Translation by J. N. Darby.

"Thou wilt keep in perfect peace the mind stayed on Thee, for he confideth in Thee. Confide ye in Jehovah forever; for in Jah, Jehovah, is the Rock of Ages."

Observe! The mind that is stayed not upon the trial nor the suffering; nor upon what might have been, nor upon second causes in any way; but that is stayed upon God, that one, his mind, he himself, will be kept by God in perfect peace. Why? Because he worries? No. Because he gets excited and hysterical? No. Because he shuts himself up by himself, shuns the company of his brethren, and nurses his troubles? No. What then? Because "he confideth in Thee." To confide, says the dictionary, is "to trust fully: to rely on." Say, dear brother or sister! do you think God is One whom you can "trust fully?" Upon whom you can rely? Is your burden so heavy, your trial so great, that you feel you cannot "intrust to" Him the whole affair? We feel
A Word of Cheer

Sure we know that you are mentally answering as you read our questions, therefore we pass on to the heartening exhortation: "Confide ye in Jehovah for ever." At all times, under every circumstance, when the clouds are dark and threatening; when the load seems almost too great; when the pain is well-nigh unbearable; when in the outlook there seems not a gleam of sunshine; when oppressed by a feeling of indescribable loneliness; "Confide ye in Jehovah for ever." What will you find? Just what myriads of saints right down the ages have found, and that numberless saints in their Heavenward, homeward journey are finding now; that "in Jah, Jehovah, is the Rock of Ages." The self-existing covenant-keeping God, can you confide in Him do you think? Has He ever failed you? Will He ever fail you? Could He ever fail you? No! No! NO! answers every reader. Then confide in Him. When? At all times: how long? "For ever."

"He knows I do trust Him—says someone—yet I must confess I tremble at times, I cannot help it." That may be, and He knows, He understands, "for He knoweth our frame; He remembereth that we are dust." (Psalm 103:14).

In Him however is "The Rock of Ages," and that Rock never trembles. The forces of hell have attacked that Rock, the powers of darkness have spent themselves upon it; and still it remains unshaken and unshakeable and there, just there, you may rest, "for in Jah, Jehovah, is the Rock of Ages." We again ask your attention to what our Lord Jesus said to His disciples when sorrow lay heavy upon them:—

"These things have I 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." John 16. 33.

Just as He did on that dark night; as you read these lines, He would speak peace to your troubled heart. Peace not in yourself, nor in your plans, nor in your restless energy, but peace in Himself, and Himself alone. Then in His own gracious, tender, sympathetic, imitable way, He would say to you "be of good cheer!" Oh the exquisite joy of His coming to us individually, seeking to wipe the tears from our eyes, to lift the burden from our spirit, and to pour His love into our heart; as He whispers in our ear:—

"be of good cheer!" We write thus, led we trust by the Lord, because we meet many in cases similar to these we have described, and we feel sure among the readers of "Scripture Truth" there are many more. To such, in the Lord's name we pass on the words of our text "confide ye in Jehovah for ever;" and our Lord's words to "His own" "be of good cheer." Let us kneel down and thank Him for them, let us take them right home to ourselves; and then with a ring of divinely-given faith, certainty, and reality, let us sing:—

"We expect a bright to-morrow; All will be well. Faith can sing through days of sorrow, All, all is well. On our Father's love relying, Jesus every need supplying; Or in living, or in dying, All must be well."

"Blessed is the man whose strength is in Thee" (Ps. 84:5).

The saint that fears God is always strong; for God is always with him: the secret of his strength is he has God on his side.
THE FLOCK OF GOD.

THE well-known Scottish preacher, John McNeill said, "Whenever or wherever I see sheep, I think 'shepherd'—by the law of association of ideas. I don't think that way when I see rats or rabbits." So if we write in this article about the Flock it is more than likely we shall have more to say about the Shepherd than about the Sheep.

No figure has made greater appeal to God's people in all ages of time at all stages of growth. When one opens the Old Testament, one finds in the pearl of all Psalms "The Lord is my Shepherd" that which has been the comfort of countless millions. "Isaiah's wild measure and John's simple page" have this theme in common. "He shall feed His flock like a shepherd: He shall gather the lambs with His arm, and carry them in His bosom and shall gently lead those that are with young." "The good Shepherd giveth His life for the sheep."

The ferocious persecution which drove early Christians of Rome to live and worship underground in the Catacombs stamped especially upon their minds the thought of the good Shepherd; for in this way the crude drawings on the walls most frequently depict our Blessed Saviour. It is the easiest thing in the world to hold children entranced with the story of the Shepherd's care, while the dying saint, ripe in christian knowledge, could declare during the last week of his earthly pilgrimage the joy and comfort he found in the simple words.

"Safe in the arms of Jesus
Safe on His gentle breast."

Holy Scripture describes this Shepherd by three adjectives:—the good, the great, the chief. The first, which occurs in John's Gospel, emphasises His death and the devotion which led Him to it. Hebrews 13 makes special reference to His resurrection and tells of the dynamic or power which we derive from the good Shepherd. 1st Peter, Chapter 5 speaks of the Arch-Shepherd from whom the under shepherds receive direction, and links up with His coming again, His appearing to reward faithful service. Thus, we learn that the One who died to save us lives to keep us and is coming again to reward us.

A. THE GOOD SHEPHERD.

"I am the Shepherd, the good." He is the true, the genuine Shepherd in contrast to the false hypocritical hirelings—the good as opposed to the wicked thieves and robbers—the perfect and faithful as distinguished from His failing and imperfect servants. He is the Shepherd par excellence, the beautiful, the noble and the ideal.

Sacrifice.

"The good shepherd giveth His life for the sheep." Here we have sacrifice. The under-shepherds at Ephesus are reminded in solemn words of the cost of sacrifice and how highly God valued it. "The Flock, the church of God which He hath purchased with His own blood." "Therefore doth my Father love me; because I lay down my life." Note that He does not say, "gave" or "will give"; but "giveth." It is characteristic that the devotion which was manifested when He gave Himself on the cross abides continually. The good Shepherd considers His sheep first,
the hireling pities and saves himself, but when Peter suggested, on hearing of the sacrifice of the cross, "Pity Thyself, Lord," the good Shepherd rebuked the advice with the words "Get thee behind me, Satan."

**Salvation.**

But this sacrifice is not in vain, for to the sheep it means salvation. In the far west of America lay a great sheep ranch with buildings to protect the sheep during the terrible winter. These however were in a very dilapidated condition and the owner's intention was to renew them the following year. A frightful blizzard, however, cut off the ranch for days and when the rescue party arrived, they found all the sheep safe; but the shepherd was dead, frozen outside the sheds at the pairing of which he had spent all his strength till death laid hold of him. A good shepherd indeed! But of the good Shepherd?

"When blood from a victim must flow, This Shepherd by pity was led To stand between us and the foe, And willingly died in our stead."

"I am the Door, by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved." A traveller recently asked a Mohammedan Shepherd in Palestine, "Where is the door of your fold?" He received this answer—"I am the door. When night falls I lie down across the opening. Nothing can enter except over my body and thus the sheep are safe." We needed saving from sin's penalty, and Peter says of Christ, "Who His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree... for ye were as sheep going astray, but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls." And we need saving daily, for we are still prone to stray, but He restoreth our souls and leads us in the paths of righteousness. We need saving from the deadly fear which besets us when called to pass through some valley of the shadow; but His presence is salvation and we can say "I fear no evil, for Thou art with me, Thy rod and Thy staff, they comfort me." When the valley is dark with fearful gloom, or when the night is falling, or when the timorous sheep are conscious of the presence of enemies and it may be have lost sight of the shepherd for a while, He taps on the rock with His rod and the sheep are comforted by the sign of His presence.

**Satisfaction.**

But He saves to satisfy. He is the pastor, that is, the feeder whose business is to satisfy the hungry craving of the sheep. In seeking to find satisfaction all we like sheep have gone astray; but by Him we go in and out and find pasture. He richly feeds our souls with blessings from above and leads us where the river rolls of endless love. He makes us lie down in green pasture—surely the rest of satisfied desire—and leads us by the waters of quietness: not the muddy, turbulent or poisoned streams of the world. Often have we been puzzled by the actions of our sheep farmers, as they moved their sheep from field to field with no purpose apparent to the ignorant beholder. But the shepherd knows both his sheep and the quality and quantity of pasture suited to their need.

**Separation.**

John's Gospel presents to us the Lord Jesus Christ as the Shepherd entering the Jewish sheep-fold, and by the attraction of His own person,
separating them unto Himself. The word “putteth forth” is the same as is used in the previous chapter, when we read that the religious leaders “cast out” the man that was born blind, because of his faithful testimony to the Lord Jesus Christ, who had given him his sight. The Pharisees who thus treated him were great separatists and they thought to separate him from them; but from God’s side we see that it was really the voice of the good Shepherd that had the effect of separating him unto Christ. Here is the secret of true separation—not merely separating from that which is evil or is no longer according to the purpose of God for us: but “called forth” by the supernatural attraction of the Lord Jesus Christ. How often do we stress the merely negative side of separation from instead of knowing the blessedness of separation unto!

Science.

“I am the Good Shepherd and know my sheep.” The science or knowledge of the Shepherd is perfect. The silly sheep neither know themselves nor their need. Even human beings cannot always explain their ailments to the physician and how much less, therefore, can dumb animals? But a good shepherd is not only a pastor, he is also a physician and surgeon to his flock, and must, therefore, study carefully all the diseases and dangers to which they are subject. In this respect the science of the good Shepherd is absolutely perfect. He knows, and knowing, He loves, and loving, He cares for His flock. None of us know ourselves perfectly, and, as years roll by, we are often grievously surprised and disappointed by what we find in ourselves. But, this Shepherd knows all about us. Before ever He called us to follow Him, He knew us and, though we may grieve Him, we can never surprise Him. “And am known of mine.” The knowledge becomes mutual. On His side, it is perfect, absolute and infinite. On our side, it is imperfect, relative and finite; but, nevertheless, it is very real and blessed.

A Single Flock.

Men speak today of many flocks and many folds; but Christ tells us that His purpose is not only to lead out from the Jewish fold; but to bring those not of that fold, and from Jews and Gentiles to gather one flock (not fold) whose rallying point and common centre will be not a place; but a person, the one Shepherd. In the Greek language the words used for “flock” and “shepherd” are almost identical, and indicate to us that it is the shepherd who makes the flock. The nearest approach we can get to this in English would be “the one herd and the one shepherd” or “the one flock and the one flock master.” In God’s thoughts there is but a single flock. Alas! how very far short we have fallen of His thoughts in our eagerness to divide the people of God, and re-erect all manner of walls to separate the sheep of God from one another.

Security.

The last thought to which attention might be drawn in this chapter is that of the ETERNAL SECURITY of Christ’s sheep. How many of God’s children go trembling through life, deeming it presumption to be too sure of their salvation. But this error proceeds from the false idea that their safety depends upon their own strength and their own faithfulness instead
of the mighty power of the Shepherd, who said "I give unto my sheep eternal life and they shall never perish." He tells us that no power can ever pluck them out of His hand, nor from the hand of His Father. How beautiful is the juxtaposition of Isaiah's statements about God:—"He shall feed His flock like a shepherd, etc." and then "who hath measured the waters in the hollow of His hand and meted out heaven with the span." Can it be presumption to believe that the hand, which holds the mighty oceans and controls the celestial orbs that speed along their orbits in boundless space, is able to keep those who have committed their souls to Him? The Apostle Paul did not think so, for he was persuaded that there was no power that could separate him from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

B. THE GREAT SHEPHERD.

At first sight it seems strange that this wonderful statement about the great Shepherd should occur in the Hebrews Epistle. Here the Lord Jesus Christ is presented to us particularly as the High Priest, and thus there is not much reference to His resurrection because the main point in connection with the fulfillment of the Old Testament figure is His entering into the Holiest for us after the perfect accomplishment of His sacrifice—"having made purification of sin He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high." "Having offered one sacrifice He sat down." But He is also presented to us as a leader. And this one, who died to save His flock—we now learn—has been raised up by the power of God and lives to keep His flock. It is interesting to note the title "God of Peace." It is certainly only on the resurrection side of death that we can know either the peace of God or the God of Peace. As the hymn beautifully puts it:—

"That glorious resurrection morn bids doubts for ever cease,
For far and wide the news is borne of perfect peace.
Yes! peace, since every claim is met
Lord Jesus by Thy blood,
And Thou, our peace, art risen and set on high by God."

The title GREAT speaks also to us of POWER. How many christians deplore their weakness and dwell with fear and trembling on the extremely solemn passages of this epistle, which warn against falling by the way in the wilderness journey? But here we have the source of power—in Christ—and we may know by experience that the same mighty power which raised Christ from the dead can now be operative in us. Surely we have a wonderful dynamo and, therefore, there is no true reason why we should be baffled weaklings, trembling before a foe whose power has been really shattered by the death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. This power is within us to perfect us—that is—to equip us—to fit us—in order that we may answer to God's will or purpose for us. And we learn that His purpose is that we should give pleasure to Him—be well-pleasing in His sight, even as Our Lord Jesus Christ was during the days of His flesh and still continues to be in His risen and glorified condition.

C. THE CHIEF SHEPHERD.

In the third title of our study—the chief or arch-Shepherd—there is the implication that He has under-shepherds, who are subject to His direction and to whom He has committed the care of His flock. The Apostle Peter speaks of himself as
such, and in a very special way, and with very definite emphasis, did the risen Lord entrust to him the shepherding of His sheep. Paul also addressed the elders at Ephesus as those whom the Holy Spirit had made overseers to care for the flock and to feed the Church of God. Note how both in Acts 20 and in 1st Peter, Chapter 5 the three words now so commonly in use are all applied to the same people. They were elders, that is, men with the experience that years bring, not inexperienced novices. They were to pastor the flock of God, and they were bishops to take the oversight of God's people. Were they to be good shepherds like their chief? Then must they be prepared for sacrifice not self-pleasing. Their duties were to be undertaken—not by constraint, that is, under pressure; but willingly—with pleasure. Was their motive to be filthy lucre or profit to themselves? No! If they were to be Christ-like, it must be from a ready mind, with a consuming passion for the souls of men. Peter tells them that they must not "lord it" over their charges as if they were their possessions, but their privilege and responsibility was to act as patterns or ensamples to the flock. Oftentimes the under-shepherd, who devotes himself to the care and cure of souls, finds it a thankless task for neither saints nor sinners are marked by thankfulness. What then will sustain him and preserve him from seeking the passing reward of popularity by "tickling the ears" of his hearers or weakly succumbing to the easy course of perfunctoriness and self-indulgence? Only the consciousness that the Chief-Shepherd has His eye upon him: that He is appraising his services at their true value, and that He will one day appear and then shall every man's work be manifest. Then how good for the under-shepherd will it be who has refused the present—the passing, and the transient and who will, in that day receive a perennial reward—the CROWN OF GLORY WHICH FADETH NOT AWAY, and hear from the lips of his Arch-Shepherd the "well done good and faithful servant."

"Ye are God's husbandry."

Plants of the Lord set by Him in His plantation on earth, to have a certain leaf and blossom and fruit. In the new nature we are exotics, placed in circumstances the best suited for us to grow, to neutralise the adverse influences of the old nature to which we are so susceptible. The place and trials which form our circumstances, however painful, are the most suited to form growth, because the Lord knows the only spot in His plantation where we can or could grow according to His intention and places us there.—J.B.S.

"To hold the Head," to draw from His exhaustless resources in realized union with Him, is the road to certain and ultimate triumph. The clarion call in this "last hour" of the Church's history below, is one of loyalty to Christ and the Scriptures. There take your stand unflinchingly till His shout of power rings through the air, calling you with all His redeemed from the earth and from the tomb to meet Him on the cloud, and to be for ever with the Lord.—A.M.
EVERY MORNING.

If anyone supposes that he is strong enough to go through the day without the support of the Lord, he will be surely disillusioned, but for those who are conscious of their weakness and inability to face the stress of life there is a beautiful word in Isaiah 33. 2.

DAILY SUPPORT.

“Be Thou their arm every morning.”

Could we wish for anything better than that? To be able to lean on the strong arm of Jehovah is to have support indeed, and strength that cannot fail. It was the arm of Jehovah that brought Israel out of Egyptian bondage (Exodus 15. 16, Isa. 63. 12). It was the arm of the Lord, that brought salvation when everything and everybody had failed (Isa. 59. 16). The arm of the Lord gathers the lambs from all danger (Isa. 40. 11). It is the Lord’s own strength, true and tender and it is put forth on behalf of all who trust. It is more powerful than every trial, and is at the disposal of all His own. Child of His love, lean hard upon His arm. Begin each day with a peace-giving confidence in Him and all will be well.

DAILY SUSTENANCE.

“They gathered it every morning.”

It is Christ, Christ as we read of Him in the Gospels. To begin the day by thinking of Him is to begin with food that strengthens the soul. The manna was God’s provision for Israel in the wilderness and it never failed. Some might miss it by being up too late for it, for when the sun was up it melted away, but there it was, enough for all, as Christ and His grace, prepared for us every morning, is enough for us all.

And if we think of other needs—our daily bread and those temporal needs that occupy such a large place in some lives. “My God,” said Paul, “shall supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus” (Phil. 4). God has not pledged Himself to supply all our wants, but He has pledged Himself to supply all our needs.

DAILY COMPASSIONS.

We cannot do without mercy, we are frail and subject to many infirmities. How good it is then to know that “His compassions fail not, they are new every morning, and great is His faithfulness” (Lamentations 3. 22).

To-morrow’s trials may not be as today’s. New trials may greet you, but God’s compassion will also be new, suited to the new conditions, He is the Father of mercies and the God of all compassion. Awake in the morning with a sense of His care, not on Sunday morning only, but “every morning.”

DAILY SONG.

Let us not forget to sing. In days of old the Levites had to “Stand every morning to thank and praise the Lord and likewise at evening” (1 Chron. 23. 30).

It was due to their God that they did so. But a thousand times more is praise due to Him from us. Not only because He daily loadeth us with benefits, but because He has made us His children and “Children’s praise He loves to hear, Children’s songs delight His ear.”
To be unthankful is to be like the unholy, godless world, to have no song is to be like the unredeemed enemies of God. But whoso offereth praise glorifieth God. In everything with supplication and thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God, and the peace of God which passeth all understanding shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. Here then is our every morning portion: Support, sustenance, compassion and song. The Lord grant that we may know the blessedness of them all. Our religion is not a one day a week affair. It is not a matter of forms and ceremonies, and rites and dull dead creeds, it is an every day contact with the living God and with a living Saviour, who died for us and rose again, and who ever liveth to make intercession for us.

“He went out...and there prayed.”

“IN the morning, rising up a great while before day, He went out and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed.”

The picture of service would not be complete without this—the root of it. But how instructive to find such seasons of retirement and prayer observed by the Son of God! Our natural thoughts as to such a Person would be against it. We should be inclined to think it too formal, too artificial, and ignoring too much of His divine nature; we should imagine it as implying too much an effort to get near or to keep near His Father. The evangelist does not in the least stop to apologize for it or explain it however; but leaves it to have its due effect upon us, a needed feature in the picture of the glorious Worker here. How necessary then for us must such hours of retirement, such seasons of devotion be; which, alas, some would consider “legal” to insist upon, whether for ourselves or others, and which the intrusion of things without, the demands of daily life, the very occupation with service itself, are apt to trench upon so much. Noticeable it is then, that the apostles, upon making the proposition for the choice of the Seven, gave as their occupation,—“we will give ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the Word,”—“to prayer,” as the first requisite, not an appendage to their work, but an essential part of the work itself. For here the vessel is put afresh under the fountain,—the instrument into the Hand that is really to handle it.

Nor is it forgotten in saying that the spring is really in the vessel,—that our Lord has said, “The water that I shall give him shall be in him, a fountain of water, springing up unto eternal life.” None the less must there be for overflow the practical acknowledgment of dependence which, giving God His place gives man his also. No spiritual working independent of moral order; and divine power works so as to give place to human responsibility for this.
"THE SON" IN SUPREMACY AND GOD

"ALL IN ALL."

H. J. Vine.

"ALL things" are to be eternally subjected to the Son! This eternal supremacy of the Son in subjection to Him "who put all things in subjection to Him" is beautifully shewn in 1 Cor. 15. 28. It could hardly be called a new supremacy, for Colossians 1. shews that "all things" were "by" as well as "for" the Son of the Father's love. Nevertheless it is His in a new way, for, having glorified God as Man on earth, He is thus glorified in God on high. No one had seen God at any time till "the only-begotten Son who is in the bosom of the Father" declared Him here below (John 1. 18). The subjection of all things to the Son, and Himself also placed in subjection to Him who "put all things in subjection to Him" is the divinely glorious way taken "that God may be all in all." This is the result of eternal counsels and Godhead love and wisdom, wrought out in grace and power and righteousness, for the eternal blessedness of men and God's glory and infinite satisfaction for ever.

Satan the tempter sought to destroy the work of the Son of the Father's love, and to degrade man,—the highest of the Son's creation—made in God's image and likeness. With deception and violence, with lying and destruction of life, he has pursued his evil way ever since against the Son and His works of grace and glory. But through the death of the cross the Son has become the gathering centre for men, and by His work of power from the throne, He victoriously brings man in Himself to higher glory than creation gave him, and He brings a holy God blessedly into His own creation, "that God may be all in all." Mark, not "all" only but "in all."

How eloquently then does baptism even now speak of "THE NAME" (singular) "of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit" (Matthew 28. 19), for so it reads. Baptism is to "the Name." That gives weight to the word in the 3rd Epistle of John where those who honour the Name are specially spoken of.

The specially selected signs given in John's Gospel are that "we may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing we might have life through His Name" (20. 31); while what is written in his first Epistle is that we may know that we have "eternal life who believe on the Name of the Son of God" (5. 13).

It is said of Him as the Christ, He came of the Old Testament fathers according to "flesh" (Romans 9. 5); but divinely He is "over all, God blessed for ever. Amen." What wondrous grace we behold in the way He came down! What glorious greatness and majesty we behold in His supremacy! What holy rejoicing and loving devotedness become believers whose faith embraces such a Saviour!

Through His first appearing, life and incorruptibility were brought to light (2 Tim. 1. 10), His second appearing will shew "the glory of our great God and Saviour, Jesus Christ, Who gave Himself for us."
(Titus 2. 13). First “the kindness and love to man of our Saviour God appeared” (Titus 3. 4); second, the Son’s great glory and kingdom, majesty and dominion will appear. We read of those who “love His appearing”; and what good reason His loved ones have so to do!

It is said “as to the Son, Thy throne, O God, is to the age of the age” (Heb. 1. 8). The Holy Spirit records concerning the Son, “The Father loveth the Son, and has given all things (to be) in His hand. 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. 35, 36, N.T.) The Father has given all judgment to the Son; that all may honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. He who honours not the Son, honours not the Father who hath sent Him (5. 22, 23).

**OUR VALUE TO CHRIST.**

The Lord has prayed that you should be kept from the evil here, but not that you should be taken out of the world. He delights in having us here for Himself, as well as to be a cheer to one another. There is nothing more encouraging than to be assured of the interest, and I might say consequence, we are to the Lord. You may feel you are very small and of little use; but when you turn to Him as to His thought of you, He says, “I am glorified in you.” Can anything promote purpose of heart in you to answer to His mind more than knowing that He makes so much of what you consider so little, and rightly so, when we think of how much He deserves.

The very fact that being here for Him is a pleasure to Him; and that as we blossom and bud, and bring forth fruit, He is glorified, urges us to be more and more according to His mind. They say that flowers do not open out into full bloom on a cold sunless day, but when the sun invites them, they expand into their brilliancy; and thus the more you are assured in heart that you are to be left here for His glory, and that His delight is in you, the more will you be encouraged, and stirred up too, to be to Him what He esteems you to be. It is not so much what one does, or what one is, but what one is to Him; and not to Him only but to His own here. Can anything conduce more to render my stay in this scene happy and cheerful, however enfeebled in health, or tried in circumstances, than the simple fact that staying here, I can please my Lord, and be in fellowship with His interests in His people? And again, nothing can more promote zeal and earnestness in me to answer to this love, than the very assurance of the estimate I am held in by Him, however I may think myself unworthy of it.

The Lord grant you to be so assured in heart of His interest in you, that daily you may more and more answer to His pleasure, and not be in any way cast down because you can apparently do so little. The fragrance of His name is a crown of glory to the greatest invalid. The Lord delight your heart in His unfailing love for you, and bless you in every way.
CORRESPONDENCE.

Christ’s Sympathy with our Suffering.

My dear Tertius,

I am writing to you on a subject of supreme importance to all the suffering saints of God. During our Lord’s lifetime He never sat by a sick bed speaking words of comfort to the suffering one, for sickness and suffering always fled before His touch. And in the cases of sickness given in the Epistles, we do not read of comfort being imparted; it is just stated that Trophimus was left at Miletus sick, and the sickness of Epaphroditus seems chiefly to have created sorrow and anxiety to Paul. We do not get what might be called the sentimental side of things in the New Testament; vigour of faith seems to have a larger place; and yet there are, of course, in the Epistle to the Hebrews, very tender passages. But turning to the Old Testament, we have such a passage as Psalm 41. 3. “He will strengthen him upon the bed of languishing; Thou wilt make all his bed in his sickness,”—a beautiful passage, seeming to indicate that the Lord comes very near to the sufferer. But do you think that every suffering saint could claim such a passage as that? I am anxious to know how the Lord ministers His sympathy to His saints in suffering, for He most surely does, and whether, being heirs of all the blessings of the past, we can claim the words of the Old Testament, such as “As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you;”

Thanking you in anticipation of a helpful opening up of this subject. Affectionately your brother in Christ,

Quartus.

My dear Quartus,

Your letter raises certain points of great interest, but which are not easy to answer.

First as to the Lord’s own human experience and resulting sympathy. We read that He “was in all points tempted (i.e. tried) like as we are, yet without sin.” Now what tries many of us very sorely is the suffering that is due to disease. But we cannot think for a moment of His holy body suffering in this way. So the question presents itself, How can He sympathize with us in this, if His sympathy depends on His having been through similar trials?

He knew what hunger and homelessness meant. He was weary (John 4. 6.) and experienced the pangs of bereavement (John 11. 35). He was deserted by those He loved; His words were twisted and misinterpreted; poverty of an extreme kind was His lot (Matt. 8. 20; 2 Cor. 8. 9). So that in all such trials we have His tenderest sympathy, and can sing:

“He knows what sorest trials mean, For He has felt the same.”

But it is different with disease, which is the heritage of a fallen race because of sin.

Let us, however think. We must be very careful in doing so not to give rein to our imagination, or build any theory on mere inferences. The person of our precious Saviour is infinitely holy. Let us approach the subject with feet unshod.

He was brutally scourged. He must have felt the terrible pain of
And surely when the scourging was over, the cruel smart remained. He suffered as the result, assuredly, during the few hours that remained to Him before He died.

Now in our case, what tries us in illness, is not so much the fact of the disease as the pain that ensues. I am not so much concerned about my rheumatism, as about the periods of acute suffering that are the result. Well, if the Saviour suffered pain as the consequence of injuries inflicted upon Him, He can sympathise with us, with all the tenderness of His heart, when we too suffer.

Infinite love does not guarantee us immunity from tribulation, distress, etc. But it is that love (through Him that loved us," Rom. 8. 37) that enables us to be more than conquerors in all such things And which is the greater: to have deliverance from these things, or to be more than conquerors in them?

"More than conquerors," not merely conquerors. Demetrius, called "The Conqueror" because of his continuous military success, laid siege to the ancient city of Rhodes. The citizens, hard-pressed, made a sudden sortie, drove the beleaguering hosts from their walls and captured all their engines of war. From the material thus obtained, they made their famous Colossus, one of the seven wonders of the ancient world, a huge bronze figure, 100 feet in height, bestriding the entrance to the harbour of Rhodes. The victors were thus more than conquerors, in that they turned the very weapons of the enemy brought against them into good account for the glory of their city.

Even thus it is with us whom Christ has loved and loves. He enables us to turn the very trials that fall to our lot to good account bringing out of them blessing for ourselves and glory to His own great Name. "Tribulation worketh patience," and so on.

Psalm 41. 3, which you quote, is a precious passage. It should preferably be read thus: "The Lord sustains him on his sick bed, and brings him back to health." It is not so much a promise as a statement of fact. But it has special reference to him "that considereth the poor." You wonder if the grace of such passages may be claimed by us in these days of Christianity. Generally speaking, we must be chary of applying to ourselves in an unlimited way what belongs to others. Take as an example of what I mean, the Kingdom Psalms.

Psalm 103. 3: "Who forgiveth all thine iniquities, who healeth all thy diseases." While the former of these blessings is incorporated into Christianity (Luke 24. 47; John 11. 12) the latter is not. There are no Christians with sins unforgiven; there are many with diseased bodies. But in the days of the coming Kingdom, all the diseases of those that fear the Lord will be healed. This is not guaranteed to us.

Psalm 112. 3: Of "the man that feareth the Lord" it is said: "wealth and riches shall be in his house." If this promise could be claimed by Christians, what a number of millionaire friends you and I should have!

Psalm 128. 3: To "everyone that feareth the Lord" it is promised:
“thy wife shall be as a fruitful vine . . . thy children like olive plants about thy table.” This is another Kingdom promise. Zacharias and Elizabeth walked blamelessly before God, yet had no family. And what multitudes of godly Christian couples have no children!

It is evident, therefore that material blessings (including immunity from disease and suffering) cannot be claimed by intelligent Christians, though sometimes given in answer to prayer.

But what about the promises of God’s care and tender love? Does not the answer to this question lie in the fact that we know God? How tender He shews Himself in Old Testament days! Modernists may decry what they call “the tribal God of the Hebrews,” but one of the chief values of the Old Testament is that it unveils to us, in so large a measure, the true God in His abounding mercy and transcendent lovingkindness. In the New Testament, He is disclosed as Father, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. But that is more in connection with His counsels of immeasurable blessing which He will bring to fruition in connection with those counsels of eternal love! Never a whisper about them comes from those who harp on “healing” by faith. Their thoughts seem to revolve on a much lower plane.

Yet the Lord taught His disciples to look for the care of a Father in heaven, who loved them, and numbered the very hairs of their heads. The joy of this abides for us, and there is never a moment and never a sorrow or trial, in which we may not count on the gracious interest and care of our Father. And how our great High Priest helps us by detaching our thoughts from the things that cause us suffering, and making us sweetly at home in the place where He fills everything, and where the very atmosphere is eternal love!

Your affectionate brother

Tertius.

_________________________

What if to-morrow’s cares were here
Without its rest?
I’d rather He unlocked the day,
And as the hours swing open, say,
“My will is best.”

_________________________

“In whose heart are the ways.”

While the heart is fixed on God, and the soul is resting on Him, the ways, and not the end only, are in our hearts, and become to us channels of communion with Him.

The more saints are for Him, the more they will in every way gain for themselves.
All real beauty is of divine order.

Everything in creation was made by the Son to meet and please the mind of the Father as known to Him. You cannot understand beauty, but as you understand the order and relation in which things were placed in their origin. God saw everything and behold it was very good. It is the harmony in the order which is beauty; there might be order, as there is in a regiment or a mill, and yet no beauty. The harmony in the order of colours in creation is the beauty of colour. Beauty is not in a thing which is right or suited on one side, while the other side is neglected and uncared for. A man has properly four sides; the first to God, the second to himself; the third to his relative duties; and the fourth to man.

Now there is not beauty unless there be harmony in the order in which each is attended to and observed. It is not beautiful for a man to be reading his Bible when he ought to be doing his master's bidding; it is not beautiful for a man to take such care of himself that he will not put himself out of the way to go to a meeting, or to be in good time; it is not beautiful to be very attentive to the wants of the poor, but to neglect home duties. Beauty consists in doing everything at the right time, and in the right measure, so that I do not overlook one side or one claim, while attending to the other. This was the beauty of the Lord; no one was neglected, and every side was fully attended to.

The sun is beautiful; it sheds its light on every side; it is not partial in itself, for it is the position of the earth which determines the measure imparted to each part; it is in itself beautiful. A tree grows round, and if it be benignly acted on, will present itself the same on every side. The blessed Lord could accept His place on the holy mount from God, and He could come down from it and provide means in His poverty to pay the tribute money, as if one were as natural to Him as the other. This was beautiful; but man saw no beauty in Him. You must have an eye for the beautiful or you will never discover it. Here it is where we all fail, we have not the divine idea as to what is beautiful. One saint is devoted, but neglects his family; another is the slave of his family, but too indifferent about the other sides.

We all as saints are set in separate and distinct spheres and we are fit, if grace rules us, to fill our appointed sphere, like a star in the sky. One may be a forest tree and appointed to grow in the forest; another, a shrub appointed to grow in the garden. Each is beautiful when each fills the appointed duty; either trying to be the other would not be in any way beautiful. Doing what I am appointed to do evenly, happily and continuously is beautiful. What makes any of us deficient in practice is not so much want of power to do a thing, as having little sense of what is divinely beautiful. We are like children who prefer some glittering pebble to the most beautiful portrait, and we betray a vitiated taste, in the eagerness with which some trifle is sought after and commended. Whatever a person commends and admires, that is what is beautiful to him, and he tries to be what he admires.
LIFE: LOST OR KEPT.


THREE verses only are before us.

The first gives us, in parabolic or illustrative form, the fact and necessity of the Lord’s death. The middle verse gives us the two courses that open before us as a consequence of His rejection and death; and indicates the only way that leads to what is proper Christian life. The last verse gives us in one word what that life really is, what must precede it, and the glorious end to which it leads.

Our Lord Jesus, as the single grain of wheat did not love His life—that life which He took up amongst us as Man, in all sinless perfection—but laid it down in death, to take up life in resurrection which should be eternal, and in which a whole multitude should be found as fruit, of the same order as Himself. This, which verse 24 states, is the basis of the verses which follow.

Now I wish to concentrate attention upon verse 25, a most remarkable and significant utterance of our Lord. Of all His wonderful words recorded in the Gospels this is the only one, as far as I know, that is repeated (with slight variations) no less than six times. Let the following passages be read: Matthew 10. 39; 16. 25; Mark 8. 35; Luke 9. 24; 17. 33. These, together with the one in John 12 just read, make six. Three of these, as may be observed, are records of the same utterance just before His transfiguration; (3) When giving a prophetic discourse not long before the end of His ministry; and (4) Within a few days of His death.

Every word He uttered is worthy of our deepest attention; but a word that He repeated in this fashion, and that is recorded in Scripture six times over, must especially command our hearts, believing as we do that all Scripture is given by inspiration of God. We assume at once that there is something of special importance about it, and on examination this assumption is confirmed. This utterance of our Lord is like a key that opens to us the life that is truly and properly Christian.

“He that loveth his life shall lose it.” The word translated life here, is one that usually is translated “soul.” It refers to that “soul-life” which characterizes man in his natural fallen condition. The soul as distinguished from the spirit (which is the higher part of man, capable of putting him into intelligent touch with God) is the seat of our natural desires and aspirations; and “soul life” is that life of enjoyment of all those things that naturally appeal to us.

This “soul-life” is further defined as being “in this world.” The word used here for world (kosmos) is one that we have taken over bodily into our English tongue. It is the opposite of chaos. God’s “kosmos” was thrown into chaos by sin; and ever since that the devil has been busy using fallen man to evolve a “kosmos” of his own, with what results we see. The “life in this world” is of course the life of this world—the “soul-life” of this “kos-
mos." Now what about it? Do we love it, or do we hate it? Do we look upon it as something to be gone in for, something to be sought and valued and cultivated, or something to be turned from as worthless, and esteemed as positive loss because calculated to divert from what is infinitely better? WHICH?

Ah! but I love the life of this world. I don't want the doom of this world, but its life is very attractive. I will endeavour to avoid the grosser side of its life while retaining much of it that is pleasant. Do any speak or think thus? Well, if they do let them face the fact that they are going to lose it all. A moment must come when not a shred of it is retained. Lost, lost, LOST, and nothing but an aching void left. What a tragedy!

Yet this tragedy need not be, since "he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal." He who turns his back on the soul-life of this world, because identified with the rejected Christ and His death, is going to keep life unto life eternal. Here the word for "life" is changed, for the "life eternal" is a far higher thing. An illustration of what this means is found in Philippians 3, where Paul recounts all his natural advantages and then shows how he counted them loss for Christ. Christ became so infinitely attractive to him that he hated all else in comparison with Him.

Christ is still in rejection and we are left as His followers in the place where He died. Are we going to spend our days pursuing the life that ultimately we are sure to lose, or are we going to grasp the life that abides and is life indeed? God give us grace to answer this question aright.

And what is this life that is life indeed? In one word it is a life of service. The next verse opens, "If any man serve ME." The word is used here in no limited or restricted sense. It does not mean merely service in the work of the gospel or in ministry of the word. It covers all Christian life. There is the service of the sanctuary as well as the service of the field. Once we were lawless, doing our own wills. Now we are subject to Another: our endeavour being to serve His will in all things. This is proper Christian life.

For this life there is an essential preliminary. It is this: "Let him follow Me." Following must precede all service. If we think quietly for a few moments we shall see that this must be so. We must accept His leadership, and be under His direction if we would serve Him. A person may be an absolutely first class worker in some business department, but if he is continually doing what he thinks best independently of the leadership of his departmental chief, he is continually causing confusion, and he is a very poor servant.

We must be followers of Christ. He is the Son of God and worthy to absolutely command us. He is in rejection and it is our great privilege to be under His orders, His direction, and follow Him. Then our whole lives, and not merely certain departments of our lives, may be characterized by service to Him. Then see the marvellous end to which His service leads. "Where I am, there shall also My servant be." How extraordinary is this intimacy between Master and servant, this community of place. Its like is not seen amongst men. Suppose
Life: lost or kept

ing you were honoured one day with a command to Windsor Castle to speak to the king in his private apartments in that magnificent royal residence. You were ushered within and at last stood in his presence. Would you be likely to comment on the absence of his servants? Would you feel inclined to exclaim, “But your Majesty, where are all your servants? Surely you have some hundreds in this splendid place.” You would hardly speak thus. But if you did, His Majesty would answer to this effect, “Indeed I have hundreds of faithful men and women in this place, who serve me. But they have their own excellent quarters. They do my pleasure, but they are not with me.”

We are to be with our Lord and Master because we are not merely servants but friends. The one who really serves Him is permitted to share His thoughts and know His secrets and be in attendance on His person. The very acme of our joy and blessing in eternity will be to “live together with Him” (1 Thess. 5. 10).

And there is more than this, for the next words are, “If any man serve Me, him will My Father honour.” What in the way of honours can be compared with this?

Let us endeavour to visualize the scene. Here stands the rejected Nazarene. For a moment it seems as if indeed the world had gone after Him. Yet He knew that in a week’s time all would be reversed and the mob be shouting for His crucifixion. Are any going to commit themselves to His leadership and be His servants? Then they must expect a bad time of it. No honour will they get from this world: rather a plentiful share of dishonour will be their portion, even as it was the portion of their Master.

The world however, passes away—the lusts of it, and the honour of it—and the dishonour it awards likewise. The moment arrives when God rewards His servants. The rejected Nazarene is the mighty Son of God. Faith enables us to perceive this and inspires us to serve Him. The Father appreciates the service done to His Son, and especially that done to His Name in the days of His rejection.

Some 3,000 years ago David became God’s king in Israel and many a devoted servant had he. Yet, pretty evidently, no service was of greater value in his eyes than that rendered by the valiant men who cast in their lot with him in the days when he was being hunted and persecuted by Saul. They served him sometimes in but very small things, yet that was the service he so highly rewarded when the kingdom at last became his. These devoted followers of David hated their life in the world of Saul’s kingdom, and lost it. But in effect they kept life to the glorious reign of his successor, and they were honoured in David’s kingdom.

This is but the type. It points forward to something much more satisfying and abiding. A day is coming when God the Father will publicly honour those who have served His Son in the time of His rejection. How paltry are all earth’s honours in comparison with this.

Do we value the honour that comes from God alone? Then let us take the way that leads to it in identification with Christ Himself.
OUR HOME AND THE WORLD’S CLUB. Robert Whyte.

(This proved to be the last Address given by our beloved brother, who was called home on September 8th.)

The exact equivalent to that good old Saxon word “home” does not occur in the original language of the New Testament, though it has crept into our Authorised Version, here and there. Yet its best meaning is to be found in many treasured texts, and notably in the words of the Lord to His disciples in John 14. “In My Father’s house are many mansions, if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto Myself, that where I am there ye may be also.” That is the Christian’s home.

We shall not forget the great blessing of the forgiveness of sins. “I write unto you,” said the beloved Apostle, “because your sins are forgiven you for His Name’s sake.” That we can never forget, nor the judgment of God that fell upon the soul of the One who was our Substitute at Calvary that this great blessing might be ours. The Son of God loved us and gave Himself for us; this will ever fill us with wonder!

But the forgiveness of sins is not the end, He did not suffer only to wipe out our fearful past, but to bring us to God, for this He suffered, to bring us home, home from our wanderings, home to God.

As we get older home makes a greater appeal to us. Those of you who are in the strength and vigour of youth may not feel the home-pull as some of us do, you are thinking of service, you have hopes of doing exploits for your Lord and Saviour, and that is well, may the Lord fulfil your greatest desires to serve Him, but don’t lose sight of home. Home is where your Saviour is, where your Father is and it is the Father’s house.

Now there are three things that characterise that home; they are light and love and life. When the Lord Jesus came into this world where true love is not, He brought what was eternal here, He brought into the world and manifested in it that eternal life which was with the Father. He opened up the sphere of life, where death can never come. How bright many an earthly home has started. How bright and happy with love is it as the family grows and develops, but soon dark days come, and the light disappears before the advancing shadow of death; but our home, where eternal life is, can never be invaded by death, and here in this world of death that life has been given to us. “And this is life eternal to know Thee the only true God and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent.” Verily the Father’s house would be no home to us if we did not know the Father, and we could not know the Father apart from Jesus Christ His sent One, but He that hath the Son hath the Father also, and this is eternal life, the life of our home.

It is a home of light, for “God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all.” He is fully revealed, in His holiness as well as in His love, all that is contrary to His nature is searched out by the light, it cannot abide in His presence, but we may
abide there, for "the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin." Fear may arise in our hearts as we think of the words "God is light" for we are prone to look in upon ourselves, and we know how often indwelling sin breaks out in ugly ways, but, thank God, the blood has met all that, it abides in all its efficacy, and we are kept in a sense of its value. And it is as we walk in the light as God is in the light that we have fellowship one with another. The joys of home, the family joys become our common portion, and what the Father is as He has been revealed by the Word of Life can fill us with joy, and this joy is outside the world, the world knows nothing of it, and can give nothing like it. This walking in the light does not mean that sometimes we are in the light and sometimes in darkness. No. the light is the normal Christian position, all who have been born of God are in the light, for them the darkness is past and the true light now shineth.

But what if I sin? What about these sins after conversion? God has made provision for that. "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." We may go to Him, our Father, and in sincerity tell out our failure to Him, assured that He will forgive and restore to us the broken communion.

And love fills that home, for love is God's nature. Twice over we read, "God is love," and if we desire to know how that love has been manifested we have only to read, "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins." And again, "Hereby we perceive the love because He laid down His life for us." That love as we know it now is the love of relationship. " Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the children of God." We are children now, the love that we shall rejoice in, in all its fulness when we reach our home rests upon us now. And God would have us know that love now. His desire is that it should cast all fear from our hearts, for he that feareth is not made perfect in love. The life and light and love of our eternal home are our present portion, for we may already breathe the atmosphere of the home life and have fellowship with the Father and with His Son, Jesus Christ, in the power of the Spirit. Then when we actually reach our home we shall not be unhappy or out of place there.

"There no stranger God shall meet Thee, Stranger thou in courts above, He who to His rest shall greet thee Greets thee with a well known love."

And now I must speak a word of warning about the world. The world is like a great Club, there is no true fellowship in it, but men band together to make themselves happy without God. In it are found the things that are pleasing to the senses and the flesh. This club was set up in days of old when Cain went out from the presence of the Lord and dwelt in the land of Nod; it was continued in Babel and in the cities of the plain and right through the Old Testament days it grew and expanded, and it was never more attractive and active than it is to-day. It surrounds us in our day, and the devil who is its god and prince maintains it to lure us...
from our fealty to God and from following Christ. You would think that it was impossible that we should be lured from the joys of our home and from fellowship with the Father and the Son by the world which lies in the wicked one, but that the danger is great is certain, for John as inspired by the Holy Ghost, wrote, “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.” I am persuaded that the world is our special danger, all are exposed to it save perhaps the fathers in God’s family. Love not the world. These are words of warning from God Himself to us, and if we fail to heed them we shall have to lament years that the locusts have eaten, lost years.

The world’s attractions are many and varied, its club life is marked by sociability and good companionship. It can even make itself more pleasant than is Christian companionship. It has its religious side and will endure forms and ceremonies and even discuss religious topics; but the Father is not in it, it is not of Him; then let us beware of it and turn from it.

And young Christians be warned against forming alliances with it, be not unequally yoked with unbelievers. You may meet those who have no life outside the world’s club life, who will be very charming to you, and because you are what they call “religious” may become religious too. This is an old ruse of Satan’s. Of old he succeeded in making the people of God intermingle with the godless people of the world until they sank down to their level and so dishonoured God that He had to banish them from the land that He had given them. Disaster can only result to the Christian from the world’s companionships. How many happy young Christian lives have been wrecked and spoiled by unequal marriages. God forbid that any of you my dear young friends should be guilty of such disobedience to the Word of God.

Christian young men and women, Do not allow yourselves to be drawn into what I have called the world’s club. It has nothing that can satisfy or abide. “All that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away and the lust thereof, but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.” Do not lose everything that is worth having by some worldly alliance, and beware of secret hankering after it. It will be your undoing. You will lose your spiritual strength and usefulness and like Samson you will become the world’s plaything and lose everything worth having except your precious soul which is secured by the Saviour’s blood.

“Be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.” What words of triumph. Yet He was then going forth to Gethsemane and Calvary. But He has come forth from death, the great Conqueror, in order that He might lead us through the world to the triumph of His glory. And when the world and its lusts and its glory have all passed away we shall be with Him in the Father’s house, our home, where there is fulness of joy and where there are pleasures for evermore.

“This is the true God and eternal life. Little children, keep yourselves from idols.”
THE WAY HOME, AND THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD.

Read Psalm 84; Psalm 63.

J. J. Anning.

IT is God’s desire that we should know Him for He delights in us, and my purpose in reading these Psalms is that we may get a better knowledge of Him. “How amiable are Thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts.” That name, I think, has to do with government. “The God of Israel,” “The God of power,” “The God of deliverance.” It does not occur many times in the Psalms but when it does it means that God is the deliverer from trouble.

Then the Psalmist starts by giving us, as it were, a picture of home. “My soul longeth for the courts of the Lord; my heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God.” His home was where his God was. God’s presence was his home. And what beautiful words are these, “Yea, the sparrow hath found an house, and the swallow a nest for herself, where she may lay her young, even Thine altars, O Lord of Hosts, my King, and my God.” The Psalmist brings before us the Homeland. He directs us to the place of our rest—and the Lord of Hosts is our God.

We know, without the Psalmist telling us of the sin, the failure, the sorrow in this life. The cross, of which those ancient altars were a type has given us rest after all the sin and failure, and he now, I think, gives us some comfort as to how we are to tread the way that leads to Home, because that is the object of the psalm. It is to direct us along those highways that lead to Home.

You notice that it says, “Blessed are they that dwell in Thy house: they will be constantly praising Thee.” Well, God in His grace has given us some experience of that; and yet how often we are occupied with ourselves and our own blessings and our own requirements, even when gathered in the presence of the Lord, when really we should be continually praising. It will be so when we reach Home, actually it should be so now in assembly meetings, which should be to us a foretaste of Home.

He says also, “Blessed is the man whose strength is in Thee.” Strength what for? Strength for the pathway that leads Home. Peter wouldn’t have denied his Lord if his strength had been found in the Lord; and we know well enough what it is to trust ourselves as he did and be defeated, but here we get it definitely stated that, “Blessed is the man whose strength is in Thee; in whose heart are the ways of them.” If you will look up this passage in the New Translation you will find instead of “the ways” it is “the highways,” and those highways are the ways that lead to life and Home. Is it not on the lines of the 23rd Psalm? The 23rd Psalm starts with the green pastures, and the still waters. But this life does not consist of lying down in the green pastures and resting by quiet waters; the highways have to be trodden. In the 23rd Psalm we get “He leadeth me in the ways of righteousness.” If you are a Bible student, study that word “ways”—it means a sort of cart track. David knew what it meant—a zigzag, winding path, where you can’t see round the corner. But it is the highway to Home.
I do not know what way God is going to take you, but I am perfectly sure you will not be able to see round the corner—but it is the highway to life. My friends, get the highways into your heart. Bless the Lord for the way He leads, is not His way better than your own? Submit your way to Him and rejoice in the words, “He leadeth me.” This is the way the Psalmist puts it: along with the strength, in his heart are the highways. Yes, have your affections on things above, and the way that leads to home, and you will not deviate from the path, because it winds and turns and because it is a rough one, to get into a more easy way.

"Passing through the valley of Baca, make it a well." We may well say, "How good is the God we adore," for He turns that valley of Baca, that valley of tears into blessing; He makes it a well—and the rain from heaven—the heavenly blessings descend to refresh and sustain our souls. We bless God, we take fresh courage and we go on—go on. We are passing—passing through the valley of Baca. We are not to stand still or mark time or wander aimlessly in it without a goal, we are on the way Home.

Then he says, "They go from strength to strength, every one of them in Zion appeareth before God." Beautiful, is it not? "They go from strength to strength." The strength is given for to-day and we get renewed strength for to-morrow, and so on until the journey is done. He who knows our frailties, knows our needs, He provides the strength, and so the pathway, although it may be a rough one and full of trials, is a blessed one. It may be that sometimes we bring dishonour on His blessed Name by our own ways in it, but the 23rd Psalm tells us "He restoreth my soul." We have got a wonderful God—a wonderful God. There is forgiveness with Him, that He may be feared.

I take it that the 84th Psalm is the normal pathway of the Christian, but the 63rd Psalm is not addressed to the Lord God of Hosts; it is “O God, Thou art my God.” Now I think we get on to what you might call higher ground. There is the individual delighting in God. Turn to the 2nd book of Samuel. 2 Samuel 15. 23, 30, 32, "And it came to pass, that when David was come to the top of the mount, he worshipped God." I believe that this Psalm is connected with that incident in David's life, when he went through trouble such as few men have had to go through, when his own son lifted up his hand against him; his life was in jeopardy; his favourite son sought his life; then he worshipped God. We read nothing about his having any blessings, but the whole of the psalm is, "I will praise Thee." My friends, that man who wrote that psalm had learnt to know God in an intimate way and he could say, "My God, Thy lovingkindness is better than life." Take my life, take everything I have got, as long as I have Thy lovingkindness. Oh, may we each one of us grow in the knowledge of God. With what a God we have to do!

See how beautifully the Psalm goes. It is a dry and thirsty land, and the Psalmist does not pray for water, he does not pray for food, but he says, “Thy lovingkindness is better than life.” He says, "Thus will I bless Thee while I live: I will lift up my hands in Thy name."
My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness; and my mouth shall praise Thee with joyful lips." When in the wilderness, in this land which is dry and thirsty, in this land of trial and tribulation here is a man who is absolutely superior to everything as long as he can have God—his God. "Early will I seek Thee." He speaks about "remembering Thee upon my bed, and meditating upon Thee in the night watches." We look back and see that picture of David weeping as he went, the hand of God as it were upon him, in the dry and thirsty land, and there on the top of the mountain he worshipped God.

Notice the 8th verse, "My soul followeth hard after Thee: Thy right hand upholdeth me." I expect it reminds you of the apostle Paul, who said, "I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." There was a man in a dry and thirsty land if you like, a prisoner in a gaol, but he pressed toward the mark. That is what David did in this Psalm.

And now in closing, I would like to apply the second verse of our psalm to Him whom our souls love and adore. He was in the sanctuary from everlasting, if we might so speak of the eternal glory, and He came down into this world in all its dryness and thirstiness; a veritable desert to Him, but He could say, "My God" every step of the way. We contemplate that blessed One in all His absolute dependence upon God, His obedience, His confidence, His delight in Him and we worship—we must do. He had known the glory and the power of God in the sanctuary and He trod a dry and a thirsty land. We see Him by that well in Samaria, thirsty and weary, and He could say, in other words, "Thy loving kindness is better than life." "My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me." We grow in the knowledge of God as we consider Him and I would urge upon us all that we should make it our business on our way Home to grow in the true knowledge of God by a more constant contemplation of our Lord Jesus Christ.

It is strange that some people should have the notion that when we speak of our Lord as the Son we make Him inferior to the Father, not so thought the Jews. They sought the more to kill Him because He said that God was His Father, making Himself equal with God. (John 5. 18.)

**Meditation.**

Meditation and study differ. Study is the work of the brain, meditation of the heart. Study sets the invention to work, meditation sets the affections to work. Study is like the winter’s sun that hath little warmth and influence, meditation leaves one in a holy frame, it melts the heart when it is frozen, and makes it drop into tears of love.

Read before you meditate. Give attendance to reading (1 Tim. 4. 13). Then it follows, "Meditate upon these things" (verse 15). Reading doth furnish the matter; it is the oil that fuels the lamp of meditation. Be sure your meditation is grounded in Scripture. Reading without meditation is unfruitful; meditation without reading is dangerous.
IT may come as a surprise to some of my older brethren, that after the ministry we have been having, I should return to the first order of things. In doing so I have particularly in mind those who are younger, many of whom I know, find themselves sorely perplexed when confronted with dogmatic teaching on what are claimed to be assured scientific results, especially in biology. Middle-aged hearers who have never had to face up to these difficulties for themselves will doubtless find that they will have to face them with their children, and it will be well if, whatever our age, we are able to offer help to those who are being tempted to forego their loyalty to the Word of God, by placing undue reliance upon the speculations of men. The trouble is that we take so much for granted. Life is such a rush that there is little time for serious reflections; we accept without thought the opinions of others. Shall we to-night "Stand still and behold the wondrous works of God"? Had this been merely a scientific lecture to a scientific audience I should have been compelled to consult the very latest authorities, and in a holiday resort like this I should have felt myself very severely handicapped.

Instead of turning to scientific text books we turn to the two oldest books in the Bible for instruction, knowing that their teaching will not be contradicted at any subsequent point, neither will it be superseded! Here at least is an advantage wholly on the side of the Bible, for scientific theory is ever in a state of flux and it is well to keep in mind that guesses, hypotheses, speculations, change so rapidly that "Modernistic" teachers have just caught up on the scientific speculators and are beginning to present their speculations as "assured results" with all the dogmatism of which they are capable, just when the scientists are abandoning them. In a sense they are not to be blamed for being behind, for many of these speculators are just like exuberant schoolboys chasing a pretty butterfly. Yes, they have it; it is under the hat; you are invited to behold and admire, but just then they have caught sight of one more beautiful, and you are again on the run. The best way to spare yourself a tiring, disappointing chase which will end in disillusionment, is ever to be ahead of the very latest results, so far as the absolute fundamentals are concerned, by listening to the voice of God.

We have read part of the first chapter of the Bible, and have been in touch with some of the so-called myths of Genesis. Could anything in the whole realm of literature be less like myth, or legend? Listen to these sober, dignified, majestic, restrained, dogmatic, divinely authoritative words, "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." Not the least remarkable feature of the whole account of creation is the restrained language used. Language so restrained that I am persuaded it
would be impossible to achieve without divine constraint. There is not the slightest attempt to make an indelible impression by resort to superlatives, or poetry; no attempt is made at dramatic effect, there is no parading of stupendous arithmetical figures, but there is in simple language which the child can understand and which the most profound thinker and the greatest literary artist might well emulate, the assertion that matter is not eternal in existence: it had a beginning: and that God, a personal God, who is ante-mundane and extra-mundane, brought the heaven and earth into being out of nothing, He created them.

I imagine that to doubt the creative power of God is hardly a danger to which we are exposed, but we are perhaps in danger of forgetting that He who, as to the end, is Heir of all things, and as to the beginning is Creator of all things, is throughout all time Sustainer of all things. Children do not as a rule credit the mother with much foresight or forethought in the home. Some intelligent thought may be necessary on exceptional occasions such as Bank Holiday weekend, and even so we are liable to think that a world running so sweetly and uniformly according to what is called “Natural law” requires no divine supervision. May God pardon our folly!

Let us for the time at our disposal focus our attention upon this planet, Earth, and let us at the outset hear the demand made by the Almighty Himself to Job, “Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth?” The natural answer is, I suppose, “unborn.” But let us not leave the matter there. God demands, “Whereupon are the foundations thereof fastened?” I have a devoted wife, who credits me with the ability to do all sorts of little knacky jobs in the house, a neat little shelf here, just a little cabinet there—and I have usually succeeded in retiring with a certain amount of self-dignity preserved, under the plea that I have not the necessary tools, or at times, that there is not sufficient room in which to work. But how would you face up to this problem, Laying the foundation stone of the earth. Suppose we eliminate the initial problems of tools and material—imagine that you have them, you have all time and all space at your disposal, but how could you begin? Do not imagine that it is the foundation of a flat earth, being laid on the back of an elephant, or any such absurdity that is contemplated here. Job himself has just said, “He stretcheth the north over the empty place, and hangeth the earth upon nothing.” Surely this is the finger of God. I know that with glibness we are prone to utter that magic word “Gravity.” When a student at Edinburgh University, the Professor of Natural Philosophy told the class this story. The celebrated Lord Kelvin, while Professor of Natural Philosophy at Glasgow University, on one occasion asked a student in his class, “Can you tell me what gravity is?” The student stood, hesitated, looked rather stupid, as students often do, and then replied, “I am sorry sir, I forget.” “Do you mean that you once knew?” asked the Professor. “Yes sir,” replied the student. “Well, well! here is a tragedy. The only man who has lived to know what gravity is, has forgotten it,” was the Professor’s sardonic reply. Shall we not rather
acknowledge that because of His power not one of them faileth?

We are all aware I suppose that in six days of work, God is preparing the earth and setting heavenly bodies in relation to the earth in anticipation of its habitation by His creatures, and especially in view of the tenancy of man. It is interesting, is it not? to note that the work of the Spirit of God, is to bring Cosmos out of Chaos, to cause light to break in upon the darkness, and the result is fertility and fruit where there had been waste and barrenness. This is ever the characteristic work of the Spirit of God, and we can say, I trust every one, "God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, has shined into our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, in the face of Jesus Christ."

We shall see, as we proceed, how everything is dependent upon the light that God gives. God saw that it was good. Everything brought forth in those six days was good because in perfect harmony with the will and the purpose of God. And light placed thus at the very threshold of God's work would, as it were, challenge us to contemplate how good, and how fundamental, and withal how inscrutable light is. Although but a short time ago God's query to Job, "Where is the way where light dwelleth?" would have been answered by the one word—Ether, Scientists have now abandoned this medium of their own imagination, and acknowledge their inability to furnish any ultimate explanation of light. Sir James Jeans has written thus: "The Victorian scientist thought it necessary to explain light as a wave motion in the mechanical Ether . . . the scientist of to-day, fortunately for his sanity, has given up the attempt and is well satisfied if he can obtain a mathematical formula which will predict what light will do under specified conditions." But however profound our ignorance as to its essential nature, we have learned and are learning how good it is.

I was much struck by a remark used by our brother Mr. Whyte in giving thanks for the food at lunch time. He referred to God as making provision for the needs of our bodies before these needs arise. This is just what God has been doing since time began, He has ever been providing in advance for creature needs. Frequently do we hear of the adaptation of the eye to light; seldom do we hear of how perfectly light was adapted in advance to the eye, for the focussing of a distant object by means of a lens is dependent on a property inherent in light itself, namely refraction. But visibility is not the only good service rendered by light. Were it not for light, life of any kind would be impossible. It is LIGHT, light and not merely heat, that enables vegetation to fulfil its part in the economy of Nature, by turning ins organic into organic matter; thus preparing the food products on which both beast and man depend. And are we not just learning how beneficial light can be to the human body? "God saw the light that it was good."

But for life even in its humblest forms, not only was light essential but a suitable atmosphere was also a prime necessity, and so we read, "And God said, Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters and let it divide the waters from the waters." There is no crudity of thought suggested here, it is not
a firmament of brass, that is in the writer's mind, for we read in a little, of flying things "that may fly above the earth, in the open firmament of heaven." The marvels of the firmament, the atmosphere, we accept without thought, passing by unnoticed the wonderful correlation of its properties to the needs of created things. But let us tonight observe here "the wondrous works of God." We all know, I suppose, that the atmosphere is a mixture of gases, the most important of which are nitrogen, oxygen and carbon dioxide. Its perfect adaptation to creature needs, the wonderful prevision as well as provision of God, are appreciated in measure at least when we reflect that respiration is a part of the life of all organisms, vegetable and animal. But while vegetable organisms are dependent upon the carbonic acid in the atmosphere, and must overcome the natural affinity which carbon and oxygen have for each other; while they de-oxidise what they take in for nourishment, animal organisms make use of the oxygen to oxidise the plant products on which they depend for bodily heat. When we bear in mind the readiness of oxygen to combine with other elements, it is surely astonishing that there should be free oxygen in the atmosphere at all, and when we contemplate the varied ways in which they are being used, is it not remarkable that the proportions of gases in the mixture which we call air, should remain so constant?

But this is not the only marvel of the atmosphere. Job in chapter 28 of the book called after him, speaks of God as looking to the ends of the earth, and seeing under the whole heaven "To make weight for the winds, and he weigheth the waters by measure." It is of course a scientific discovery of the 17th century that the atmosphere has weight, but here at least is a most suggestive hint, and at any rate the correlation of the height and therefore weight of the atmosphere to our creature needs is surely an evidence of the foresight of God. The planets, let us bear in mind, have not been turned out on a mass-production pattern. There is no apparent connection between the size of a planet and the height of its atmosphere, but God has so adjusted conditions on the earth that we are normally so free from a sense of burden as to be unconscious of the fact that the atmosphere exerts pressure at all. Had its height been much greater and our constitution as at present, we should have suffered under a constant sense of oppression, had it been much less we should have been as distressed as climbers to the summit of Everest. But He remembereth our frame. He makes provision for our needs before the needs arise.

Most wonderful of all, some scientists of distinction have asserted, is the correlation which enables water to float in the air as vapour. Let us hear Elihu's question to Job, "Dost thou know the balancing of the clouds, the wondrous works of Him which is perfect in knowledge?" Were it not for the fact that double atoms of oxygen and of nitrogen form molecules of these gases in the atmosphere, such balancing would be impossible. I do not enlarge upon a subject which is but imperfectly understood, but it is perhaps good to have pointed out what a very simple calculation will reveal to be true, that for every inch of water precipitated over a square mile of the earth's surface 64,700 odd tons
of water must have been held in suspense in the clouds. “He bindeth up the waters in His thick clouds, and the cloud is not rent under them.”

On the third day referred to in Genesis 1 we read, “And God said, Let the waters under the firmament be gathered together in one place and let the dry land appear. And God called the dry land Earth, and the gathering together of the waters called He Seas.” It is all very well for us, living in days when the world has been navigated and circumnavigated to take for granted the unification of the Seas, but how came it to be asserted with such assurance on the first page of Holy Writ? Here again let us observe the wonderful prevision of God. There are planets, Mars for example, which have next to no water on their surface. There are others which appear to have a superabundance of water. It is said that if the seas of the earth to its size were proportionate in depth to those of Jupiter to the size of that planet, they would be 1,500 miles deep, and of course all land surface would be entirely covered. But God has apportioned the water surface to the needs of our planet. He “has measured the waters in the hollow of His hand,” the amount being adequate to the needs of man and of beast; to provide the natural habitat of fish, to assuage creature thirst, to perform all necessary ablutions, to purify the filth so constantly pouring into the oceans, and to serve a thousand and one other purposes.

In considering the prevision of God we cannot pass over the most unusual property of water with which God surely has endowed it for the good of His creatures. While water in conformity with other substances, increases in density on cooling, there is in the case of water a most abrupt reversal of this law at the critical temperature 4 degress C. so that instead of increasing in density right up to freezing point, which would mean that ice would form from the bottom of water expanses upward, life in these becoming impossible, there is a sudden reversal of the natural law; ice is less dense than water, and our water surfaces freeze from above as all experience confirms. It is Divine provision, but it implies Divine prevision. For a perfect description of the evaporation, circulation, and condensation constantly taking place in the atmosphere by the mercy of God, read Ecclesiastes 1. 7—“All the rivers run into the sea; yet the sea is not full; into the place from whence the rivers come, thither shall they return again,” and take in conjunction with it Psalm 135. 7, “He causeth the vapours to ascend from the ends of the earth; he maketh lightnings for the rain; he bringeth the winds out of his treasuries.” The watery vapour is ever rising from all water surfaces. In the upper reaches of the atmosphere the cold air gathers it in its mighty grip and “the harvest of the sea is reaped.” Clouds of condensed water vapour are formed and God yokes His winds as steeds to the chariots of cloud to carry the refreshing showers as He seeth the need. It is said that Lord Kelvin in conversation with his students remarked on one occasion “I believe there is never rain without lightning.” The lightning flash, the shock, and then the shower; the streams are replenished, and so the cycle to which the Preacher refers is completed.
Reference has already been made to the function of the plant in the economy of nature to turn inorganic matter into organic, thus preparing food for higher orders of creation. This is a work which no higher order of creation can do for itself, and it is interesting to note how the humblest things in nature minister to the needs of the highest. We have been forcibly reminded in our Bible Readings that as members of the body of Christ, each member must function aright for the maintenance of the whole in health. And in this, nature itself would teach us. We commonly recognise how dependent we are upon those with greatest gift, but there is a place for each and if in Nature plant life ceased to function, higher life would become impossible. It is well to notice the perfect order in the main kingdoms so clearly brought to notice in this chapter; the Mineral Kingdom; the Vegetable Kingdom, the Animal Kingdom, and above all the Human realm. In the sphere of life there is first vitality in the Vegetable Kingdom, self-consciousness in the Animal Kingdom, and God-consciousness when we come to man.

Time forbids any reference to the Animal Kingdom, save to make two comments. Firstly let us notice the reiteration of the phrase “after their kind” and “after his kind.”

While godless speculators speak of “origin by descent” pointing to the profound mystery of reproduction as the explanation of the origin of species, bidding us see light by looking upon abysmal darkness, God in His Word asserts that descent has been according to origin, each “after his kind.”

The second point is that the record of the rocks shows that certain forms of life reached in the past a magnificence that has been lost. Consider, for example, the great age of Reptiles, when reptiles of the air, land, and waters appear to have dominated creation. These huge beats, with coats of mail rendering them invulnerable, one would imagine, and with formidable teeth giving them an advantage over every foe, have disappeared, making room for the humble and meek inhabitants of the field. But if “the struggle for existence” and “survival of the fittest” of which we hear so much by way of explanation of the existing species, be the true and ultimate explanation, then those, by all human standards of judgment, best fitted for the struggle should have survived. They have not; and the explanation rests with God. “Thou hidest Thy face, they are troubled; thou takest away their breath, they die, and return to their dust” but again “Thou sendest forth Thy Spirit, they (new species) are created: and thou renewest the face of the earth” (Psalm 104). In this Psalm of creation too, reference is made to the function of vegetation. Had vegetation had only its own interest to serve it might well for self protection, have been rankly poisonous, instead of nutritive, but in the wonderful prevision and provision of God “He causeth the grass to grow for cattle and herb for the service of man: that he may bring forth food out of the earth.”

And now a closing reference to man with an appeal thereon. Quite clearly from the account given in Genesis, man is a tripartite being. As to his body, God formed or moulded him of the dust of the ground, and it is true, I suppose,
that every element in the physical make-up of man can be found in the soil. But man is clearly more than body, he became a living soul, a creature of will, intelligence, emotion: but more than that, for as such he would only have been a high grade animal, but as made in the image and likeness of God man is a spiritual being, standing in responsibility Godward, and I want everyone of us here gathered, called by His Name to remember the words of Jehovah concerning such, “I have created him for my glory, I have formed him, yea I have made him.”

The first question in the Scottish Shorter Catechism is this, “What is man’s chief end?” and the answer is, “Man’s chief end is to glorify God and to enjoy Him for ever.” It is said of a schoolboy who was asked this question, that he answered, “Man’s chief end is to glorify God and to enjoy himself for ever.” and, my dear young friends, I invite you to remember that the answer is not so ludicrous as at first sight it appears to be, for it is as enjoying God and glorifying Him, that we shall truly enjoy ourselves. This will involve sanctification—set apartness—a sanctification that will affect not merely the spirit, but the soul, the seat of our affections and emotions, intelligence and will, yes, and our bodies with which we make contact with the world outside. By all means keep the body fit, but maintain it in health that your members may be rendered as servants of righteousness to the Lord. Remember there is no such thing as a holy spirit within an unholy body, and so dear brethren and sisters in Christ, “The very God of peace sanctify you wholly, and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.” But is it possible? The God who has made such perfect provision for every contingency in nature, has made such perfect provision in grace for every need of the pathway. All the resources of God are stored up for us in Christ, and so the Apostle adds, “Faithful is He that calleth you, who also will do it.”

Christ as the governing principle of the life is the starting point in the Christian race, and the necessary condition of the final result: “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.” It would be altogether wrong to suppose that every Christian can say this. It is open to him, surely; but as practical attainment, how far often from being reached! The result here is found only by the man to whom Christ is the governing principle of his life, the pattern of his way, and the Object of his heart. We must put these things together or we misplace the truth. It is a truth of experience; and experience alone can give it to us.

The knowledge of the new man is, Christ is all; and this it is that makes worshippers in the power of the Spirit of God, for Christ alone is He whom the Spirit glorifies, and with whom He occupies the heart.
Our resources are in God Himself, and we need more and more to realize this great fact. There are no circumstances in which we may find ourselves (apart from those that are sinful) where we cannot count upon the resources of God. In the four scriptures I have referred to we find the resources of God available in the

1. Testing through which we are called to pass as His witnesses—He is able to deliver.

2. In the learning of God's counsels and will for us—He is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think.

3. In the conflict the believer is called to face in connection with the heavenly calling—He is able to subdue all things unto Himself.

4. In the weakness that marks us and the dangers that assail us—He is able to keep.

In the case of the three Hebrew children, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, we have an example of the resources of God for the testing we may have to experience, and most assuredly we shall be tested if we belong to God. The circumstances in which these three men found themselves were certainly such as to call forth our sympathy. They had been carried away from their friends to be slaves in a foreign country, under the sway of an unscrupulous and conceited monarch, deprived of the privileges they desired in serving their God and surrounded by everything that would be revolting to them. For a brief period they seem to be favoured, but as is always the case, the enemy will not allow them to rest and very soon his snares are laid that they may be tested. His tactics are to depress, discourage or disappoint, but it is when depression is at its worst, discouragement at its fullest and disappointment at its height that we are made to feel and know the resources we have in God.

Peter writes in his letter to the strangers scattered abroad that "the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ." So the faith of these three men is to be tried in a very real way. Will they recognize the image of gold set up by Nebuchadnezzar, who, as incited by the god of this world, considers that he has the paramount claim, and whose image was but the symbol of his own greatness?

Everything is done to make the setting seductive and attractive, and it might be argued what possible harm could there be in bowing the knee to the image just for one moment? It was only an outward thing and they would please the king, while they could still remain loyal in heart to the God they served! It is said that when you are in Rome you should do as Rome does. How easy it is to argue on these lines and escape the testing, and then you lose the knowledge of the resources that are in God, and as we have had it brought before us from John 12, "He that loveth his life shall lose it." We cannot have the resources of God apart
from this testing. Nebuchadnezzar had no use for the God these men served, but what confidence, what triumph in their simple words, “Our God whom we serve is able to deliver us.” There was no anxiety, no wavering, no hesitation, but the simple assertion that they would at all costs serve their God.

Ye cannot serve God and mammon, ye cannot be partakers of the table of the Lord and the table of demons, and how we need to realize the truth of these statements when there is so much compromise around us to-day. But the furnace is terrible, and is it worth while? The furnace is so fierce that those who cast these youths into it are slain by its heat. Is it possible that the resources of God are such that such terrible testing can be borne? Thank God they are, and the children of God can go into the fire in calm and happy confidence. The resources of God are unknown to the cruel king, but to those who trust Him how real they are; the fire cannot even touch them. The question arises as to how they can possibly escape and how do the resources of God manifest themselves. Nebuchadnezzar himself furnishes us with the answer, “Lo, I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt; and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God.” Here is the secret, God has One whom He has made strong for Himself, One upon whom help has been laid, His own beloved Son, our great High Priest, and it is in Him that all the resources of God are found. He has passed through all the testing, apart from sin, and is able to succour them that are tried, He is with them in the trial and is able to carry them through it. Oh! then for the pure pose of heart to say we will not serve other gods, for our God is able to deliver us.

A very different picture is presented to us in our second scripture, but we need the resources of God in the school of God, where we learn the lessons connected with His counsels and will for us. The circumstances are entirely favourable, but the beloved Apostle bows His knees to the Father our Lord Jesus Christ that the saints might be strengthened with might by His Spirit to enter into the things that are so blessedly necessary for us to learn. There are five petitions presented and each one is a wonderful one. We are brought to the great centre, Christ Himself, to view the limitless and infinite expanse of the thoughts of God, and the love of Christ. How marvellous is the conception, but how can we lay hold upon these precious realities? Thank God there is a power at our disposal, a power that works in us, not now for us, and that power is the Spirit of God. God has brought us to His centre, and it is through that blessed One, who is Heir of all things, that we learn the lessons that God would teach us and apprehend the counsels of His heart so that we might be for His pleasure. What encouragement to us in our dullness and slowness to have these words brought before us that He is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, and that according to His mighty working. All our resources are in Him and when we feel how little we have entered into His thoughts and how poorly we express His desires for us, we are thrown back upon Him, and it is not our poor asking or our tiny thoughts but His wonderful power that is our resource
for the lessons He would have us learn. Just as in the testing, so now in the learning His love has provided for us in the vast resources that are so freely placed at our disposal. May we have grace to come to Him with our requests, to know His will and find that, small though our apprehension is, He works in us according to His own mighty power, and the result is that we find how much greater are His thoughts than our feeble requests.

Then we come to the conflict. How real this was to the Apostle. He had every natural advantage that the flesh could confer, and naturally speaking he could have gone a long way in making a name down here if he had considered earthly things, but all that might have been assessed as gain he was willing to count as loss for Christ. In so doing, however, there was much conflict to encounter, as in the pathway that leads to salvation, the ultimate goal, every step of the journey will be contested. If we are to follow the Captain of our salvation we shall find that all that is connected with earth and earthly things, so often delectable in themselves, must be left behind, and it is just this the Apostle brings before the saints at the close of Philippians 3. He would have them followers of himself, because as his citizenship was in heaven so was theirs, but if they were to have the crown there they must have the cross here. The goal is infinitely desirable and precious, to be with and like Christ, but to all those whose faith and hope reach out to that goal there must be the pressing on and the following. Here it is we learn again of the resources of God. The One for whom we are waiting and who will change our bodies and make them like unto His body of glory, is all powerful and is able to subdue all things to Himself. He is the Captain of our salvation, and it is His delight to work in us even now that which will keep us from earthly things and cause us to press on to that glorious consummation of our heavenly calling. What a resource for us to know that however long, however dreary, however trying the path may be, He has trodden it, and in treading the path His strength will be ours on the road.

Lastly we have that beautiful and encouraging word in Jude, “He is able to keep you from falling and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy.” Jude gives us a picture of the sorrowful days of departure when the saints of God need to be exhorted to contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to them. The word comes to us as beloved of the Lord, to build ourselves upon our most holy faith, to pray, to keep ourselves in the love of God and to look for the Lord Jesus Christ. What an exercise of us, and in the midst of such departure how can we be sustained and maintained? Thank God there is a resource which cannot fail—He is able to keep us from falling. Thus to the end of the journey we find all our resources in Him, the faithful God, whose love and care for us never changes. Well might we ascribe to Him glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and for ever.

To be able to avail ourselves of His power, we must be in communion with Him by the practical energy of faith.
STANDING AND STATE.

Read Hebrews 12. 18-29; Titus 2. 11-15; 1 Corinthians iii. 10-16.

By standing I mean the position the grace of God puts us in. By state, the moral condition the believer is actually in. Our standing in grace is perfect. Our state is, alas, generally far short of what it should be. The Spirit of God constantly strives to bring us into a condition that will correspond with our standing.

It is ever God's way. He gives us the standing before He calls for a state to correspond. We are never asked to work up to a position. The position is given to us, in grace; once given, never recalled, and then we are asked to answer to it.

Our first Scripture tells us what we, believers, are not come to. "The mount that might be touched" is Sinai, where the law was given, attended by awesome sights and sounds that made the very mediator, Moses, "exceedingly fear and quake." The law is demand. Nothing is ministered by the law in the way of support or ability to answer its demands. The law only proved what man was. Rightly understood, all it could do was to shut our mouth, and bring us in guilty before God. Thank God, we have not come to that mount, though the lessons taught there are salutary.

But we are told what we have come to, even to Mount Zion. Isaiah 35. 10, gives an idea of what Zion means. We read, "And the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall cease." It is the place of grace. It connects with redemption and joy and gladness. Sorrow and sighing ceasing tells of the unalloyed bliss that grace will bring us to.

What is grace? I have never yet heard an adequate definition, and never expect to! For grace is the way God acts in showing His favour to sinners, who do not deserve it in the smallest degree. Grace is the way God acts, not as measuring and meeting our need as sinners, but who with lavish hand blesses us according to what He is in His very nature.

An illustration will help us to understand this. It is said of Alexander the Great, that a beggar sought alms from him on one occasion. The Emperor threw him a handful of golden coins. A courtier, astonished at such generosity, ventured to say, "Sire, copper coins would meet the beggar's need. Why give him golden coins?" Alexander replied in true royal fashion, "Copper coins would suit the beggar's needs; golden coins suit Alexander's giving." Yes; and what suits God's giving? We must get to know how great He is, His nature, love, and we may get a little idea of what grace means.

"Ye are come unto Mount Zion." Now we climb mountains, and we may well climb this mountain, going up one side, as it were, and descending the other. The items enumerated in verses 22-24 of Hebrews 12 are marked off by the conjunction "and."

MOUNT ZION.

1. "The city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem."
2. "An innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly."

3. "Church of the firstborn (ones), which are written in heaven."

4. "God, the Judge of all."

5. "The spirits of just men made perfect."

6. "Jesus, the Mediator of the new covenant."

7. "The blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel.

First we have the church, seen in her administrative capacity under the figure of a city. It is Jerusalem above, free, not in bondage, the mother of us all. (Galatians 4. 26.) What grace to link us up with that which is nearest to the heart of Christ. How often we look at things from a merely individualistic point of view, from the village pump standard, instead of being linked up in our minds with the whole church of God upon earth, a member of Christ, to display Him in our place and measure, as fitting in with the whole scheme of display of His grace.

Second, we know little of the place angels play in this matter. We have glimpses of it here and there in the Scriptures. It is here called, "an innumerable company of angels" Psalm 68. 17 tells us, "The chariots of God are twenty thousand: even thousands of angels: Jehovah is among them, as in Sinai, in the holy place." We remember how "a multitude of the heavenly host" filled the lower heavens and over "the Babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger" sang their ëan of exultation, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men." (Luke 2. 13, 14.)

We give a glance at their unknown, unnoticed, constant ministrations to God's people, when we read, "Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them, who shall be heirs of salvation?" (Hebrews 1. 14).

This leads us to the church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven. This is the church seen as the fruit of God's counsel, "the fulness of Him that filleth all in all" (Ephesians 1. 23), the church that the Lord will "present . . . to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing . . . holy and without blemish" (Ephesians 5. 27). What boundless grace, far, far beyond our need, is this, "the counsel of His own will" (Ephesians 1. 11) "according to the good pleasure of His will" (Ephesians 1. 5).

We step still higher. What or who is at the top of this mighty mountain of grace, this more than spiritual Mount Everest? Are we able to reach the top? Mount Everest has defied the most strenuous and earnest efforts to put foot on its mighty crest. Can we scale this mighty mountain of grace? Who or what is at the top? Surely, God Himself. He is the One from whom all blessing descends. The gospel is designed to bring us to God. "God, the judge of all;" Judge in the sense of the One, who appoints and apportions to each his place. God is the Judge as witness the Great White Throne, but He is also the Judge, the One who decides for each the place and portion in this scheme of grace. We cannot think of God on Mount Zion as exclusively the One who will exercise a judicial prerogative in appor-
tioning judgment. No, here we are on Mount Zion, grace, grace is our theme. "He shall bring forth the headstone thereof with shoutings, crying, Grace, grace unto it" (Zechariah 4:7).

We begin to descend the mountain now. We come first "to the spirits of just men made perfect." The last verse of the previous chapter throws light upon this. "God having provided some better thing for us [believers in this dispensation] that they [believers in old Testament times] without us should not be made perfect" (Hebrews 11:40). That is to say the Old Testament believers have to wait till the end of the Christian dispensation for full blessing. They will share in the resurrection of those "that are Christ's at His coming" (1 Corinthians 15:23). Their spirits will be made perfect; full blessing according to the place "the Judge of all" apportions them will be theirs.

We next come to Jesus, the Mediator of the new covenant. Moses, the mediator of the law, said at its inauguration, "I exceedingly fear and quake." And well he might. Jesus will administer the new covenant—the covenant of grace, the covenant of unalloyed blessing, which will be publicly ratified with Israel in a future day, but which blessings are ours even now, even the new birth, the forgiveness of sins and the gift of the Spirit. For its public ratification with Israel in the coming day read Jeremiah 31. 31-34 and Ezekiel 36. 21-28.

Lastly we come to the blood of sprinkling speaking better things than that of Abel. The blood of the firstling of the flock offered by Abel was only a shadow. Christ's blood is the substance. One was typical, the other anti-typical. One without real efficacy, the other efficacious.

It cannot here refer to Abel's own blood being shed, for that only called for vengeance. It spoke of nothing good. But the blood of Abel's sacrifice was good in its typical meaning, but how infinitely better is that of which it speaks, even the precious blood of Christ, making full atonement, settling every question of righteousness, setting God free to minister grace, pure grace. Thus we have a magnificent mountain of grace. God at the top and the blood of Jesus at the bottom, the firm foundation.

But the chapter runs on to warn us not to neglect the voice of Him that speaks from heaven. If there was no escape for the one, who refused the voice of him who spoke on earth, Moses the giver of the law, it is far more serious to refuse Him who speaks from heaven. God is going to shake everything. That will reveal what can be shaken, which will be cast aside, and reveal that which cannot be shaken that it may abide. How solemn this is!

We have come to Mount Zion—grace, covenant grace, blessing we cannot lose in the mercy of God. But what of our lives? There is the judgment seat of Christ to be faced. There is God's government to meet. We shall only find relief in the coming day when the wood, hay and stubble are burned up, when all that is not of the Spirit of God shall be consumed. We know how the clearing out of the accumulation of rubbish in homes is a positive relief.
Thank God that “gold, silver, precious stones,” which will stand the test of the fire, God’s discriminating judgment, abides. Doubtless Hebrews 12. 25-29 speaks of that which is universal in a coming day, but we do well to apply it to ourselves in our individual life, for the grace of God positively teaches us that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously and godly in this present world” (Titus 2. 12).

We may well remember, ever keep in mind that “Our God is a consuming fire,” words written to professing Christians. If we are right minded we shall welcome this, for our God only consumes that which He cannot approve, that which is of the flesh. It is a mercy that is so, for it is in this way our standing and state are brought into accord fully, and “sorrow and sighing will cease” for ever.

Christ the Centre.

It is not christians but Christ who is become God’s centre. We may gather christians together, but if it is not Christ in one’s own spirit, it is scattering. God knows no centre of union but the Lord Jesus Christ. It is Himself the object, and nothing but Himself can be the centre. Whatever is not gathering round that centre for Him and from Him is scattering. There may be gathering, but if not “with Me,” it is scattering. We are by nature so sectarian that we have need to watch against this. I cannot make Christ the centre of my efforts if He is not the centre of my thoughts. It is a great thing for a man to say, “I have no other object but Christ, no activity in my heart but for Christ.”

Each nature retains its own characteristic. As flesh never becomes spirit, so spirit never degenerates into flesh. The natures abide distinct, and the practical business of the believer is to hold himself for dead to the one that he may live in the other by the faith of the Son of God, Who loved him and gave Himself for him.

We get strength to obey in the act of obedience.

The consciousness of His presence banishes all fear. “Be not afraid” follows “It is I.” It is of no use to preach courage unless we preach Christ first. If we have not Him with us, we do well to fear; His presence is the only rational foundation for calm fearlessness. Only when the Lord of Hosts is with us ought we not to fear, “though the waters roar ... and be troubled.”
EVERY MORNING.

"Man goeth forth unto his work and to his labour until the evening"
(Psalm 104. 23).

Forth to their labour go Thy loved and ransomed host,
To earn their daily bread in stress and sweat of face;
"Be Thou their arm," O Lord, and strength and mercy send
Fresh from Thy glorious throne of never-failing grace.

Help them to shine as lights before their fellow men,
And in the midst of death hold forth the word of life,
And shew how God can keep a soul in perfect peace
Amid the world's wild clamour and its godless strife.

Some serving masters, froward, thoughtless and unjust,
From morning unto night will have their spirits tried;
"Lord Christ," Thou art their Master, it is Thee they serve,
And all they do, as unto Thee, is sanctified.

Some dogged by unsuccess, will disappointed be,
And sigh with weariness before the day is done;
Refresh their spirits, Lord, give confidence in Thee;
Thou wilt not fail or leave them till their race is run.

Some weak and troubled mothers in their homes this day
Will need a special portion of Thy grace divine;
Uphold them, Lord, strengthen their faith, and let them feel
That Thou art near to make their every burden Thine.

O let Thy mercy great on all that prosper rest,
And Lord, preserve them by Thy good and faithful word:
Lest they upon uncertain riches should rely,
And turn from Thee, the only true and living Lord.

And when, O Lord, at length the day draws to its close,
And tired hands and feet and brains seek home and night;
Then these, Thy well-beloved, all day sustained by Thee,
In true contentment shall declare, "Thy way is right."

And raise their happy songs of praise and thanks to Thee
For that sweet quietness of mind Thy presence brings;
And lay them down with grateful hearts, in peace to sleep
Beneath the shadow of Thy strong, protecting wings.
A LIFE SO PLEASING TO THE FATHER.  

David Ross.

John 8. 28-29; Romans 15. 1-3; 1 John 3. 21-22.

Notes of Address at Bangor, North Wales. July 30th.

"O Saviour, we would contemplate Thee
In all Thy pathway here so lowly;
Thy life so pleasing to the Father,
So perfect, faithful, and so holy."

HERE indeed in this "life so pleasing to the Father" is a subject worthy of meditation.

In Perthshire is a spot called the "Queen's View", so-called because Queen Victoria expressed her pleasure in the landscape from that point, and thousands following her example have found a similar pleasure. But now we wish to look at the Father's View as He says: "This is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased."

Note carefully that these words were uttered after thirty years of life in the obscurity of a humble and despised Galilean village. How short was the life of our blessed Lord, thirty-three years, and yet ten elevenths of it were spent unknown to fame, seen only by a few peasants, but pleasurable to the Father. True it was that He always did those things that please the Father, whether in the hidden life of Nazareth, or in the blaze of publicity during His tireless journeys in the land of Palestine.

In the law of the offerings in Leviticus the emphasis laid on the "inwards" of the sacrifices would surely indicate in a typical way that all the inward hidden secret details of that wonderful life were well pleasing to the Father. Are any of us inclined to grumble at the obscurity of our lot and lack of opportunity to do anything to command admiration? Do we think in the poet's words,

"Full many a gem of purest ray serene,
The dark unfathomed caves of ocean bear.
Full many a flower is born to blush unseen,
And waste its sweetness on the desert air."

Then remember how and where "the white flower of a blameless life" and perfect fruit for God, so pleasing to the Father, was spent.

Confessedly great is the mystery of the incarnation. With Paul we acknowledge Him as "God over all, blessed for ever", and yet we see the holy Boy increasing in wisdom and stature and in favour with God and man. Only once do we find the veil drawn aside to hear Him say, as He sat in the Temple ... I must be about My Father's business", and after that He was subject to His earthly parents, living under the law, the very first life that fulfilled the law. He dwelt among men,

My Example is He.

And now, when He does come forth in public service and has the seal of the Father's approval in the words from the opened heavens marking Him out as God's beloved Son, does He come forth to assert His will, to please Himself, to rule and dominate and demand the services of His creatures? No, His motto was indeed, "Ich dien", I serve, for even Christ pleased not Himself. The Son of Man came not to be ministered
unto, but to minister and to give His life a ransom for many.

What a joy it gives to study reverently these four short records of that life so pleasing to the Father, full of the heavenly fragrance of service for God and man. See Him at the humble wedding feast meeting the need of the bridal couple, despite the fact that His hour was not yet come. At all times and in all circumstances He was willing to sacrifice Himself for the good of others—whether to answer the questionings of the religious leader whose visit hinders Him from rest at the midnight hour, or ready in spite of the weariness, hunger and thirst that cause Him to rest on Sychar’s well at midday to give the living water and reveal His Father to a wretched outcast woman. Truly His meat was to do the will of Him who sent Him. Learn from Mark’s pen how His privacy was invaded (jealously guarded by so many of us), so that He had no time so much as to eat. Did He not say, “Come ye yourselves apart and rest awhile”, only to have that rest disturbed by the thronging multitudes? When impatient and impotent disciples said, “Send them away”, did not His compassionate heart see in them sheep having no shepherd? and with the words, “Give ye them to eat”. He supplied His servants with the means to do so. What a contrast to ourselves with our petty self-indulgence which grudges to sacrifice for others even a tiny portion of our comfort, convenience, money, sleep, time, food and privacy. “We ought to bear the infirmities of the weak and not to please ourselves, even as Christ pleased not Himself.” Do we claim relationship with Him through grace as His brethren? Then let us never forget the only relationship He recognised, in the days of His flesh, “Whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is My brother and My sister and My mother.”

Consider Him again returning from the comparative safety of Peraea over Jordan to the place where His life had been attempted; returning at the anguished cry of need. “Lord, he whom Thou lovest is sick,” undeterred by timorous disciples who say, “Master, the Jews of late sought to stone Thee; and goest Thou thither again?” Yes, back to the stones and on to the Cross, for this commandment had He received of His Father.

Behold Him again in the agony of Gethsemane and listen in wonder as He says, “Father, if Thou be willing, remove this cup from Me; nevertheless not My will, but Thine be done.” No thought of Himself, no self-pity. To the suggestion of His disciple, “Lord, pity Thyself”, His stern answer is, “Get thee behind Me, Satan.” Thank God, there have at all times been compassionate women who have sought to alleviate suffering, and such, it may be, offered Him as usual in those days, medicated drugs to dull the excruciating agony of crucifixion, but in response to their weeping and wailing, He says, “Weep not for Me, but for yourselves and your children.” In the moment of the keenest physical agony when cruel hands nail Him to the cross, we hear no complaint, no curse, no self-pity. No, only the revelation of Divine pity, “Father, forgive them, they know not what they do.” Of the few sayings of His on the cross, one was for the woman through whose soul the sword had pierced, another for a penitent thief, another was the word that spoke of the will of God ac-
complished. Only one word indicates His physical suffering, and the evangelist expressly tells us, that Jesus, *that the Scripture might be fulfilled*, said, “I thirst.” On the one hand the cry, “My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?”, on the other hand Paul’s inspired interpretation of the event, “An offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling savour.”

“The Father hath not left Me alone: for I do always those things that please Him.” What a wonderful life of unbroken communion. The bitter pain of man’s rejection and reproach cannot disturb it, for He says, “I thank Thee, Father. Even so, Father for so it seemed good in Thy sight.” Again when death has claimed His friend and He groans and is troubled, “Father I thank Thee that Thou hast heard Me, Thou hearest Me always.” His disciples would forsake Him and leave Him alone, “Yet, I am not alone, because the Father is with Me.” And when all was over, He bowed His head and in unclouded communion, said, “Father into Thy hands I commend My spirit.” And because of His piety, His obedience, He was heard and was “saved out of death”, being raised by the glory of God the Father.

And now, brethren, He has left us an example, that we should follow His steps. “Let every one of us please his neighbour for his good to edification, even as Christ pleased not Himself.” The unhappiest life we could possibly live is one of selfishness, of self-pleasing. The Man of Sorrows is also the Man of Joy, Who even on the dark night of His betrayal could speak of His joy and His peace, and Who even in the enduring of the Cross had joy set before Him. The highest, deepest, fullest joy is found in doing God’s will.

Should we not emulate Enoch who walked with God and before his translation had this testimony that he pleased God? Not self-pleasers, nor even men-pleasers, except for their good to edification, not living our lives with eye-service, but as Paul enjoins, walking worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, not waiting for or expecting always specific instructions, but so living in communion with God that intuitively we know His will, even anticipating His wishes, “keeping His commandments, and doing those things that are pleasing in His sight.”

This, as John tells us, is the secret of successful prayer, for whatsoever we ask, we receive of Him. How little we know of this and how true of us are James’ solemn words, “Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts.” Even in our prayers how selfish we are.

And what are the things that please God? Hebrews 13, tells us of the sacrifices with which God is well pleased. They are twofold, the sacrifice of praise, thanksgiving, worship in the sanctuary and the sacrifice of doing good and communicating blessing to others, a life Godward and manward, worship and service. And the God who sets this ideal before us is the One who gives us the power for it. Shall we not therefore join in the petition, “Now the God of peace that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, make us perfect in every good work to do His will, working in us that which is well pleasing in His sight through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.”


THE WAY OF VICTORY.

R. Turnbull

Notes of Address given at Bangor, North Wales, August 1st.

Hebrews 2. 16, 18; 3. 1, 2; 4. 14-16; 8. 23-36; 8. 1, 2; 9. 2-4;
1 John 1. 4; 2. 1-2.

Let us remind ourselves that our Lord and Saviour not only died for us but has risen again from the dead. In the scriptures I have read, from the epistle to the Hebrews, we see that He lives, He ever liveth in the presence of God for us; is so interested in us that we might, each one, almost think we were His only interest. In this epistle He appears in the presence of God for us as our Great High Priest before God, and in the epistle of John we see His activities on our behalf as our Advocate with the Father. It is a knowledge of these two truths which will be a stay to our souls and keep us livingly in touch with Him.

He is presented in this epistle as seated on the right hand of the majesty on high, and we do well, as exhorted in the first verse of chapter 3, to consider the Apostle and high Priest of our confession, Christ Jesus—Who is faithful to Him that appointed Him, and Who is ever merciful to us—a merciful and faithful high Priest.

We have a great high Priest who has passed through the heavens (4. 14-16). As of old the high priest on the great day of atonement passed through the outer court into the holy place, and thence into the holiest—not without blood) right into the presence of God—there for himself and as representing the people, so our great high Priest has passed through the heavens into the immediate presence of God, there to appear for us.

Do we at times feel faint-hearted? Are we sometimes tempted to give up, or to ask is it worth while? Let us consider Him—Jesus, the Son of God. Him whose majestic glories are brought before us in a seven-fold way in chap. 1, as Heir of all things; Maker of the worlds; the brightness of God’s glory; the express image of His person; the upholder of all things; the One who made purgation for sins, and who seated Himself at the right hand of the Majesty on high. As we consider Him, we might well allow the exhortation to come home, “Let us hold fast our confession,” and ask as Peter—impetuous loving Peter who said in answer to the Lord’s question, “Will ye also go away?” “Lord to whom shall we go, Thou hast the words of Eternal Life.”

We have not an high Priest who is unable to sympathise with our infirmities or weakness, the secret of this being that when on earth He as dependent man trod the way before us. He knows all about each testing and tempting that we can possibly have, for He Himself hath suffered, being tempted (apart altogether from sin) and He is able to succour us when we are tempted.

There is one point here I must emphasise, and that is that our blessed Lord, when here though truly God the Son, the Eternal Son, was truly man, the dependent man, Who ever did those things that pleased His Father, and in all things was entirely apart from sin. In you
and me there is the evil of our hearts which so readily responds to the evil without, and also to the desires of the flesh—but in Him there was no guile. He was without sin, and there was nothing, absolutely nothing, to respond to the evil without. Think of Him when tempted by Satan after having fasted forty days, and yet as the ever dependent One He replied three times, "It is written—It is written—It is written", and Satan under the mighty power of the Word had to withdraw. Temptation to Him involved suffering, but having passed through it all, and for ever beyond it, He as our high Priest before God is now able to succour or help us when we are tempted.

Because of this we are encouraged to come with holy boldness to the throne of grace where we may obtain mercy and find grace for timely help. It is one thing to be recovered when we do fall; it is quite another thing to be kept from falling, which is the result of the great fact we are considering. To use an illustration, it is not the doctor rendering aid to a child after an accident, (that would be an illustration of our Lord's service as Advocate) but rather the doctor being on the spot and with presence of mind dashing in and averting an accident to the child, lifting it out of danger.

Think of the Apostle Paul. You remember how after being caught up into the third heavens where he heard words which it was not lawful for a man to utter, and lest he should be lifted up with pride—an awful sin that is—he was given a thorn in the flesh: a messenger of Satan to buffet him; this drove him to the throne of grace. He needed timely help. He prayed, but no answer. He prayed again, still no answer. Yet again the third time, I imagine with increased earnestness, he prayed and then the answer came "My grace is sufficient for thee", and more than that, he got a reason for such an answer, "For My strength is made perfect in weakness." Delightful is it not? Was he satisfied with such an answer? Surely! for he says, "Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities that the power of Christ may rest upon me." Let us come boldly to the throne of grace when feeling our weakness and we shall receive mercy and grace for timely help, and we shall be able to say as the Apostle said, "When I am weak, then am I strong", always remembering that our great high Priest ever liveth in the presence of God for us.

Turning to the 7th chap. we find in the 23rd verse that the priests of old under the Aaronic priesthood could not continue in office perpetually. There were many of them, but after recording details of their lives, it had to be said, "And he died", but our great high Priest, Jesus continueth ever. Death has no more claim upon Him. His is an unchanging and unchangeable priesthood, and because of this He is able to save to the uttermost—completely and right to the end—those who come to God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them.

Does this not remind us of the incident in the history of the children of Israel when we find them on one occasion in conflict with Amalek (Ex. 17)? See them in the valley; first the children of Israel prevail, then Amalek. Presently the tables are turned and Israel prevails and gains the victory. What is the secret of that? Look up to the
Se ripture Truth

mountain top and what do we find? There we see Moses uplifting his hands interceding for the people he loved. When so engaged the Israelites won, but Moses got weary, his hands fell, and Amalek prevailed. To overcome this, Aaron and Hur come to the rescue. They seat him on a stone, then they each hold up one hand and so the day is won, and victory, a great victory, is gained.

Our blessed Lord intercedes before God for us. Thank God He never wearies. His hands need no support. His hands are ever uplifted, and for us to realise that is a comfort to us and is the secret of our power and strength. To realise this means we will be wholly cast upon Him. We will allow Him to act for us. Then and only then we are victorious in His strength, and then it is we are enabled to live the victorious life.

You remember too, how when the high priest of old, on the great day of atonement, went into the presence of God, there were engraved on his shoulders and breastplate the names of the twelve tribes, so representing all the children of Israel. Had we been inscribing those names, we might very easily have put there the names of those who were proved to be true, but no, every one was there, the weakest, the feeblest, even those who were apostate in their day. So with us beloved young Christians. Your name and mine, feeble and faltering though we be, are on the breastplate and on the shoulders of Jesus our great high Priest. On His breast, the place of affection; on His shoulders, the place of power and strength, and however feeble and weak we may find ourselves, nothing can remove our names from those places. Would that we realised more and more His love, His power. Thoughts such as these would surely keep us from relying on our love for Him, or our strength to stand for Him, but they would cast us in dependence upon Him, and so His love would sustain us, and He would be our strength.

Passing on to the opening verses of chap. 8 we find we are being led on to the main point of the epistle, "Of the things which we have spoken this is the sum". We have such an high Priest—seated on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the Heavens, a Minister of the Sanctuary, and as we follow the teaching of the epistle we see that in the new place that our Lord, as high Priest, now occupies, we are identified with Him. He "the Sanctifier and we who are sanctified, are all of one, for which cause He is not ashamed to call us brethren". Can we ever forget that memorable message sent to His loved ones on the resurrection morn, "Go tell My brethren I ascend unto My Father and your Father, to My God and your God." Intimate association and relationship, and as so favoured we are privileged with boldness to enter into the holiest, not now with the blood of bulls and goats but by the blood of Jesus. By a new and living way—Christ crucified—which He hath consecrated for us through the veil that is to say His flesh, and having an high Priest over the house of God (taking in every true believer in Jesus), let us draw near, let us hold fast, let us consider one another (la. 19:25). Then turning to the statement in ch. 13, v. 12, "Jesus, that He might sanctify (set apart) the people with His own blood suffered without the gate." Let us go forth therefore, unto Him without the camp. Christ
must have the first place. He is outside all mere religious formality and as we go forth to Him there is reproach. There came a time in the history of Moses when he had to make a choice, and he chose rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season. He counted the cost, he weighed his position in the balances and He esteemed the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt. He gained a great victory that day!

Having so acted we are privileged to enjoy the presence of our Lord in our midst as the great Leader of our praises and in the enjoyment of His company we can offer “the sacrifice of praise to God continually”, (and please note this well) “that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name.”

There are some whose voices we never hear. God forbid that we should throw stones, but let us mark well those words, “the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name.” He delights to hear our voices.

Fulfilling this service we are now able to think of others as in v. 16. To do good and to communicate, forget not—for with such sacrifices God is well pleased. We have been reminded of how in all things the Lord when here on earth, the holy and obedient One, did ever those things that pleased His Father, and from this we see how with such sacrifice on our part (and it will cost us something) God is well pleased. May we take delight in giving God pleasure because of the One who ever liveth in the presence of God for us.

Passing to the first epistle of John, we read in ch. 1. v. 4, “These things write we unto you, that your joy may be full”, in the first of ch. 2, “My little children (embracing the whole family of God), these things write I unto you that ye sin not. And if any man sin we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and He is the propitiation for our sins”. We have here certain “things” referred to. Things written that our joy may be full and things written that we sin not. The question may well arise, What things? This carries us to what precedes and in looking at these things we must remember that that in John’s Epistle we are to look at them from God’s view point. John presents that which is truly characteristic of the family of God.

We have in the first place, Christ Himself brought before us as the Word of Life—that which was from the beginning—which the Apostle says, “we have heard and seen and our hands have handled”—that eternal life which was with the Father had been manifested, and to it the Apostle bears witness. It has not been manifested to condemn us, as we might have expected, but to save us, and become the subject of our fellowship, for “truly our fellowship is with the Father and His Son, Jesus Christ.”

Thoughts of the Father and the Son touch our hearts, and lead them out in songs of praise and cause us to worship in spirit and in truth.

As we are kept in the enjoyment of this fellowship our joy is full and we sin not; and yet how gracious of God to make provision so that if we sin we have an Advocate with the Father. It is not of necessity that we do sin, but if (not when) we sin we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. The Lord Jesus acts, from Himself immediately, and in
accord with God's righteousness. He does not wait until we even confess our sin, but so closely does He watch us in His love, that immediately we do sin, He, as our Advocate or Comforter (one called alongside) takes up our case with the Father, with Whom we are brought into relationship—the relationship of children—a relationship which nothing can touch or change. We may grieve Him, alas, we do, but ever are we His children and our Lord Jesus as our Advocate, takes up our case with the Father in view of our restoration to communion with Him.

The Holy Spirit indwelling us—another Comforter—acts upon our conscience (setting aside for the time being, His normal work of taking of the things of Christ and the deep things of God and shewing them to us), to bring us in repentance to God. It is in the presence of God we realise the awfulness of sin—the sin which interrupts communion with Him and robs us of the joys of the fellowship; but in His presence too we confess our sin, and God is faithful and just to forgive us our sin and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness, not by a fresh application of the blood of Jesus, but because of the value and efficacy of the blood once shed at Calvary, because He lives in all the power of His effectual propitiation, He is the propitiation for our sins.

This confession on our part in true repentance calls forth our heavenly Father's forgiveness, and His gracious work in cleansing us from all unrighteousness; communion is restored, our joy is full, and we are free once more to praise Him and to come into His presence as worshippers. No cloud above, no spot within, and enabled in His strength to live the victorious life to His praise and glory.

May we each one test our hearts realising it is not our words that count (see verses 6, 8, and 10. ch. 1, "If we say, etc.") but that all things are opened and exposed to the eye of Him with whom we have to do,

"These things write we unto you that your joy may be full."

"These things write I unto you that ye sin not."

There is this great difference between the world and God: we always get less than we anticipate from the world, but when desire turns to God, we find that He is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think.

Let none of us make his ignorance or weakness an excuse for spiritual indolence or worldliness. For our weakness, if sincerely owned before God, is the opportunity for Him to shew how He can strengthen us by His Spirit. We have a great High Priest who cares for the ignorant. Everything depends upon our desires; if they are after God and Christ we shall get on.

He who praises God for mercies shall never want a mercy for which to praise. To bless the Lord is never unseasonable.
"COME ON" AND "GET OUT." 

F. B. Hole.

Genesis 11. 1-9; 12. 1-3; 13. 1-4; Hebrews 11. 8-10.

Notes of Address at Bangor, North Wales, August 3rd.

If we trace back the present world-system to its source we arrive at the Tower of Babel. There it was like a trickling stream, now it is like the mighty Amazon at its mouth, bearing all kinds of craft on its bosom. Its ramifications are so immense today that we become lost if we attempt to understand it. If, however, we consider what happened at Babel we find things much simplified, yet with the essential features present.

We are not told much as to the age that preceded the flood. What we are told in Genesis 5 and 6 leads us to think that it was an age of fierce and aggressive individualism. No government had been established by God, and violence and corruption filled the earth. The post-diluvian age took on another character. Men awoke to the fact that they could achieve the desire of their hearts far more effectively by combination and cooperation. It was not that God was more in their thoughts, for they made no mention of His Name. It was merely that instead of laying all stress upon "I," they learned to substitute "us." "Let us build us... and let us make us' a name."

The beginning of their enterprise was "a city," and the city was to be followed by "a tower." Now a city is not only an aggregation of dwelling-places, but also a centre of power and influence. When men build a city they establish themselves in the earth, and having once got firm hold for themselves they can extend their power further afield.

The significance of the tower may not be so apparent. It can hardly have been intended as a place of refuge should another flood come, since all the high hills had been covered in the flood that was so fresh in their minds. Personally I connect it with the fact that the idolatry that overran the ancient world had its origins at Babylon, and that this terrible trafficking with the devil and his powers (which is what really lies behind idolatry), was usually carried on in some lofty place.

If confirmation of this is sought, let Numbers 23 and 24 be read. As long as Balaam was seeking enchantments, by getting into touch with his familiar spirit, he went to high places: "the high places of Baal," "the top of Pisgah," "the top of Peor." As soon as he abandoned the attempt to get into touch with the powers of darkness, he lost interest in these high places, and "set his face toward the wilderness." The tower of Babel was, I judge, a first attempt to get into touch with these supernatural powers, though it may have had uses besides this. Satan, we must remember, has no objection to helping men to make a name for themselves in independence of God, for it exactly suits his designs.

Now the building of a city and a tower whose top should be lifted into the heavens is a task beyond the ability of one man. It can be accomplished without much difficulty if men combine together. Hence combination became the order
of the day. “Go to,” they said, “let us build.” “Go to,” has a strange old-world sound in our ears. It is an expression that has gone out of use. The expression we should use today is, “Come on,” and this is the rendering adopted in Darby’s New Translation. “Come on,” they said, “let us make brick.” And again, “Come on, let us build.” Until the Lord Himself ultimately said, “Come on, let us go down and there confound their language.”

The variety of tongues in the earth has been a great brake on the chariot wheels of human progress. However, in spite of it men have combined as far as they could, and in recent times the idea of combination has been mightily revived. All knowledge and resources are being increasingly pooled and the world is moving with giant strides. Still the cry is “Come on!”

And that is the world’s cry to you, my young Christian friend, and to me. Come on! it says; we have a bright idea; we have a good plan, we wish to abolish troubles. We wish to improve conditions. We want a happier world: a world where we can all enjoy ourselves more fully and for a longer time. You believe in good causes don’t you? So do we! Ours is a good cause! Lend a helping hand! Join us! Come on! Come on! Come on!

“Now the Lord had said unto Abraham, Get thee out.” WHAT? Get out? Yes, “Get out.”

Does that strike you as extraordinary? It should not. It is just what one might have expected. The post-diluvians were busy building a very nice world according to their own tastes—a world without God. Now God does not intend to be thus excluded, and therefore He took certain measures. First, He confounded their language and so upset their plans. Second, He began to formulate His own plan, and as a first step towards its ultimate accomplishment He called out one man, making him the depository of the promise, and the ancestor, according to the flesh, of the Messiah in whom the promise centred.

The world began saying, “Come on, come on!” God began saying, “Get out, Get out!” The world has not ceased saying, “Come on!” God has not ceased saying, “Get out!” to all who have ears to hear.

Abram’s separation was very complete. He left “country”—i.e. his national surroundings; “kindred,”—i.e. his social surroundings; “father’s house”—i.e. his domestic surroundings. And when he left Ur of the Chaldees he did not know where he was going, as Hebrews 11 so plainly tells. A marvellous act of faith! No wonder he is called “the father of all them that believe,” and “the friend of God.” No wonder that God specially blessed him, and made him a fountain of blessing for all families of the earth.

Not only did God promise to bless him, but also to make his name great. This is very striking. The great object of the men of Babel was to make themselves a name. The ante-diluvian world had perished. They wished to achieve something that would perpetuate their names, as names of renown, whatever might happen to them. Have their names been perpetuated? Their names are utterly forgotten, though now at length men are digging to find the ruins of their cities.

When Abram turned his back on the splendid Ur of his day, his action must have appeared to be
the height of folly to the men of his generation. "Why," they would say, "you are throwing away all your chances. You leave civilization and plunge into the unknown. No monument will ever be erected in Ur to perpetuate your distinguished name to future generations!"

Some four thousand years have rolled and the name of Abraham is remembered by hundreds of millions of human beings! Not only Jews, Christians, and even Mohammedans venerate his name. And for thousands of years all traces of the names of the builders of Babel and Ur have vanished. "Let us make us a name" was their cry, and they are totally forgotten. "I will make thy name great," said God; and the thing is effectively accomplished.

Still Abram might have said, "It is very nice to know that my name is to be great in connection with things to come; but what have I got for the present?" If he asked that question he very soon found the answer. The answer confronts us as we open chapter 13. He had a tent and an altar. His tent stood in sharp contrast to their city. They were out to establish themselves in the earth; to "dig themselves in"—if we may use a modern phrase. He had but a flimsy and moveable tent, the sign of his pilgrimage. His altar stood in sharp contrast to their tower. If they sought to the heights to get into touch with spiritual powers of darkness, he had the lowly altar whereby he was maintained in communion with God.

Now here we have an indication of the immense compensation at the disposal of all those who have been called out of the world by the gospel to-day. Eternal blessing lies ahead, but communion with God is our privilege to-day. And think how much of God's mind and purpose has been revealed to us. God did not hide from Abram a certain thing which He was about to do, but let him into the secret. God has to-day let us into the secret of purposes which are immeasurably greater. By the side of his altar, outside Ur and Babel, Abram had a sight of things, utterly unknown in those great cities of man's construction. The believer of to-day who is in communion with God and separate from the world has the knowledge of things of which the world knows nothing.

Abram did have a sight of things far beyond his present surroundings. As Hebrews 11 tells us, he "looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God." The literal foundation of Babel and of Ur may have been all right: their moral foundations were all wrong. They were founded on human pride and power, and hence were doomed to destruction sooner or later. Abram wanted a city of divine construction, founded on righteousness which is of God. That he looked for, and that he is going to get; for it says, God "hath prepared for them a city." In the light of that divine city the glory of Babel or of Ur was but a poor tinsel thing.

We have been called out of the world-system. Let us hold fast to that. "Get out," was God's word to us when we were converted, and never has He said, "Go back." As thus called out we have blessings, privileges and occupations which Abram never had. We have not less than he had but more. Blessed are we, with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ. That could not have been said of Abram. Our place is that of sonship with
the Spirit of God's Son in our hearts, and that Abram had not. We are called to take some part, however humble, in the great work of God's present grace in calling out a people for His Name and called to association with Christ in the coming day of His glory. No such evangelical mission was known to Abram.

Still we have what Abram had. We have a spiritual pilgrimage to pursue and we have a place of communion with God and of worship, while we journey. We are called out of the world, put out of touch with its systems and order of things, in order that we may be put into touch, and maintained in touch with God, and with His order of things which centres in Christ.

No one need have pitied Abram! He was a prince moving amongst paupers! And no one need pity the out-and-out, devoted, consistent, unworldly Christian! Congratulate him the rather. He is spiritually enriched to-day. His name will be great in the millennial age, when the great world names of to-day are as forgotten as though they had never been. Pity the vacillating, compromising, semi-worldly Christian, if you like, but not one of the Abram type.

Young people which is it going to be for us? How do we stand as to these things? The call of God has reached us in the gospel. Have we fully responded to it? Are our world-links cut? As the world continues to call us, saying, "Come on, come on!" do we turn our backs to its syren voice because we have heard the divine call, "Get out!"?

God grant that thus it may be for every one of us.

If there is an odour of a sweet savour to God in that which is done, there will be something corresponding to it in the souls of those who have in this way offered what is agreeable to Him.

We are not made by our circumstances; that is, if there is any vigour in our souls at all. We are manifested by them, which is a very different thing. One can easily look at the condition of things around and make it an excuse for the inexcusableness of our own condition; but God has not ordained for us that we should be down to the level of those around us. All His grace abides for us. The power of the Spirit is not a mere register of the outside temperature. If men seek their own things, they will excuse themselves by the fact that they are only in keeping with the company around them. If Christ be really before the soul, it will be impossible to do so. This would rather stir up and energize one who thought of Him to serve Him the more earnestly. Thus it was with Timothy, a worthy spiritual child of such a father as Paul was, one who had served as companion with him in the work of the gospel.
GOD FIRST.

THERE have recently been called home two shining examples of men who sought first the kingdom of God.

HENRY JAMES VINE passed away to be with the Lord on August 15th, 1934.

Brought to know the Lord Jesus as his Saviour when a young man: strong, a well-known athlete, full of health and vim, and bubbling over with enthusiasm, he turned his back on the world of pleasure and decided that GOD FIRST should be his guiding principle and it was. In an active, very active, business life in which he was diligent and conscientious to a degree, his recreation was to be found with his fellow-believers at the meeting for prayer, or for Bible study, or in telling out the "glad and glorious gospel." It never occurred to him that on the Lord's day he "simply must rest." That to him was the day of days. Commencing with the precious feast of remembrance, the remainder of the day was spent not in fleshly but in God-given energy in the work of the Lord. How many on Tyneside, and over the country, thank God upon every remembrance of him. Putting GOD FIRST in his own life, he ever urged young Christians in particular to do likewise. Less than six weeks before his home-leave, in a striking address on "The Christian's Home and the World's Club," he besought his hearers to cultivate the former and to renounce the latter. GOD FIRST was indeed the motto of his life. (See October issue of Scripture Truth.)

We write thus, not to eulogise these two beloved servants of the Lord, but to encourage others to follow their examples. We appreciate the difficulties with which the young are confronted in these days.

We see how they are tempted to hide their light, to trim their sails, to adapt themselves to circumstances in case they suffer some
Those who succumb to this suffer the greatest possible loss; and though they may reach the goal of their ambition, they do not reach the goal the Lord has set before them, and a blasted Christian life is the result. We have the exhortation and the encouragement of the Holy Scriptures; we have the example of men of God, old and young in all ages; and we cite these two brilliant examples, only to encourage ourselves and our readers to make GOD FIRST the motto of our life. It was our blessed Lord Himself who said:

“Seek ye FIRST the kingdom of God, and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you” (Matthew 6. 33).

Oh! you young men and women! we appeal to you. There is offered to you the most attractive proposition imaginable. Something good in time and for eternity. Something that will carry you through this world, and will fit you for “the world to come.” Let God be your guide; let His glory be your ambition; let His glory be your delight; let GOD FIRST be your motto. So shall you have His approval now, and His appreciation in a day not far distant. Shall we here and now say to our precious Lord:

Just as I am, young, strong, and free,   
To be what Thou wouldst have me be, 
To live, to serve, to follow Thee, 
O blessed Lord, I come.

FAREWELL.

Farewell Beloved! Thou hast run thy race, 
That race marked out by Him, whose heavenly voice 
Called thee in His unfathomable grace, 
To make that path of life divine thy choice. 
That voice which not the music of the spheres 
Could wake like it the slumber of thine ears.

He whose lifegiving voice, thy soul to call, 
Came where thou layest dead to God and good, 
Thy soul to save from sin’s accursed thrall, 
And bring to thee a blest beatitude. 
He bade thee, “Follow Me” ; and thus thy Friend 
Became thy Lord and Leader till the end.

Farewell Beloved! Here He walked with thee, 
And now thy travail sore is at an end, 
And thou art with Him where thou lov’st to be, 
And there with Him eternity to spend. 
Himself He gave thy precious soul to save 
And thou art His beyond both death and grave.
THE desire of the natural heart for power in order to rise superior to the varied conditions of human existence, is in itself a confession that man does not possess the thing which he covets. Conscious of personal weakness he seeks it in the aggregate of his fellows, and in combination and confederation with them, hopes to achieve his purpose, and to realise the current phrase that union is strength. Even so, whilst success in this direction may seem apparent for a short while, the inherent weakness only too soon makes itself manifest. The Psalmist had experience of this and at last was brought to the evident conclusion that it is not to be found as a deposit in any creature, and that in the Creator alone is its source and the strength of its activity, all being dependent upon God and His word. "God hath spoken once; twice have I heard this; that power belongeth unto God" Ps. 62. 11.

In the consciousness of his own feebleness, he thought how striking was the contrast with the greatness of God expressed in the ordinances of the created heavens, and he exclaimed "what is man?" Ps. 8. Man is but the creature of a moment, a shadow that declineth, a wind that passeth away. He is surrounded by forces much greater than himself, which often destroy him when he seeks to control them for his own ends. Helpless in the presence of disease and death, he is truly a son of 'enosh,' frail, miserable, mortal. The Psalmist had heard how the worlds were framed by the word of God, and the power that so wrought was evident in the creation he beheld, for worthless indeed must be the boasted wisdom of men, when they cannot discern by the things which are made, the eternal power and deity of the Creator. Rom. 1. 20.

Again and again the Old Testament records bear witness that the origin of created things is not to be found in the things which do appear, but they go further, and reveal the power of God in another realm concerning which God has spoken, for those same records bear witness of how God could redeem to Himself a people from Egyptian bondage in a way which justified His name and righteousness. Eze. 20. 9. True, this was but the glimmering of a more glorious light, the forecast of a greater revelation which awaited the coming of the Virgin's Son, 'God manifest in flesh, for its full display.

Power may be viewed under three aspects, 1. Physical, 2. Moral, 3. Spiritual, and if we consider these as man is related to them, his total deficiency is manifest. Physically, though fearfully and wonderfully made, the length of his sojourn on earth is an uncertainty from day to day, neither has he power in the day of death to retain his breath. He may make him great works, but he can construct nothing abiding, vanity of vanities is written upon all that his hands can accomplish. View man morally, he is fallen, and upon him lies the sentence of his Judge, "There is none righteous, no not one,—There is none that doeth good, no not one." Rom 3. 10, 11. Spiritually man has no knowledge of God, and though gifted with high intellectual capacity, he is unable to rise above his earthly conditions. He
has the consciousness that his departure from this world is not the end of his existence, yet he is face to face with a barrier which he cannot penetrate, nor have any of his race returned to tell him what lies beyond. Lying spirits there have been, and are, whose deceptions beguile unstable souls, and like wraiths lure men to destruction. For all these things man’s only hope lies in the fact that “Power belongs unto God.”

Physically, the power of God reaches beyond all human knowledge, for let man search the starry heavens, or dig deep into the recesses of the earth: let him strive with all his intellectual reasonings to fathom the origin of things: yet shall he not be able to find out the work that God maketh from the beginning unto the end thereof.

In the physical realm God has provided a witness to His eternal power and Godhead, in order that men may fear before Him and acknowledge His omnipotence. Faith in this carried Abraham a step further for recognising the Almightiness of God in unnumbered worlds and grains of sand, he did not count it a thing incredible that God should raise the dead. This involves another consideration, for if man is to be raised, in what condition will he stand face to face with his Creator? Can mortal man be just with God? Or seeing that if he tries to justify himself his own clothes shall abhor him, is there any daysman that can lay his hand upon the sinner and his Judge? If so, his only hope is in the power of God to provide such an one.

In the physical realm God has shown what He can do, and yet will in a new heaven and earth, but when neither the heights nor depths of creation could reveal the needed Mediator, God has shown that His resources are not limited to the things He has made, and He has opened a moral sphere for the display of what He can be. God has given His Son, and the Virgin has conceived and borne the One whose name is Immanuel, God with us. Grace and truth came by Jesus Christ, the mercy and tender compassion, long-suffering and forgiveness, yea, every beauteous grace in the heart of God, came to light, and that amidst a scene of moral darkness and corruption which was the negative of all that was in God. The culmination of this moral power was the cross. To the eyes of men there was apparent only weakness, but in reality the cross is the exhibition of the power of God unto salvation, which alone is adequate to lift men from realms of night to plains of light.

Consequent upon this great act of renunciation on the part of Christ, the exceeding greatness of the power of God raised Him from the dead, and seated Him in the highest place that heaven could afford of administration and authority, the right hand of the Majesty on high. In this was revealed spiritual power, for not only were the powers of darkness and death overthrown in the resurrection of Christ, but there came to light the secret of God’s will to head up all things in Christ, and further to make known purposes of grace which were in the mind of God before the world’s creation. In this was shown forth that the power which belongs to God, is now towards us who believe, but displayed in the inverse order. First we are brought to God in the spiri
tual realm, made partakers of the exceeding riches of His grace according to the good pleasure of His will; raised up together and made to sit together in heavenly places in Christ, and in relation to this sphere, death is for us a thing which is abolished. Then we are made the subjects of the work of God in the moral realm, a power working in us to conform us to the character of God's Son. Lastly we await the putting forth of the physical power of God, which shall both raise the dead in Christ and change the living, that we may together bear the likeness of His body of glory. Such is the strength that worketh in us, not as recipients who are detached from the source of power, but as holding the Head from whom the whole body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered and knit together, increases with the increase of God.

Conscious weakness on our part is no hindrance to God's supply of grace. The trials and difficulties which beset our pathway, provide but the occasion for that confidence in God that rather glories in infirmities that the power of Christ may rest upon us. Thus may we prove that when we are weak, then are we strong. If we seek to know the secret of such overcoming power, we may learn it from the experience of one who though an apostle and richly gifted as such, nevertheless lived as a saint by the faith of the Son of God. Pointing to the source by which he could do all things by Him who gave him power. Phil. 4. 13. he sought to encourage his tried and sorrowing brethren by words like these,—"I know" (using the word which signifies conscious acquaintance,) "Whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able," (all powerful) "to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day." 2 Tim. 1. 12.

The confident expressions of tried believers are a rich solace to their brethren of less experience. We ought to talk of the Lord's goodness on purpose that others may be confirmed in their trust in a faithful God.

Jehovah is infinite, and therefore cannot really be made greater, but His name grows in manifested glory as He is made known to His creatures, and thus He is said to be magnified.

Just when the sinner condemns himself, the Lord graciously absolves him. If we chasten our own spirits the Lord will spare us. He never breaks with the rod of judgment those who are already sore with the rod of conviction. Salvation is linked with contrition.

The more we think upon our Lord and the less upon ourselves, the better. Looking to Him, as He is seated upon the right hand of the throne of God, will keep our heads, and especially our hearts, steady when going through the deep waters of affliction.
WHEN Christians are not getting on well, they can only be helped by bringing the glory and the love of our Lord Jesus before them. In the above passage of scripture it would seem that the disciples had given everything up. All appeared to have been lost! As all of them were of Israel by birth and aspiration, their hopes were based on earthly blessing indicated by the Old Testament prophets in connection with the reign of the Messiah.

They had seen the wonderful miracles wrought by the Lord. They had seen the marvellous display of His power and naturally they looked for the Kingdom in display to be introduced and the establishment of the glories of the world to come. Three of the disciples had been on the Mount of glory with the Lord; they had heard the voice of God the Father testifying to all His good pleasure in Him; they had witnessed the transfiguration. The Gospels are full of evidence that they loved the Lord very much, yet they went fishing. But when we fail in faithfulness, God does not give us up. Well might the hymn-writer exclaim:

“O love, that will not let me go!”

The Lord leaves us in this world of sin and sorrow to learn the wonderful lessons of His patience and forgiveness. (We have often gone fishing typically, when the Lord has not sent us.) He allowed them to come to the end of their resources. They had caught nothing! He used the endearing epithet, “Children, have you any meat?” The fact that the net did not break with the miraculous draught of fishes opened their understanding to recognise it was the Lord. Yet they did not like to question Him. When they reached the shore they found that He had a fire kindled and food provided. It is always His desire to nourish and cherish His own!

The Lord overwhelms us with the sense of His love. Addressing Peter He had said that Satan desired to have him, but the Lord had prayed for him that when he had failed, his faith would not fail. Peter clung to the Lord and he was sustained by grace. In this incident in the 21st chapter we have the record of Peter’s complete restoration.

In Colossians, the Apostle’s prayer is that our hearts may be knit together in love. Whenever the Lord restores He always floods the soul with love. Just as on a chilly morning the sunrise fills the valleys with warmth and brightness, so we are nourished and cherished.

Peter wandered and the Lord allowed him to wander in order to teach him a lesson. His words were “Go tell My disciples and Peter.” It may be asked why was Peter singled out for special attention? The answer is obvious! Peter might have thought he was not wanted. The Lord allows things to happen to us, so that we may be brought down in our own estimation.

At the conclusion of the passage, Peter is publicly restored. But his conscience received three very deep probes in the process, so as to reach the root of his failure. When the surgeon has something to cut away in the case of a diseased tissue, he
runs the lance down to the bottom of the diseased part. So the Lord does not spare our feelings in removing what hinders our spiritual progress. He brought back to Peter's memory the proud boast that if all forsook the Lord he would stand by Him. So the Lord said to Peter, "Do you love me better than these?" We do not like such experiences. Peter was not well pleased. But nevertheless he was humbled and broken. He had now nothing to say except that he appealed to the Lord's omniscience. "Lord Thou knowest all things."

Peter was going to be put in the most responsible position: viz., in charge of the sheep and the lambs of Christ. When a man fails and judges himself he is afterwards morally higher than he was previously. He has learned the grace and the love in the Lord's heart for him. John might have said to Peter, "If you had stood with me, you would not have had the distressing experience which you have had." But Peter could answer, "I learned the Lord more deeply, and I have learned to love Him better than I could have done otherwise."

Divine Guidance.

What a world is this, in which the mass of men around us have no thought of God, no knowledge of His will, no desire to know it—men with whom life is little else than the instinctive animal life; disturbed, more or less, by conscience, that is, by the apprehension of God! And as to Christians themselves, how easily are they persuaded, that, with certain exceptions at important crises of their lives, the simple rule of right and wrong—often determined by custom of some kind, rather than the word of God—is sufficient to indicate for them the will of God; their own will being thus left free within a variously limited area.

The law in fact drew such a circle round man, and in mercy, as a sheepfold is a limit for the sheep. A class of actions is defined as evil, and forbidden; within these limits, one may please oneself. Nor could law do other than this: for the rigidity of a fixed code is necessary. But Christ came into the sheepfold to make His sheep hear His voice, and to lead them out: free, but where freedom would be safe as well as blessed, following the living guidance of the Shepherd Himself (John 10). The rule is at the same time stricter and freer. And the reality transcends the figure, even as the Good Shepherd Himself transcends every other shepherd. To a love like His, united to a wisdom absolutely perfect, no detail of our lives can be unimportant, as (in the connection of these throughout and of one life with another) none can be insignificant. Could it be imagined that any were so, yet which of us is competent to discern this, in any instance? "Behold how great a matter a little fire kindleth" is but the utterance of the common experience. Who, then, that has learned to distrust himself at all, but must welcome deliverance from such an uncertainty and find it joy to be guided at all times by a higher wisdom?
GOD SPEAKING.

GOD at sundry times and in divers manners spake in times past unto the fathers by the prophets, but all His speaking seemed to be in vain. "I spake unto you," said He to His people, "rising up early and speaking, but ye heard not; and I called you, but ye answered not" (Jeremiah 7. 13). And again it is written, "The Lord God of their fathers sent to them by His messengers, rising up betimes, and sending; because He had compassion on His people, and on His dwelling place; but they mocked the messengers of God, and despised His words, and misused His prophets, until the wrath of the Lord rose against His people, till there was no remedy" (2 Chronicles 36. 15, 16). While God never left Himself without a witness in the earth, Israel's sad history of backsliding proved beyond a question that if He was to secure men for Himself, something other than the prophetic word, or even the ministry of angels was needed. God knew what was needed from the beginning and gleams of light as to it broke out here and there in those former ineffectual days, as when in His lament over Israel's continual treachery, He asks, "How shall I put thee among the children, and give thee a pleasant land, a goodly heritage of the hosts of the nations? And I said, Thou shalt call me, my Father; and shalt not depart from me" (Jer. 3. 19). It was this that God held in reserve until the fulness of the times should come. He would reveal Himself as Father, and by this revelation secure a true and steadfast response in the hearts of men. But no man is a father without a child, and if God was to be revealed as Father, there must of necessity be a Son. One standing in this intimate relationship to Himself in whom and by whom what God is as Father could be revealed to men, and it is of this that we read in Hebrews 1, He "hath in these last days spoken to us in His Son."

But we must not make the mistake of supposing that this full and final revelation of God in His Son would change the nature of men and overthrow and subdue the enmity of their hearts against Him. The Lord's own parable of the vineyard shews plainly that this was not so. It is a sad story that that parable tells. He had sent His servants to the most favoured nation and they had beaten, stoned, wounded, shamefully handled and killed them. Then "having yet one Son, His wellbeloved, He sent Him also last unto them saying, They will reverence My Son. But those husbandmen said among themselves, This is the Heir, Come, let us kill Him, and the inheritance shall be ours. And they took Him and killed Him, and cast Him out of the vineyard" (Mark 12). This last move on God's part which brought into fullest manifestation His great love wherewith He loved us, also laid bare the incorrigible wickedness of the heart of man, and stript him of every cloak for his sin. "If I had not done among them the works which none other man did," said the Lord, "they had not had sin, but now have they both seen and hated both Me and My Father. But this cometh to pass, that the word might be fulfilled which is written in their law, They hated Me without a cause" (John 15. 14, 15).

But if men shewed themselves to be so insensible to God's great love, and with wicked hands crucified, and
slew His well beloved Son; if this final test brought out the worst that was in them, what hope could there be for them? None, either in time or eternity if God had no other ground upon which to deal with them than that of what they were. Everything had depended upon what they were under the law. The man that did those things lived by them, but “cursed is everyone that continueth not in all the things which are written in the book of the law to do them.” “But when the fulness of time was come God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law” not to make demands upon men, but to give; not to command them to love Him, but to shew the greatness of His love to them; not to condemn the guilty to a just and everlasting bondage and curse, “but to redeem them that were under the law” from the curse of it: He sent His own Son, in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, to meet all the terrible liabilities that men had incurred, and by His unspeakable gift to shew His love for sinners and His abhorrence of their sins, and to save them at His own cost; and their crowning crime, the slaying of His Son, gave Him the opportunity.

“The very spear that pierced His side Drew forth the blood to save.”

Now the whole basis of man's blessing is shifted. It is no longer what man is but what God is; no longer is it a question of what man can do for God, but what God can do for man. The offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all, when He offered Himself through the eternal Spirit, without spot to God, has set God righteously free to act according to His own heart's deep desires; and in the riches of His mercy for His great love wherewith He loves us, even when we were dead in sins He quickens us; by grace are ye saved. This is the grace of God, the exceeding riches of His grace in kindness toward us through Christ Jesus. And this is the way that God is dealing with men today. He has no other way of dealing with them in this day of grace, and it is thus that the revelation of Himself in His Son has become effective. He has not spoken in Him in vain.

“And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in judgment; that ye may approve things that are excellent; that ye may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ; being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God” (Phil. 1. 9-11).

It is not the fullest or clearest statement of the truth which most acts on others. Nothing tells so powerfully as the expression of the heart's joy and delight in an object that is worthy. “Looking at Jesus as He walked, he (John the Baptist) saith, Behold, the Lamb of God.” The greatest of woman born acknowledges the Saviour with unaffected homage, and his own disciples that heard him speak, follow Jesus.
"I AM COME IN MY FATHER'S NAME."

J. Lindsay.

These words, found in the 5th chapter of John's Gospel, were spoken in stern denunciation of the Jews who had refused the testimony of our blessed Lord when He had declared Who He was and why He had come. But we would meditate on the revelation of grace and truth recorded in the chapter, using the words which conveyed His authority to the Jews, as an introduction.

The One who had come is the Son Himself. God had spoken to the fathers by the prophets, but the time had come to speak in the Son. By those who believe, His gracious accents are heard, telling of the source of love, of active grace, of death conquered, and of glory gained.

Reading from the 17th verse the steps recorded call forth our adoration and praise. The Father and the Son have been working ever since sin entered this world, that men might be saved eternally. But there is more than this. In the counsels of God before time had begun to be, the Son had declared that He would come to do God's will, to redeem men for the glory of God and to deliver them from Satan's bondage.

Students of Scripture recognize "The Son" as a title within the Godhead, standing in relation to eternity. "The Son" never began to be—He is from everlasting to everlasting. Not as subject or receiving is He presented here, but as sovereign. The Son had declared that God was His Father, and by so doing had declared His equality with God, (verses 17, 18). As we read what follows (verses 19-23), we are struck with the way in which the Speaker, the Son incarnate, the Word become flesh, presents the oneness and equality of THE FATHER with THE SON. He did not by explanation come down to natural intelligence but He announced to the Jews in unmistakable words the omnipotence of the Son. How that He doeth all that the Father doeth—Who fondly loves the Son—coquickening the dead with Him. The Father has committed all judgment unto the Son that all should honour the Son as they honour the Father.

The conclusion of this seven-fold presentation of the Son is the solemn announcement that he that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father who hath sent Him. It is the Son characteristically, we contemplate as we read, rather than His activities as the Sent One; His greatness as well as His grace.

Next we find our blessed Lord, speaking of Himself as the One whom the Father had sent, declaring that those who hear His Word and believe on Him who sent Him have everlasting life. The time had come when on earth the Son sent of the Father, in Whose bosom He ever dwells, the Son of God tabernacling in the bodily prepared for Him, the Son of Man, purposed for death and glory, should speak with the voice that wakes the dead, and they who have ears to hear should hear and live.

The Son has come in His Father's Name, and the mystery of His person does not perplex the subject soul whose faith rests upon the living Word.
And what a wonderful possession does faith ensure—not a blessing promised but—life out of death, everlasting life, begun now, with no possibility of judgment impending. The eleven disciples heard a wonderful confirmation of what was theirs in Christ, little as they understood it, when they listened to the Lord's prayer as given us in John 17. I refer especially to the 24th verse, "Father I will that they also whom Thou hast given Me be with Me where I am that they may behold My glory which Thou hast given Me, for Thou lovedst Me before the foundation of the world."

The activity of the Son of God, who is also the Son of Man, is clearly set forth. That activity is founded on His death, and goes on to the resurrection of both the just and the unjust, and the judgment of the unbelieving. It is evident that the different presentations we have looked at are markedly distinctive. In the first, the Son speaks of Himself, of Who He is rather than what He does, of relationships which are eternal. In the second section, He announces that the good news is for all that believe, not for him that worketh, but for him that worketh not, but believeth. From the 24th verse onward He speaks of the work He had been sent to do. He speaks as the Son of God, who appeared among men in the body prepared for Him. He is the GOD-MAN. The voice of the Son of God shall wake the dead whether on the earth or in the grave, and they that hear shall live. It is striking how life-giving is dependent on what has previously taken place as recorded in the 26th verse, "For as the Father hath life in Himself so hath He given to the Son to have life in Himself (v. 27), and hath given Him authority to execute judgment also, because He is the Son of Man."

If the Father gave the Son to have life in Himself it was that the Son should share life with those who believe on His Name. To do that He must die. He, the Prince of life must work a miracle in dying, and the Father, whose just claims have been perfectly satisfied by His atoning death, glorifies Him by raising Him from the dead. The sweet savour of the true burnt offering had ascended, as well as the sin-offering, most holy, and on the resurrection morning, the Father through the Son, welcomes the brethren of Christ, those who had accompanied with Him, and through them all those who had the right to be children of God, through believing on His Name.

But not a single blessing is ours except through His death. Unless the Son of Man should come to seek and to save the lost not a son of Adam's race could ever be found and saved. What a price was His to pay! But with clear-sighted vision, He saw the crown reserved for Him by His Father, and with the prize in view He endured the cross and despised the shame.

We still live in this sin-stricken world—in it but not of it. Our life is hid with Christ in God. He, having come in His Father's Name, the true Bread from heaven (given by the Father) that a man may eat thereof and not die, the believer is sustained in the life given, by eating His flesh and drinking His blood, and so doing, he dwells in Christ and Christ in him. He feeds upon the death of Christ, and if we believe His own words, separation from Him is impossible. Listen: "As the living Father hath
sent Me and I live by the Father, so he that eateth Me, even he shall live by Me” (John 6. 57). Life, eternal life, is God’s gift, and the love of God, eternal love for its objects is guaranteed by the Son.

The Father loveth the Son with a love that is unmeasured, the Son loves His own as the Father loves Him, and the Father loves His own, given to the Son, with the love wherewith He loves the Son. So we are loved with a love that is immeasurable! Well may we praise the Father for sending His Son in His own Name!

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SALTED WITH FIRE.

“EVERYONE shall be salted with fire, and every sacrifice shall be salted with salt. Salt is good: but if the salt have lost his saltiness, wherewith will ye season it? Have salt in yourselves, and have peace one with another” (Mark 9. 49, 50).

Every one must be salted with fire: for “our God is a consuming fire”. This jealous holiness by its judgment of the evil would only preserve the good: for, when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world. On the other hand, for the wicked the salting with fire applies to the awful judgment of Gehenna, “where their worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched.” Here the holiness of God as pure wrath upon sin, eternal as His unchanging nature, unites with the undying worm of a remorseful conscience to torment the sinner. Ah, better surely to give up what may seem necessary as eye or hand or foot, live here in whatever maimed, imperfect way, and enter into life, than, having here the fulness of all good, pass on to the eternal fire.

But “every sacrifice shall be salted with salt:” that which is to be presented to God must answer to His nature; there must be “the salt of the covenant of thy God”, as the law puts it, or what must be in all relationship with Him. Salt is the energy of devotedness to God which keeps out corruption: “salt” therefore “is good”, and if it lose its power, what shall replace it? Salt, therefore, we must have in ourselves. It will diffuse its savour round, of course: if it has any, it will surely do so. But this is ministering, not requiring. We must be jealous over ourselves—careful, of course, to maintain this character in all our intercourse with others; but in peace—so easily broken by a legal and exacting spirit: “have peace one with another.”

One of the gravest mistakes one can make in his Christian life, is that of being so anxious for Spirit guidance, that he is willing to open his soul to any spirit who may come along and try to lead him.
The two thoughts which we would stress in these verses are: A Living Sacrifice and the Will of God. Somewhere in Asia, in days long gone by, a large city was threatened with an attack by a comparatively small band of warriors led by a renowned leader. The King of the city sent a messenger who said to this leader, “Be advised! My king has thousands of soldiers and you have only hundreds—go back!” For answer the warrior turned to one of his men and said, “Jump into that river,” and the man leaped into the boiling stream. To another, he said, “Plunge your sword into your breast,” and he did so. To a third, he gave the order, “Leap over that precipice,” and he obeyed. “Now,” said he to the messenger, “return to your king and tell him that my army is made up of men like that, and that, if he does not surrender immediately, I shall have his head.” On receiving this astounding message, the king immediately surrendered to the man whose followers were prepared to yield themselves, an unquestioning sacrifice, to the the will of their leader.

In Genesis, chapter 11, we read of people who planned to make themselves great by building a tower and thus going up. Here, the Apostle beseeches his brethren to make themselves great by yielding their bodies a living sacrifice, i.e., by going down.

In response to man’s ambition to go up, God said, in the days of Babel, “Let us go down and cause confusion.” But, now, the Apostle has in view another going down, when he beseeches by the mercies or compassions of God. For these were manifested when His Son, our blessed Lord and Saviour, came down to make that supreme sacrifice, which is the basis of all our blessing and which is now the incentive—the motive power of this appeal. The man who had realized as few others, the meaning of those words, “And He poured out His soul unto death” was himself willing to be “poured out” as a drink-offering, and therein to joy and rejoice.

He could not only tell us of that One who, though equal with God, humbled Himself and took upon Him the form of a bond slave that He might redeem us to Himself; but he was willing also to be called the slave of Jesus Christ, and to endure all that such slavery meant. Nor is such self-sacrificing devotion limited to Paul or his contemporaries; but many others have gladly yielded themselves to slavery for Christ’s sake. The first two Moravian missionaries, who went to the West Indies to work among the negro slaves, actually sold themselves into slavery that they might bring the gospel to those poor souls who sat in darkness and the shadow of death.

Nor did Paul shrink from bearing upon him the marks of this slavery—the branding in his body—for he says, “I bear in my body the marks—the stigmata—of the Lord Jesus.” It may be these were scars left by
the scourging and the stoning, which he endured in the service of Him, who bears in His hands and feet and side the marks of His passion for us, "The Lamb as it had been slain." And, thank God! there are still men and women, who are willing to offer their bodies a living sacrifice for Christ, and to receive marks thereon. In our own time in Arabia, in the land of Mahomet, an Arab child lay dying and the doctor, knowing that nothing but a blood transfusion would save its life, found that there was not a single Arab willing to make the necessary sacrifice. Mahomedanism knows nothing of sacrifice; but Christ, still active in His members here, moved the Christian doctor to operate upon himself and with his own blood to save the child's life. And now the Arabs call him "brother," who was willing to yield his life's blood and who will bear upon his body to his dying day the mark of his sacrifice.

But, the Apostle appealed, not for a sacrifice in death, but that we might present our bodies a living sacrifice. What a wonderful thing it is for young men and maidens to yield these bodies, young, strong and free into the hands of the God, who will use them to the best advantage for truth and for righteousness. Wonderful as it is that God forgives the sins of men and women, who have wronged God and their fellows; but who, though forgiven, may have done things that can never be put right. How much better it is to have yielded our young lives into His hands to keep and use so that, when we come to old age, and grey hairs, we can look back upon a life which in some measure at least has been holy and well pleasing to God.

And who are these who please God? Surely not those, who listen to the world's "Come on!" but rather to those who heed the injunction of the Apostle's, "Be not conformed to this world!" How much we all, whether old or young, need this injunction, for is there not in all of us a craving after popularity, a desire to stand well in the eyes of our fellow men, to hear them speak of us as "a jolly fellow" "a good sport," "a rare sort," rather than to be known as a "Bible-thumper," "a goody-goody," "one of those pious fellows," "a religious milk-sop"? But the injunction is not merely negative. If Paul says, "Be not conformed," he enjoins us also to be transformed—transfigured—changed. And how does this transfiguration take place? How was it that Abraham refused the world's "Come on!" and obeyed God's, "Get out!"?* It was because of the revelation of the God of Glory, because of the promise of an inheritance, of a city, which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God. He was willing to obey, to make any sacrifice, which God, in proving him might demand, and God found his sacrifice holy and well-pleasing. But Abraham also found that, when he sought to do the will of God, even when he might not understand it, that it was good and well-pleasing. A dearly loved friend of mine died, and I shall never forget the comfort received from his brother as he repeated in the hour of sorrow, "God is good! God is good!" Yes! Let us never forget it! If God asks us to do His will, it is good. And

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*See November issue, page 249.
if we do it, then shall we find it pleasing, and when the dawn of heaven breaks and we see everything in its true light—no longer the broken threads at the back of the weaving, but the finished pattern and design—then shall we know that His will was perfect.

Young men and women, refuse to listen to the world's appeal, which promises you a full and pleasant life of self-pleasing, and listen rather to this appeal, which calls for a life of self-sacrifice and yield the vessel of your body into the hands of Him, who will make it something well-pleasing to Himself and not mar it as sin will surely do. And then, when the day dawns and the shadows flee away—

"When we stand with Christ in Glory
Looking o'er life's finished story,
Then, Lord, shall we fully know
Not till then how much we owe."

Those who heed the world's "Come on!" are in danger of "going out!" into the blackness of darkness for ever. Those who heed God's "Get out!" shall go for ever into the land that is fairer than day.

THE FRIEND OF THE POOR.

The seventy-second Psalm is full of music regarding One who is to come and reign over the earth. We want to know the attributes of the King who is to have dominion from sea to sea and to the uttermost parts of the earth; the very greatness of His dominion interests us in His character; if such dominion be not associated with the highest moral graces it will of necessity be an infinite disaster. What then is said of Him who is to hold the universal sceptre? These are some of His characteristics, "He shall deliver the needy when he crieth; the poor also, and him that hath no helper. He shall spare the poor and the needy, and shall save the souls of the needy." Ought not the poor to desire to know this great King of whom such things are predicted, if He can be known? Most certainly. Then who is He? His Name is Jesus. And what He will be in the day of His glory, He is now in the day of this grace, the Friend of the poor and needy.

Strange that multitudes of the poor have no desire to know Him. But let the gospel preachers proclaim Him as the Friend of the poor—the One ever-reliable, all-sufficient, unchanging Friend of the poor. They will fail in their mission if they fail in this.

"Oh, lead me, Lord, that I may lead
The wandering and the wavering feet;
Oh feed me, Lord, that I may feed
Thy hungering ones with manna sweet."

"The Father's love, the Son's, the Spirit's power,
Be with thee till the day when shadows flee,
And we behold His face—Yea, till that hour,
Goodness and mercy great shall follow thee."
I WOULD speak of the great Saviour and that love that led Him down into the depths of death for us; and, in the fear of God, the effect that those sufferings and the thought of them should have upon us. That is why I have turned to this Scripture. I want you first of all to notice how over and over again in these few verses the Lord is spoken of as "THE LORD." This is a very lax day in Christendom and the Lord Jesus is very often spoken of irreverently. You will find people speaking of our Lord simply as "Jesus" and not very reverently either. There is a way in which we may breathe forth that precious Name which will show the deep reverence of our hearts as we do it, but very specially in these days when the Lord is robbed of His glory we do well to maintain it in word and deed. If He is the Lord let us speak of Him as Lord and let all who thus own Him be in subjection to Him, and heed His word and obey Him.

It was from the Lord that the apostle Paul received this communication, from the Lord in His glory; so it comes to us with all authority of His lordship, and we should, everyone of us, be subject to what He says. But there is something more than His authority in it. We learn from it that while He is glorious in His exaltation and power, while He is in the place of authority to command, He has not forgotten us, His heart is full of tenderness, His love is unabated, He still cares wonderfully for what His people upon earth think about Him. He desires to be remembered, He would not be forgotten; and so from the glory He has given this communication of His will for us.

The night of the Betrayal.

See how the Lord communicated this matter to the apostle, and the relation in which He set it to other events. Paul says, "I have received of the Lord that which also I communicated to you, that on the same night in which He was betrayed He took bread." We must see the setting in which the Lord Himself put His Supper. I have no doubt if the apostle Paul had been left to write it according to his own wisdom, he would have connected the institution of the Supper with the crucifixion, for that which would be greatest in his mind would be that with which he would connect every event. But, the Lord did not connect it with the day of the crucifixion but with the night of His betrayal, and we may be sure that there is the most important teaching for us in that. Let us consider the circumstance—the night of the betrayal! Was there ever in the history of man upon earth a darker night than that? We talk about the treachery of Judas; his name stands out as the most execrated amongst all mankind; but consider for a moment the chief priests and the Pharisees; they were the leaders of light and learning in the land. They were the men who gave the people a pattern by which they should live; they took the place of teachers and of men who stood for God; but see their baseness! They were ready to bargain with that poor covetous wretch for the possession of the body of the Lord. I have no doubt they bargained
and beat him down until he was prepared to take a slave's price for his Master, and the money changed hands. And if you ask me whose was the greater crime I would say that the leaders of the nation of Israel sinned the more deeply when that foul business took place. Why did they not drive the traitor out from them with contempt? Because they were as bad or worse than he.

Think of our Lord Jesus in that hour, on that very night. He knew what was going on. He knew that the leaders of that nation, so beloved by Him, had the price for His betrayal ready. He knew that one of His disciples had bargained to sell Him for that price, a goodly price, the price of a slave, and there He sat in the midst of His disciples, knowing all this, and His soul was sorely troubled as He said to them, "One of you shall betray Me." Not a poor, blind pagan; not a besotted cut-throat from the slums of the city, nor even those leaders of that apostate nation, Israel, but ONE OF YOU whom I have chosen and gathered round Me, to whom I have been communicating heavenly things, and revealing the Father's Name. "One of you shall betray Me." No tongue can tell how the Lord felt that! keenly felt it; but, feeling it, He took the bread and then and there instituted the Supper. What was the meaning of that? It seems to me it meant this. You may not be able to trust anyone else, but you may trust Me. If treachery springs up in this inner circle, to whom can you look? My love will not fail you. Throughout all the days of the pilgrimage of the church upon earth you may rest in My unchanging love. Amid days of darkness and nights of treachery and betrayal you will find Me always the same. My death for you is the pledge of it, and the Supper will ever keep this fact before you. Surely that was the meaning of the fact that the Supper was instituted on the night of the betrayal. The betrayal is the dark background, the love of the Saviour, an unchanging love, a love that would go even unto death, a love that could not bear to be forgotten, is the picture that shines out upon the background.

Thanksgiving to the Father.

He took the bread and before He handed that bread to His disciples He lifted up His voice in thanksgiving to His Father. His Father came first. We might well enquire as to what there was in such circumstances as those to give thanks for, but there we see Him perfect in all circumstances and ever delightful to His Father's heart, we see Him with that bread in His hand which was to speak of His body given to judgment for us, giving thanks to His Father. He was there for the Father's pleasure. He was there to shew that He loved the Father—as you remember, His own words expressed it, "That the world may know that I love the Father and as He hath given Me commandment even so I do. Arise, let us go hence." And so He gave thanks to the Father. What could He give thanks about? Well, it seems to me that He looked beyond the darkness of Calvary and the bitterness of the cup He had to drink, on to the time when He would be able to surround Himself with His ransomed people in cloudless favour that should never be withdrawn. Beyond the storm, beyond the darkness, beyond the judgment He looked and anticipated the day when He would be able to gather such as we
are in His own presence, and give thanks to the Father afresh, as He has said, “In the midst of the church will I sing praises to Thee.”

When the saints of God gather in assembly this should be the chief thing with them. In the midst of a world of treachery and apostasy the saints should gather together giving thanks unto the Father. We may be sure of this, every blessing that has reached us has come from His blessed heart; and whatever has been revealed of love and grace in our Lord Jesus Christ, He has revealed as being the Father’s sent One, and so it is right that thanksgiving should ascend to the Father: that we should tread in the footsteps of our Lord Jesus Christ, that we should take character from Him, that we should be a thanksgiving people, and we surely shall be if we realise the favour in which we stand in Christ. I will press this for a moment, if you will allow me. Do we give thanks sufficiently? God’s ear hears many discordant sounds from this world. He hears the bitterness of men cursing His holy Name; He hears their blasphemies; He hears some of His children murmuring and repining. Oh strange sounds for the ears of God! His children murmuring and repining instead of giving thanks and singing songs of praise!

Let us consider the Lord Jesus in these circumstances: surrounded by hatred and treachery He lifted His heart and voice to the Father in thanksgiving; and let us say, as we consider Him, “Lord Jesus, make us more like Thee.” You may be sure of this, one of our greatest privileges, as being left in this world to-day, in the midst of a state of things of which I have spoken, is to be able to give thanks to the Father, that He should hear from His children thanksgiving and songs of praise, that sweet harmonious notes should rise to Him, sweeter notes than angels can raise. That thanksgiving of our Lord has stamped upon the Christian assembly its true character—it should be a thanksgiving assembly and everyone of us individually should be of those who give thanks. What cause indeed we have for thanksgiving.

The Bread and the Cup.

So He gave thanks unto the Father and having given thanks He gave the bread to His disciples saying, “Take, eat, this is My body which is given for you.” And likewise the cup after supper. The bread and the cup speak to us of Him in death. We know Him as a living, glorified Lord, but He would have our thoughts carried back to the time when He was dead for us. He handed the bread and the cup to His disciples with these words upon His lips, “Remember Me.” Think of Me. It is as though He said, Amid the sorrows of Calvary I thought of you. When it is well and blessed with you, think of Me. And when we take the bread and the cup we are really saying to the Lord Jesus, “Lord, we do not forget Thee. We are keeping in mind the fact that Thou wert dead for us.” Consider this, ponder over it, the Lord of glory, the Prince of life was dead for us. There came a time in His history upon earth when He hung dead upon the cross of Calvary. Oh, this is indeed wonderful! but this we have to learn: that nothing less than that would avail. By nothing less than that could He deliver us. We do well to dwell on His sufferings, on all that is recorded in the Word for us,
but the bread and the cup impress upon us the fact of His actual death. I know we know these things, but I feel it is well we should be reminded of them—Yes, the Lord of glory hung dead upon a cross for us. Why? Well, there are two great reasons. One great reason was that the judgment of death lay upon us. We had no life toward God. If we were to live He must die, so He poured out His soul unto death. God is holy. Eternal justice demanded that judgment should be executed and He died to establish God’s throne in everlasting rectitude, to clear God’s Name, to show forth His holiness, and to deliver us from the judgment that rested upon us. And along with that, that God’s love might be known in all its fulness, for when the blood flowed forth from the side of our dead Saviour we see in that blood the extent, the length to which God would go for our salvation and blessing.

But while we keep all that before us, for the Spirit teaches us these things, the great thing when we come to the taking of the bread and the cup is this, that Jesus gave Himself for us and He does not desire to be forgotten. He would have His love to be real to us in our souls, and so it is brought before us continually in the Supper, that we might have Him as the One who died for us before our souls, that there might be towards Him responsive love on our part.

It is in His death that we know Him. His death has shown us what He is. The Lord’s Supper has been likened to the portrait of a man’s mother. I point to a portrait hanging upon the wall and I say, “That is my mother.” Somebody says, “It is only canvas and paint.” I say, “That is my mother.” When I look at that portrait I recall what she was, her tenderness, her kindness, her care, her continual unchanging love, and I say, “That is my mother.” Oh, yes, it is only canvas and paint to you but it speaks powerfully to me, and it brings back to my memory what once was but is now no more. So in the Lord’s Supper, the bread and the cup bring back to our memories that which was once but is now no more, Christ in death, for now He lives to die no more. But His love remains in all its strength; He has come back from the dead and death has not changed His love. But, once He was dead upon a malefactor’s cross. He suffered for us that we might be brought out of the darkness and from under the power of death, that the yoke of sin might be broken and that we might be brought into all the realisation of God’s favour; that we might live for ever and ever beneath the sunshine of the Father’s love, and be bound to Jesus, our great Lover, with bonds that can never be dissolved. We shall need no Supper of remembrance when we reach the glory, it is here where our fickle hearts so easily turn to other things, that He says to us, “Forget Me not,” and here it is our privilege, the privilege of love to answer, “Lord, we do not forget, and the remembrance causes our hearts to overflow with praise.”

Shewing the Lord’s death.

But now the Holy Spirit’s comment reveals another side of the Supper. “As oft as ye eat this bread and drink this cup ye do shew the Lord’s death till He come.” We might, I think, say that in eating the bread and drinking the cup in the presence of the Lord we have a
privilege, great privilege, set before us, one of our greatest privileges as Christians; but in shewing forth His death we come to our responsibility. There is our privilege and our responsibility. There is what it means to the Lord Jesus Himself, and there is the place in which it sets us in regard to the world. We shew forth His death until He comes. We declare our allegiance to Him; we stand by His cross; and declare by our act that we stand there in the presence of men and angels. It seems to me that the most beautiful illustration of this is seen in Joseph of Arimathea. Our Lord hung dead upon the cross. The leaders of the people had done their worst and were satisfied with their deed. The only voice raised on behalf of the Lord at that time was the dying malefactor's. The world was against Him. In Hebrew, Greek and Latin the accusation had been written and set over His cross, and now, having cried with a loud voice and said, "Father into Thy hands I commend My Spirit", He bowed His head in death, and hung there with pierced side, rejected, cast out by the world. But, see, there is a movement in the multitude and Joseph the Counsellor steps forward and He takes his stand by that cross and by his action he says, "I am on His side, Christ for me, I take my stand here; there is but His dead body but that dead body I claim." He identified himself with the dead body of Jesus, and he did not stand there alone many minutes, for Nicodemus joined him and two or three women; and in those two men and two or three women we see the very essence of Christian fellowship.

All our ecclesiastical rules and regulations are of no account to God, but let two or three be gathered together to Christ to consider His dying, to think of Him as dead, to have their hearts moved by that wonderful love that led Him into death, let them identify themselves with His cross, truly that will delight the heart of God. Such shew forth His death; they hold the fort until He comes; they say to the world, "You despise Him and forget Him, He has no place in your counsels, but to us He is everything, He is supreme." That is Christian fellowship as it faces up to the world. Nothing can bind hearts together like that stupendous love that led Christ into death for us, and bound together by it, together we shew forth His death until He come. The apostle Paul was in the spirit of this when he said, "God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ; by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I to the world." That is the spirit in which to truly partake of the Lord's Supper. The Supper has been given to us that He might be kept in our memories while He is away, and we hold the fort for Him until He comes back again. How great, how wonderful is our privilege, and how great is our responsibility. The two things go together. But do we not welcome the responsibility and rejoice in it, and seek that God, by His Holy Spirit, will so fill our souls with the sense of the love of Christ that nothing less than that will be our hearts' purpose and determination.

The Secret of faithful witness.

Let us return to the upper room in which the Lord instituted the Supper, and learn the secret of faithful witness to Christ and what it is that will ensure our standing by
His cross and following Him. He says to His disciples, “One of you shall betray Me.” Peter rises up, and he meant every word that he said, and says, “Lord, I will go to prison and death for You. You may trust me, Lord. I won’t fail You. Your head is weary, we can see that You are full of sorrow. Rest Your weary head upon my breast. I am Your man, Lord.” That was Peter. But John draws near to the Lord and his action says, .. Lord, I hear what you say, I cannot trust my love to You, but I can trust Your love to me.” So he puts his head down on the Lord’s bosom. The secret of faithful witness is self-distrust, and full reliance on Christ and His unchanging, unwearied love.

It seems plain to me that when we partake of the Lord’s Supper it is as though the Lord invited us afresh to put our heads upon His bosom. He says, Here is love that is stronger than death, it will not fail you. We respond and say, “Lord, we cannot trust our love to Thee but we can trust Thy love to us, that love that went through the waves and the billows of death for us, and down into those unfathomed depths beneath which there was nothing. We can trust that love.” And who was the man who stood by the cross? He was the man who put his head down on Jesus’ bosom. And who was the man who followed, in the last chapter of John’s Gospel, without being told? He was the man who leaned his head on Jesus’ bosom and who stood by the cross. If we are to follow the Lord in the world that rejected Him, we must have our heads upon His bosom, for we cannot follow Him unless we stand by His cross and we cannot stand by the cross in any power that nature possesses. If you are to say, God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified to me and I to the world, you must have your head upon His bosom. And you do that afresh every time you truly partake of the Lord’s Supper. You must know that love which is greater, brighter, better than anything the world can present to you. Greater, brighter, better than even self, for when it comes to be a question of self you remember the apostle said, “I am crucified with Christ. Nevertheless I live, yet not I but Christ liveth in me, and the life I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.”

“To insist on the one flock (John 10. 16) and yet form a sacramental fold which is exclusive, instead of inclusive, is suicidal: always has been and ever will be.”

“As by the light of opening day, The stars are all concealed, So earthly pleasures fade away When Jesus is revealed.”
THE PRESENCE OF THE LORD.

JOHN'S Gospel does not give the incident of the institution of the Lord's Supper, but the Lord's words recorded by John, chapters 13 and 14 were undoubtedly spoken at that time. That the Lord is absent is implied in the celebration of the Supper. We should not require it if He were present. He was forty days on earth in resurrection, but the disciples did not break bread during that period.

But during His physical absence, we have His spiritual presence. There is not only the promise of His physical return for His own in the third verse of chapter 14, but the promise of His spiritual coming to them in the eighteenth verse, "I will not leave you orphans, I will be coming to you." During His period on earth He did not remain with His disciples continuously, but He visited them occasionally.

"Where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them," are words of the greatest moment as setting forth one of the fundamental truths of Christianity. But if this is merely accepted as a dogmatic statement, it will not take us far. Apart from the soul's apprehension of the Lord's presence His Supper will be a formal matter.

The realisation of His presence is strictly conditional. In the twentieth chapter of John, He came into the midst of His disciples, when the doors were shut. Doubtless that had a literal meaning, but now it has an equally applicable symbolical meaning. What hinders our enjoyment of the Lord's presence is failure to close the doors of our minds, when we have closed the door of the place where we meet.

"Cause every man to go out from me" (Gen. 45. 1) were Joseph's words. No Egyptian could be present while he made himself known to his brethren. So in symbol the "Egyptians" prevent our realisation of the Lord's presence, and the Egyptian who is most difficult to evict dwells within ourselves. In 1 Kings 8, we read, "When the priests were come out of the Holy Place, the cloud filled the House of the Lord." So long as the priests remained to share the place with Him, the Shekinah glory cloud would never have been revealed. They must go out disowning all lordship or title to the place.

We might amend one word of a simple and sweet song.

Closed the door we leave behind us
Toil and conflict, SELF and strife,
And, within, Thy love doth bind us
In one fellowship of life.

Self and selfishness are the greatest hindrances to enjoyment of the truth of Matt. 18. 20. But on the other hand love leads to self-sacrifice and is the chief condition essential in the apprehension of His presence. "If anyone love Me, he will keep My words" (John 14. 23), "Fulfil ye My joy... having the same love" etc. (Phil. 2. 1-4). Love cannot be satisfied with anything short of His company. He was frequently at Bethany because a company was there that delighted in having Him with them, and so it is today.

Being like-minded in Christ Jesus, causes us in lowliness of mind to esteem each other better than self and gives the proper atmosphere to
the local company to experience the reality of the consolation in Christ and fellowship of the Spirit. But the realisation of His presence is not unfruitful. There are precious fruits of the richest flavour. The first is peace. His first words in John 20, were “Peace unto you.” Every disturbing element is hushed under His Lordship and we are free to think of Him. But joy always follows peace. “Then were the disciples glad when they saw the Lord” (John 20. 20). They doubtless remembered His words “I will see you again and your heart shall rejoice and your joy no man taketh from you.”

Then we have enlightenment as to the great sphere of blessing into which the heavenly company is introduced. “I will declare Thy name unto My brethren.” These two possessive pronouns, “Thy” and “My” are full of significance. What divine enlightenment is not contained in that revelation “Thy Name.” “My brethren” speaks of the blessedness of association with Him, whose spiritual presence we have come to prize. Well may our hearts burst forth in unison with the poet.

That our glad hearts responsive unto thine
May wake with all the power of love divine.

“Upon Thy promises I stand,
Trusting in Thee: Thine own right hand
Doth keep and comfort me!

This life of trust, how glad! how sweet!
My need and Thy great fulness meet,
And I have all in Thee.”

Faith comes before knowledge: there is no link with God in knowledge if faith does not precede it. If I am depending on God, all true knowledge must increase that dependence; for if I learn correctly, I find that there is none so worthy of dependence as He.

“The fear of the Lord is wisdom, and the knowledge of the holy is understanding.” If I have not God before me, I never can, with the natural mind and in a world of evil, walk wisely: for God only is the fountain of wisdom. Therefore mere knowledge in itself is nothing; that is, it never leads a man to walk with God.

The way in which we act when the time for acting comes, discloses the nature of principles which we have imbibed. It is sometimes apparently a very little thing, and a thing overlooked by other servants of God, which peculiarly indicates the elevated position of the faithful servant.
CORRESPONDENCE.

Christ and Samaria.

My dear Quartus,

I have lately been making a study of the relations of our blessed Lord with the people of Samaria. It has bowed my heart afresh before Him, and His grace has magnified itself anew before my eyes. I want to share some of my thoughts with you.

The Samaritans, as we know, were a mixed race, with some most undesirable elements among them. We learn this from 2 Kings 17. The king of Assyria removed many from Samaria and settled them in his own land, replacing them by men from Babylon, who began to worship the God of the land along with their own heathen deities. "They feared Jehovah and served their own gods" (verse 23). This was the origin of the Samaritan nation.

Geographically, Samaria lay in the very heart of the land of Israel. It straddled across the country from Jordan to the western sea, separating Judea from the thickly populated northern province of Galilee. The Jews, who held the Samaritans in utter contempt, and had no dealings with them (John 4. 9), when travelling from Judea to Galilee or vice versa, would take a devious or circuitous route to the east of the Jordan rather than defile themselves by passing through Samaria.

Christ visits the country.

John the Baptist had gained tremendous success in his ministry. Mark tells us that all Judea and Jerusalem had gone out to him, confessing their sins. There had been nothing comparable to it since a whole city of Ninevites had repented at the preaching of Jonah.

In one way, John's success was greater than Jonah's. Jonah had preached to a lot of heathen and he had won them to repentance. But John had hard worldly religious people to preach to. Yet he had won multitudes of them to go so far as to make confession of their sins and submit to his baptism unto repentance.

But—and here is my point—Jesus had won a greater success still, even in Judea. The result that followed John's preaching was amazing, but "Jesus made and baptised more disciples than John (though Jesus Himself baptised not but His disciples)." The other evangelists pass over this huge movement in silence. With many, the word of the Sower may have fallen on rocky ground, or by the wayside or among thorns. But we speak of the immediate, visible results.

But the very hugeness of the movement turned the Saviour's thought elsewhere. He who could read men's inmost thoughts did not attach the same importance to great and visible results as some of us are inclined to do. The Pharisees were taking note of His success, and this was enough to make Him move away. He set His face northward, and had, of course, to go through Samaria on His way. He was free from the bitter prejudices that would make the ordinary Jew
incure the extra expense and waste an extra day, in taking the longer way round. So the Lord follows His own order, given before His Ascension: "In all Judea and in Samaria" (Acts 1. 8). He had laboured in Judea; now Samaria was to have its turn.

The first Samaritan that He encountered was a woman, even as the first European met by the Apostle of the Gentiles was a woman. But this Samaritan woman was one of more than doubtful character.

Now note the transcendent grace of the Saviour. Knowing the innate prejudice of her race, He presented Himself as a weary and thirsty traveller, asking, as a favour, a drink of water! Think of Him who created the rivers and the oceans doing that! Who would be alarmed or repelled by One who came in that manner?

He draws the woman out to speak truly (verse 18). For He always desires "truth in the inward parts." All else He will freely bestow, but there must be the true acknowledgment of sin and need.

The Lord goes on to speak of the Father’s search for worshippers. For this is what lies behind the Shepherd’s search for straying sheep. But think of it! God was seeking for Samaritans to worship Him, to worship Him as Father. For this they must know Him in that blessed relationship, and He who alone can reveal Him, was in Samaria for the purpose!

This transcended anything that was known in Israel. In a national sense the people of Israel were “the children of Jehovah” (Deut. 14. 1), and this quite irrespective of whether they had been born of God or not. He said, “I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against Me” (Isaiah 1. 2). Even those who were truly godly were in the position of minors (Gal. 4. 1). They had not the status of sonship, nor did they know God as Father.

And now the revelation was made, not to favoured Israel only, but to the despised Samaritans! Whatever would those hard, bitter, orthodox scribes and rabbis in Jerusalem have said, if only they had known! Finally, the Lord reveals Himself to the astonished woman (verse 26). He was the One who would fulfil all expectations of good, even hers. He was the promised Christ.

The woman had said, “Give me this water (the living water), that I thirst not, nor come all this road to draw water,” for this is the force of the word “hither” in verse 15. But now she has something that makes her forget the long, hot dusty road. She forgets her need of water too, (even as the Saviour had not thought of material food) and off she goes, leaving her waterpot behind, to bear her testimony to the city folks.

Meanwhile, Jesus bids His disciples look on those Samaritan fields, white already to harvest. What did He see? Sheaves to be gathered for the heavenly granary; precious grain to be reaped from the teeming cities and villages of that despised land; men and women of Samaritan birth who should be found of the seeking Shepherd, and more, found of the Father as worshippers in spirit and in truth. What a reaping was there to be done!
"Many of the Samaritans," we are told, "believed on Him for the saying of the woman," but "many more believed because of His own word." This must have been exceedingly precious to the heart of the Lord. Many in Jerusalem had believed because of the miracles which they saw (John 2. 23). Even in Galilee He had to say; "Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe" (4. 48). But here were some who believed because of His own gracious words. And they were Samaritans!

Jesus accepted their hospitality, and remained with them for two days. This would be a heinous and unpardonable offence in the eyes of the Jewish religious world. But I venture to surmise that those two days in the Samaritan city were among the happiest that the Saviour spent on earth.

God gets His tithe.

The Lord came into the borderland between Samaria and Galilee. This is the real meaning of Luke 17. 11. He was met by a mixed company. Among the ten lepers there was at least one Samaritan. Then, under certain circumstances, the Jews had dealings with the Samaritans! Yes: misfortune makes strange bedfellows, as the proverb has it.

All the ten lepers benefited by the Saviour's willing grace. But of nine of them He had to pronounce the words "not found" (verse 18). Our thoughts revert to the search of which the Lord spoke in John 4, the search for worshippers of the Father. Here were ten men, all cleansed, all made happy, but one found to give glory to God. God got His tenth, His tithe. And it was a Samaritan, but not valued any the less on that account.

See what marked this tenth man, God's man. 1. He had assurance of cleansing. "He saw that he was healed." 2. He "turned back." He was content to turn his back on his former companions; to turn his back on the priests and the ritual which they administered, to have his face towards Jesus. 3. With "a loud voice" he glorified God. Actions speak louder than words, and the loudest voice of all is that of a consistent Christian life. 4. He "fell down on his face." Self was forgotten and effaced. The homage of the man's grateful soul went out to Christ. 5. He gave thanks to the One whose coming had meant so much to him. Henceforward the name of that blessed One would live in his memory, and be fragrant beyond all else.

"And he was a Samaritan!" What lovely fruits grace can produce in the most unlikely of men!

"Consume them."

So said James and John. Certain of the Samaritans, with antagonism in their hearts towards those who treated them as dogs, did not receive Christ "because His face was as though He would go to Jerusalem" (Luke 9. 53).

James and John were resentful. They had just seen Elijah appear in glory on the Mount and thought that his example might well be followed. They asked permission to call down fire from heaven to consume unreasonable men.

"Ye know not what manner of spirit YE are of," was the Saviour's mild rebuke. It was right for Elijah
to call down fire from heaven, even as it will be right for the two Witnesses of Rev. 11 to send fire from their mouths to devour their enemies. But James and John were disciples of One who had come to save men, not to destroy their lives. And Samaritan lives were as precious in His eyes as any others. So in silent grace, He (and His disciples) “went to another village” (verse 56).

**A Charge that did not hurt.**

“Thou art a Samaritan!” All the scorn and fury of men intoxicated with bigotry and hate were concentrated in the charge as they hurled it at Christ (John 8. 48). He did not think it worth while to reply. They also accused Him of having a demon. This charge He dealt with. But as to being a Samaritan, what mattered it to Him?

His goodwill towards Samaritans, publicans and sinners was too manifest to remain unnoticed. And if it were true, as some Rabbis maintained, that to eat with a Samaritan made the one who did it a Samaritan, then the Lord was one. And He shewed His love and regard for His many Samaritan friends by not troubling to answer the accusation. But a year later a wonderful answer was given. Let us see what it was.

**A certain Samaritan.**

A crafty jurist stood up to “tempt” the Son of God, to catch Him in His words (Luke 10. 25). He asked what he must do to inherit eternal life. The Lord referred him to the Law, and enquired how he read it. Fluently enough the man repeated the old time sacred words. Immediately, like a flash, the Lord turned to him and said, as it were, “What you have said is correct, but it is a matter of doing, not saying.”

The jurist was caught in his own trap. He began to wriggle and find an excuse for himself. He had not loved his neighbour as himself, but he sought to cover his default with a squirming question, “And who is my neighbour?” Who is my neighbour whom I must “love,” and to whom I shall extend my descending patronage, and whom I may help occasionally with a few coins that I shall not miss? This is what the fellow meant.

But his cynical enquiry drew from the Saviour’s lips a matchless parable of grace. It is as if He said to the lawyer, “It is you who need a neighbour to shew mercy to you. It is not a question of you loving your neighbour, but of a neighbour loving and being kind to you. You are an object needing the help of a pitiful hand, however little you deserve it, and the kind of neighbour you need is a certain Samaritan.”

Did the man writhe? or was he held spellbound by the wonderful picture drawn by the Saviour of men? We know not. We cease to be interested in him, for we, at least, are held as in a spell by what follows. Under the guise of the kindly Samaritan, the Lord sets forth a picture of Himself as man’s truest Neighbour and Friend. Men did not love their Neighbour as themselves, but hated and crucified Him. But He loved them, and all that He had was at their disposal.

Look at the picture. Levite and priest are either unwilling or unable to help. But the Samaritan benefactor does all that could be done. He binds up the wounds, carries the helpless man on His beast, and...
leaves him at a temporary place of shelter to be cared for at His own charges.

“Thou art a Samaritan!” Yes, and this is the kind of Samaritan that sets forth in very truth the activities of the Saviour's grace. And the concluding verse of the story (verse 37), which has led so many to misread and misapply it, simply means that all true kindness is to be the outcome of, and shaped on the model of, the Saviour's kindness to ourselves.

Working from Heaven.

When the Lord went back to heaven it was not to cease from His work, but to continue it, with and through His servants, from His place of power at the right hand of God (Mark 16. 20). Before He ascended, He indicated the lines on which the work was to proceed. Beginning (not at home, for the Apostles were Galileans) but at Jerusalem, they were to carry the message to the ends of the earth. Besides Judea, the Lord mentioned no nation particularly, except Samaria. But He specifically named Samaria (Acts 1. 8). He knew how difficult His chosen servants would find it to rid themselves of their Jewish prejudices, and He would have them use the sickle of the gospel in the white harvest fields of the central province, so He made His commission include the significant words, “and in Samaria.”

But it took almost an earthquake to move the heralds of the gospel from Jerusalem! And even then the Apostles were not moved. For the “great persecution” which the Lord permitted to come upon them (Acts 8. 1) scattered the Christians around, except the Apostles.

Many found refuge in Samaria, and we may be sure they were not silent. It was the custom of those early Jerusalem Christians to preach the Word wherever they went (Acts 11. 19). Many, fettered by tradition, spoke to none but Jews. But Philip, being full of the Holy Ghost, was free from this prejudice and he betook himself to a city (not “the city”) of Samaria. Which city we are not told.

The Lord worked with him. Many believed the glad tidings, and the amazing report reach Jerusalem, “Samaria has received the Word of God!” (Acts 8. 14). The Apostles, with intuitive caution, send Peter and John to investigate. How they would recall, as they journeyed, the wonderful time at Sychar three years before! Ah, the Lord was with them still in a very real way.

So they arrive in Samaria, and the first thing that we read of their doing was to pray for the Samaritan converts that they might receive the Holy Spirit, a prayer which, with the laying on of their hands, was answered.

They preached the Word of the Lord and gave their testimony. And on their way back to Jerusalem they “preached the gospel in many villages of the Samaritans” (verse 25).

Here let us leave them, reaping amid the white harvest fields which the Saviour had seen in His soul’s clear vision. His two servants were doing His work, preaching not merely in the villages, but in many of the Samaritan villages, gathering fruit that will be to the praise of Christ for all eternity. For the Lord was working with them in the Samaria that He had loved.
How much, my dear Quartus, I have left unsaid! I have raised no questions, but how many there are that suggest themselves! Let me have your comments!

Yours in the Lord,
Tertius.

My dear Tertius,
Many thanks for your notes on the Lord's relations with the Samaritans. I rejoice with you in these manifestations of His grace, and have been helped and I trust enlarged in my apprehension of that grace that reaches out to the most despised, and lifts the beggar from the dunghill and sets him among princes. I do not feel that I can add anything to your notes, but shall endeavour to have them circulated that many others may have the benefit of this fruit of your study.

Yours affectionately in the Lord,
Quartus.

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CALVARY. J.I.M.

Dear Lord, through these Thy heart I see,
A surging crowd, a mocking cry—
Which all unconscious tribute pays
To Him on whom they scornful gaze—
"Others from darkness and the grave
He saved: Himself He cannot save."

Ah, soul of mine, dost question still
Why Jesus hangs on Calvary's hill?
The load of guilt He bears is thine,
For thee He meets the wrath divine;
His life or thine must forfeit be—
He cannot save Himself and thee.

Now darkness broodeth o'er the scene,
The conflict Heaven and Hell between;
My soul, in wondering awe draw nigh,
"'Tis finished!" Hear His dying cry.
O matchless love, behold and see—
He saveth—not Himself—but thee.

O awful mystery of grace,
O wounded Hands, and marred Face.
O Cross of shame and Death of woe,
Grief passing all that man can know.
Dear Lord, through these Thy heart I see,
Thou hast not saved Thyself—but ME.
LOVERS! OF WHAT AND WHOM?

H. J. Vine.

God's own love has begotten a family which loves Him, so that we read in the Word of "them that love God" (Rom. 8; 1 Cor. 2). His love is declared to be "His great love wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead in sins;" and we are called upon to behold the manner of His love, in that nothing less would satisfy Him but we should be His children.

The lovers of God are lovers of the brethren; for it is said, "Every one that loveth Him that begat, loveth him also that is begotten of Him" (1 John 5. 1); or, as the apostle to the Gentiles so often writes, they are marked by "love to all the saints." Moreover they are distinctly shewn to have that of which unbelievers are void, "the love of the truth." The truth of God is valued by them increasingly, they are lovers of the truth. Jesus said, "They that are of the truth hear My voice." Above all, grace has wrought so wonderfully and divinely with them that at a time when the One who is "the Truth" personally is being denied His true glory, they have the precious privilege of being true and loyal to Him, who is the delight of the heart of God, our Father, for they "love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity;" (Eph. 6. 24). they are lovers of the Lord.

As they prosper in light and love, the excellencies and virtues of that which is divinely beautiful will manifest themselves through these lovers of God. He has received them into His house of plenty, as we learn from the story of the prodigal. And as they rejoice in His love and all that it has done and is doing and will yet do for them, they become like Him and are instructed to be "lovers of hospitality" (Titus 1. 8). And while doing good unto all, lowly men and good men are to find a specially welcome place with them, for they are to be "lovers of good men" (Titus 1. 8). Like God Himself, their Father through infinite love, His children are "Lovers of that which is good." Each one is a "lover of goodness."

Guidance also is given in Romans 13, as to how those that love God should act towards earthly authorities ordained of God. Though they are the children of God with heavenly glory as their destiny, they are to be rendering to all what is due. They are to "Owe no one anything, unless to love one another: for he that loves another has fulfilled the law." And further, "Love works no ill to its neighbour: love therefore is the whole law." In every circle love triumphs. It is written, "Love never fails." "Every one that loveth has been begotten of God, and knoweth God." The manifestation of divine love is found where the love of God is believed and known. With the redeemed, of course, both the measure and the manifestation are varied and limited; but in God's Son it is perfect in every way; and there is such a thing as being made "perfect in love" (1 John 4. 18).

The law is not contrary to this. Love is the fulness of the law. It is true that "they that are in the flesh cannot please God;" they may become religionised or christianized ostensibly, but apart from the new birth and the sealing of the Holy Spirit, they cannot answer to God's
demand; for we are told also that the law itself could not produce in the unregenerate man what is pleasing to God. We read, “It was weak through the flesh” (Romans 8. 5); nevertheless, sin having been condemned in the sacrifice of Christ upon the cross, and the Spirit having been given to those who believe, the righteous requirement of the law is fulfilled in us who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit (verse 4), for He it is who sheds abroad God’s love in our hearts, and who also produces “delight in the law of God after the inward man” (7. 22), and that in spite of the opposition of the law of sin in our members. Love to God and love to our neighbour is what the law required! The Lord Jesus said the second was like to the first (Matt. 22. 39); but mark, it is the second and not the first! Response to God’s love comes before love rightly flows out to others. Attempted reversal of this order has produced dire iniquity. Pre-eminent ly the law demanded love to God; it could not produce it, but God’s own love has brought this about in those who are now His children. He revealed His love when Christ died and our hearts have been won by it.

The very fact that the law’s demand was love shows that it was God’s own nature which desired this; and that nature is love;— “God is love.” Nor does the law simply demand love from the whole heart as is sometimes said, but rather from the whole being! for we read, “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment. And the second is like, namely this, thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these” (Mark 12. 30, 31). How encouragingly blessed and glorious then it is to know that what God’s own nature desired, He shall have in righteousness and holiness through the redeeming work of His Son; and in His eternal home He shall rejoice to have those who wholly love God! How glad are our hearts that He desires nothing less! How we bless His holy name that His perfectly proven love has produced love. What the law could not do, His love has done. “We have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love;” and, “We love because He first loved us.” Love was desired and demanded, but being fully proved in the Son of God upon the cross, love has been procured responsively.

The Spirit of God having been given by our Lord Jesus Christ—He had secured eternal redemption for us upon the cross; after He had risen from among the dead; after He had ascended to the throne on high—delights to bring home to our hearts God’s own sovereign love. Therefore we do not find in the distinctive teaching to those who are God’s children any command or exhortation given to love God, for as we have seen, God’s own love in Christ has secured this after the law had failed to do so.

We can only shortly indicate this; from whence cometh the “way of more surpassing excellence”;—this which is the greatest—GREATEST? (1 Cor. 13). It comes from God, for it is what God is in Himself. Twice we are told so in the inspired writings—twice in one chapter—“GOD IS LOVE” (1 John 4. 8, 16). “Love is of God”; He is love, therefore
He loves. And, oh! if He sought it from all the heart, all the soul, all the mind, and all the strength of man how greatly must He Himself (Who desired this) love the redeemed. And then His love is eternal (as well as everlasting in regard to our being brought into it), for although its manifestation and commendation are seen in the death of His beloved Son, nevertheless in itself, it has neither beginning nor ending. Like Himself it is from everlasting to everlasting. *God is the supreme eternal Lover!* And He shall be supremely and fully loved for ever by His redeemed ones who shall love one another amidst the rejoicings of eternity! Glory, glory, glory to His holy name!

You, all with deepest joy at length shall sing His love divine, And praise His holy blessedness, sweeter than choicest wine; Yet even now, its favour flows the same as shall be ours When heart and mind with soul and strength love God with all their powers.

He loved the world and gave His Son in view of the believer having eternal life (John 3. 16). He manifested His love toward us by sending His only-begotten Son that we might live through Him (1 John 4. 9), “Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son a propitiation for our sins” (10). He commends His love in Christ’s death for us while we were yet sinners (Romans 5. 8). How exceedingly wonderful all this is! It makes the heart uprise in worship. It has often caused also the glad repetition of the apostle’s words regarding all the saved, “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.”

Yes, divine love is there. Faith beholds it and knows it there; “in Christ Jesus our Lord!” and His redeemed are in Him free from all condemnation; “There is no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus.” Love is there and also a new creation; but no condemnation. He bore all our condemnation on the cross; now He is risen and accepted in divine favour on high and we are taken into favour in Him.

When about to go to the cross in obedience to the Father’s commandment He said, "I love the Father." And before He went forth from the presence of His loved ones (who were with Him in the large upper room furnished), He said to them, “The Father Himself loveth you, because ye have loved Me, and have believed that I came out from God.” Again He said, concerning them, to the Father, “Thou hast loved them as Thou hast loved Me.” I must close! The subject is infinite! Brought so nigh, its glorious immensity stretches out far beyond us! Thankfully we rejoice with exceeding joy that our eternal Lover has secured “lovers of God” already, and they shall be to His glory for ever and ever.

The Psalmist calls all that is within him to remember all the Lord’s benefits. For our task our energies should be suitably called out. God’s all cannot be praised with less than our all.
WE have considered on a former occasion the thought of power flowing from the source which is found alone in God to whom it belongs. It is necessary to bear in mind that this does not reveal all that is in God, for God is love, and it is this that He is essentially. He may be hidden in the thick darkness, but still He is love; sin may raise a barrier to the activities of love, but nevertheless God remains what He is; He may reveal Himself in the holy attributes of His character in the demand of righteousness, and consequently as the inflexible Judge of sin, but still He remains in His essential unchanging nature, Love.

Yet how incapable is the creature of appreciating this. It is one thing to know the beneficence of God, to rejoice in the fact that He is good and doeth good. Myriads of angelic hosts have had experience of this and praise Him for His goodness. Sun, moon and stars of light bear witness to His excellent greatness, but something more than acts of creative might working in harmonious accord, and vocal with praise was needed, or God in what He is would have been ever unknown. A revelation on the part of God was necessary, and though great is the mystery which surrounds the origin of sin, yet the fact of its invasion into the universe of God, became the occasion for God to reveal Himself.

Love in itself is beyond human definition. No artist can transfer to his canvas the heat of the fire he depicts, so no words can express the fervour of the holy love of God, its excellencies cannot be described. The love of Christ in whom it is expressed, passeth knowledge, it can be felt but never properly or fully defined in tongues of men or of angels. The pen of the Holy Spirit in 1 Cor. 13, tells us of how essential love is, views it by contrast, speaks of what it does and does not do, asserts its unfailing continuity, and assures that in our present condition we only apprehend it as through a dim window, but that the time will come when we shall bask in its full orbed radiance, knowing the fulness of love as we are known and loved even now.

Love is the fullest expression of Divine wisdom using the occasion of the rebellion of man against God declared as good, to reveal itself. Vainly shall the created sphere be ransacked for wisdom to deal with such an emergency, in a way that shall exhibit every attribute of God in perfect consistency with His nature.

The words of Job 27, are full of meaning in this connection; for says he, man has no price to purchase it; the things he most values, gold, silver, onyx, sapphire, crystal, coral, pearls, topaz, and all things the heart can desire, are not to be compared to this hidden wisdom. The fact that death and destruction only introduce into the presence of God the unknown, only renders the problem more inscrutable. Where shall wisdom be found? where indeed except in God. And His love which is the essence of wisdom, and which alone can solve the enigma,
has been manifested in one infinite display.

It has appeared in regard to man on earth, whose condition and practice was sin, and who had no desire for God. To such as we who were darkness, the light of God has shone forth, for God has sent His only begotten Son into the world that we might live through Him. Think of the wonder of such an act, He sent His only begotten Son, none other had a place of such near relationship to Himself as this One. He was born in time, but He was from all eternity in the deep place of affection which the words “only begotten” convey. The Son in the bosom of the Father: the Son who knows, He only, all His love, in Him that love has been declared; as another has said, “It is the full wealth of His heart that He has poured out here for our acceptance.” It was our necessity which moved Him, and how great that necessity was, we were dead, so morally insensible that when such love was displayed there was no response. Further it found us in enmity, but it was a love which was infinite in resource, and it awoke us to behold the light of its shining, that we might live through Him. It won us by the miracle of a new birth from blindness to a new vision. Not only was love displayed in the radiant pathway of moral perfection trodden by the Son of God through a scene where all was contrary to it; but it went further, for when this produced no love to God, but hatred, the culmination of love was seen in the cross. Its extent was this, “God sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.”

Exalted to the right hand of God, He has been made both Lord and Christ. How precious to the heart is the name of Jesus, His personal name, and it stands enshrined between these two titles of majesty, He is the Lord Jesus Christ. At the name of Jesus every knee shall bow in confession to the almighty power of His Lordship. As the Christ He is the supreme administrator of love which passeth knowledge, love which is infinite, eternal, unchanging and unchangeable. Love—almighty love, led the Son of God to become man. Love was the spring of all His activities of grace and mercy on earth, and it is still the same now that He has sat down at the right hand of God. He loves to the end, and having given Himself in death, He loves now in resurrection beyond the power of death.

The love of God is commended to us on the very ground that there is the absence of all attractive qualifications of righteousness in those towards whom it is exercised. Many and great will be the endowments of the saints in heaven, for love delights to give and even to share all with its objects. Yet all that may be thus bestowed is only the result of that love which went forth to us as sinners. “Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us.”

God is no longer the unseen, He has been manifested in light, the light of love. A marvellous result follows, for the reception of such love produces a character like to itself. “We love, because He hath first loved us” (R.V.). God Himself, is, of course, the centre and object of such response, but the assertion of the text is the formation of a quality which embraces affection all that is of God. Hence it is the love that pervades the family
of God. This is no mere sentiment, some emotion of the feelings, it is that which springs from a divine implanting, it is a love which sees in a brother one whom God loves. God we have never seen with our eyes, our brother whom He loves we have. On these lines the commandment of the new life runs, "That he who loveth God love his brother also." The reverse is a moral impossibility in the Divine reckoning. Alas, that oftentimes it is so feebly in evidence, but what a joy of loving hearts where this comfort of love and fellowship of the Spirit is known amongst those whom the Lord calls His brethren.

At the same time obedience to the revealed will of God is never, nor can be separated from love. These two things were perfect in Him who could truly say, "I do always those things that please Him." Anything contrary to the will of God, cannot be the expression of love to God. The true love of God is the love of His truth, of His holiness, of His whole will: true love is that which reflects itself in obedience: true love is that which stirs and purifies the conscience. When the constraining love of Christ is thus brought home to the individual soul, then there is no need to seek for any further principle of obedience or holiness or virtue. He who keeps His word loves God in principle: he who keeps His commandments loves God in action: His love produces heart obedience, and the presence of the obedience of love results in a character of walk as Christ walked. Therefore by this we know that we love the children of God when we love God and keep His commandments, and His commandments are not grievous.

Let us observe that it is when we keep His commandments, our brother may not be doing so, but love is not deterred by lack in its object, nay rather it suffers long and is kind, and in this it takes character from God, in stooping to the lowliest in order to serve, and win to paths of righteousness and peace. His love shows to us a path of peace, an overcoming power of victory above all that is in the world where self seeking and hatred reigns.

One more result that love produces is the expulsion of fear, and this has to do with us personally, as the former consideration concerned our relation to one another as brethren. Perfect love casteth out fear, he that feareth is not made perfect in love. The greatest of all fear has been for ever dismissed by the infinite sacrifice of love, and the day of judgment holds no terrors for us. The believer in Christ stands before God accepted as He is, in heaven; He is for us, and because He lives we live. The knowledge of this is not relegated to some future time, but is already ours, "As He is, so are we, in this world." Should any doubt as to this remain it would prove that we had not learned to perfection the lesson that love would teach us. Yet often do our lesser fears, begotten by the circumstances of the way or conscience of our own feebleness, bear witness that the perfect love of God is not having is full place in our hearts. When this is so, let us gaze with deeper attention upon the face of Him in whom the light of the glory of God shines forth, and remember that there abides for us the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ, ever revealing the depths of the love eternal which flows from the heart of God.
SECOND MAN—OUT OF HEAVEN.
1 Cor. 15. 47.

As born into this world, the Word become flesh, Christ is the second man. As raised from the dead He is the last Adam. J. G.

"The apostle had said that the first body was 'natural.' Its life was of the living soul, as to the body it partook of that kind of life which the other animals possessed—whatever might be its superiority as to its relationship with God, in that God had breathed into his nostrils the breath of life. Adam, the son of God, said the Holy Ghost in Luke. He had become a living soul, but he had no quickening power in himself. Free from death he was by the sustaining power of God, he became subject to this, or mortal, by the sentence of Him who had formed him. The first Adam was simply, a man—'the first man Adam.'

The word of God does not express itself thus in regard to Christ when speaking of Him as the last Adam, but it does not say 'the last man was a quickening spirit' but 'the last Adam' and when it speaks of Him as the second man adds that He was 'from heaven.' Christ had not only life as a living soul, He had the power of life, which could impart life to others.

A man of earth, (for He could not be the last Adam without being a man) He had life in Himself, accordingly He quickened whom He would. But this involves resurrection. He had glorified God, made expiation for sin, was raised in righteousness; had overcome death and destroyed the power of Satan before he became as quickening spirit the Head of a spiritual race, existing according to His mode of being, His life and condition being ours. It is not that as Son of God he could not quicken at all times as indeed He did, quickening whom He will, but He did not become Head of a new race, the last Adam until He had accomplished redemption and was risen."—J.N.D.

(Syn. vol. 4. p. 269, 270. abridged)

"Praise ye the Lord! 
To Him accord
The glory and the might.
Eternal Son!
In Godhead One!
Object of heaven's delight.

"Bow low the knee,
For truly He
Worthy of worship is;
And we indeed
His praise should lead,
For we through grace are His.

"He entered earth,
By lowly birth,
And in a servant's state,
Obedient
To death He went,
Our sins to expiate.

"He bore the cross,
His was the loss
Endured to set us free;
He bore the blame,
The curse, the shame,
O let us bend the knee!"