

SCRIPTURE TRUTH

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*“A glory gilds the sacred page,
Majestic like the sun:
It gives a light to every age,
It gives, but borrows none.”*

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GOD'S TRIUMPH AND THE DEVIL'S DEFEAT.

J. T. Mawson.

HOW the devil must hate the Epistle to the Ephesians; he will certainly keep us from reading it if he can, for in no part of the Bible is his complete defeat so thoroughly exposed, and the riches of God's grace so fully revealed. It may be the knowledge of this that has made him with devilish subtlety make some of us believe that it is an epistle too deep and doctrinal for us. It is neither one nor the other; only let us be in the right state of heart before God and we shall exult in it, for the very reading of it will bless us, even if we are unable to fathom the depths that are in it. Who can do that but the Spirit of God?

The devil is probably the greatest of all the creatures that in the beginning God created, but he has fallen from his first and high estate and his heart is full of hatred against God; he is God's adversary—his name Satan means, the adversary—and he has set himself deliberately and desperately to oppose and break up every purpose and work of God. When God created Adam and set him in Eden, and enriched him with everything that His infinite bounty could give, this great foe of God saw with envious eye that God loved the man He had made and delighted in him, and he plotted to ruin him and rob God of him; and how well he appeared to succeed. He probably reasoned: If only I can make that man whom God has favoured above all His creatures, doubt His goodness, and disobey His word, and rebel against Him, as I have done, then I can do with him as I

will; I will strip him of his nobility, rob him of his peace and make him hate his Maker, and if I succeed in this desperate enterprise, God in simple justice will be compelled to turn him out of Eden and condemn him and his progeny to my doom in hell, and so shall I gratify a double spite: God will lose the man He has created and loves and I shall destroy the man whom I hate because God loves him.

The Triumph of God's grace towards us.

He accomplished his purpose so far, and he must have wondered and exulted at the ease with which he did it; but what a surprise and a shock he must have got when first he read this Epistle to the Ephesian church, and discovered that some of the children of fallen Adam could say, "*Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus.*" The earthly paradise lost, yes, but the heavenly paradise opened; earthly blessing forfeited, yes, but heavenly blessing bestowed, and all those blessings not in a patched up Adam, who might fall a second time into the devil's snare, but in Christ Jesus, where the devil cannot touch them and where they can neither fail nor be lost.

The devil's purpose was to make man like himself, unholy in nature and unrighteous in act, and so bring down upon his defiled and guilty soul the wrath of God; what a surprise he must have got when he first read in this Epistle that God

hath chosen us in Christ, "that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love" (verse 5). Holy instead of sinful; without blame instead of guilty; in love instead of under wrath! What a triumph for God, what a defeat for the devil!

The devil's expectation was that man, when he had sinned, would be driven far off from God, as being for ever unsuited to His presence, every link of relationship with Him being broken; and that God would never have His purposed and longed for delight in the sons of men. What a jar he must have got when he read, "Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself, to the praise of the glory of His grace, wherein He hath made us accepted in the Beloved" (verses 5, 6). "Accepted in the Beloved"! Not even an unfallen angel could have anticipated such grace towards men on God's part; and no sin-convinced sinner could have thought of it, and we may be sure that it never entered into the head of the devil that God would act thus. How could he have guessed that his temporary triumph over man would give God the opportunity of lifting man into a closer and more glorious relationship than ever Adam knew, for Adam did not know God as Father; and that they should stand in a favour that no creature, either fallen or unfallen ever stood in before, even the favour in which the Beloved stands! Accepted in the Beloved, brought as near to God as He is, and to abide for ever in the favour that rests upon Him! And this is to be not only a blessed secret for our own joy now, but it is to be publicly manifested; men, angels and devils are to see it, "That the world may know that Thou hast sent Me, and

hast loved them, as Thou hast loved Me" said our Lord Jesus Christ to His Father in John 17.

And suppose the devil had stood up and challenged God's right to bless us with these infinitely greater blessings than Adam lost by his sin; suppose he had said: "They are my lawful captives, slaves to sin and under the condemnation of death, and your enemies. You cannot bless them righteously and You must condemn them if You are still to be the just Ruler of the Universe." God's answer is, "In whom [the Beloved] they have redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of My grace" (verse 7). That is conclusive and final; there is no place now for discussion or argument; it is the last word, and the vindication of God in His mercy before the universe; and as to this matter the Accuser is for ever silenced. The blood of the Beloved answers every claim, it is the everlasting righteous and unassailable basis of all our blessings, and because of it God forgives with an eternal forgiveness and we are redeemed from all bondage with an eternal redemption; the devil is defeated and the exceeding riches of God's grace are fully disclosed.

The Triumph of Christ's Resurrection.

Now consider the great conflict between God and the devil from another side of it. The Son of God became man, sent forth into the world by the Father to be its Saviour, and having come into the world He had to meet the devil face to face. We may be sure that the devil resented His presence in the world of which he is the god and prince, and was determined if

he could to ensnare Him as he had done the first man. The conflict had to be waged; and Jesus, the Son of God, met the great Adversary, who, flushed with 4,000 years of triumph over men, does not seem to have feared defeat. Jesus met him, not with His Godhead authority and power, but in His manhood's lowliness and weakness and His dependence upon God. By man had come Satan's victory and by man must come his defeat. Let us watch this conflict, for the glory of God and our blessing hangs upon its issue. Satan chose his own time and battle ground, he appeared in the desert when Jesus was weak with hunger, having fasted forty days, but he could not prevail over Him. His deftest blows were parried and turned aside by one weapon only, the Word of God. Twice he was repulsed but he returned the third time to the attack, apparently confident of success, for he knew men well, and he probably thought, In the soul of the Son of God ambition must lurk as it lurks in the soul of every man. If he could only make the prize big enough, for every man has his price, he would surely gain his greatest and final triumph. So he offered all he had to offer: the kingdoms of this world and the glory of them, for one moment's homage. He would set the Son of God at the head of all things; he would give Him the highest station; He should reach the pinnacle of glory by a short and easy way. All should be His, if He would but bow down before him and own him as the giver. And what was the alternative? It was suffering, and shame; scourging and spitting; it was death, even the death of the cross. And the Lord chose the alternative, for God and His glory were more to Him than ease

and fame and exaltation, and to obey God was His very life.

Now see the result as revealed in our Epistle. The lowly Man of Sorrows had said, "*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 that hence was to Gethsemane, Gabbatha, Golgotha and death. But God has answered that great obedience and has acted in mighty power towards Christ. He has reached down into the depths of death and has "*raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: and hath put all things under His feet and gave Him to be Head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all.*" The devil hoped to sway this universal sceptre himself by subjugating Christ to his will, but having failed in his bold and impious design he now finds that the One who refused to be lured from His obedience to God by his wiles, has been set infinitely above him; He has received from God a higher honour and a greater glory than the devil was able to offer Him. He has been made head over all things.

We may be sure that Satan would like to hide this fact from men; he does not want them to know that the Lamb of Calvary is Lord of lords and King of kings, the sceptre of Whose throne is a sceptre of righteousness; he knows that this exaltation of Christ to the highest place in the universe is the sure and certain pledge that all his works will

be undone, that his authority over men will be for ever broken, and that he himself will be finally condemned to the lake of fire. Ephesians 1. 19-23 is hard reading for the devil, but it is a most blessed revelation to us who have been delivered by the Father, even now, "from the authority of darkness and translated into the kingdom of the Son of His love" (Col. 1. 12, 13).

The Triumph of the Churches formation.

And what of the church which is here spoken of as the body of Christ? It is made up of those who were once dead in trespasses and sins, of you and me, and our like, who were children of disobedience, who walked according to the will of the prince of the power of the air, and were children of wrath, even, as others (ch. 2). The devil held us for a while in his power by the delusion that God was against us; that He was a hard and austere master, to be dreaded and shunned; which had been the devil's lie from the beginning. But that darkness has been dispelled and we have been delivered from that lie, for, "*God who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead in sins hath quickened us together with Christ (by grace ye are saved:) and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: that in the ages to come He might shew the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus*" (verse 4-7). "Rich in mercy," "His great love," "the exceeding riches of His grace," and "His kindness towards us through Christ Jesus," describe for us what there is in God for us; we may have but poorly apprehended what

these words describe, yet they are words surely that make our hearts glow, and they have most thoroughly exposed what the devil is. He has been defeated in his efforts to hold us in everlasting darkness by this revelation of the mercy, the love and the grace of God to us through Christ Jesus. And being enlightened and quickened, and redeemed, and sealed by the Holy Ghost, we, with all believers, are now the body of Christ. He is the Head, we are His members, and we share in His victories, for even Satan himself shall shortly be bruised under our feet by the God of peace (Romans 16. 20).

When we come to chapter 4 we learn that Christ has ascended up on high, but that He first descended into the lower parts of the earth. He went down into depths beneath which there was nothing, and has gone up to the highest heights of glory. There is no realm through which He has not passed triumphantly, and which He will not fill with the glory of God. Satan has bitten the dust, he has not been able to hold any realm against Christ. From the place into which He has gone, having led the whole power of the enemy captive, He has given gifts unto men, and this for the building up of the body of Christ, for the deliverance of its members from every lie of the enemy, for their development in the knowledge of the Son of God, and their unity and increase in love. And this is a present triumph, for in this world where hatred and sin abounds, there are men and women who once belonged to it, but are now no longer of it, but are members of the body of Christ, united to Him their glorified Head, and in them His character is shining out in the darkness, and

they are edifying one another in love. Think of the triumph in that.

*The Triumph of the Churches Rap-
ture.*

Thoughts of the church bring that vivid passage as to it in ch. 5, to mind, and I cannot pass it by. It tells us, "*Christ also loved the church, and gave Himself for it; that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that He might present it to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish*" (verses 25-27). Verse 31 is a quotation from Genesis 2 regarding the bringing of Eve to Adam, and our passage carries the mind back to that event. It is well known that Adam in his deep sleep is a foreshadowing of Christ in death; and as the woman was the product of that sleep so is the church a product of the death of Christ. But the devil succeeded in beguiling Eve through his subtilty and she dragged Adam down in her fall; she dragged him so low that he not only disobeyed God, but cast all the blame of the tragedy upon her whom he ought to have protected with his very life. "The woman whom Thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat," said he. He had become a disobedient, selfish, cowardly sinner. What a contrast to Adam is our Lord Jesus. He said to His Father, "*Those that Thou gavest Me I have kept, and none of them is lost*" and they, and all who have believed through their word, are the

church, and for it Christ gave Himself. He took all the blame of their sinfulness and guilt, and bore the judgment of it all, and He is still keeping His church, and sanctifying it and cleansing it by the word, and waiting for the day when He will present it to Himself, all glorious in the glory.

How will this come to pass? "*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*" (1 Thess. 4. 16, 17). We shall meet Him. But why in the air? The air is the seat of the devil's power; he is the prince of the power of the air; it is from thence that he rules the darkness of this world and organises its spiritual wickedness, and it is there that we are to meet our Lord. Could anything prove more conclusively how complete is his defeat? Christ will meet His church in the very seat of Satan's authority and carry it triumphantly through to His glory. That will be the day of Christ's supreme joy on which He will receive to the embrace of love that passes all knowledge, His ransomed and glorious church. Satan has sought to corrupt the church as he corrupted Eve, but Christ has kept her and will keep her. And the presentation day, the day of the marriage, will celebrate His triumph and the devil's defeat.

Lord, shouldst Thou lead along a shadowed road,
It is with *Thee*;
And darker was the path Thy love once trod
Alone, for love of me!

PREPARED FOR SERVICE.

R. McCallum.

Notes of an Address to Sunday School Teachers.
Exodus 2; Proverbs 22. 6.

THE remarkable history of the child Moses may well be a great encouragement and inspiration to us as workers among the young. Here was a cast-out foundling who in the purposes of God was destined to be the leader of God's chosen people, and for the accomplishment of His purposes of grace God in wondrous providence used the very faith of the parents. True it is that the faith of the godliest parents can never save a child, but faith can understand and trust God's purposes and work for the child's blessing. Such faith honours God and God honours it, and in our present study we see the consummate wisdom and power of God at work in causing man's wrath to praise Him, the arch-enemy of God's people being foiled by his own weapons. The child is taken from the hovel of a slave and placed in the palace of the king himself; delivered from the hands that sought his death by being placed in the only hands that could accomplish his preservation: a child's tears—the eloquent oratory of a mere babe—the appeal of weakness touching a heart that was doubtless unaffected by the calamities of a nation, so that the Divine intention for His people might be achieved.

There was a three-fold preparation for the work to which God was calling him. Firstly, there was the instruction received at his mother's knee—a simple, intense and prayerful course. Short, one might be tempted to think, to the point of fruitlessness, yet signally cared for and blessed of God. Fortunate

beyond estimate is the child who has godly parents to impart to him his first knowledge of divine things! No better instruction can come to any man, no deeper or more lasting impression can be made than that received at life's dawn from the mother who knows God, and many a man of God can thank his Father in heaven for the earliest training received in a home of true piety. But alas! how many there are, especially in these days, who receive no such early impressions, and we as Sunday School teachers must regard ourselves as "in loco parentis" and in faith lay hold of God's purposes of grace for such as come under our care and influence. With God nothing is impossible. He can take the most humble and equip him for the most exalted service, in spite of the most determined opposition of evil forces. This is the message of the training of the child Moses. Could we desire more encouraging knowledge than this?

Secondly, there was the preparation received in the palace of the King, the preparation received from Egypt's learning. A questionable equipment maybe, from some points of view, for it is admittedly difficult to weigh the benefits against the disabilities resulting from training obtained in Egypt. Difficult often, admittedly, to say whether ultimate good or harm will accrue to the servant of God by his training in the Colleges of this world. Be assured of this, my dear young friend, that your usefulness in the service of God will not depend on the quality of your degree in Science

or Arts, in Medicine, Law or Theology, but will depend entirely—from your side—on your personal dealings with God and on your attitude of heart to His Christ, and if right here, the potential benefits of your training can be made real by consecration to His cause. A good physique, a cultured and well-stored mind, the graces of refinement are not to be despised in the service of the Lord but let none imagine that these are the “sine quibus non”.

The moment in the career of Moses when service for God became possible was when looking right on to the future and assessing things in the light of eternity, having respect unto the recompense of the reward, he was filled with an overwhelming sense of the tawdriness of Egypt's greatness and glory, and refused longer to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter. He had made the “great refusal” and had decided to identify himself with the down-trodden people of God. Noble choice! There was still necessary “discipline in the School of God” but by faith, after mature consideration of all that was involved, he “esteemed the reproach of Christ greater riches than all the treasures in Egypt.” Wise and happy choice!

Whatever else was lacking, with commendable decision he sought a sympathetic knowledge of the needs of his people. “He went out unto his brethren and looked on their burdens.” Is not this a trait that we might well emulate, for whether we seek to help old or young we shall do it doubly well if we are familiar with their daily cares and needs? Certain characteristics of the God-sent workman were, however, absent. In the first place he lacked the conviction that he was

really commissioned. “He looked this way and that” with his eye upon man, but had forgotten the upward look, and we are reminded that man, however well equipped naturally, must fail to accomplish anything for God, whether it be in righting the wrongs of the world, or in settling the disputes among his brethren, unless God is directing. Much so-called social service is merely the attempt to do God's work in man's way, but a social or ethical gospel has never yet liberated one of Satan's slaves. Israel was to be liberated and united by divine means, and the interference of Moses in a fleshly way merely ended in another split. Still the root of the matter was in him; his intentions were good, and if his zeal was not according to knowledge, he was at least far from indifferent to the case of his brethren, and in the desert God would train him. Here was the third element in his instruction.

How much we would all learn that would ultimately result in blessing had we more leisure for quiet communion, away from the hurly-burly of this mad age. “The world is too much with us.” We lack the opportunities for contemplation and reflection which were possible in previous ages. “Talent is developed in solitude, character in the battle of life”, and opportunity was afforded Moses for the development of them both. In the solitude God revealed himself to Moses as the eternal I AM, and gave him his call to serve. In the pursuit of the humble tasks performed day to day, he was being trained to rule a nation, and while God prepared thus the deliverer for the people He was preparing the people for their deliverer. Their cry rose to His ear, and He heard. Nor was the God

who heard the groans of the grown-ups unmindful of the little ones. They too were the object of His care, so are they now. In Moses as leader, we see the realisation of those forces of heredity, environment, and

instruction, which had moulded his life in the providence of God. May we as Sunday School teachers, play our part in influencing and shaping the lives of the young for the glorious service of God.

SERVICE.

A. M. Chambers.

"Jesus took a towel and girded Himself" (John 13. 4).

Lord, didst Thou stoop so low?
 Didst Thou indeed
 Gird Thyself thus to tend
 Thy creature's need?
 Hung on Thy least behest
 Legions above—
 Yet Thou didst kneel and serve!
 What perfect love!

Lord, when I ponder Thee
 Taking that place,
 All my heart's stubborn pride
 Melts at Thy grace!

How could I ever seek
 Honour or fame
 When Thou—the Lord of all,
 As servant came?

Lord, let this grace of Thine
 Rule in my heart;
 Teach me this blessed path—
 The servant's part.
 In service to Thine own,
 Master Divine,
 Where there's a lowly task,
 Let it be mine!

"When Moses raised his hands, Israel prevailed"

Exodus 14. 11.

A LESSON is here written for the people of God. It was by prayer alone that Israel prevailed. When the hands of Moses were lifted up, Amalek was driven backward, like a wave receding from the shore. When the hands of Moses fell down, Amalek came on like a rushing flood. God could use the sword of Joshua, and the spears, and the bows, and the slings of the men of Israel; but by prayer alone will that fighting host prevail. A testifying and praying Church

will advance with deepening praise from triumph to triumph, till its foes are scattered and consumed. Amalek can prevail only through the Church's folly in supposing that it can have victory either by conflict without prayer, or by prayer without conflict. There must be both. Prayer without testimony is cowardice, or unfaithful withholding of the service which God demands. Testimony without prayer is self-confidence and presumption.

“OUR FATHER.”

“I MUST tell thee,” said dear old Becky, a Yorkshire saint, “how I came to say ‘Our Father.’ It was spring time, a lovely day, and I was at work in t’fields. Eh, I can hear them now—how all t’birds were singing, and there was the scent of May in the air, and buttercups and daisies everywhere. A young woman had come to work alongside o’ me, and she brought her baby. She put it down in a mossy place in t’hedge, wrapped up in a shawl. And she were always turning her head to see t’bairn was all reet. And times she went back to look at it. Then it all come to me. I lifted mesen up from my work and my soul was filled. ‘Eh, Becky,’ I said, ‘Eh, Becky, dost know how the Heavenly loves thee? My Father’ I says, ‘and am I Thy bairn, that Thou dost love for Thine own. Eh, to think that I can lie down, down in Thy love, same as t’bairn in t’mother’s arms—that I can look into Thy face and laugh with gladness, same as t’bairn on t’mother’s knee.’

“He had put t’best robe on me, a better one than He’d given the flowers; and He’d put music in my soul better than He’d given the birds. And I could take all His love for my own, same as t’bairn at t’mother’s breast.”

Then Becky lay back on her pillow at rest, as if compassed with those arms of love.

(Pearse.)

What comfort there is in that most blessed name, “Father!” Abba, Father! If it be a question of our temporal needs—and to some who are facing the New Year, this may be a very serious question—we have our Lord’s own words, “*Your Father Knoweth*;” we ask for nothing more than that. Then we have the Father’s all-satisfying love; dwell up on these words that came from our Lord’s own lips “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).

Confidence.

Thou who hast led us all our days,
 We trust Thee for the coming year;
 We face the strange, untrodden ways
 Untroubled by a single fear.
 New light shall cheer us from above,
 Thy tender mercies sure shall be;
 And new revealings of Thy love
 Compel a deeper love for Thee.
 If long and tiring be the road,
 And sad the lot Thy love ordains,
 We tread the path Thyself hast trod,
 And pain shall pass, but joy remains,
 The winds are under Thy control,
 No harm the fettered tempests bring;
 Securely dwells each blood-bought soul
 Beneath the shadow of Thy wing.

“WHY DO THE HEATHEN RAGE?”

F. B. Hole.

Read Psalms 1 and 2.

THIS question opens the second Psalm. It was first written therefore about three thousand years ago. It is not, because of that, wholly out of date, and without any application for to-day, only interesting as throwing some light on affairs of hoary antiquity. The Bible deals with eternal values, and when it touches the passing things of time it is to disclose the underlying currents that flow in human affairs, which do not alter from one age to another.

The word translated, “heathen” is the one that frequently occurs in the Old Testament to indicate the various nations of the earth apart from Israel. A more literal translation renders the opening words thus, “Why are the nations in tumultuous agitation, and why do the peoples meditate a vain thing?” With this simple explanation the words become luminous, and express exactly what any one of us might wish to enquire concerning the agitated nations of to-day.

The question is not merely asked in this Psalm, it is conclusively answered. Moreover the answer is given with the prophetic *insight* which goes to the roots of things, and the *foresight* which carries us to the end of things, when the agitation and rage of the nations shall cease. If we profit by this prophetic insight—and especially if we discern the contrast between this Psalm and Psalm 1—we shall gain much in the way of moral instruction. If we profit by the prophetic foresight afforded we shall not be unduly disturbed though dwelling in the midst of the agitation.

There are innumerable causes of strife amongst the nations, causes which lie upon the surface of things, and which vary from age to age, and even from year to year. The inspired Psalmist probes beneath the surface and discerns that the real root of all is the innate lawlessness of fallen man, the desire to be rid of the restraint which the Lord and His Anointed might impose upon them. This lawlessness is the very essence of sin.

The Man contemplated in Psalm 1 is the exact antithesis of this. He is wholly separate from the ungodly, their thoughts and their ways. His delight and his meditation is in the law of the Lord. The very law, which the natural man finds to be an intolerable restraint, He finds to be a perfect delight. As a consequence He is like a tree planted by the softly flowing river, full of prosperity and fruitfulness—a simile which conveys no thought of agitation and tumult but the reverse, placidity and prosperity.

The Lord Jesus is the only one who ever has fully answered to the description of Psalm 1. He only could say, “My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me, and to finish His work.” Since this characterized His life He could speak later in John’s Gospel of His own peace—“My peace I give unto you”—unruffled by the storms without. The years of His ministry were spent amidst a whirlwind of opposing and contradicting forces, yet He abode at the very centre of the will of God, with full delight in that will, and in perfect serenity.

Now we are called to follow His steps. His path is our path, though we follow so often with feeble and hesitating feet. We may depend upon it however that the measure in which we find our delight in the will of God, and are marked by obedience, will determine the measure of our peaceful prosperity and fruitfulness.

Why are saints of God so frequently found in a state of tumultuous agitation? Because they are out of harmony with the will of God, if not in a state of open warfare against it. Only let us delight in His will and meditate day and night in the Scriptures, wherein His will and purposes are revealed, and we shall be fruitful and prosperous.

The various races of mankind, ever since they had existence as nations, have always been in a state of unrest and pursuing vain objects, yet the Psalmist with prophetic vision sweeps on to a moment now drawing near—as we believe—when their raging will reach a climax under kings and rulers of extraordinary genius and power. There is to be a last great concerted rising against Jehovah and against His Christ, with the object of ridding mankind once for all of those bands and cords which they feel to be only the relics of a less enlightened, a less scientific age, and therefore an intolerable check on human progress and glory. A day is coming when the Christian religion will be almost universally regarded as a relic of a darker age, to be no longer tolerated.

This prediction occasions no surprise to any who are observant of the drift so visible in Christendom. Then the cry will be, "Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away

their cords from us." That is really just what the leaders of a large part of Christendom are saying to-day, only they express their sentiments in rather different terms. *It is just the modern attitude towards the Bible.*

Many there may be who will pay tributes to the Bible in glowing terms. As ancient literature it is declared to be incomparable. Its maxims, its moral tone, the ethics it inculcates, surpass anything found elsewhere. The Figure portrayed in the Gospels, Jesus of Nazareth, is confessed to be absolutely unique; the life He lived without a rival. *Moreover our Authorized Version* is eulogized as a literary wonder, a well of pure English undefiled, so that no education is completely rounded off except the student has some acquaintance with it. All this and more may be said, and yet in another aspect of it the Bible may be rejected with scorn.

Whether these beautiful and complimentary things said about the Bible are intended as camouflage we cannot say; we do know however that they often act as camouflage, and hide the stubborn refusal to regard the Bible as any kind of authority. Immediately anyone quotes the Bible as an authority as to the things of God and religion, the modern "kings" and "rulers" of the religious world are up in arms, and empty the vials of their scorn. They accept it as giving an interesting history of the development of religion up to the first century of the Christian era, but that is all. A Luther, a Calvin, and many more besides, might quote it as the supreme authority, and gladly embrace its bands and cords, as also many a believer does to-day: they

wish to be free to reason, and speculate to their hearts' content, and so will have none of it.

So for well over a century the attack on the Bible has proceeded, with the sole object of undermining its authority. It has succeeded all too well with the mass of unconverted adherents of the Christian religion. The increasing lawlessness, the loosening of restraint in morals and behaviour, so noticeable in Protestant lands, witnesses to the way in which the bands have been broken and the cords of the Divine Word loosed.

The attack has not yet been pushed to its full length. It will culminate of course in the apostasy, and the revelation of the man of sin, as predicted in 2 Thessalonians 2—"who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped." When that point is reached every restraint will be removed, and the only "deity" that will remain will be *man*, in the person of "the man of sin."

Then indeed the nations will be in tumultuous agitation, and the peoples will vainly imagine themselves to be free to work out a glorious future without any restraint or interference. The "raging" of those days may take the form of an enthusiastic propaganda of adulation and applause.

And all this may seem very, very wonderful to those who are duped by Satanic power. To those who fear God it will be very terrible. To God Himself it will simply appear to be laughable.

The Scriptures do not often represent God as laughing. Three

times in the Psalms they do so, and once in Proverbs, and in each case the same thing is in view. If men refuse His mercy, if they maltreat His people, if they lawlessly deny Him and His Anointed, deriding His authority and His Word, they will be judged in due season. And not only judged, but cast down in such a way as to make them supremely ridiculous, the objects of derision to all created intelligences. The "laugh" will be on God's side in that day. Divine wrath and displeasure will be then poured out as verse 5 says; and the Son will execute that wrath, as the last verse indicates. Only He will not need to exert Himself. When His wrath is kindled but a little they will perish. The little finger of His wrath will be much thicker than the loins of their combined strength.

The ragings, the imaginations, the counsel that is taken by kings and rulers, all comes to nothing, and God's counsel stands. His purposes are not delayed one hour, and His King is set exactly as intended upon His holy hill of Zion. The word "set" is literally "anointed" as the margin of a reference Bible shows. The rulers and the kings will depart in judgment, the shouting and the tumult will die, and Jehovah's King will be anointed according to the decree.

Now let us put together the striking things concerning our blessed Lord, which greet us as we read the two opening Psalms. In the first place He is "*the Man*" who was wholly apart from the smallest taint of that which is evil, who found all His delight in the will of God, revealed in His word; and who consequently was fruitful in everything, carrying all to a pros-

perous issue to the glory of God. He was not the negation and denial of God's thoughts as the first man had been. The rather, "all the promises of God in Him are yea, and in Him Amen, unto the glory of God."

But secondly, this Man is "*His Anointed*," that is, Jehovah's Christ. He is the One anointed to carry out all the Divine pleasure, and sustain everything in a way that shall be worthy of God. This explains why Satan's malignant hatred is directed against Him, since once he was "the anointed cherub that covereth" (Ezek. 28. 14). Behind the raging and plots of men lies the craft and power of Satan, as the book of Revelation makes so plainly manifest.

Thirdly, the Man who is Jehovah's Anointed is "*My King*." The kings of the earth and the rulers of the last days will have a great overlord—the first beast of Revelation 13. He will be a king of kings, and control the destinies of the revived Roman Empire. Satanically inspired, he will be the type of strong man that will mightily appeal to the mass of men, and so be emphatically man's king. To him Satan will give "his seat" as well as his power, and he will be found on the "seven mountains" of Rome.

Sinai was the mountain characterized by the holy demands of God, and abject human failure. Rome has the seven mountains of human pride and glory, where the king of man's choice will have his seat. Jehovah's King will be anointed upon "Zion, the hill of My holiness." Zion has become the symbol of the sovereign mercy of God which leads to holiness and glory.

We may well thank God that we "are come unto mount Sion," and not to either Sinai or Rome.

And who is this Man who is both Anointed and King? In verse 7 we hear His voice speaking to us, and we discover lastly that He is Jehovah's Son. This is the decree, "*Thou art My Son*." As Son He is the Heir of all things, and well able to make good His title to the earth by judgments.

This seventh verse is worthy of special note. It is quoted by the Apostle Paul, as recorded in Acts 13; and he applied it to the raising up of Jesus at His first Advent. It is also quoted in Hebrews 1. 5, and there it is placed alongside a quotation from 1 Chronicles 17. 13, of words which in the first instance had reference to Solomon. It is not unusual to find that these inspired utterances, given originally in connection with important persons or things, had in them a depth of meaning which was by no means apparent when first uttered. And further, that predictions which in the fulness of their meaning will only be fulfilled at the second Advent, have a fulfilment at the first Advent. So it appears to be here.

Another illustration of the same thing is found in Psalm 89, where David and not Solomon is in question. There we read, "I will make him My firstborn, higher than the kings of the earth" (ver. 27). David was that in a certain sense. Christ will be that in every sense of the word. So in our Psalm He is the Son, acknowledged as such as He is introduced into the world, whether at His first Advent or His second. Being the Son He is the Heir of all things, with the power

to make good His title. Meanwhile He is the test for every man.

The hour of His public glory and of the overthrow of all human opposition and pretension is not yet arrived, so a word of admonition is given to the kings and judges of the earth and all others besides. There is still time to tender submission to the Lord and to serve Him. Then though trembling at the remembrance of His might, one may rejoice at the coming vindication and glory of the Son. If any would tender submission they must do so by honouring the Son. Kiss the Son," is the word; that is, salute Him by way of submission to His authority, render Him the homage that is His due.

No one will do this except they trust in Him. Hence the note upon which the psalm ends. The word used here for "trust," is one which has the sense of "take refuge." Blessed are all they that take refuge in Him. Amazing fact! Before the hour strikes when He will deal in righteous judgment, making good His kingly authority, ruling as with a rod of iron even the remotest of the nations, poor sinful men may trustingly take refuge in Him. It

reminds one of the saying attributed to Augustine that, "The only way to flee from God is to flee to God."

Blessed are all that have fled to Him. Do we not know it? If the blessedness was apparent in Old Testament days, how much more apparent to us who live in the light of the New Testament? Let us rejoice in the blessedness that is ours.

And do not let us forget that though He alone fully answered to the beautiful description of the godly in Psalm 1, yet that we are left to tread in His steps. The godliness there described is to characterize us to-day. We are to be marked by a careful avoidance of all that is evil, and of the evil men in whom these things find expression. We are to find our delight in the will of God our Father. We are to make His Word our continual meditation so that we may be instructed in His thoughts, and in His will in which we delight. Then we too—in the measure in which these things do characterize us—shall be like trees that are fruitful for God, and be prospered in the things that concern His Name.

Oh, may He go before you,
Through all the unknown days,
Preparing for your coming
And marking all your ways.
With strength for all your weakness
And for your blindness sight,
And joy for all your sadness
And for your darkness, light.

Oh, may He teach you always
To lift your eyes above,
And when His hand is hidden
To trust His changeless love.
To know that though He lead you
Through shadows grey and dim,
And by a strange, rough pathway
The end is known to Him.

Love has reached us in the depths of misery, but is not satisfied until it has seated us in the circle where wisdom orders everything. It has done its *most* in entering into death for us; it has done its *best* in setting us in glory, where every item is the perfection of wisdom.—J.B.S.

OUR PROSPECT.

E.W.T.

Faster, yes, faster fly the years,
 As towards the goal we press;
 Each milestone passed with joy we
 count,
 Knowing it leaves one less.

Brighter, yes, brighter on 'before,
 The prospect gleams ahead;
 The coming of the Lord draws near,
 The path with joy we tread.

Longing, yes, longings deeper grow
 To see the Face we love;
 May we be found e'en here below
 Set upon things above;

For this New Year may be the last
 That we on earth shall spend;
 This life's short span will soon be
 past,
 Then—joys that know no end.

“Let us press on!

The heavenly prize resplendent shines before us,
 The darkest hour is that before the dawn,
 The chariots of God are round us. O'er us
 Love's bright blue banner waves—
 Let us press on!”

“In faith we sing a song of thankfulness
 For that deep comfort Christ's belovèd share;
 The blessed hope of everlasting peace,
 The Home in God's high glory bright and fair:
 Awhile we wander in the wilderness,
 But that eternal Home awaits us there.”

“Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless His holy name”

Many are our faculties, emotions and capacities, but God has given them all to us, and they ought all to join in chorus to His praise. Half-hearted, ill-conceived, unintelligent praises are not such as we should render to our loving Lord. If the law of justice demanded all our heart and soul and mind for the Creator, much more may the law of gratitude put in a comprehensive claim for the homage of our whole being to the God of grace.

“Rest, rest, beloved, thy head upon My bosom,
 Lean on My arm and tell thy griefs to Me.
 My heart is thine, in all the full perfection
 Of sympathy, none else could give to thee.”

THE PRESENCE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

Inglis Fleming.

IT has been said that there are four great pillars of Christianity.

- 1 The incarnation and death of the Son of God.
- 2 His resurrection in power and ascension to the right hand of God.
- 3 The Coming and abiding presence of the Holy Ghost.
- 4 The Coming again of the Lord for the church and to establish His kingdom in glory.

It is of the third pillar that I wish to say a little. In doing so let us limit ourselves mainly to the consideration of the various ways in which He is spoken of in the Epistle to the Ephesians—the great Church epistle. Turning then to the first chapter, we read, "Ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession unto the praise of His glory" (vv. 13, 14).

THE SPIRIT OF PROMISE

is here. The promise of the Father has been fulfilled (Acts 1. 4). On the day of Pentecost He was shed forth and came upon the assembled believers. He came to abide forever with them (John 14. 16). It would be unintelligent to ask Him to come for He is present. He seals those who believe the gospel of our salvation. He marks them out as distinct from the rest of men. They are set apart as belonging to God Himself, to be here for His glory and praise. The seal looks back upon the work of Christ for us. It is on the ground of that work that we are redeemed to God. The earnest looks forward to the

redemption of the purchased possession, to the coming of the Lord Jesus to change our bodies of humiliation and to fashion them like to His body of glory. The earnest is a payment on account, the balance of which is to be received in the future. It is as a bond, a contract between two parties. So we are "sealed unto the day of redemption." There is separation and security in the seal, and expectation of completion in the earnest.

It is interesting to notice that the first result of the presence of the Holy Spirit as brought before us in this epistle is towards God Himself, who has sealed us. Thus we read "For through Him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father."

AS THE SPIRIT OF PRIVILEGE

the Holy Spirit is seen in this verse (2. 18). And let us observe that the whole of the Trinity of the Godhead, are in view "*Through Him,*" that is, through Christ whose precious blood is our sure title.

"*We both*"—that is, Jewish and Gentile believers alike "*Have access.*" We have privilege of approach "*By one Spirit,*" who forms the unity of "*both*" Jew and Gentile and is our power of enjoyment and of worship.

"*Unto the Father.*" Thus in the joy of our relationship as sons before His face we may bow in thankful adoration. Our servile fear has been dismissed. The knowledge of His love has cast out the dread which once filled our hearts. In filial reverence we bow before Him with our praises. "*We have bold-*

ness and access with confidence by the faith of Him." "Having therefore brethren boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus . . . let us draw near" (Heb. 10. 19-22).

Our God and Father desires our heart's love and adoration. He seeks worshippers in spirit and in truth. Our Lord Jesus sought and found by His atoning death, worshippers for the Father, and the Holy Spirit is the power by which we come before Him to magnify Him.

In chapter 3, we read the apostle's prayer to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, on behalf of the saints to whom He has by the Spirit unfolded the truth. "That He would grant you according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man."

THE SPIRIT OF POWER

is now in view. "The inner man" is the part of our renewed being which has to do with God in spiritual relationships. ("The outward men," that in which we are in contact with the things of time and sense, perishes; the inward man is renewed day by day, as we walk in the Spirit.) To perceive the breadth and length and depth and height of the purposes of God and to know the love of Christ, He dwelling in our hearts by faith, we need the strengthening of the Holy Spirit. Human intelligence and wisdom are insufficient. The things which God hath prepared for them that love Him are unseen by the natural eye, unheard by the natural man, unknown by the natural heart. They are now "revealed unto us by God by His Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea the deep things of God . . . Now we have re-

ceived, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God, that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God."

If the Spirit of God is unhindered He will lead us further and further into the understanding of the wealth of spiritual blessing which is ours. He will guide us "into all truth." But He alone is our power for this. He is the Spirit of understanding, the anointing by which we apprehend—the unction by which we understand the things—the deep things of the riches of the glory of our God and Father. Hence the importance of walking in the Spirit, of being led by Him, day by day. There is a danger of our being content in having life in the Spirit—of being quickened by Him out of spiritual death. But "If we live in the Spirit let us also walk in the Spirit," cries the apostle (Gal. 5. 25).

THE SPIRIT OF PARTICIPATION

is the aspect in which the Holy Spirit is seen in chapter 4. 3. We are exhorted to "walk worthy of the vocation wherewith" we "are called." Called out from among Jews and Gentiles and formed into one body—the church—we are to go on together. "By one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free: and have been all made to drink into one Spirit" (1 Cor. 12. 13). To this calling to oneness we are to answer. For this we need "all lowliness and meekness, longsuffering, forbearance and love." These the Holy Spirit will produce as fruit in our lives. They are the Christlikeness in which God delights. With these in manifestation we are to be found "endeavouring to keep

the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." The unity has been formed by the Holy Spirit—we are to observe it earnestly, and to seek to avoid anything which will mar the peace among saints. This is the desire of our God and Father.

The word "together" marks the epistle. We are not only blessed as individuals. We have been formed into one organic whole. The enmity between Jew and Greek, and between man and man is removed in the cross of Christ. His death has broken down the barriers. Out of death we have been "quickened together with Christ," have been "raised up together" and made to "sit together" in the heavenlies. Thus we are called to go on together here in the common enjoyment of the rich provision made for our happiness in the grace of our God and Father.

Alas! that Christians should be separated by man-made barriers and that thus their testimony to the world should be hindered. "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one for another," said our gracious Lord (John 13. 35). Let us seek to express the love to *all His own* as we are "taught of God to love one another" (1 Thess. 4. 9). For this we need to obey the leading of the Holy Spirit—the Spirit of grace—"The love of the Spirit" that which He produces in our hearts is to be cultivated with diligence. Nothing is to be allowed in thought, word or deed which will hinder it.

THE SPIRIT OF PURITY.

"Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers. And grieve not

the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption" (4. 29, 30). There is no thought here of grieving Him away—He seals us "unto the day of redemption." He abides with the saints for ever. But, this being the case, we are to exercise watchfulness lest in any way we act so as to pain Him who is our holy guest. Thought, word and deed are to be watched continuously that nothing is contrary to His wish. "All bitterness and wrath and anger and clamour and evil speaking" are to "be put away." The evil is to be refused utterly. On the other hand the good is to be cultivated. "Be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you. Be ye therefore followers [imitators] of God as dear children and walk in love as Christ also hath loved us" (4. 31—5. 2).

The old saying, "Evil for good is devil-like, evil for evil is man-like; good for evil is God-like," may well be pondered by us.

And do we not forget at times the adjective "Holy," in this connection? All that is unholy is to be shunned by us so that Christ in His moral excellencies may be produced in us by the Spirit's power.

The Holy Spirit as

THE SPIRIT OF PRAISE

is spoken of in 5. 18, 19.

"Be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit; speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord; Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ."

Never are we exhorted to be sealed

by the Holy Spirit—never are we exhorted to have Him as the earnest or the anointing. These are Gods given to all believers. But we are exhorted to “be filled with the Spirit.” To allow Him to have fullness of control, to act unhindered in our hearts. He has come to undertake for us, to take charge of us while here in this world, and to employ us in the worship of God and in witness for Him. For this we need to be filled with the Spirit.” This filling is not “How much I can have of Him,” as “How much He can have of me,” as some one has said. He is “Not one to get hold of and use, but One to get hold of and use me.” To this we should give attention. The result of being filled with the Spirit will be jubilation in the presence of God. Praise will fill our hearts and flow from our lips as we make melody to the Lord. With the heart thus occupied with the goodness of God and of Christ, the world will lose its attractions—its geegaws and glitter will not appeal to us. “The joy of the Lord is our strength” to refuse the best the world has to offer. “The full soul loatheth an honeycomb; but to the hungry soul every bitter thing is sweet” (Prov. 27. 7). The heart will be “satisfied with favour and full with the blessing of the Lord” (Deut. 33. 23). and so overflow in praise to God, and in seeking the help and blessing of those around us.

Turning to chapter 6. we find,

THE SPIRIT OF PRAYER

in verse 18. “Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints.”

The saints have been called upon

to “put on the whole armour of God,” so that they may “stand against” all the power and wiles of the devil. The loins girt with truth, the breastplate of righteousness worn, the shoes shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace, the shield of faith covering all, the helmet of salvation protecting the head, the Word of God—the sword of the Spirit wielded, all these are to be accompanied by prayer and supplication. These latter are the lines of communication with our base of operations. We are ever dependent upon our God and Father to be maintained in our spiritual warfare. No strength have we of our own, no reserve force in ourselves upon which we may draw, but we may “be strong in the Lord and in the might of His strength.” There is unlimited strength with Him. He is all-sufficient for our salvation and He is all-sufficient for our service. But we need to have the constant supply of His power. Thus we are called to unceasing dependence. “Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit.” We ever need to be supported by our God, and He is ever ready to supply all our need for walk and worship and warfare.

Thus we see how all important is the presence and action of the Holy Spirit in us who believe, and how careful we should be lest in any way we oppose His operations in us and through us.

Wonderful is the privilege which is ours of being in this world for the glory and praise of our God and Father and of our Lord Jesus Christ. This we may be as we walk in the power of the Holy Spirit. May it be ours thus to be found until the coming of our Lord.

TWO YOUNG MEN OF SCRIPTURE.

T. Oliver.

Read Judges 6 and 2 Timothy 1. 2-7.

THERE is a striking similarity between the characters of Gideon and Timothy. Both were young men. Both had received good training in the school of God from their infancy. Both had exercised hearts as to what befitted the service of God. Both were naturally of backward disposition and thus tending to the shirking of responsibility. No committee of experts would have selected either of them for the work with which they were ultimately entrusted. But man's ways are not God's ways. He selects the most unlikely agents for the execution of His will.

The secret of Gideon's initial success is evinced in the fact that he was found threshing wheat by the winepress, for the purpose of hiding it from the Midianites (Judges 6. 11). In Timothy there was unfeigned faith which had marked three generations. Moreover, from a child he had known the Holy Scriptures. The only (yet all-sufficient) resource that the servant of the Lord has. The *typical* teaching of Gideon's act for us is that as he seized every opportunity of securing the product of the land which was evidence of God's goodness to His people, so we should appreciate the preciousness of Christ, so that our souls might be fed in secret meditation thereon. "Unto you, therefore, who believe, Christ is precious" (1 Peter 2. 7).

One is apt to think that the preciousness of thought in connection with the person of Christ is vouchsafed to those who can apprehend the meaning of scriptural texts and give wonderful expositions thereon.

No! the simplicity of faith is the key which opens the door to that mine of wealth which transcends the richest store of this world's treasures. Gideon was engaged in this way when the Midianites would have destroyed the food of the people of God. So to-day in much obscurity the believers have the peerless privilege of making much of the precious jewels in scripture which reflect the exquisite lustre of Christ. The modern Midianites would do all in their power to destroy the food of the people of God. But thanks be to God, there are still many who prize the Scriptures.

While so occupied, the angel of the Lord said to Gideon, "The Lord is with thee, thou mighty man of valour." From the study of the chapter we would never have recognised him as such. But he was a man with an exercised heart. The Apostle Paul received from the Lord the intelligence that His strength is made perfect in weakness. However, notwithstanding such encouragement, Gideon pleaded his insignificance in Israel. It is important that the servant of the Lord should realise not merely his littleness, but his absolute nothingness. We are apt to be proud of our littleness, but if we are absolutely zero then there is no room for the exaltation of the flesh. God can easily dispense with our service, but it is matchless grace that one should be taken up and fitted for the Master's use.

Gideon threw down the altar of Baal by night, because he was afraid to do so in the day. How provoking he was in seeking signs from

God to confirm his commission! Also it is worthy of note that God was long-suffering in reacting favourably to all his tests. On many occasions are we any better than Gideon, when we test God to see if our commission is valid? But ultimately Gideon came into the light of consciousness of divine favour. He built up an altar showing that his service was linked up with God's infinite spring of power. His first work was to throw down the altar of Baal in his father's house. Thus testifying in the home circle with the result that his father was won over to the cause. The Spirit of the Lord immediately fitted him for the work and he blew a trumpet. His coward spirit was made brave.

In his sallying forth against the Midianites, he was obedient to the Lord's instructions. The first test eliminated 22,000 of his followers and left him with 10,000. Modern masters of strategy would have thought his action questionable. Surely with his skeleton army he would have been well advised to fight a rear-guard action in retreat, and so have forestalled the fame of Xenophon with his 10,000 Greeks in their retreat from Persia across the mountains of Armenia, 850 years later. But the subsequent procedure was right in the face of all worldly wise counsel. The second test ap-

plied had the result of eliminating ninety-seven per cent of the reduced army, and he advanced to the attack with only 300 men. So that the glory of any achievement might be of God and not of man. God will not give His glory to another!

As we have seen, Timothy, like his Old Testament prototype, was of a shrinking disposition. So the aged Apostle impressed him to stir up the gift of God which was in apostolic delegation (that gift was in the realm of responsibility. There is a gift from God in the gracious administration of the Lord which is not subject to our effort). The apostle went on to say that the spirit of fear (lit. cowardice) which was liable to dominate as in the case of Timothy was not God-given. God gives the spirit of power, love and of wise discretion (2 Timothy 1. 6-7), so that we may effect the service which He has put in our responsibility. It is well to observe that power is intimately associated with love. Indeed all manifestation of power is contingent on our being imbued with love for the souls of saved and unsaved alike. Moreover, love is the connecting link between power and wise discretion. How often the exercise of power is marred by the lack of discretion on the part of the servant of the Lord. But we may safely leave their effective conjunction in the efficiency of love.

If I should dare to take and use
 The gift bestowed by Thee,
 In other ways than Thou wouldst choose—
 Then, Lord, in love for me
 Lay Thy dear piercèd hand on mine
 Till I have surely known
 That all I have is only Thine,
 And nothing of my own.

THE GREAT SECRET.

W. Bramwell Dick.

Notes of an Address on Acts 11. 19-30.

THERE are two ways in which we may read the Acts of the Apostles. First: As an historical record of "The Wonderful Works of God" (2. 11), from the advent of the Holy Spirit, consequent upon the Lord Jesus taking His place at the right hand of God, till Paul's arrival at Rome. This will form intensely interesting reading, and as we follow the triumphal progress of the gospel and note that the more fiercely the opposition raged, the more the good news spread and the work of the Lord prospered, our hearts will be filled with ever-increasing delight. It may be, however, we will feel that we want something more. In other words we desire to learn the why and wherefore of all these wonderful actings. We study the Epistles, particularly the Epistle to the Ephesians, and as we do so, we feel that we have found the golden key that opens the door, and discloses to us the secret of a divine scheme which, through God's servants, was being carried out exactly according to plan. We might see what looked like being a very fine building in course of erection. We ask one of the workmen what is going on. "I believe it is to be a grand hall," he replies, "but I really do not know anything about it." We meet the Architect. He shows us a magnificent plan, and says, "I expect in a year's time to have erected on this ground an exact reproduction of that plan." God, in His infinite mercy, has let us into the secret of His plan. In the light of it we read and reread the Acts of the Apostles, this is the second way, and we are delighted as we see the plan opening out, the work commenced, it proceeds,

and we are able to look beyond the record of the Acts to its glorious consummation.

In the first place, there is the great Builder, the Lord Jesus Christ, in glory; then there is the Holy Spirit on earth, and we also see various workers come on the scene, do their part and pass off, and still the work goes on. Peter, on the day of Pentecost, (chapter 2) carried out the first part of his commission (Matthew 16. 19); the work went on and prospered. The enemy sought to crush it, and Stephen, that valiant witness, was sent to heaven (chapter 11). The more severe the persecution, the greater the success of the divine work. As the disciples were scattered the glad tidings spread abroad. "Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and preached Christ unto them . . . and there was great joy in that city" (8. 5, 8). Then he went to "Gaza, which is desert", and there he "preached Jesus" to the Ethiopian Eunuch who got the blessing, and, doubtless, carried the good news to "the uttermost part of the earth." Thus was the Lord's instruction (1. 8), being carried out; and it may be that then Philip graduated as an Evangelist, a decree credited only to him, and which might well be desired by all.

In chapter 9 is recorded the conversion of the arch-enemy of Christ and His disciples, Saul of Tarsus. In chapter 10 we find Peter completing the commission entrusted to him; Gentiles are brought into blessing and with this the record of the activity of that splendid worker practically ended. For the moment

there seemed to be a period of quiet. Following the conversion of Saul, we have the significant statement: "Then had the churches rest throughout all Judæa and Galilee and Samaria, and were edified; and walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, were multiplied" (9. 31). In the divine arithmetic there are rules of multiplication and addition. It has been reserved for later days to invent a rule of division which has been much in evidence but which God does not recognise.

Now we come to the portion indicated at the head of our paper, viz. 11. 19-30. "They which were scattered abroad" preached the word to the Jews; (v. 19); others preached the Lord Jesus to the Gentiles; "And the hand of the Lord was with them: and a great number believed, and turned unto the Lord" (verses 20, 21). Observe! These are nameless workers. Unknown except by the Lord, but all having a part in the carrying out of the great plan and yet, up to that time, the plan had not been revealed. The heartening news reached the assembly at Jerusalem "and they sent forth Barnabas, that he should go as far as Antioch" (v. 22). "A good man" was he, "full of the Holy Ghost and of faith" (v. 24). He had shown his devotedness to the Lord by laying at the Apostles' feet the proceeds of the sale of his land (4. 36, 37); he had commended Saul of Tarsus to the disciples at Jerusalem; (9. 27), and, on the occasion that we are considering he went to encourage the young converts at Antioch. He "exhorted them all, that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord" (v. 23).

We see how prominent the name

of the Lord is just here. They were under the sway of the Lord, they were subject to the leading of the Lord; they found all their resource in the Lord. What a lesson for us! "Then departed Barnabas to Tarsus, for to seek Saul" (v. 25). Why did he do this? Did he merely follow an impulse? We trow not. We feel sure he was led by the Lord, and that the Lord was clearing the way for the divulging of the great secret. For a whole year Barnabas and Saul "assembled themselves with the church and taught much people" (v. 26). Thus we see the church in existence. We see also these two servants of Christ so alive to the need of His own that for a whole year "they taught." Is there not need for teaching to-day? Is there a danger of being so obsessed with preaching that we omit the teaching and those who profess to get blessing do not enter into God's great secret, they are starved and stunted, and ultimately drift away? Is there such a rush in these days, and the absence of desire for much teaching, that a year's teaching would be out of the question? "The disciples were first called Christians at Antioch" (v. 26). This may have been a name of reproach, now-a-days it is a badge of respectability. Then if a person was called a Christian, those around rightly expected to see Christ in them. It was probably because of this that the name was given.

The closing incident of the chapter shows how the divine plan was operating though it was still a secret. When the Gentile believers heard of the coming dearth, they "determined to send relief unto the brethren which dwelt in Judæa" (v. 29). They who by nature were poles apart, had learned that by grace

they were brethren, and though, at that point, they knew nothing of the priceless truth of the one body they acted as those who were members one of another.

Shall we read once again the Acts of the Apostles, or the Acts of the Holy Spirit, in the way we have ventured to suggest? We believe the result will be that we will extol

God's wisdom; magnify His grace and praise Him for permitting us to live in this, the day of the full revelation. As we look on to the end of it all, we will take up the divine pæan of praise and say:—
"To Him be glory in the assembly in Christ Jesus unto all generations of the age of ages. Amen" (Eph 3. 21, New Trans.).

The Saviour's Name.

"**L**ORD! remember me," says the penitent thief, "when Thou comest into Thy kingdom." One of the ancient writers addresses the petitioner after this manner: "Whence didst thou know that that same person that died in thy company, and passed for a malefactor like thyself, how didst thou know that He was thy Lord and Saviour?" And he makes him answer thus: "Oh!" says he, "I could discern it by the very testimony of His enemies. These words which they flung upon Him in reproach, 'He saved others—Himself He cannot save'; this looks so like a Saviour—to save others by giving up Himself!' . . . So when Pilate gave this testimony to our Lord, "I find no cause of death in this Man," St. Ambrose has this remark upon it. Says he, "There was no cause of death in the Man for He was innocent; but there was cause of death in His Name, which He must die in order to make good. His name JESUS upon the cross was a certificate of the cause, end, and design of His death.

"The inscription over a malefactor usually signifies what he has done; that over our Saviour signified what He must do, viz., 'Save His people

from their sins,' as a sacrifice. O ye Jews," continues he, "when you said 'Let Him come down from the cross, and we will believe.' Had He come down He would have left His name JESUS behind Him, and we should have had reason to have inverted the argument and to have said, 'He hath saved Himself, and therefore He cannot save us.'"

He would not abandon His character. No; that inscription was written in Latin, Greek and Hebrew: three languages that would then have gone all over the world, as if designed to express that He died to save out of "all kindreds, tongues and people." In a word, had He come down from the cross and "saved Himself," He might have been our Lord, or any other name, becoming so great a person; but JESUS, in the sense of the text, He could not be.

"There is none other name given under heaven whereby you can be saved. . . . All the other names He wears will signify nothing to you without this—nothing that you can take any comfort in. They will be all against you; and this name, too, will be against you if it be not for you, if "you neglect so great salvation."

OUR SHADOW INFLUENCE.

Inglis Fleming.

INFLUENCE! that "unseen power of one person over another." There is something strange, almost inexplicable about it.

A stone is cast into the midst of a small lake. There is the resultant splash, the following eddies extending, ever extending, until the whole surface of the lake is covered.

To-day A affects B. To-morrow B affects C. The next day C affects D and so on in an endless succession. Again to-morrow A affects E. Then E affects F and so interminably. And every day the effect of influence is felt and will be until time is no more. And—serious thought—our influence may be felt in eternal issues too. Am I not right then in saying this is almost inexplicable?

And then it is not what we say only, but what we are which is operative upon others. And, perhaps, it is more what we are than what we say which moulds and fashions those about us. Our unconscious influence is the most powerful, probably, of all that which we exert.

Dr. A. T. Schofield, the mental specialist, used to tell a story of how he had been affected by the thought of unconscious influence. As a young man he was listening to a somewhat prosy sermon being read by an aged preacher in an uninteresting voice. Suddenly the youth was awakened to attention by the expression, "Our life casts a shadow as well as our body." The brief utterance was never forgotten. On the contrary it was frequently referred to. And passing it on, Dr. Schofield would refer his hearers or readers to the fact that it would seem that God was pleased to cause the

shadow of Peter as he passed by on his way to have a healing effect upon the sick ones who were brought and placed by the wayside where Peter might walk (Acts 5. 15).

Thinking of Peter we may recall how his influence was powerful. At the tomb of our Lord when at His resurrection, it had been vacated, Peter entered at once though John "that other disciple" had come first to the sepulchre. But when Peter had entered "then went in that other disciple . . . and he saw and believed." So far his influence was good (John 20. 3-8). But at Antioch Peter feared the legal Jews from Judea and ate no longer with the Gentiles as he had done aforetime in the liberty of the gospel. His example affected Barnabas. Others also were carried away into a path of deceit. This conduct of Peter brought upon him the strong censure of the apostle Paul, who felt the truth of the gospel was at stake (see Gal. 2. 11-16).

But Peter is not the only individual of whose influence—conscious or unconscious—we might speak. All down the centuries instances are afforded us of its far-reaching power.

Eve influenced Adam. Abram influenced Lot. Naomi influenced Orpah and Ruth. Daniel influenced Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah (Dan. 1. 8-21). Andrew influenced Peter, Philip influenced Nathaniel and so we might continue to quote the Old Testament and the New for examples of the power of our ways and of our words.

But perhaps the most beautiful instance of unconscious influence is found in that of John the Baptist (John 1. 35-37), "Looking upon Jesus, as He walked, he saith, Be-

hold the Lamb of God." He was soliloquizing it seems, gazing upon the Son of God. Two of his disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus. Blessed influence indeed!

There is an atmosphere created by the presence of some which is indefinable but forceful in truth. It may be for good or for evil, but it is there, and cannot be fully concealed if the person producing it so wished.

Moses' face when he came from the mount shone—sent forth beams or horns of light and power. Of this apparently at first he was unaware. Others took knowledge of it. So with the disciples who had been with Jesus. The fact became known around.

The prayerful desire of one in our own day was, "To shine and not to know it." And this shining will be produced as one is with the Lord in private and personal communion. "Beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord," we "are changed into the same image from glory to glory" (2 Cor. 3. 18).

In the great chapter on Christian care and consideration for others (Romans 14. Read the chapter), we are exhorted to consider the result of our conduct and warned that "none of us liveth to himself." No! we cannot prevent our influence.

Many of us as children have sought to run away from our shadow but always found our endeavour profitless and vain. Our shadow was never defeated in the race try as we would. This is as true in spiritual things as in physical. Hence the seriousness of the matter.

We, Christians, are—not should be—"the epistle of Christ." Alas! that we should blot and blur by our blunders and sin this writing of our Lord by the Holy Spirit.

And we are, as often pointed out, a fifth gospel, the only gospel which many will read, and of what importance it may be in the lives of some.

It is said that one who had gone to the foreign mission field, was about to leave it as he was unable to master the language of those he had gone to help. But the voices of the white workers and of the black natives were as the voice of one, that he should remain at the post. His whole life was such that he was a more powerful witness for Christ than the choicest words could have been.

May it be ours to bear such a testimony to have such an influence, to cast such a shadow, that "Christ liveth in me" may be a practical reality in each of our lives, and not a Christian doctrine merely.

ALL THE ATTRIBUTES OF DEITY BELONGED TO CHRIST ON EARTH, BUT AS SOVEREIGN LORD IT DID NOT ALWAYS PLEASE HIM TO DISPLAY THEM.

He that seeks to belittle the Word made flesh digs his own hell: and he that seeks to rob the Son of Man of His unchanging and essential Deity, robs the sons of men of their only Saviour. Do not, I beseech thee, O my Reader, seek to scrutinize the Inscrutable, but rather trust in Him with all thy might, and lean not to thine own understanding. (Prov. 3. 5). Do not analyse but believe.

WHO WILL SHOW US ANY GOOD.

F. B. Hole.

(Read Psalms 3 and 4.)

TROUBLE of one sort or another is the common lot of man. Eliphaz the Temanite made the assertion that, "Man is born unto trouble, as the sparks fly upward," (Job 5. 7), and it can hardly be contradicted. The child of God is not accorded any special exemption in this matter. Indeed it would seem that he gets an increased quantity, for he is confronted by opposition from the world, if not persecution, which, in the very nature of things, is unknown by the child of this world. With it however he gets the support of God, and ultimately he will get a salvation equally divine.

Sometimes the child of God is found in a position where he is smarting under trials and sorrows that he has really brought upon his own head. In His holy government God has placed His hand upon him, and he has to reap what he has sown. This perhaps is the severest test of all. When David wrote Psalm 3 he was in this plight, for he was fleeing from Absalom his son. That was perhaps the blackest hour of all his varied history, for its details bore a strongly retributive character. He had sown to the flesh and was now reaping a perfect whirlwind of corruption.

In that dark hour the number of those who troubled him had greatly increased. Many had risen up against him under the leadership of his rebellious son; and again many others there were who discerned the hand of God in it, and hence they concluded, "There is no help for him in God."

In this conclusion they were absolutely wrong. Precisely the opposite was true. There was no help for him *any where but in God*, as the next two verses show. Jehovah was a shield of protection to him. He was also the One in whom he could make his boast, the One who would lift up his head when men sought to cast him down. To Jehovah he cried, and was heard "out of His holy hill."

In this there is very great comfort for us. How many times have we come under the disciplinary hand of God. Sometimes we may have been conscious of it; though more frequently we may not have realized that we had brought our troubles upon ourselves. Whichever way it may be however, the aim of the devil would be to keep us from turning to God; and he will never lack many to voice his desires and insinuate that God will no longer be on our part: there is no hope or help for us in Him. Let us learn the lesson that this is a lie. David under discipline was not shut out from God, and neither are we.

Someone, however, may wish to tell us that we need not drag the devil into this matter, since as far as they are concerned their conscience works with sufficient acuteness to keep them away from God. That is so of course, if there has not been honest and thorough confession of the sin.

We venture to say that David would never have written thus in Psalm 3, on the occasion of his flight from

Absalom, if he had not previously written Psalm 51, as the outpouring of his heart in the confession of his great transgression. But having judged himself, and acknowledged his sin, he was restored to communion with God; and therefore was able to face with confidence in Him the tribulation that came on him according to God's governmental dealings.

Let us then keep short accounts with God. If we sin we have an Advocate with the Father, so our course is to judge ourselves, and confess, when we shall be restored to communion with God, and be able to accept whatever may come upon us in the way of discipline, without losing confidence in Him. Then in the midst of the trouble we may find God to be our Shield and Glory, and ultimately our Deliverer. The latter part of Psalm 3 gives a beautiful picture of David calm and sustained and unafraid in the midst of his afflictions; and then finally delivered out of them.

But this is by no means all. Psalm 3 is followed by another Psalm of David, which, though not distinguished as being written at the same time, yet follows most appropriately as regards its theme. In it we are enabled to see that his time of trouble led to other desirable things. He gained, (1) spiritual blessing and enlargement for himself; and, (2) capacity for rendering testimony to others.

In the first verse of Psalm 4, we encounter this remarkable statement, "Thou hast enlarged me when I was in distress." The word for "distress" in the original is the same as that for "trouble" in the first verse of Psalm 3. It apparently

has in it the thought of straitness, narrowness, pressure.

In Darby's New Translation the words are rendered, "In pressure Thou hast enlarged me." Here indeed is an extraordinary thing. As far as things material go, we should certainly associate in our minds pressure and contraction. A certain substance is placed in a powerful press in process of manufacture. As the result of heavy pressure it is solidified and strengthened. That we understand and expect. But we certainly do not expect to discover it to be *enlarged* by the process, but rather diminished. The working of the spiritual is in this case the opposite of the natural and material.

No "distress" can be otherwise than troublesome and grievous, yet if God takes it into His hands and uses it as a press it greatly enlarges us. Illustrations of this fact abound by the ten thousand in the experiences and lives of God's saints. Trouble in itself does not enlarge: it is going through 'trouble with God that enlarges. It is when He takes up the trouble and skilfully uses it as a press that the blessing results.

If we understood this more fully we should not be so anxious for a trouble-free life. We should not yearn to be always sailing under blue skies; always walking a smooth road with pleasure as a companion—And this is true even when sorrow comes to us, not as the result of our faithfulness to Christ and His service, but as discipline, the fruit of our own folly and sin.

"I walked a mile with Pleasure,
She chattered all the way,
But left me none the wiser
For all she had to say.

I walked a mile with Sorrow,
 And ne'er a word said she;
 But, oh, the things I learned from
 her,
 When Sorrow walked with me."

It is experience that counts. In the hours of our distress, that which heretofore had been merely doctrinal now becomes experimental and consequently practical. There is many a thing as to which the youngest and most inexperienced believer can say, I believe that because the Bible affirms it. God has said it and that commands my faith. In after years the same believer, no longer young and inexperienced, is saying, And how fully have I found it to be true; and what enrichment of heart and life has come to me in the proving of it, even though the process of proving it has been a painful one.

Take two well-known Scriptural cases as illustrating this point. The Apostle Peter sadly broke down and denied his Lord. This involved him in painful experiences, culminating in the probing he underwent at the hands of the Lord Himself, as to his ways and motives, as recorded in John 21. Yet he was enlarged thereby, for being restored himself he was to strengthen his brethren and feed the lambs and sheep of Christ's flock. Moreover he did not fail in either courage or boldness when face to face with the foes, as we see in the early chapters of Acts.

Again, consider the case of the Apostle Paul, as he himself presents it in 2 Corinthians 12. The discipline under which he came was preventive and not retributive, but that did not make the "thorn in the flesh," any less trying. "Thorn" is we understand, a rather inadequate word. It should rather be "stake." Now to have a stake driven through

one's flesh must be a fearful and crippling business. This Paul had. But by it he learned experimentally that the grace of Christ was sufficient for him. He discovered how the strength of Christ could be perfected in his weakness. He learned to glory in his infirmities with the power of Christ resting upon him.

Come now, what do we know in practical reality of the grace of Christ, the strength of Christ, the power of Christ? Do we know as much as Paul? We do not indeed! Why not? Because we do not know much about a stake in our flesh. In our cases, we do probably only have experience of a mere thorn.

Paul, we must remember, had been caught up into the third heaven, where he heard unspeakable things. That must have been a tremendous experience, and brought him amazing enlightenment as to the things of God. But we venture to think that it did not accomplish with him what the stake in the flesh did. In the trying circumstances of weakness and cripplement there was an opportunity for the experience of the grace, the strength and the power of Christ, not afforded amid the glories of the third heaven.

See also, in Psalm 4, how David, enlarged in soul, learned to differentiate between the "godly" and the "sons of men." The sons of men turned his "glory" into shame. Jehovah was David's glory, as the third Psalm has told us. But Jehovah was nothing to them; indeed worse than nothing in their estimation. Vanity was what commanded their hearts, and the objects of their pursuit were but a lie. From all that those who feared God were separate.

They were separate, not because they fancied themselves better than others, but because Jehovah had set them apart for Himself. God had claimed them, and just because He claimed them He disciplined them. The sons of men may pursue their vanities and their lies with apparent impunity. They are not dealt with, as God deals with those who are in relationship with Him. They are allowed to heap up judgment to themselves against the coming day of wrath. But God keeps short accounts with His people. And that is why we do well to keep short accounts with Him.

However, the godly are called to render testimony in the presence of the sons of men; and when, like David, they have been learners in the school of discipline, they are the more qualified to do so.

The pursuit of vanity does not bring any satisfaction to the sons of men. The very reverse. It leaves them sadly discontented, in just the same frame of mind as it left Solomon, who came to the conclusion that all was vanity and vexation of spirit. Consequently their cry is, "Who will show us any good?" They ask that question evidently with the air of those who believe that there is no real answer to it, because no real good is to be found.

Many there were who asked that question, just as there were many who asserted of David that there was no hope for him in God. Pretty clearly both the assertion and the question sprang from the same root of utter unbelief. And without a doubt the many who asserted and asked were *wholly* wrong on both occasions. There was help for David in God, and *only* there. Absolute

and eternal good *exists*, and there are those who can *show it when challenged*. David accepted the challenge and proceeded to show the good. He not only knew it theoretically, but also experimentally.

In the first place he declares that good is found in the light of Jehovah's countenance. No "good" is to be found in the darkness of this world: to obtain it we must stand in the light of God. David knew this, but how much more ought we to know it, seeing we are in the light of His countenance, fully shining in Christ. In the advent of our Lord Jesus the very face of God has indeed been lifted upon us, and not merely His "back parts" as in the case of Moses. All true good is to be found in the knowledge of God and of Christ Jesus our Lord. Nothing surpasses, "the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus" our Lord, nor will surpass it to all eternity.

The light of Jehovah's countenance was, in a general way, David's answer to the question. However he evidently felt that details of a more particular sort were called for. These details he supplied in the two verses that end our Psalm. As we draw to a close we will note the three things upon which he dwells.

First, there is *gladness*. But take particular note that the gladness of which he speaks comes from God, has its source in God, and consequently is independent of earthly things. It is heart gladness, and not the superficial, frothy article in which the world deals. It was God who put it into the heart of David. We are not surprised therefore to discover it is of the sort that flourishes above all that can be pro-

duced by earthly good, the sort that continues when the other fails. In David's day a great deal of the wealth was represented by corn and wine, which thereby became symbolic of the good things of earth. When bountiful harvests caused them to increase it was an occasion of gladness. But the gladness which has its source in the light of God's countenance is far better than that.

A further and greater contrast is furnished in Habakkuk 3. Even when the corn and wine and all else fail, the gladness of heart which is of God *abides*. It is *eternal*.

In the second place there is *peace*: such peace that David could lay himself down and sleep in happy forgetfulness of himself and his troubles. Jehovah was a shield unto him, so why should he not do so? If God cared for him why should he be consumed or distracted with care for himself? This again be it noted, was the fruit of an earlier experience. When many had risen up against him under Absalom's leadership he cried unto the Lord, he was heard, and then in childlike confidence he lay down and slept, and awakened sustained of the Lord. What he had done once he could trustfully do again. And he could testify to the sons of men that he was prepared to do it, no matter what the distress or pressure he was under.

And in the third place there was the *safety* that was guaranteed to him by the presence of the Lord. Men might threaten and imperil, but the Lord, and the Lord alone, made him dwell in safety.

The generation of the disappointed, the discontented, the disillusioned, has not ceased out of the earth. We suspect the rather that it has multiplied amazingly. There are still many who say, *Who will show us any good?* Still they challenge us in this way. Are we ready and glad to answer them? And can we do so out of glad hearts that not only have tasted, but also are in the full enjoyment of the grace of our God?

We can point them to Jesus, the Son of God in whom God is known to us. We can speak of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. And then we can tell of the gladness and peace and safety, which have been brought to us by the gospel. Only perhaps we should reverse their order, and speak of safety, peace and gladness. Safety, certainty and enjoyment are indeed the foundation of the "good" which the gospel has brought to us, and of which we gladly testify to others.

And the more we are enlarged under pressure the brighter will our testimony be.

Satan cheats many of God's children out of accomplishing things that God would have them do, by making them restless in the homely paths that God opens up to them of doing things that they can do; and sets their heart upon doing things that they cannot do; and thus they leave the path of actual achievement to brood over things they would like to do, and which they never will do.

DIVINE DELIGHT.

H. J. Vine.

TWICE did the voice of God from the excellent glory express His pleasure in His beloved Son, as a man upon the earth. He who revealed to us in full perfection the grace and truth and love of God, ever yielded a sweet savour to God our Father.

The work of Christ for us upon the Cross—that great atoning sacrifice, and the great work of the Holy Spirit in us who believe, have as their great end the bringing of our hearts to find our delight in the same Person who is so precious to the heart of God, and that in spite of the hindrances which we discover through the presence of sin in us.

There is, however, thank God, a spring in every true believer which ever turns to Him as the needle to the pole and delights in what is truly of God. The bitter experience of Romans 7 results in this discovery: "I delight in the law of God after the inward man, but I see another law in my members warring in opposition (verse 23, N.T.). Yet we learn that the sacrifice of Christ by which sin was condemned in the flesh, and the new principle of life in Christ Jesus gives full deliverance from what hinders and energy to enter into that which the new nature within us yearns for. Consequently Christ becomes our satisfying Object increasingly, and communion with God our Father is deepened in our souls.

"We are satisfied as well."
"He is satisfied with Jesus,

God chose us in Christ before the world's foundations were laid, and He has taken us into favour in

His beloved One, through the redeeming blood, to the praise of the glory of His grace; and He has abounded towards us in all wisdom and intelligence to bring us into one-mindedness with Himself as to Christ. We can easily see how far beyond the simple meeting of our needs this is. We should have been satisfied with much less.

To have escaped hell and got into heaven would have been enough for us, but God could not be satisfied with that, so great is His joy in His Son that He must share that joy with others, and He has not chosen angels for this joy, but the sons of men, who are redeemed by the blood of His Son, and shall owe everything to Him for ever.

Wonderful things are revealed to us in the Scriptures; take 1 Cor. 2, for instance, "the hidden wisdom" foreordained before the world for our glory is "the Lord of Glory" whom the princes of this world crucified. Now it is He, surely, Who speaks in Proverbs 8, "The Lord possessed Me in the beginning of His way, before His works of old . . . I was daily His delight, rejoicing always before Him: rejoicing in the habitable parts of the earth: and my delights were with the sons of men." Not angels, but men! This is exceedingly precious, for it reveals to us the fact that before ever a thought concerning Him entered our darkened minds, He thought of us with delight, though this involved His taking on, not the nature of angels, but the seed of Abraham, and suffering for our sins, that we might be redeemed according to the good pleasure of God.

Yes, He was with Him when He prepared the heavens, when He ordained the circle over the face of the deep, when He established the skies above, when He strengthened the fountains of the deep, when He gave to the sea His decree that the waters should not pass His commandment, when He appointed the foundations of the earth: then, as the Nursling of His ineffable love, He was by Him—God's wisdom to be made wisdom to us afterwards (1 Cor. 2, 7: 1, 30), God's wisdom in a mystery of which Paul spoke to mature believers.

Having become incarnate He filled the Father's heart with delight, but from this Scripture we learn that He always did that, and can understand His saying to the Father, "Thou lovedst Me before the foundation of the world" (John 17). But it was the pleasure of God that others should be brought to share in these scenes of love and delight and holy rejoicing. But how were they to taste the joys of such high and holy realms? They were sinners! They were the sinful children of Adam's fallen race! They deserved God's everlasting judgment! How then could they share in such divine blessedness? The answer is found in the love of God!

"His Son, His delight, His loved One,
He gave
The cross to endure—by suffering to
save;
Sure love so amazing, unmeasured, un-
told,
Since Him it hath given no good will
withhold!"

God loved! God gave! He gave His Son that we might not perish! But more, He gave Him that "eternal life" might be ours in all

its fulness! And even now, we can also say, He who "spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not also *with Him* freely give us all things."

Moreover the Lord Jesus Himself came for us in all the greatness of His love. On the one hand it was His delight to do God's will, and He said, "Lo I come to do Thy will, O God"; on the other hand, since He found delight in us, He came voluntarily to redeem us. "Christ loved us and gave Himself for us, an offering and sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour" (Eph. 5. 2). Now risen from among the dead, and ascended to the Father, the Unction has come, and He fills our hearts with the loveliness of our eternal and glorious Lover. Truly He is the One Who fills *the Father's* heart with delight, and we can say surely He is the delight of *our* hearts too! But what can we say of the ceaseless care God has for those, who, like Himself, find pleasure in His Well-beloved? "The Father Himself loveth you because ye have loved Me" (John 16). Their delight in Christ may be measured, but not His loving concern in regard to them! However feeble may be their appreciation of Jesus, there is no feebleness or lack in His tender care for them! He sees to it that "*all things*" work together for their good! The Father loves them! The Son loves them! And the Holy Spirit leads them into a deepening sense of God's well-proved and unchanging love for each one!

Soon the mystery of God's will shall be seen, when all in heaven and on earth shall be centred up in Christ; and, in the fulness of times, when the blessing of God shall flow

out universally through the administration which is then in the hands of our capable and glorious Lord and Head, *all hearts* shall find their delight in Him. His death, His resurrection, His ascension and His wonderful mediatorial service result in rich blessing to the praise of God's glory. Therefore we often sing, and sing rightly,

"The Father's full delight
Is centred in the Son,
And countless tongues in heaven unite
To tell what He hath done."

But, oh, beloved brethren, before the day of glory, before He is seen in the splendours of redemption's display, before the assembly's Head and Lover shines forth with His Bride, before His Kingdom and dominion spread their blessings over all, before faith gives place to sight, is it not our God-given portion to share increasingly in the divine delight which is found in Him? Yea, to find His fruit sweet to our taste, as we sit under His shadow with great delight.

A Peculiar People.

"The great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a PECULIAR PEOPLE, zealous of good works" (Titus 2. 14).

Our English word, "peculiar," when rightly understood, is full of meaning, and none fitter or worthier could be chosen. As Webster's Dictionary tells us, "*peculiar* is from the Roman *peculium*, which was a thing emphatically and distinctively one's own, and hence was dear."

A single word sometimes contains a sermon. And what a sermon we have here! To be a peculiar people is not to be a queer people. Still less to be a people noted for ungraciousness or rudeness. It is to be "emphatically and distinctively" the Lord's own people, and therefore to be very specially dear to Him.

The Beginning and the End.

Genesis begins with man placed in the most desirable of conditions, surrounded by every good that a beneficent Creator could devise; and it closes with the greatest of men in those times in a coffin. That was the result of the entrance of sin into the world.

Exodus, begins with a people in most deplorable conditions, oppressed, degraded, crushed, and it ends with the glory of God filling the Tabernacle and a people cared for and carried by God. That was because God had revealed Himself as the Redeemer of men from all bondage. The Tabernacle foreshadowed what is universal and eternal, when God shall dwell with men and fill all things with His glory. Sin brought in bondage, condemnation and death, redemption brings in liberty, life and glory.

THE TREE OF LIFE.

J.N.D.

SOON we'll taste the endless sweetness
 Of the Tree of life above;
 Taste its own eternal meetness
 For the heavenly land above.

Fresh, and ever new, are hanging
 Fruits of life on that blest Tree,
 There is stilled each earnest longing—
 Satisfied my soul shall be.

But my soul! hast thou not tasted
 Of that Tree of life on high?
 As through desert lands thou'st
 hasted,
 Eshcol's grapes been never nigh?

Oh! that Tree of life was planted,
 Rooted deep in love Divine,
 Ere the sons of God had chanted,
 Worlds where creature glories
 shine.

Love Divine without a measure
 Godhead glory must reveal;
 In the Object of its pleasure
 All its ways of grace must seal.

As a tender sucker rising
 From a dry and stony land,
 Object of man's proud despising,
 Grew the Plant of God's right
 hand.

Grace and truth, in love unceasing,
 Rivers on the thirsty ground—
 Every step to God well pleasing—
 Spread their heavenly savour
 round.

He the Father's Self revealing—
 Heavenly words none else could
 tell,
 Words of grace, each sorrow healing,
 On the ear of sorrow fell.

Yes! that Tree of life is planted;
 Sweetest fruit e'en here has borne!
 To its own rich soil transplanted,
 Waits alone the eternal morn.

Fruits that our own souls have tasted
 By the Spirit from above,
 While, through desert lands we've
 hasted:
 Fruits of perfect, endless love!

“I will in no wise cast out.”

“All that the Father giveth Me shall come to Me; and him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out” (John 6. 37).

A hundred texts there are to encourage needy men to come to the Lord, and to assure them that He will welcome them when they come and turn none of them away, but it is scarcely that that our text says. Consider it: those who come He will not cast out. No, never! It seems to me to run on the same line as, “Having loved His own which were in the world He loved them to the end.” Once His, His for ever. “Not one of them is lost, save the son of perdition.” His disciples fled, every one of them and Peter denied Him. Did He cast them out? The resurrection chapters shew how dear they were to Him. They were His Father's gift to Him; and so are we, every true believer, every one that has truly come to Him. How dear to Him we are, so dear He will not cast us out, in spite of all our fickleness and failure. What patient unchanging love is His! He will not get tired of us or discard us. He knows His sheep and will never say to them, “I know you not!”

A BIOGRAPHY IN PROPHECY.

J. T. Mawson.

Isaiah 53.

IF any one enquires of me as to this greatest chapter in the Old Testament, as did the Ethiopian Chancellor of Philip the evangelist, "I pray thee, of whom speaketh the prophet this? Of himself or some other man?" I can but answer as Philip did, "Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture and preached unto him Jesus" (Acts 8). That name which is above every name is the sure key to the chapter, there is none other, and of Him who bears it, it is my determination and privilege to speak. Here we have set in true and divine order the sufferings of Christ and the glory that shall follow. The chapter gives us in vivid terms the great steps in the history of the Lord from the manger-cradle to the universal throne, from the first Advent to the manifested glories of the Second Advent. It is on this line that I ask you to consider it with me.

THE PROPHETIC WORD.

"Who hath believed our report?"

The prophets had spoken, telling in appealing words of His coming, of His great love for His people and His determination to save them; but who cared for the prophets? Who believed their report? Not many. So few indeed, that an aged widow knew them all in Jerusalem, and could speak with them. Yet there they were, that godly expectant few who looked for redemption in Israel, for God did not permit the light of faith and hope to wholly die out; but the mass of the people were indifferent to any words that God had sent to them by His holy prophets.

HIS BIRTH IN BETHLEHEM.

"And to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed."

"The arm of the Lord" is a divine title. In the 51st chapter of the prophecy the arm of the Lord is called upon to awake for the deliverance of the people as in the ancient days. "Art thou not it," cried the prophet, "which hath dried the sea, the waters of the great deep; that hath made the depths of the sea a way for thy ransomed to pass over." The arm of the Lord was manifested in such glorious power at the Red Sea, that even the sceptics in Israel's host must have been convinced. But now, where do we see the arm of the Lord? Not in the thunder, the lightning, the earthquake or the fire, not in the mighty wind that divided the sea, but in a Babe in the manger at Bethlehem. A weak Babe, apparently entirely dependent upon His mother's breasts for sustenance! Could that lowly Babe be the arm of the Lord? Yes, He was, but to whom was He revealed? for verily a revelation was necessary if He was to be known; a revelation which only faith could receive. And not many received it. A few did, such as the shepherds of Bethlehem, and the aged Simeon, and the widowed Anna, and Elizabeth the mother of John, and the Virgin mother who treasured the revelation in her heart. Just these, and very few beside them, for the eyes of the heart had to be opened before men could see in that lowly Babe the arm, the strength of the Lord.

THE HIDDEN YEARS.

"For He shall grow up before Him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground."

Here are described those thirty hidden years in which our Lord grew up before the eyes of Jehovah. Other eyes did not discern the freshness of that apparently insignificant and tender shoot, but no words can describe its beauty in the eyes of God. "Thou art My beloved Son in whom is all My delight," are words in which are summed up all that those hidden years meant to Him.

And it was in a dry ground that He grew. He derived no nourishment from His surroundings. Israel had become debased and degraded, an apostatising and barren nation. They were like a sun-parched desert in which God could find no pleasure, and the godly no sustenance. Not from the schools of the Rabbis, nor from the teaching of the scribes did Jesus draw His supplies as "He grew and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom and the grace of God was upon Him" (Luke 2. 40). No, they contributed nothing to Him; all His springs were in God. He was cast upon God from the womb; He hoped in God when He was upon His mother's breasts; and in His law He meditated day and night as He grew up to the full stature of a man.

HOW HE APPEARED TO MEN.

"He hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see Him, there is no beauty that we should desire Him."

Thus He appeared to the eyes of men. He had attracted no notice

during those hidden, quiet years. The absurd and blasphemous legends of the Romish church have no foundation in fact. Men had no eyes to see or hearts to appreciate Him, who was altogether lovely in the eyes of heaven. If He had come with power and arrogance, crushing all opposition to His will beneath all-conquering feet, they might have admired and followed Him, but they could not understand His holy separation to God, His loveliness, His meekness and His lowliness. The grace of heaven was unattractive to their eyes; they had no use for Him who sought only the honour that comes from God and lived only to serve, who came not to be ministered unto but to minister.

HIS ENTRANCE ON PUBLIC SERVICE.

"He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from Him; He was despised and we esteemed Him not."

This was what He received when He stepped out of seclusion into public ministry. Many a man has been rejected by his fellows, yet respected, but this Man—who was none other than the Lord of glory, was despised as well as rejected. How scornfully the great men of the nation spoke of Him; with what disdain they said: "Is not this the carpenter?" "This fellow receiveth sinners!" "He hath a devil and is mad, why hear ye him." And even those who did not treat Him with the undisguised contempt of the Pharisees, hid their faces from Him and His appeals of love. In the last great test, when His visage was more marred than any man's they were afraid to speak out on behalf of

Him whom their leaders despised. None, save perhaps one or two women, understood the meaning of His deep poverty; His sighs and tears moved the multitude only to derision and laughter.

THE SORROWS OF HIS LIFE.

"Surely He hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem Him stricken, smitten of God and afflicted."

But it was not for Himself that He sighed and wept, but for them. He would have lifted every sorrow from their hearts, and been exceedingly joyful in doing it, but they would have none of it; they were blind to their blessing, and hugged their sins and rejected Him. It was for them He wept. In the midst of men, because of what men were—sin-loving, devil-deceived, God-hating—He was the Man of sorrows.

Yet their enmity did not change His love. How greatly He loved them! Right on to the end of His day of service He served them with unwearied mercy. He healed their sick; He touched their lepers with compassionate and powerful hand; He gave sight to their blind, and delivered multitudes from the blighting tyranny of demons. And let no one suppose that these were acts of power only as when He created the worlds. No, He felt their miseries and bondage; in His tender heart He carried their burdens; He was afflicted in the midst of them because they were afflicted; virtue went out of Him to heal them, and His spirit was weighed down by the loads that He lifted from them. It was in His spirit that He felt these things, for His sinless, holy body could not be seized upon

or defiled by disease, even though His enemies said, "An evil disease cleaveth fast unto Him" (Psalm 41. 8). But they thought that God was against Him when they saw His sorrow: that He was stricken and smitten of God. Why was He so poor if He was in God's favour? Why should He sigh and weep? If God were pleased with Him would He not be popular with pharisees and priests? So they reasoned and reasoning thus they appeased their consciences while they rejected Him.

HIS CROSS.

"But He was wounded for our transgressions; He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed."

Now we reach the cross, the great end for which He came into the world. The nation of Israel will yet take up these words; for the veil is to be removed from their hard and unbelieving hearts; at His feet and with broken and penitent spirits they will bow down in wonder. But we also, who are not of Israel, but are sinners of the Gentiles, we can find room enough for us in this great statement. We might well ask, why He, the Prince of life, bowed His head in death? Certainly death had no claim upon Him, and could have had no power over Him, had He not submitted Himself to it. The enmity of His foes, fierce as it was, was not enough, no matter how fixed was their determination to do it, to account for His death. Then where shall we find the answer to our question? We find it here. It was for our iniquities and transgression that He suffered and died, that by His stripes we might be healed. And those stripes were not

those that men laid upon Him, but those that fell upon Him from the throne of eternal justice. What was it that carried Him to the cross, and enabled Him to endure until justice could demand no more from Him? It was love, invincible, eternal love, the love of Christ that passeth knowledge, love to us who had no love for Him.

OUR CONDITION FOR WHOM HE DIED.

"All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned everyone to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all."

What words are like God's words? Here in two brief sentences there is described our character and condemnation. Like sheep we have strayed and have, in our straying, shown the *folly* of our sin; "we have turned every one to his own way," and thereby have declared the *wilfulness*, the wickedness of our sin. What but the just condemnation of God could fall upon us, after we had so definitely and deliberately declared what we are? But God has undertaken for us, and whether it be the folly or the wilfulness of our sin—all our iniquity He laid upon our Surety. It is the saved remnant of Israel that is speaking in these wonderful words, but every believer may use them, for "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins" (1 John 4. 10).

HIS CHARACTER WHO DIED FOR US.

"He was oppressed, and He was afflicted, yet He opened not His mouth: He is brought as a lamb to

the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so He openeth not His mouth."

The Spirit of God would not engage us wholly with the great work that has been done for our salvation, but with Him who has done it, and here is described His character and the way He met all the sufferings that men and devils forced upon Him. There was no resentment in His heart and no resistance to evil. It was the will of God that He should suffer and in absolute subjection to God's will He went to the cross. "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," are surely words that should fill us with wonder and worship, for they describe as no other could, this holy subjection, this complete obedience to the will of God. "And they took Jesus, and *led Him away*. And *He bearing His cross went forth* into a place called the place of a skull" (John 19. 16, 17).

HIS APPARENT COMPLETE ECLIPSE.

"He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare His generation? for He was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was He stricken."

So complete and unanimous was His condemnation by His judges, that it seemed as though the desire of His foes would be realised when they said, "When shall He die, and His Name perish" (Psa. 41. 5). He was cut off out of the land of the living. The whole earth groans beneath the ways of Adam's generation. Violence and corruption, pride and selfishness declare what his pro-

geny is; the world is full of Adam and his disobedience; but this Man, the obedient One, shall His heavenly graces that shed their fragrance amid the moral putrefaction of Adam's world survive? Shall He have a generation that shall fill the earth with His beauty? It did not seem like it when He was led to the cross and when He was stricken for the transgression of the people. "It is expedient," said the godless high priest, "that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not." He did not understand the meaning of his words, but when he succeeded in his design, it did appear as though the visit of our Lord to this world had been a disastrous failure and that He had spent His strength for naught and in vain.

HIS BURIAL.

"And men appointed His grave with the wicked [correct translation] but He was with the rich in His death, because He had done no violence, neither was there guile in His mouth."

It was the custom of the Romans to leave the bodies of crucified criminals upon their crosses until the carrion birds had cleaned the bones of every shred of flesh, but as a concession to the Jewish laws, which said: "If a man have committed a sin worthy of death, and he be put to death, and thou hang him on a tree: his body shall not remain all night upon the tree, but thou shalt in any wise bury him that day; (for he that is hanged is accursed of God)" Deut. 21. 23, they permitted the bodies of Jewish criminals to be buried at night fall; and the custom was to dig a rough hole near the spot of the crucifixion and cast them in there. These soldiers,

who had gambled for the clothes of the Lord, were keen to get back to their dice and their wine, and had prepared beforehand a grave big enough to hold the three corpses.

They made His grave with the wicked, for He was nothing more to them than these other poor wretches, and they had their brutal work to do, and the sooner it was done the better for all concerned.

But when the great work was finished, and the darkness was past and His beloved Son hung dead upon the cross, God stepped in and cried, Halt. No further were men permitted to go on dishonouring the One who had done His will with a perfect obedience. His enemies were thrust aside and from this point onward He was honoured and revered by those who loved Him. "He was with the rich in His death." God had held His man in reserve, and now Joseph, the timorous and secret disciple, stood forth with the courage of a lion, and in the very teeth of a hostile world, and regardless of all consequences, took his stand by his crucified Lord and begged His body. It was an unheard of thing! Whoever before had set any value on the body of a crucified criminal? It was so strange that Pilate made special enquiries as to whether He was really dead, and then he granted Joseph's request. The sacred body was wrapt in pure linen with a hundred pounds of spice, and Joseph and Nicodemus with two or three women gave Him the burial of a King.

And here lies the meaning of the grave being introduced before the sufferings are fully told. The sort of grave He was to fill was not an after thought, either on man's part or God's; both were prepared and ready before He died.

HIS DEATH AS GOD'S JUDGMENT.

"Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise Him; He hath put Him to grief: when Thou shalt make His soul an offering for sin."

Justice has often miscarried in this world's sad history, and men have suffered for crimes of which they were not guilty; but here was not a miscarriage of justice; though He had done no violence neither was there any deceit in His mouth, "Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise Him," and there is no unrighteousness with the Lord. He is the just God. He is righteous in all His ways, and holy in all His works. Ps. 145. 17. Oh, why did the just God bruise Him, who is "that just One" Acts 22. 24? Why did God who is holy forsake Him "that is holy, Him that is true?" (Rev. 3. 7). Why was the sinless One put to grief? There is only one answer, and it is that God chose to deal with Him as our Surety and Substitute. It gave God no pleasure in the way in which we understand pleasure, to do this, but it was the only way if He was to be a Saviour God, for just He must ever be. And this bruising was not the physical wounds that He endured, but the indescribable sufferings of His soul when He was made an offering for sin. Injustice there was from man's side, inveterate and unrestrained wickedness was in the judge's seat and absolute goodness at the bar; sin upon the throne, crowned with almost universal acclaim, and holiness on the cross, despised and execrated by Gentile and Jew. But God was over all and permitted men to go thus far that they might fully declare themselves in their hatred of Him and that He might shew in absolute justice the exceeding riches of His grace to them.

HIS RESURRECTION AND PRESENT WORK.

"He shall see His seed, He shall prolong His days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in His hands."

Not until resurrection could He see His seed, for "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit" (John 12). And it was after death and in resurrection that He said to Mary "Go unto My brethren, and say unto them . . . My Father and your Father, My God and your God." These were His seed, His generation, and the multitudes who "have believed on Him through their word" (John 17), are the answer to the lament of the prophet, "Who shall declare His generation, for He was cut off out of the land of the living?" "He that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of One, for which cause He is not ashamed to call them brethren" (Heb. 2). His life, His character, His graces are not lost, the earth is to be filled with them through His seed, and their great destiny is to be conformed to His image that He may be the First-born among many brethren (Romans 8. 29). Israel also will be gathered and He will be able to say as He presents them to God, a redeemed nation and a wholly right seed, "Behold, I and the children that Thou hast given Me."

And He "dieth no more" He lives "after the power of an endless life." Have glorified God and saved His people by one offering He prolongs His days into eternity; God's answer to those who would have cut Him off for ever.

"And the pleasure of the Lord" prospers in His hand "for Him

hath God exalted with His right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and the forgiveness of sins" (Acts 5. 31). And to this day He is working from His throne in glory and winning men for God.

HIS COMING AGAIN.

"He shall see of the travail of His soul, and shall be satisfied."

A great hope fills our hearts and His, and I believe that I am justified in bringing it in here, though the Old Testament does not speak specifically of it. We have read in the Word that "Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for it, that He might sanctify and cleanse it by the washing of water by the word; that He might present it to Himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish" (Eph. 5. 25-27). When that hour of presentation of the church to Himself comes He will see of the travail of His soul and be satisfied. He will say the prize is worth the price, for His church will yield everlasting joy to His once broken heart as she receives His boundless love into her heart and responds to it without reserve. How near the hour of His supreme joy may be we cannot tell, but this we know, He has said, "Surely, I come quickly; and His church, the Bride of the Lamb replies, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus."

HIS GLORIOUS KINGDOM.

"By His knowledge shall My righteous servant instruct many in righteousness, for He shall bear their iniquities. Therefore will I divide Him a portion with the great, and He shall divide the spoil with the

strong; because He hath poured out His soul into death: and He was numbered with the transgressors; and He bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors."

He will establish a kingdom according to God's own righteousness and everyone who enters it will be instructed by Him in ways of righteousness, and He Himself will be for ever the manifestation of the righteousness in which He instructs His subjects; for they will never forget that they could not have been in the place of blessing at all if He had not borne their iniquities. "And He shall be great . . . and of His kingdom there shall be no end," but He shall have companions with Him in that kingdom—the great and the strong—and who are these? Those surely who have taken character from Him and learnt His ways, and have delighted to follow in His footsteps; to suffer with Him and for Him in the day of His rejection that they might reign with Him in the day of His glory. "He that is greatest among you let him be as the younger; and he that is chief as he that doth serve . . . I am among you as He that serveth." Yes that is the way of true greatness and for it strength is needed; and it is those who are conscious of their need of strength that are made strong, for He has said, "My strength is made perfect in weakness."

But among the crowns that shall shine upon His sacred brow in that day of glory this shall shine with the greatest splendour—He is the Lamb that was slain. This shall never be forgotten: He poured out His soul unto death: and He was numbered with the transgressors, and He bare the sin of many and made intercession for the transgressors.

THAT THEY ALL MAY BE ONE.

T. Oliver.

THE Apostle had to address a Christian company at Corinth saying, "You are yet carnal" or fleshly. At first, doubtless when Paul was with them they could not be said to be such, but the test came after they were left to themselves. One may be greatly impressed on walking in the woods to see that when trees are cut down so as to lay a plantation open to the blast of wind, many more are blown down in consequence. How like that circumstance is to the experience of a Christian company. Christians cannot stand alone, and it is the constant effort of the enemy to divide them. Paul could stand alone, but he did not mean us to attempt to do so. Even as the trees standing together helped to keep the wind out, so Christians standing in unity help to repel the blast of the enemy.

The devil is very wily. He divides the people of God into sects or parties. He will try and bring in coldness and jealousy especially with reference to Scriptural teaching. Paul, Apollos and Peter are made the names as excuses for division, and even the Corinthians sought to make a sect of special averred ecclesiastical standing in Christ. The devil always contrives to spoil the testimony and efface the image or moral likeness of Christ in those who bear His name. Dear old Rowland Hill once wrote,

"Let names and sects and parties fall
And Jesus Christ be all in all."

Christ is in all the Christians, although misconduct may arise by allowing the flesh to dominate us. In Christ there is only an unleavened lump. The leaven may be working, but not in Christ. In Him there are but the features of one new man. We may allow ourselves to come

under the influence of the flesh, as it is still an active part of us. There is a very good story told to illustrate these opposing principles. A raven and a dove were put in one cage. On feeding them with bread, the dove was fed and the raven starved, and vice versa when flesh was the food put in. It is at once seen that their needs will never harmonise. One of them must die. So it is with the Christian. What feeds the new creation starves the flesh, and what feeds the flesh starves the new man. The Apostle said, "Do not let sin reign in your mortal body." That, of course, supposes that sin dwells in our bodies. The Spirit of God says "The tendency of the flesh is to assert itself against the Spirit, therefore, do not let it reign."

Then there is so much outside which appeals to us and pierces in to our hearts. The eye and the ear are avenues to the heart. There is the lust of the eye, and the lust of the flesh. If they are allowed to work for a time, we are carnal for that period. Christians, when in that state, have not been keeping company with the Lord. When we forget to be alone with God, we are bound to suffer. It is a great thing to get a little time alone and confess our own weakness. Confession leads us to be well kept. The Apostle could pray that his readers might be preserved soul and body blameless by God's Holy Spirit. We are blest when in the place of dependence, and sanctified wholly from the power of the flesh. God will keep us in a state of humility and preserve us from fleshliness.

It is well to remember that we may become sectarian even in our

own minds without outward manifestations e.g., there are different lines of teaching. One teacher is able to open up the Word to us, another to give the application, while the third is burning with love for souls. And we may make parties by shewing our preference to one or other of these. We need all these varied gifts. Gifts are the proof of the continuance of the love of Christ. The work of many honoured servants of the Lord is spoiled through lack of wisdom. Doubtless the faults arise unwittingly on both sides, yet the Apostle condemned the Corinthians for it.

If the Lord helps us through any one's ministry let us be thankful for it. But do not let us put the one

who ministers acceptably on any special pinnacle. Let us not pin our faith to him. Gifts adorn the Assembly. Instead of edifying, gift often evokes people's jealousy, e.g., it is not uncommon if a man gives a word of ministry in any place where he is unknown, it is frequently more valued than it would have been at home. This should not be the case. We should thank the Lord for the word, no matter through whom may be the channel of communication. A very important passage of scripture in this connection is, "Quench not the Spirit, despise not prophesyings" (1 Thess. 5. 19-20). The utterance of five words may convey just what we need, and if there were more waiting on the Lord this would be more in evidence.

"Who satisfieth thy mouth with good things," or rather "filling thy soul with good."

No man is ever filled to satisfaction but a believer, and only God Himself can satisfy even him. Many a worldling is satiated, but not one is satisfied. God satisfies the very soul of man, his noblest part, his ornament and glory: and of consequence He satisfies his mouth, however hungry and craving it might otherwise be. Soul-satisfaction loudly calls for soul-praise, and when the mouth is filled with good, it is bound to speak good of Him who filled it. Our good Lord bestows really *good things*, not vain toys and idle pleasures; and these He is always giving, so that from moment to moment He is satisfying our soul with good; shall we not be still praising Him?

Not the lot thou wouldst have chosen,
 But His way is best;
 Simply trust Him, meekly follow—
 So shalt thou be blest.

And thy Lord Himself shall shew thee
 On that glorious day,
 When His sweet rewards He giveth,
 Why He led *this* way.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

The Question of Man's Free Will.

I should be glad if you could give me some help as to whether man has a free will or not. I am told that he has not. But if this is so, I am unable to see why "God commands all men everywhere to repent." Would He command a man to do what he cannot? If the answer is that with the command He gives the power, then those to whom He does not give the power are automatically cut off. I am conscious of being able to choose which way I shall go: doubtless my every step is being ruled over by Sovereign power, but I am still conscious of my own choice. That Christ died for all, and yet the greater part of those for whom He died will not benefit by His death because they have not the power to accept it, is very strange doctrine to me. I know all this has often been talked about, but perhaps you can put things at a different angle to me"—N.S.W.

THE question you raise is as old as the Fall. And there has been endless controversy over God's sovereignty and man's responsibility. Now we see through a glass darkly, but when "the mystery of God is finished" we shall see all things clearly, but let this be a comfort to you in your perplexities. *The final destiny of every soul is in the hands of Jesus*, all judgment has been committed to Him. You may safely trust Him to do right.

But a few suggestions may also help you. It would seem that man had a free choice in Eden, and then he followed the devil instead of God. Has his will been free since then? We see that his mind is darkened by sin and blinded by the devil, that the prince of the power of the air now worketh in the children of disobedience, and that the natural heart is enmity against God. Look up the scriptures that make these statements for yourself. Is a man free who is under such influences? We know that in ordinary affairs, no man can give a just judgment who is governed by prejudice; with men their whole natural being is prejudiced against God, and so far they are not free. Yet every man knows the right, for he has a conscience that witnesses

within. But how then does he stand in regard to God's just claims and the gospel? Well the Lord did not say, "Ye cannot come," but "Ye will not come unto Me." It is the will that is at work. "Men love darkness rather than light."

There is no such thing as reprobation taught in Scripture—i.e. foreordination to perdition. And God does not prevent souls from believing His gospel; He puts no stumbling block in their way; His offer of pardon to all is absolutely bona fide, and He willeth not the death of any.

It is true that men have not the power, but that is because they are enslaved by their own wills and darkness of unbelief; are they then not responsible? We knew a house in which the midday meal was not forth coming at the right hour, and when enquiry was made in the kitchen, the cook was discovered helplessly drunk, she had no power to prepare the meal but her responsibility was not lessened because of that.

That men are responsible to believe is plainly taught in Scripture, that they do not and will not do so apart from God's compelling grace

is equally taught. What then, will the vast majority be lost, as your letter suggests? Well, when a man asked the Lord, whether there would be few saved, part of His answer was, "They shall come from the east, and from the west, and from the

north, and from the south" (Luke 13), which seems to us to mean that mighty streams of men will flow into the kingdom of God from every point of the compass, and Christ shall not have died in vain.

"While it is day . . . the night cometh."

"What night was the Lord referring to in John 9. 4, when no man can work? Not this time, surely, for this is working time. After we are gone? But the godly remnant of Israel will be working then, will they not?"—LIVERPOOL.

WE had always understood these words of the Lord to refer to His own day of unwearied service. He was the sent one, to do the works of God, and the hours of His day were swiftly passing, but He missed no opportunity; with Him there was no idleness, and when His day closed there was nothing left undone that God had sent Him to do. "The day" and "the night" is surely figurative language, indicating the period of activity and its close. He is our example, our pattern in this, and happy it will be for us if we seek grace to follow in His footsteps and fill up life's little day in doing the works of God which are appointed to us.

The Lord had His day here, we have ours and the remnant of Israel will have theirs in their turn, and thus will God move on in His purposes, until we reach that glorious state when there shall be no more night, but His servants shall serve Him in an everlasting day.

It is instructive to see that the Lord speaks of Himself as the Light of the world as long as He was in it. The world has lost its light, but the Christians are light in the Lord and are able to labour in that light, according to their knowledge of Him, in the midst of men, among whom they shine as lights.

The Hundred and Forty-four Thousand, Rev. 14.

Will you kindly give me some light on Rev. 14. 1-5? Who are the company spoken of in these verses?—KILKEEL.

WE should say that this company will be a remnant of the Jews who will stand in unflinching faithfulness to the Lamb during the ascendancy of Antichrist—the false prophet, who is also the second beast of Revelation 13. Notice their special features. They are separate and undefiled by the corruption that will prevail amongst the multitudes that will be deceived by Antichrist

(ch. 13 and 14); instead of following him, who will appear as a *lamb* (ch. 13. 11), they follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth, which means that they will suffer from their countrymen as He suffered; instead of having the mark of the beast in their foreheads (13. 16), the Name of the Father of the Lamb is written there; they are not "earth dwellers" (13. 14), but are redeemed from among

men, and their hopes are centred in Zion and the throne of God; and there is no guile in their mouth, in contrast to those who will gladly receive and repeat the lie that is in the mouth of the false prophet (see 2 Thess. 2. 8-12; also 1 John 2. 21, 22).

They seem to occupy a similar place to that which the disciples had in regard to the Lord when He was on earth, and His words to His disciples in Mark 13. 9-13, and Luke 21. 12-19, will have special reference to them and no doubt be a great comfort to them.

They are not the church which is in heaven at this time, while they are upon earth; though they are very near to heaven and can learn its song. Their association with the Lamb on Mount Zion would shew that they had recognised and probably borne witness to the fact that the suffering and rejected Lamb was the son of David, their royal Messiah. And the symbolical number given would be a further proof that they

are of Israel and not of the church.

Of all the great harvest that the Lamb will reap from the earth during His millennial reign over it these are the first-fruits and the choicest. They will suffer with Him and also reign with Him.

It is thought by some that they are the same company as the sealed ones in ch. 7. 1-8, and it may be so. It may be that in ch. 7 we see them as the objects of God's sovereign choice, in ch. 14 as those who have answered morally to that choice. God's work in them seen in their unblemished character, justifying His choice of them. But we incline more to the view that in ch. 7, we have the whole of the saved nation, while here there is a special remnant of faithful ones, to whom the Lord will be able to say words similar to those addressed to His disciples, "Ye are they that have continued with me in My temptations," and they will have a special place with Him in His glorious reign.

The Place of the Church during the Millennium.

"As a young christian, I have some difficulty as to the place of the Church in the millenium. After the judgment seat of Christ, will the Church return to the earth, or where will it be? I have searched the Scripture in vain as to this, but perhaps you can help me from Scripture"—BARRHEAD.

LET us rightly divide the truth, the church as such, will not pass the Judgment seat of Christ, for it is His body, entirely of Himself, but the individuals that compose it will, to have their lives of responsibility on earth manifested and scrutinised by the Lord. And their place in relation to His glorious reign will be appointed to them according to His own unerring wisdom and pleasure. Faithfulness now will secure

a large measure of honour then, as we may learn from such scriptures as Luke 12. 42-44; 19. 12-27. Where He will send these faithful servants to serve Him during His universal reign we do not know. The universe is illimitable, though some of these servants will, no doubt have their part in the governing of the earth, others will have matters angelic to deal with (1 Corinthians 6. 2, 3). Judgment in this passage

does not mean condemning and sentencing to punishment, which is entirely in the hands of the Son (John 5. 22, 23), but discriminating and guiding and ruling.

As to the church itself, after the marriage of the Lamb, the church being His wife (Rev. 19. 7-9), it is to come out of heaven (Rev. 21. 7-27) but its place in regard to the earth seems to be over and not upon it. Note that Satan is spoken of as the prince of the power of the air (Eph. 2. 2), and it is from that place that he and the great spiritual beings that serve him carry on their

warfare against what is of God in the world (Eph. 6. 12). But he is to be cast out of that place of power and influence (Revelation 12). Why? To make way for the church, which will be light to the world, as the devil has been darkness to it, for, the nations shall walk in the light of it (Revelation 21. 24). Many scriptures shew that the church will share the glory of Christ during His reign over the earth, and Revelation 5. 10, should read, "We shall reign over the earth" as the New Translation, or Scofield's margin notes will shew you.

The Blessing of Esau.

Referring to the blessing of Jacob and Esau in Genesis Chapter 27, verses 28 and 39 it would appear from the Authorised Version, that both share in the "Dew of Heaven and the fatness of the Earth" tho' the order is reversed in Esau's case. In F. W. Grants' Numerical Bible Esau's blessing reads as follows: - And Isaac his father answered and said unto him, 'Behold, apart from the fatness of the Earth and from the Dew of Heaven from above, but by thy sword shall thou live, and serve thy brother etc..' This rendering of verse 39 appears to me to suggest that Esau did not receive the Dew of Heaven or the fatness of the Earth whereas the Authorised reads as tho' he did? Your kind help will be appreciated UPMINSTER.

THE Authorised Version follows the Septuagint; J. N. Darby in his New Translation also gives the passage as we are accustomed to it, but gives a footnote, "Some translate 'without'" i.e., without the fatness of the earth and the dew of heaven. We are inclined to favour F. W. Grant's rendering and J.N.D.'s footnote, because it seems to us that the blessing would be according to the character of the man. Esau had despised his birthright which carried with it God's promise of the land of Canaan with its dew from heaven and the fatness of the earth, its corn and wine. He cared nothing for the quiet life of

agriculture lived in dependence upon and subject to God, but loved the excitement of the chase, and his own unbridled will, and his future and that of his progeny was to be according to his character. These blessings in Genesis were really the foretelling of the future by God's direction, and have been or will be fulfilled to the letter. Esau, like Ishmael, was typical of man after the flesh, upon whom the dew of heaven, typical of God's favour, can never rest, and so contrary to God's thoughts and will were the character and ways of the people of which he was the head that we read "Esau have I hated" (Malachi 1. 3).

DEVELOPMENT IN THE CHRISTIAN LIFE.

J. T. Mawson.

Consider the birds how they develop.

THERE are three stages in bird-life that illustrate well the normal development of the Christian life.

1. The little bird only opens its mouth for food: feeding is its one simple occupation.

2. Its feathers and wings grow and it flies and sings.

3. It builds its nest and cares for its young.

Food is the first necessity of its life, and for this it is dependent upon others, but as it feeds it gains strength, and becomes fit for the air, its true element, and it flies. I believe that no bird sings until it flies. But until it builds its nest it is alone, no matter how strong its wing or brilliant its song. It selects its food but it is only for itself, but when it builds its nest where its young may be reared its habits and character undergo a change; it does not surrender its former powers, but instead of contenting itself with its own peculiar and perhaps selfish satisfaction, it devotes itself to objects outside itself, objects dear as its own life and it shapes itself always to the good of the objects of its love.

Now consider the Christian life.

1. As a new-born babe the Christian desires the Word of God, only by it can his soul be fed, only by it can he grow. 1 Peter 2. 1, makes this very plain and every Christian knows it by his own experience. Why are there so many half-fledged Christians? because they have not been fed upon God's Word. And who is responsible for this? Well it may be that some who have been

called of the Lord to feed His own are neglecting to do it. Some have their own aviaries, and are very diligent in feeding their caged birds and do not think of all the saints; to change the simile, they have not entered into the meaning of Paul's words to the elders of Ephesus, "Take heed therefore unto yourselves and to *all the flock* over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to *feed the church of God*, which He hath purchased with His own blood." Anyhow the Holy Ghost does not fail, and He delights to present Christ and His grace to the new born babes; if the desire for food is there, it will not be disappointed. Oh, let us pray earnestly for greater spiritual desires.

2. As the new-born babe feeds upon the Word he is possessed by soul aspirations after heavenly things where Christ sitteth; he feels that heaven is his sphere; moreover he realises that power has been given to him to rise up into this new sphere, above earthly things. This power lies in the Holy Spirit of God that dwells in all who have believed the gospel. He sets his affections on things above where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God, and he can spread his wings and rise up into the enjoyment of those things, and as he does so he sings, he pours out the satisfaction and joy of his heart in melody to the Lord. This two-fold exercise of power and joy is found in Colossians 3. 2 and 16. This is the development of Christian life, indeed.

3. Then he begins to care for others. He learns that Christ has

His interests in the world. That there are others as dear to his Lord and Saviour as he is, that he is united to them in one life, derived from one source and Head, the living Lord in the glory. He cannot ignore these; no longer can he look upon himself as a unit, gathering food for himself and enjoying it alone. He must have fellowship with others, he must now live a community life, and love those whom Christ loves, and care for them and feed them as he has opportunity. This comes out in great fullness in the Apostle's words, "I endure all things for the elect's sake that they may obtain salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory" (2 Timothy 2).

It is pressed upon us all very strongly in John's first Epistle. None of us lives to himself.

Thus we have the heart fed, nourished and satisfied with Christ, and able in the power of the Spirit to rise above depressing earthly circumstances and the allurements of the world to the heavenly things of which Christ is the Centre, and delivered from self-occupation, are able to care for Christ's interests on earth, moved thereto by the love of Christ, that made Him lay down His life for all His own. May we all be well acquainted with this three-fold blessedness for the sake of the Lord Jesus Christ

Not Forsaken.

No friend, or relation, or brother, no matter how dearly loved, is indispensable to us. We have to learn this lesson by sad experience. We see them go one by one, and we continue, we live without them, but there is One we cannot do without, we cannot do without God. We can do without father, mother, sister, brother, husband, wife and child, but without God we cannot do, nor our Lord Jesus Christ. How blessed it is to know that He will never abandon us. "No man," said Paul, "stood with me," "Notwithstanding the Lord stood with me." "I was in the isle that is called Patmos," said John, a solitary exile for Jesus' sake, and He, his Lord, "laid His right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not." And to everyone of us, He says, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." So that we may boldly say, "The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me." What consolation, what support is this; we are not and never can be alone. Our Lord ever liveth, He ever loveth; He lives for us; He loves us.

"I change not!" Words of love and truth, combining
 To cheer our faith and make our weakness strong;
 The darkness flies before their radiant shining,
 And all our sorrowing is turned to song.
 We grasp the promise in its strength and sweetness,
 Smiling to think that fear had made us weep;
 And lulled to silence by its blest completeness,
 Fear folds her sable wings, and falls asleep.

"THE SON OF MAN" AND "THE MAN OF THE EARTH."

F. B. Hole.

(Read Psalms 8 and 10.)

THE name of Jehovah our Lord is excellent. Beyond all question it excels every other name. Its excellence is fully acknowledged in the heaven of heavens, but not yet in all the earth. In the larger part of the earth it is still blasphemed. The day approaches when the statement made in the first verse of Psalm 8, and repeated in the last verse, will be gloriously fulfilled. But for that day we have to wait.

To-day we should have to exclaim the rather,—O Lord our Lord, how dishonoured is Thy name in all the earth! There is a reason for this, and our short Psalm identifies the source of the mischief in one word—"man." Having done so, it passes on at once to dwell upon the great Personage who is going to make the name of the Lord excellent in all the earth—"the Son of Man."

If we pass on to Psalm 9 we get a good deal more about the "man" who is the root of the trouble; and this sorrowful theme is continued throughout Psalm 10. Indeed in this latter Psalm the theme seems to rise to a climax, and the character of "man" is fully exposed, until we reach mention of one who is to come, in whom human evil will rise to its heights. In the last verse of Psalm 10 he is designated as "the man of the earth."

In the Old Testament several words are used for "man." One of them is *enosh*, which, we are told, has the significance of "frail mortal man," being almost a term of contempt. This is the word used when the Psalmist asks the question in

Psalm 9, when he says, "Arise, O Lord; let not man prevail;" and also, "Put them in fear, O Lord; that the nations may know themselves to be but men." It is used again in Psalm 10, when he speaks of "the man of the earth."

Now this is very instructive. "Enosh" may be a pretty big fellow in his own estimation, and in the sight of others. When he rises to his full height he may do many pretentious things. He may defy God. He may oppress those who fear God. But after all, he is only "the frail, mortal man of the earth." With heaven he has nothing to do.

Will our readers scrutinize this tenth Psalm in which the character of unconverted man is exposed. They will discover that five times over he is called, "the wicked." He is not only called that, but also what constitutes his wickedness is described: in one word, it is the pride of his heart.

He doth persecute the poor but it is his pride that moves him to do it. He is covetous and "blesseth the covetous" (ver. 3), and his pride leads him to boast of this evil feature. Again he has no desire for God: "God is not in all his thoughts" (ver. 4), and this is because of the pride of his countenance. He totally excludes God from his thoughts, and this is because he is filled with self-sufficiency and imagines that he will never be moved. Further, the question is asked, "Wherefore doth the wicked contemn God?" (ver. 13). The answer is obvious. Only the most

insufferable pride could lead him to treat God with contempt. No wonder then that in verse 15 we have the prayer, "Break Thou the arm of the wicked and the evil man"; a prayer which will be answered in due time.

This description of the wicked was penned some three thousand years ago, nevertheless it exactly fits the present leaders of the world of the ungodly. They completely rule God out of everything. They exclude Him everywhere, as far as their thoughts are concerned. They deny His action in creation. They do not admit His presence in Christ: the Jesus of history is to them merely a superior kind of man. They do not recognize any moving of His hand in the affairs of to-day. He is outside the scope of all their politics, their business, their science, their philosophy. And if some of them cannot do without a religion of some kind, they take care that even there He shall be pushed far into the background, as a vague and shadowy Being who can be pretty safely ignored.

From the Psalmist's day to our own, throughout the three millenniums, this wickedness has been manifested. To-day it is evidently working up to a climax. We will let the New Testament sum up the situation for us: "The mystery of iniquity [or, lawlessness] doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way. And then shall that wicked be revealed" (1 Thess. 2. 7, 8). The lawless pride of man has been working, but being held in check it has taken on mysterious or secret forms. The greatest activity of this evil has been in and amongst the Christianized nations; but just there the restraining power

of the Holy Spirit, indwelling the saints, has been most felt.

That restraining power will however be withdrawn in due season, and then the iniquity no longer held in check will blaze forth and reach its culmination in "that Wicked"; spoken of in our Psalm as, "the man of the earth." His leading characteristic is opposition to God. The Salonians emphasizes this, as also does our Psalm, which also discovers to us that he will be an oppressor of God's people. Those two things of course go together. He will express his opposition against the God whom he cannot reach by oppressing the saints whom he can reach.

He is the man of the EARTH. Even in the apostolic age Paul had to write of some as, "the enemies of the cross of Christ: whose end is destruction, whose god is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things" (Phil. 3. 18, 19). He will be all this carried to its highest power. Earth will fill his every thought: it will bound his horizon, and there will be no sky line for him. The average modernist, whether minister or layman, is exactly on those lines to-day. They travel in that direction, though they have not as yet reached the terminus.

The saints whom the man of the earth will oppress will doubtless be those raised up of God after the church has been translated. Their character is very beautifully portrayed in Psalm 10. Five times over are the features of the wicked mentioned, and the character of the saints is also presented under five headings.

They are "*the poor*" (ver. 2). That is, of course, poor in spirit, and not merely in worldly posses-

sions. Their poverty of spirit is the exact opposite of the pride which is the distinguishing feature of frail mortal man.

They are "*the innocent*" (ver. 8). They are not party to all the cursing, deceit, fraud, devices that fill the lives of the wicked.

They are "*the humble*" (ver. 12). The margin has it "*the afflicted*." They neither have big ideas of themselves nor do they make big claims. Hence frequently they get pushed on one side and troubled.

They are "*the fatherless*" (ver. 14). They have no natural protector; no one on earth to stand up in their defence, and protect their rights.

They are "*the oppressed*" (ver. 18). Being of God, they become the special object of the hate of the adversary; and the man of the earth will become the devil's instrument for their oppression.

Notice that the list begins with "the poor," and ends with "the oppressed." In this it agrees with the beatitudes of Matthew 5, which begin with the blessedness of "the poor in spirit," and end with the blessedness of those "which are persecuted," whether for righteousness sake or for the sake of the Lord Himself. So we may be sure that whether it be the day in which the Psalmist lived, or when our Lord was on earth, or our day, or the day when the man of the earth will flourish for a very short space, the moral features which God loves to see in His saints are the same.

Let us take good note of them, and be exercised thereby. For we may be sure that one reason why we come so little into collision with the men of this age is that we are so little marked by these features

which are so sharply in contrast with them. The wicked in his pride doth persecute "the poor." He does indeed, no matter what the age may be. As soon as "the poor" is in evidence he simply itches to persecute him. The wicked we have with us right enough. But where is the poor? Well, if the wicked of this age compliment us and pat us on the back, it raises some serious questions!

When "the man of the earth" seizes power for a few brief moments he will display in highest measure the hideous deformities of fallen man. Then David's question in Psalm 8, "what is man, that Thou art mindful of Him?" will take on an added significance. David asked that question, and saw him dwarfed into nothingness by the splendours of God's inanimate creation. He also saw him set aside, that out of the mouth of even babes and sucklings He might give forth and establish His Word. "The enemy and the avenger"—who may perhaps be identified with "the man of the earth" of Psalm 10—is to be stilled not by the efforts of mortal man, but by God Himself, working through the feeblest and most insignificant instruments. That work is reserved for the Son of Man Himself.

Now when the Spirit of God inspired David to write Psalm 8, and verse 4 was reached, He led him to change the word for "man." He avoided the word *enosh* in the title, "Son of Man." The first part of his question was, "what is *enosh*?" The second part was, "and the Son of *Adam* that Thou visitest Him?" *Adam* is the generic term for man, and does not carry of necessity the reproach and contempt that is connected with *enosh*. Our Lord was

truly the Son of Adam as the genealogy given in Luke's Gospel so definitely shows. But when He is thus traced up to Adam the line given is that of Mary His mother; involving the virgin birth, by which the natural entail of sin and death connected with Adam was broken. He was truly Son of Adam, and yet *Man of a new order*.

What is the Son of Man that He should be visited by Jehovah? Why, He is everything. He is all that Jehovah Himself could wish. Verse 5 gives us first His humiliation and death; but also His present glory. Verses 6 to 8 give us the public glory and dominion that shall be His in the coming day.

We are told in 1 Peter 1. 10 and 11, that the prophets of old had to inquire and search diligently to discern the mind of the Spirit who spoke through them. Often doubtless they had to search the very words they had just written with anxious enquiry as to their full meaning. It may very probably have been thus with David when he had written verses 5 to 8 of our Psalm. Even then did he discern, we wonder, what words referred to the sufferings of the Christ, and what to the glory that should follow? Could he have detected that the very glory that should follow would be divided into that which is His now in private, and that which presently shall be His in public display?

It is perfectly obvious to us. But then we have the privilege of that light which is shed by the New Testament writings. We have the inspired comment of Hebrews 2. 6-9. In the light of that passage all is plain.

Man's place in the original scale of creation is a little lower than

the place of angels. He, whom we know as Son of Man, was not in that lower place to begin with. He entered into it by an act of God. It was not what He was, but what He *became*. This lower and lowly place was His as ordered of Jehovah, and He took it that thereby He might become obedient unto death. The man of the earth displays the apotheosis of human pride and lawlessness. The humbled Son of Man became the holy Servant of God to accomplish all His good pleasure. That pleasure included the tasting of death for all, and the triumphant bringing of many sons to glory, as Hebrews 2 reveals.

But He was rejected on earth, and hence as risen He is gone from human sight into the heavens, and meanwhile poor *enosh* monopolizes the earth and drags out his sad story to culminate in the man of the earth. Jesus is crowned with glory and honour in the presence of the Father. There it is we see Him by faith. The splendid priestly vestments that were made in the wilderness for Aaron, and which apparently he wore but once, were "for glory and for beauty." Our High Priest sits in the heavens, "crowned with glory and honour." There and thus He is to-day.

The hour approaches when another act of God will take place. Three times over do we get an act of God in these verses: one for the past, one for the present, one for the future. Jehovah made Him a little lower than the angels. Jehovah has crowned Him with glory and honour. Jehovah will yet set Him over—or, make Him to have dominion over—the works of His hands, with all things under His feet, as the Psalm predicts.

The prediction is a very sweeping one, commented upon twice in the New Testament—1 Corinthians 15, and Hebrews 2. The former scripture points out that inasmuch as the putting of all things under His feet is an act of God, He who acts must be excepted from the statement. The latter scripture asserts that, subject to this solitary exception, the statement is all-inclusive, there is absolutely nothing that is not put under Him.

In that day consequently every thing will be as He orders it, and at long last, as a result, the name of Jehovah will be excellent in all the earth. Instead of setting forth the evil pleasure of the will of man, everything will declare the excellence of the good pleasure of God. The Divine glory will be set above the heavens in the person of Jesus.

So the world to come is to be placed under Man. What an amazing development this is! When

Adam in innocence was placed in the garden he certainly was granted dominion over this earthly creation. When he fell and became subject to death all was slipping from his hands. Who would have imagined for one moment that MAN was yet to dominate ALL THINGS? From Psalm 8, it is true, we could only discern that He is to dominate all things on earth. Hebrews 2 reveals that the "all things" has so wide a meaning as to embrace things in the heavens also.

Well may our hearts sigh and long to see the Son of Man in that exalted place, and Jehovah's name covered with glory. Well, we are going to see it in its season. We wait to see our Lord Jesus in the place of which He is so worthy.

Meanwhile we continue to sing,
 "Lord, haste that day of cloudless ray,
 That prospect bright, unfailling;
 Where God shall shine in light divine,
 In glory never fading."

Confidence.

IN Thy keeping, gracious Saviour,
 Oh what rest my spirit knows,
 Who can touch me—what can harm
 me—

What can break my heart's repose?

Though the pestilence sweep o'er me,
 Far beyond its reach I rest;
 If it seize me at Thy bidding
 'Twill but waft me to Thy breast.

Though the tempest rage around me,
 Evil forces ever near,
 Hidden safe in Thy pavilion,
 Not a breath can reach me here.

Could I leave Thy love's enclosure,
 Could'st Thou drop me from Thy
 hand,
 Frail, as leaf beneath the tempest,
 Not one moment could I stand.

Oh how blessed is the weakness
 That finds all its strength in Thee:
 While I draw from out Thy fulness,
 Oh how rich my poverty.

Precious lesson of dependence,
 In the desert only known,
 Where I learn Thy love's deep
 meaning,
 While I lean on Thee alone.

Here my heart has found its resting
 In Thyself for evermore,
 And its full unchanging portion—
 To be with Thee and adore.

And to Thee I'd cleave the closer,
 Till the journey shall be o'er,
 Then be Thine the praise, Lord Jesus,
 And the glory evermore.

“COMPASSING THE MOUNTAIN.”

Inglis Fleming.

“AND we compassed Mount Seir many days . . . And the Lord spake unto me, saying, Ye have compassed this mountain long enough.” They were to go forward towards the land of promise.

There is food for serious thought in these words for us who live in our glad gospel days. We are in danger of compassing some mountain of blessing instead of going on. So it was with the believers to whom the epistle to the Hebrews was penned, and they were urged to “go on to perfection.” instead of resting in that to which they had already come.

“Speak to the people that they go forward,” had been the word of the Lord to Moses on the Egyptian bank of the Red Sea. They were not to fear the dark waters. And the Lord had caused the Sea to open before them. Now they were in the wilderness where they had wandered long because of their sin, but the time had come for them to continue their way towards Canaan and so the word came to them to address themselves to the journey.

“Compassing the mountain.” We may be found doing this in our individual experience. One may know that he is saved from the wrath to come, and that heaven is assured to him in the future and then settle down content with going to certain meetings on the Sunday and possibly one in the week (if he is not too tired with his day’s work!). Such an one is not thinking of making any advance in spiritual things, or of helping others into the pathway of truth.

Alas! this seems to have been the case all down the history of the church. The apostle Paul had to lament in his day that this condition was prevalent. Writing to the Philippian Christians he said of Timothy, “I have no man likeminded who will naturally care for your state, for all seek their own and not the things of Jesus Christ.” They were “compassing the mountain.” They were not willing to move on and to occupy themselves in the interests of the Lord Jesus. They were losing their opportunities, they were living lost lives, lives that would count for nothing in eternity.

Said a Christian to me, “I know that my sins are forgiven and that I am going to heaven, what more do you want?” This was putting it baldly of course, but are there not many who are “compassing the mountain” in that way? Is that all that our Lord who died for us wants? Is He content that we should live for ourselves now that He has saved us? Did He not die for all that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him that died for them?

“Compassing the mountain.” Yes! We are *all* in danger of doing this. Unknown to ourselves we get into a routine, into certain habits of thought and action and then consider that all is well with us. The routine may be termed “Rut-in.” And once in the rut it is hard to escape from it. So it is that we may compass the mountain and satisfy ourselves that all is well when it is otherwise. As it has been said we may be “earnest within the sphere of traditional religion but unwilling to sub-

mit to a fundamental revision spiritually."

Round and round we may go and make no advance as the days and weeks and months and years pass from us. "Compassing the mountain" will get us nothing of advantage.

How different was the apostle Paul in his Christian course. He could say, "Forgetting the things which are behind and reaching forth to those things which are before I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." There was no "compassing the mountain" with him, and he exhorts us to be likeminded with himself.

So the apostle Peter bids us to "give all diligence and to add to our faith." He warns us not to be

content with the precious faith given to us, lest we be found barren and unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

"Compassing the mountain" is akin to being asleep spiritually. So the call: "Awake thou that sleepest and arise from among the dead and Christ shall shine upon thee." "It is high time to awake out of sleep." "Therefore let us not sleep as do others; but let us watch and be sober."

May it be ours to be found going forward, seeking to possess our possessions, earnestly desiring to enter upon all the wealth of blessing which is ours in Christ and seeking to serve His interests so that we may be for His pleasure while we wait for His appearing.

"Mine eyes have seen Thy salvation."

The Babe in the manger was "God manifest in the flesh." Simeon worshipped Him in the temple; and strangely—which nothing can account for but the light of the Holy Ghost that then filled him—he blesses the mother and not the Child. He had the Child in his arms, and naturally he would, on such an occasion, have given the Child his blessing. But he does not. For he had that Child in his arms, not as a feeble Infant whom he would commend to God's care, but as God's Salvation. In that glorious character, in the hour of nature's perfect feebleness, he held Him up, and gloried in Him. "The less is blessed of the better." It was not for Simeon to bless Jesus, though without wrong or robbery he would bless Mary.

J. G. B.

Let Jesus choose
 Each step for thee; He knows which way is best;
 And so thou shalt not lose
 The joy of those who, trusting Him, are blest.
 And know thou this,
 That He who leads can clearly show the way;
 Just lay thy hand in His,
 And gladly go with Him, or with Him stay.

THE POWER OF GOD.

J. Purves.

A Talk to Sunday School Teachers.

IN our Sunday School we have been teaching the children a hymn, a verse of which runs like this :

May the mind of Christ my Saviour
Live in me from day to day,
By His love and power controlling
All I do and say.

You will often find that it is when you start to teach other people you begin to learn yourself, and when I began to think about that hymn the question arose in my mind, why "by His power"? I could understand "by His love controlling," but I asked was power necessary too? On pondering this question I am more and more convinced that the power is needed just as much as the love. We remember that the Lord said to His disciples, "Tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem until ye be endued with power from on high" (Luke 24). And the extent of the power is to be found in this 19th verse of Ephesians 1, "The exceeding greatness of his power to usward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power."

This particular verse, on which I wish to focus your attention expresses what Paul desired for those Ephesians and for the whole Church, and it must surely be the desire of each one of us "to know what is the exceeding greatness of His power to usward who believe according to the working of His mighty power."

From our earliest childhood most of us have acknowledged God's power. Almost the first thing we learned was His creatorial power. We have in Jeremiah (51. 15) God's power in creation summed up in those words, "He hath made the earth by His power."

What God made by His power God also maintains by His power for we read in Hebrews (1. 3), "He upholdeth all things by the word of His power," and the Psalmist tells us in Psalm 66. 7, that, "He ruleth by His power for ever." We all acknowledge the creatorial, the upholding and the administrative power of God.

There came a time in our history when we first recognised with joy God's saving power and we could say like the people of whom we read in Nehemiah (1. 10), we are "Thy people, whom Thou hast redeemed by Thy great power." We have been redeemed and saved by the great power of His grace, and those God saves by His power God keeps by His power.

Day by day now we learn that we can only be "kept by the power of God through faith" (1 Peter 1. 5), and, should the time come when we have to pass into death we know that He "will also raise up us by His own power" (1 Cor. 6. 14), so that from the very beginning of our Christian pathway right on into eternity we know and shall know for ever His saving power. If we really believed this, really appreciated the wonder of it, I don't think we should ever again grumble or faint.

When we come to the power that Paul wishes these people to know I suggest that we might call this God's working power "according to the working of His mighty power." What is this "exceeding greatness of His power to usward"? It is "the might of His power which He wrought in Christ, when He raised

Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places." This is even a greater power than the power which made the world, and I think it was this power that Paul had in mind when he said, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me" (Philippians 4. 13).

I well remember sixteen years ago going forward one June day at the Battle of Messines and looking into a huge crater about a hundred and forty yards across, where a few hours before had stood an enemy stronghold. In the grey of that early morning nineteen mines had been exploded simultaneously and their five hundred tons of high explosive had utterly wrecked sections of the German defences. If you could have been within the British lines a few minutes before the zero hour you might have seen officers with the electrical appliances in their hands ready to detonate the mines at the appointed time, but you could never have imagined the awful power just about to be released to break through the enemy defences. That was power for destruction, the power of God is used now in salvation.

Who would think, when looking at a young Christian girl spending her Sunday afternoon with her class around her, of the power that is there to work through her, for the blessing of those to whom she is speaking of her Lord?

When Paul said, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me," it was not an idle boast. We may say we can do all things through Christ without fully meaning it, and when certain circumstances confront us we almost shiver with fear; but Paul said it

from his heart because he appreciated the power that was in the Lord, whom God had raised up from the dead.

Think of that very wise daughter of Levi, the mother of Moses. I think if we could have seen her deposit that little basket with her darling in it at the water's edge and if we could have said to her "To what are you trusting your child?" Although it happened so many years before Paul expressed these words I think we would have heard her make reply "to the exceeding greatness of His power to usward who believe." She trusted in the power of God and her trust was not in vain.

Years afterwards if we could have gone up the face of a mountain and seen a tired man, too tired to hold up his arms unaided, this same Moses, we might have thought "not much power there." Even Moses himself might have said, "Rather give me a sword and I will throw my weight into the battle"—that would have been trying to do God's work in his own power. Moses, down in the valley would only have been one among many but up there on the mountain he was in vital contact with the mighty power of God.

"All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth" are words of the risen Lord that we cherish. What this power that is in Him would mean to us, if we were fully under His control and usable to Him!

Two men might live next door to one another; they might have similar houses similarly wired for light and heat and supplied with the same electric energy; the one house is brilliantly illuminated and delightfully warm but the other is every-

where dull and cold. There is the same power available in each house but only one has made use of the power. He has put in lamps of sufficient wattage and radiators of ample strength to give the light and heat, whereas the other has used lamps of small candlepower and one small heater and he expects the same results. But what about us in respect to this power of which I speak?

When talking of electricity I am reminded of an incident in the life of the famous Michael Faraday, one of the greatest of English Scientists and the leading electrical experimenter of his time. In addition to his fame in the sphere of electrical research he was equally distinguished as a popular lecturer and his lectures at the Royal Institution were attended by the highest in the land. On one occasion among those attending his lecture was the Prince of Wales of that time. The Prince was so impressed by the brilliance of this man's thinking that after the meeting he commanded that the lecturer be brought in and presented to him but Michael Faraday could not be found anywhere. A search was made and where do you think he was found? In a little room with some simple folk at a prayer meeting. The great scientist knew a power greater than that of elec-

tricity, and he also knew that prayer was the way by which that power could be appropriated.

Our Lord once said to His questioners, "Ye know not the scriptures, neither the power of God," and I think these two things go together. It is only through reading the Scriptures that we can learn the power of God and it is only through prayer that we can be in vital contact with these great resources which are available for us.

You may well say, "What has this to do with Sunday School teaching specially?" It has to do with the whole life of a Christian and Sunday School teaching is one of the normal occupations of a young Christian.

A Christian who is not in one way or another interested in the young—well he isn't a Christian at all. You must be interested if you seek to follow the Master, for He "took the children up in His arms, put His hands upon them, and blessed them" (Mark 10, 16), so whether they are the little ones or the older ones, we should seek to lead them into the knowledge of Himself through "the exceeding greatness of his power to usward who believe," always remembering that

"His love is as great as His power,
And knows neither measure nor end!"

The Lord's Supplies.

When Abraham interceded for Sodom, God did not stop granting till Abraham stopped asking. When Elisha provided the oil for the widow's vessels the oil ceased not to flow until there was not a vessel more. When Jesus opened His treasures on the mount and fed the multitude, His supplies did not stop till they ceased in their demand. "As much as they would." So it is now, Christ's measure is infinite. "Exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think," this is God's measure. If we have little grace the fault is ours, not His.

“SOME HAVE FALLEN ASLEEP.”

J. T. Mawson.

“Them also which sleep through Jesus.”

TH**ERE** are many passages in the New Testament that describe the death of the Christian as sleep. It is an attractive word; there is not another like it in our English language for quietness and peace and rest, for the absence of weariness and worry. How welcome is sleep at the end of the day, and what a compensation it is for all its labour. And sleep is the word chosen by the Holy Spirit to describe the death of the Christian. How well may we say as the disciples did, “Lord if he sleep he shall do well.” Yes, indeed, the one who sleeps through Jesus does well, for at the other side of such a sleep there is eternal life, perennial vigour, the presence of the Lord, and the day of God’s everlasting favour that shall never know a night. “And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord from henceforth. Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them.” That is it, they rest, blessed rest!

But this sleep applies to the body, and the things of this restless world only; it is to this life in which men sigh and groan that the Christian sleeps. Nirvana, complete cessation of being, the highest state of felicity that Buddhism offers, belongs to that system of gross darkness and has no place in the light. Not so does God’s Book speak of the state of those who have fallen asleep. “I am the God of Abraham,

and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob,” said God to Moses centuries after those patriarchs had passed into the life beyond this, and He is not the God of the dead, of those who do not exist, but of the living, for all live unto Him (Matt. 22; Luke 20). “Whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord’s” (Romans 14. 8). When one falls asleep they are just as truly in the Lord’s hands as they ever were, “None,” says He, “shall pluck them out of My hand.” Death may separate them from us but not from Him; He holds them in everlasting security in the hand that smashed the power of death.

“Absent from the body to be present with the Lord” (2 Corinthians 5. 8); “With Christ, which is far better” (Philippians 1. 23); “Lord Jesus,” cried the first martyr for the faith, “receive my spirit.” He knew that his Lord was a triumphant Lord; he knew that death had been conquered and that there was but a step between his living Saviour and him. Just one step out of a suffering body into the presence of the Lord; to sleep here but to be awake there; that is what the death of a Christian is. God giveth us the victory, thanks be unto Him! To sleep through Jesus is a triumph for Christ and a triumph for His saints.

“No man knoweth the Son but the Father” (Matt. 11. 27).

THE GREAT HIGH PRIEST.

C.H.M.

Exodus 28.

“THE ephod” was the great priestly robe. It was inseparably connected with the shoulder-pieces and the breastplate, teaching us, very distinctly, that the *strength* of the priest’s shoulder, and the *affection* of the priest’s heart, were wholly devoted to the interests of those whom he represented, and on whose behalf he wore the ephod—that special priestly robe. This, which was typified in Aaron, is actualized in Christ. His omnipotent strength and infinite love are ours—ours eternally—ours unquestionably. The shoulder which sustains the universe, upholds the feeblest and most obscure member of the blood-bought congregation. The heart of Jesus beats with an undying affection, with an everlasting and an all-enduring love for the most neglected member of the redeemed assembly.

The names of the twelve tribes engraven on precious stones, were borne both on the shoulders and on the breast of the high priest. The peculiar excellence of a precious stone is seen in this, that the more intense the light which is brought to bear upon it, the more brightly it shines. Light can never make a precious stone look dim; it only increases and develops its lustre.

The twelve tribes, one as well as another, the smallest as well as the greatest, were borne continually upon the breast and shoulders of Aaron before the Lord. They were, each and every one, maintained, in the divine presence, in all that undimmed lustre and unalterable beauty which belonged to the position in which the perfect grace of the God of Israel had set them. The people

were represented before God by the high priest. Whatever might be their infirmities, their errors, or their failures, yet their names glittered on the breastplate with unfading brilliance. Jehovah had set them there, and who could pluck them thence? Jehovah had put them thus, and who could put them otherwise? Who could penetrate into the holy place to snatch from Aaron’s breast the name of one of Israel’s tribes? Who could sully the lustre which gathered round those names, in the position which Jehovah had placed them? Not one. They lay beyond the reach of every enemy—beyond the influence of every evil.

How encouraging and consolatory it is for the tried, tempted, buffeted and self-abased children of God to remember that God only sees them on the heart of Jesus! In His view, they ever shine in all the effulgence of Christ; they are arrayed in divine comeliness. The world cannot see them thus; but God does, and this makes all the difference. Men, in looking at the people of God, see only their blots and blemishes. They have no ability whatever to see further, and as a consequence, their judgment is always wrong—always one-sided. They cannot see the sparkling jewels, bearing the names of God’s redeemed, engraven by the hand of changeless love. True it is that Christians should be most careful not to furnish the men of the world with any just occasion to speak reproachfully. They should seek “by patient continuance in well doing, to put to silence the ignorance of foolish men.” If only they entered, by the power of the Holy Ghost, into the come-

liness in which they ever shine in God's vision, it would assuredly lead to a walk of practical holiness, moral purity, and elevation, before the eyes of men. The more clearly we enter, by faith, into objective truth, or

what is true of us in Christ, the deeper, more experimental, and practical will be the subjective work in us; and the more complete will be the exhibition of the moral effect in our life and character.

He shall divide the Spoil with the Strong.

Isaiah 53.

I MUST tell you of a little High School girl, not more than fourteen. She was converted on the Sunday afternoon and on Monday morning she had to come in by train to school from the town in which she lived, and there were a number of school-girls her own age living in that same town, who travelled in that same train to the same school. The train had scarcely started before the little girl bubbled up in her new found joy and told them she was a Christian, and that Jesus was her Saviour. Instead of being glad to hear the good news, they scoffed and mocked, and when the train stopped at the first station they got out saying they would not travel in the same compartment with a religious girl. And she told me that as she saw her old friends leaving the compartment one by one a lump got into her throat and the tears ran down her cheeks. But she remembered the hymn we had sung in the gospel meeting the day before and she began to sing,

"Oh, Who could it be with His brow
crowned with thorn?
The centre of hatred the object of scorn.
Exposed to derision and shame on a
tree,
Enduring such anguish, oh, Who could
it be?"

The darkness surrounds Him, no helper
is nigh,
No sweet word of comfort no pitying
eye;
Alone on dark Calvary by faith I can
see
My blessed Redeemer is dying for me."

She said as she sang the sweet words it seemed as though the empty compartment filled up with the presence of her Saviour and she rejoiced that she had been counted worthy to suffer for His Name's sake. Little Olive was one of the strong. The day is coming when He will appear in all His glory, and she will share in that glory. He will not have that glory alone, He will share it with His loved ones, who have confessed Him before men. That day of glory shines before us. Oh, wonderful day!

We praise Thee for the daily, lesser blessings
That meet each smallest need;
The tiny, ceaseless tokens, ever proving
Thy love is love indeed.
We come to Thee, O Father, with thanksgiving,
Low at Thy feet we kneel;
Now give us grace to show in sweet obedience
The gratitude we feel!

CORRESPONDENCE.

Cleansing: Judicial, Moral, Practical.

My dear Quartus,

I should like to consult with you about the various aspects of *cleansing* presented in the Scriptures.

First, there is the cleansing by the blood of Christ (1 John 1. 7). I expect you will agree with me that this is not a cleansing of *the heart*. Whatever the precious blood of Christ does, it does perfectly, and we none of us need to be informed that our hearts are not perfectly cleansed from all sin. It is a question of guilt before God: the accumulated sins of our lifetime, all put away from God's sight in virtue of the death of Christ.

But what of the cleansing of 1 John 1. 9? Is it the same as that in verse 7? Some of us have been accustomed to stress the "we" and to apply verse 9 exclusively to believers. But it is not a question of holiness but of righteousness, and a cleansing from *unrighteousness* is in view. Do you think it would be better, with the late F. W. Grant, to take verse 9 as a general statement, amplifying verse 7? or would you regard it as treating of the way of restoration for a child of God who has sinned?

Then, secondly, there is the cleansing of regeneration (Titus 3. 5). This, of course, is the new birth, and is necessary because of what we are, rather than because of our actual sins. Would you connect this in any way with the *water* that flowed from the Saviour's pierced side?

Thirdly, there is the cleansing of the backsliding child of God,

whether or not we see it in 1 John 1. 9. It seems to be set forth typically in the ritual of the red heifer (Numbers xix). The ashes (result of death) were to be applied to the one who was contaminated, by means of running water. Would you take this to be the energy of the Holy Spirit bringing the death of Christ to bear upon the conscience? If so, the death of Christ in what aspect? I suppose it would not be so much atonement as the cross standing as a barrier between us and everything to which Christ died.

Fourthly, there is cleansing *by the Father's work* (John 15. 2). The Father is the Vinedresser, and cleanses the branches, not because of failure, but because of success. Does this come in the way of discipline and suffering?

Fifthly, there is cleansing by the word of Christ (John 15. 3). Will you explain this please? It does not seem to be in view of failure. Nor does He say, "Ye are clean because I have washed your feet." His ministry among His loved ones would surely tend to detach their hearts from the things of this world. Is this what it means?

Sixthly, there is the washing of the feet (John 13. 1-12). This act had a significance which was at the moment not apparent (verse 7) but was to be understood in the "hereafter" when Christ was glorified and the Holy Spirit had descended.

In the East, feetwashing was more than cleansing. It was always accorded to a welcome guest, and had much the same force as our English, "I hope you will make yourself

quite at home." The Lord remarked on the lack of feetwashing in the house of the supercilious Pharisee (Luke 7. 44). We may be sure that this homely act of courtesy, affection and welcome was never omitted in the humble homes where Jesus was always an honoured Guest. Peter would many a time have washed the feet of his Lord and Master. Now the situation was reversed, and his Lord and Master had girded Himself with a towel, and stood with the bason ready to wash Peter's feet. Oh, whatever could it mean?

It seems to me that verse 1 is the key to the enigma. In the latter part of John the Lord does not speak so much of "the world" as of "*this world*," in contrast with the Father's world up yonder, to which He was about to return. That was *His* home.

In chapter 14. 1-3 He promises to return to take His loved ones thither, but in chapter 13 He says, as it were, "I want to carry your thoughts and affections with Me where I am going. I wash your feet to express My welcome to you: I want you *to be perfectly at home with Me there.*"

Of course, if the feet are soiled, the washing of them cleanses. But in the East, the feet of the guests are washed, whether they are soiled or not. The cleansing is a secondary matter: the welcome is the great point.

There is a seventh cleansing which I feel is intensely important. "Let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and the spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God" (2 Corinthians 7. 1). It appears to throw the responsibility upon us.

Please let me have your thoughts not only with regard to what I have said, but also to what I may have omitted. You will agree with me that it is a subject of tremendous practical interest.

Yours affectionately in Christ,
"Tertius."

Dear Tertius,

You have indeed broached a subject of the greatest possible importance to everyone who has believed; and as solemn and sobering as it is important. I welcomed your letter, and in considering it have been impressed by two things; the evil character of sin and the world, and the proneness of our flesh to go after them that makes cleansing a necessity, and the adequacy and blessedness of the provision that God has made for this, entirely at His own cost; and a third thing impressed me, God's great desire to have us near to Himself, and suitable to Him, that we may have communion with Him and He with us. This shews us the character of His love for us.

Every sincere soul must have groaned under the plague of his own heart and have yearned to know the way of cleansing from it. It was so, in ancient days, when David, giving voice to the desire of many, cried out to God, "Cleanse Thou me from secret faults" (Ps. 19). "Cleanse me from my sin . . . wash me and I shall be whiter than snow" (Ps. 51). This desire should be even greater now that the full light is shining, and thank God, the desire will always be answered by the light.

1 JOHN 1. 7. "*The blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanseth us from all sin.*" A few remarks as to this God-glorifying, conscience-re-

believing statement are called for, for it does, as you say, lie at the basis of all cleansing and righteousness for us. We must, I think, consider it in its context. There are three great facts stated, they really cover our Christian life and 'faith, we walk in the light; we have fellowship one with another; and what makes these unspeakable blessings possible, is the *the all-sufficient, never changing efficacy of the blood*. The light is all that God is as declared by His only begotten Son (John 1. 18), but we could have neither the fitness, nor the title to walk together in this light and enjoy it, if it were not for the blood that has answered for ever for every sin that we had committed or might commit. The blood of Jesus Christ, which was simply the proof of the completeness of the one great sacrifice that He had made for sin, is the righteous and immoveable base upon which our relations with God and one another rest.

The statement does not suppose a continual, or oft-repeated cleansing, for that would put us back upon Jewish ground, where the offerer, because he could not find a perfect sacrifice, never had a perfected or purged conscience, and so could never be happy or free before God (see Hebrews 10), nor is it exactly a once-for-all cleansing, never to be repeated, which is most blessedly true in its place, but it is what the blood is in itself, our perfect answer to every question that could arise, or charge that could be made against us in regard of our sins.

"Though the restless foe accuses,
Sins recounting like a flood,
Every charge our God refuses,
Christ has answered with His blood."

1 JOHN 1. 9. I should hesitate to question anything that the late

F. W. Grant taught on such a passage as this, but I find that I cannot agree with him when he says that it is a general statement indicating the first coming of a sinner to God. It seems rather to shew the terms on which God is towards those who have come to Him, and are now His children. God in the light is full of grace; His children know this; they walk in the light as He is in the light; they know that God is love, and they are not afraid of Him, for His love has cast all fear (in the sense of dread) out of their hearts. If through carelessness of walk they fail and wander and sin, they do not hide away from God as Adam did, but when their consciences are aroused through Christ's advocacy they confess their sins and He is faithful and just to forgive them. But they go further, for they desire to be in all things suitable to God, and they know that He requires truth in the inward parts, so they say, "Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting." In this way they are cleansed from the unrighteousness of hiding things from God and pretending to be what they are not. They are not only forgiven, but in their spirits there is no guile (Ps. 32). The late Wm. Kelly speaks of this cleansing as "cleansing from the lack of integrity which sin naturally entails."

You will readily agree that this cleansing is absolutely necessary to our "fullness of joy" (verse 4); our communion with one another (verse 7), and most of all to our fellowship with the Father and His Son Jesus Christ, (verse 3); for how could we be in the realised joy of these essentials of eternal life apart

from honesty with God? There must be uprightness of soul before Him, and to this He brings us through His grace and as a result of Christ's advocacy for us. Would you agree with me if I said that here we are cleansed by the light? It seems to me that the dullness in many Christian lives and the absence of joy is because there is not sufficient energy of life and desire for God's company to be satisfied with nothing less than this cleansing.

TITUS 3. 5. There is evidently a difference of view as to this great text. You say, "the washing of regeneration is of course the new birth." I have looked up a paper on it by the late Edward Cross and he gives baptism a definite place in relation to it. He says, "Regeneration must not be confounded with the new birth," (and he gives the Greek words with which I will not trouble you). "The word occurs only here and in Matt. 19. 28. In both places it refers to a fresh outward status, or position, whether in the coming kingdom, or the Christian's position in this world now in view of it. But in neither case does it involve, as does the new birth, new, vital state subjectively. The subjective state may or may not correspond to it." This may sound rather theological, but you will consider it, and admit, I know, that it is at least one side of the question. It follows the exhortation to be subject to rulers; describes what we were in our lawless condition; shews that we have been transferred into a new kingdom, we have come under a new rule or management. Once we played our part in the kingdom of darkness, where everything was corrupt as verse 3 shews, but now we have been cleansed from that corruption

by being introduced by the mercy of God into another kingdom where all is clean and righteous, baptism being the outward evidence of this. But if this is our new outward position according to Edward Cross, it would be a sham if there did not go with it the new birth, according to you. And while the word regeneration may not be the same as born again, as J. N. Darby also shews, yet there is in this text, surely, the communication of life-giving fitness and capacity for the new Kingdom. The renewing of the Holy Ghost, I think, proves this, for He is the power of the Christian life, and if no life is there, there would be no sense in speaking of the renewing of the Holy Ghost.

I am sure you will agree with this further quotation from Mr. Cross. "Baptism is then an external change of position; the new birth is an internal, vital change of state. The former introduces into new privileges and responsibilities; the latter is the production by the breath of the Spirit, of a new nature, vitally; and the operative power of this new nature is the personal power of the Spirit Himself" (*Scripture Truth*, Vol. 7. pp. 333).

I should not connect this cleansing directly with the water that flowed from the side of the Saviour, but with the fact of our transference from a kingdom of darkness where all evil passions and things flourished into a kingdom which is bright with the kindness and love of God our Saviour, involving a new life of righteousness and the energy of it. Of course this could not have been apart from the death of Christ.

NUMBERS 19. In order to get the full significance of this type,

which is one of the most important in the Old Testament, we should notice the place the Tabernacle has in the chapter. It is referred to in verses 4, 9, 13, 20. And because the people were identified with that which was the Lord's sanctuary, these waters of purification were sprinkled upon them when they were defiled—it might be through carelessness, or in some cases through necessity. Now we have been brought nigh to God in fact and reality. We learn from 1 Corinthians, for instance, that we are the house of God and the body of Christ; and holiness becomes God's house for ever.

The Corinthian Christians were a very careless lot, they did not realise the defiling character of sin and the world, nor the holiness of God's house of which they were a part, and they seemed to be forgetting that Christ had died not only to save them from the penalty of their sins but from the evil workings of sin itself. It is in this Epistle to them that we read "Christ our pass-over is sacrificed for us." They needed to be reminded of that, and so do we continually. It is here, it seems to me, that we have the ashes of the red heifer. The ashes were the remembrance of the sacrifice. They were the evidence that the victim had been consumed by the fire. This speaks to us not of any particular aspect of the death of Christ, but simply that He suffered for our sins. This great fact is brought afresh to our memories by the Holy Spirit's power, which as you say the running water typifies. This produces contrition of heart, and confession, that we should have been careless about that which cost Christ His suffering when He was made sin for us. God does not

require a fresh sacrifice to meet the fresh sin. He has found all that His justice could claim in the one perfect offering, but we need to be freshly reminded of what it cost the Lord Jesus to save us from the penalty of sin, and the consideration of this brings us to a right sense of what sin is, thus are we morally cleansed from it.

But no notes on this interesting chapter would be anything like complete that omitted the fact that there were times when it was impossible to avoid defilement, as when one died in a tent. I take that to typify that we all are compelled more or less to come into contact with the world, and the deeper our sense of the holiness of God the more conscious shall we be of its defiling influence; there is ever that within us, too, that responds to its appeals, and our spirits become dulled by its very atmosphere of godlessness. What then? Well, when we feel this we may retire into "the clean place"—the presence of the Lord, and find relief and refreshment in thoughts of the great love that brought our Saviour into death for us. Such thoughts given by the Holy Spirit from the Word have a sanctifying, purifying effect upon us, recalling our souls to their true life of communion with the Lord. In this way we make use of the waters of separation. But this seems to me to have in view very specially the place that we have as being part of the house of God, and our relations with Him in consequence.

JOHN 15. 2. Yes, this is the Father's careful discipline. Every body knows that the vine has to be constantly watched for the many parasites that attack it, and must be continually cleansed and at the right

season pruned. What wisdom there was in the Lord in His parables! There are some well-known lines by J. N. Darby that explain this passage better than anything else that I know of and so I pass them on to you, though probably you know them as well as I.

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

Takes ever knowledge of our state—
What dims communion with His love—
Might check our growth—or separate
Our hearts from what's revealed above.

Oh, wondrous love! that ne'er forgets
The objects of its tender care:
May chasten still, while sin besets,
To warn and guard them where they
are.

But ne'er forgets; but feeds them still
With tokens of His tender love;
Will keep, till, freed from every ill,
They find their rest with Him above!

JOHN 15. 3. It is everywhere seen in Scripture that the Word of God cleanses those who are subject to it. Psalm 119. 9 and other texts will occur to you. It does not cleanse *judicially*, the blood only does that, but *morally*, that is, it goes down to the very centre of a man's being and changes him; it exposes what he is and leads him to abhor himself, and it reveals what God is, and leads him to put his confidence in Him, and thus he is made clean. This is really the new birth. The word that Christ had spoken to the disciples was the revelation of God, whose name of Father He had declared, and what an amazing effect it had had upon them. I think we see this in Peter's words in ch. 6. 68, 69, "Lord to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life and we believe and are sure that Thou art the Christ,

the Son of the living God." They had turned from priests and temple, from ordinances and rites, and from their own righteousnesses also to Christ. He met their whole need, changed their entire outlook, and having attached them firmly to Himself, had made them clean branches in the Vine. His word had done it, it had given them life for by it they were born again. "The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life."

JOHN 13. 1-2. Your suggestion that feet washing in the East was an act of hospitality is a help in the understanding of this most moving incident in the Lord's ways with His disciples. It was in view of His going away to the Father's house that He did it, and that they might have part with Him there while they were still on the earth; He would undertake to so serve them, that though He was going into another sphere of life, they might still have part with Him in it, even as they had had part with Him in His temptations on earth (Luke 22. 28). But for this they needed to have their feet washed, not only to assure them of a welcome into that new sphere of blessing, and to shew them that having loved them He would love them to the end and be satisfied with nothing less than their company there, but to fit them and keep them fit for this new communion. They needed of course to be cleansed from their earthly hopes, and to have their affections set on things in heaven, His word was already doing this for them and would do it more completely. It is not difficult to see what a washing of feet this would be for a Jew, they were to walk according to an entirely new rule, but we all need it for our tendency is always to settle down

upon the earth and forget our heavenly calling, even if we avoid evil things.

But further I do not think that we can leave out of this act of the Lord the fact of defilement. His own words, "He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit" would surely indicate that the one morally cleansed by His word, needed not to have that repeated except as far as his feet were concerned. In our walk through a defiled world we contract defilement. It may not be actual sin that is in question here, but the fact that contact with earthly and worldly things unfits us for communion with the Lord, and He undertakes this service because of that, applying the purifying word to us.

Here would come in the meaning of the water which flowed from the side of our Lord when He had died. John saw water and blood. The blood was for the expiation of sin and was for God, that He might be just in saving us and welcoming us into His family; the water is for us, it flowed from the side of Christ *dead*. It has its part in all moral purification from sin and teaches us that we are freed from the old sinful, selfish life by death and by death alone; we have been committed to the death of Christ in our baptism; we have died with Him. It is the realisation of this that purifies us from the old life of sin; how shall we that are dead to sin live any longer therein? This great truth is contained in the word—the word of the cross, it shews us as it is applied to our souls by the Holy Spirit the way of condemnation and death for the old life of enmity against God and the blessedness of living unto God through

Christ Jesus who is alive from the dead.

2 CORINTHIANS 7. 1. Nothing could be more important and imperative on the responsible side than this exhortation. It flows out of the fact that we are God's sons and daughters, and that He who is the Almighty God, has promised to exercise a fatherly care over us, as we separate ourselves from evil things and associations. But there is more than outward separation from evil, we must purify *ourselves*. The filthiness of the flesh would be outward conduct, that of the spirit would be the inner thoughts. No man can be cleaner than his thoughts; as a man thinketh in his heart so is he. It is in our spirits and in our thought-life that we have to do with God, and here there must be a resolute refusal to entertain evil thoughts. They may flash into the mind but we must refuse to entertain them, and cast ourselves upon the mercy of God, asking that He will renew our minds by His Spirit and furnish us with thoughts of Himself and Christ, for only so can we perfect holiness in the fear of God. Filthiness of the flesh proceeds from filthiness of the spirit. The inner life needs to be lived with God, that the outer life may honour Him.

Now this is a very long letter, longer than you expected, I am sure, and much longer than I intended when I commenced to write, but I do not see how I can reduce it and can only hope it will not weary you, and that you will be quite free with your criticisms; for I feel that it is only a very feeble attempt to answer your interesting questions.

Yours affectionately in Christ,

"Quartus."

ANSWER TO CORRESPONDENCE.

Eye Salve.

"I was asked a few days ago the meaning of the words. 'Anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see,' and would like to know your thoughts on the passage. I wondered if it was the washing of water by the word."—KENT.

YOU will notice that in the Lord's eyes the condition of this proud and boasting and self-deceived church was wretched, miserable, poor, blind and naked. An exact description of an Eastern beggar, in scanty rags, and festering, inflamed and sightless eyes. Was there any hope for those in such a pitiable condition? Yes. He was their hope. He could enrich them, provide them with spotless garments, and give sight to their blind eyes. And if we carefully consider these things we shall realise that it is Himself that He offers instead of all the poverty and blindness that was theirs. He is Himself all these things.

"Eye-salve to anoint thine eyes" seems to be the correct reading, it implies healing as well as sight-giving, and as we consider it we cannot forget the way the Lord treated the man born blind in John 9. He spat on the ground and made clay with the spittle and anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay. This was eye-salve in-

deed. It indicated how He had come down and would go even into the dust of death for us. How He brought all the grace of His own person into death to bless us. How that fact opens our eyes! how it rebukes our pride! and fills us with shame that we should ever neglect Him! There is no true sight for anyone until they see this great act, this unique, incomparable sacrifice on the Lord's part; in it there is the revelation of the love of God to men, and the Lord's own personal self-surrender because of His great love for us. He who was in the form of God humbled Himself even to the death of the cross.

This eye-salve is applied to the eyes of our hearts. It is the Holy Spirit's work. Paul prayed, "That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, would give you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the full knowledge of Him, *being enlightened in the eyes of your hearts*" (Eph. 1. 18).

Yielding ourselves to God and our wills.

"Does not yielding ourselves to God demand effort on our part and the exercise of our wills with this in view; and if so is it right to say as I have heard it said, All human effort is in vain?"—H.L.

THE meaning of this word as to "yielding to God," in Romans 4, is really, Have it done, once and for all. Having been set free from sin, as the great task master, by death—for Romans 6 views us as being dead to sin, as indicated by our

baptism, which is identification with Christ's death—we are no longer to listen to the commands of sin, but as having a new life, being alive from the dead, we are to definitely yield ourselves to God who is the source of our new life. He is our

master now, and we are surely glad to own His claims as such. We should not say that this calls for effort exactly; purpose of heart, perhaps, but chiefly delight in the love that has been commended to us in the death of Christ. It does not need effort to yield ourselves to One who has loved us so greatly. Are we not delighted to yield ourselves to our Saviour God? Sin ruined us,

and would have damned us. God has delivered us and saved us with an eternal salvation, it should be a joy to be free from sin and to yield ourselves to the will of our great Deliverer. There is no exercise of our wills in this, but the surrender of them to God's will, which will we may be sure is never against us but always on our part and for our blessing.

John the Baptist not an Apostle.

“Does Scripture enable us to form any idea as to why John the Baptist was not called to be one of the Apostles? He who sent an angel to liberate Peter from prison could have liberated John. But instead of that brave and fearless Levite, a Christ-hating, blaspheming, pharisaical Benjamite was chosen as the great Apostle to the Gentiles. Why?”—JERSEY.

WE can give no definite scripture as to this, but it is clear from all Scripture that God acts sovereignly in these matters. Frederick Myers in his great poem has put these words into the mouth of Paul,

“This is His will: He takes and He
refuses,
Finds Him ambassadors whom men
deny,
Wise ones nor mighty for His saints
He chooses,
No, such as John or Gideon or I.”

But I think we can see that John, being the last of the prophets who told of the coming of the Lord and who sought to prepare His way, must of necessity share the fate of his predecessors, if only to bring into prominence the solemn fact that one generation was no better than another, and that the progress of man towards final good is fiction and that men would not endure the

word of God against themselves. Then as the Lord's forerunner, his reception and treatment were as his Lord's would be. It is true that his faith faltered for a moment, but what a high honour was his, and how honourable was his death, and how true was his witness, and how blessed his determination to decrease that his Lord might increase. He filled his day as a burning and shining light according to the will of God and fell asleep.

In Paul there was set forth the exceeding grace and mercy of God and we may be greatly encouraged as we consider God's ways with him, for we see in them that the most unlikely and unexpected are laid hold of by His power and transformed by His grace. Satan's captives become the bondslaves and trophies of Jesus Christ.

Had there not been
Another soul in this wide universe—
One only, ruined, lost, and that one thee,
God still had given His well-belovèd Son,
His life for thine.

THINGS MOST SURELY BELIEVED.

J. T. Mawson.

No. 8. Atonement by Blood.

“**A**ND behold a throne was set in heaven, and one sat on the throne, and He that sat was to look upon like a jasper and a sardine stone” (Revelation 4. 2, 3). It is my conviction that if the glorious and eternally blessed Occupant of that throne had appeared only as the jasper stone—the clear, unsullied crystal—no created being could have stood before Him, but because the blood-red rays of the sardine blend with the light of the jasper, the worst of sinners may have a footing there in everlasting righteousness and peace. To understand what the symbol illustrates take the great Christian message which is declared to us in 1 John 1. 5, “God is light and in Him is no darkness at all.” There is the clear shining of the crystal, but if that had been all could any man have abode in the searching brightness of it? But there follows at once the fear-dispelling, peace-giving word, “The blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanseth us from all sin.” How perfectly that great fact harmonises and blends with the light! Indeed it is part of it. What confidence it gives to the soul! and what uprightness! for in the light nothing can be hidden, yet all is covered by the blood, it is the perfect atonement, equal in its efficacy to the full shining of the light. In the knowledge of this the one who believes can walk in the light even as God is in the light and can rejoice in the supremacy of the throne that shines as the jasper and the sardine stone.

Had sin never entered into the world there would, of course,

have been no need for atonement by blood, and according to our estimate of what sin is will be our appreciation of it. If a man thinks that sin is merely “the survival of the tiger in humanity” which evolution will most surely destroy, as some divinity professors have asserted in defiance of the Word of God, he will deny all need of it; if he thinks that a man’s sin is nothing more than weakness or a mere negation that he may overcome in time, he will resent the word that tells him that he needs a Saviour such as Jesus is; but if he discovers that his deeds are the outward evidence of a corrupted inward nature and that his “sin is lawlessness” as the Bible says it is, “for every one that doeth sin doeth lawlessness” (1 John 3. 4. R.V.); if his soul bows down before the truth that “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), then atonement by blood will become a necessity to him and his awakened conscience will be satisfied with nothing less.

Atonement by blood is as necessary to God as it is to us. Apart from it His true and full nature and character could never have been known by any of His creatures, least of all by sinful men; but by it His ways are revealed and justified, for it is by the way He has dealt with this question of man’s sinfulness that what He is has been fully declared.

We must face the question as to what God is as well as what we are. Would we have Him to be other than the gospel says He is?

In the gospel His righteousness is declared and His wrath is revealed against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men. Could any creature have security and peace if it were not so? There are those who cavil at God's right to execute justice, would they care to live in a land where crime was strong and law weak? Where even the greatest criminal lived in fear of a greater arising to crush him unchecked by the law? No, they are ready enough to support the law of the land in which they live, and to justify its penalties for their own protection, but deny the right to God which they claim for themselves. Of them the Bible says, "Thou art inexcusable, O man, whatsoever thou art that judgest: for thou that judgest doest the same things. But we are sure that the judgment of God is according to truth against them that commit such things." How daring and how unreasonable is that spirit in a man which insists upon his neighbour obeying the laws of the land and yet flouts the law of God!

If the judgment of God were not according to truth and justice, if He winked at sin, and were the indulgent and weak-fatherly being that the modernist would have Him be, then an awakened conscience would be morally greater and better than He, and the devil would take advantage of His weakness and seize His throne. But we may be thankful and rejoice that God is God and that His Justice will "never descend from her sceptred royalty" and compound with sin. God will maintain His supremacy and abide for ever and without change in His infinite and unsullied holiness, and all His ways will be in absolute and unchallengeable righteousness.

Since that is so, what of men who are sinful and who have been guilty of rebellion against Him, and as a consequence are lying under the sentence and power of death? There could be no hope for them apart from atonement by blood. Hence the Bible, which is God's Word to men, is full of it; it is, as some one else has said, the diamond pivot upon which the New Testament turns, and it is the burden of the Old; it is woven into the very fabric of the Holy Scriptures and is the basis of all relationship between God and sinful men; apart from it there is no light, no peace, no hope for men. If we reject this the Bible has neither message nor meaning for us.

The Old Testament declares, "It is the blood that maketh atonement for the soul" (Leviticus 17. 11), and the New Testament adds its witness by saying, "Without shedding of blood is no remission" (Hebrews 9. 22). The coats of skin with which God clothed Adam and Eve in Eden first proclaimed the fact that a victim not chargeable with the offence must suffer in the place of the guilty if he is to go free. Abel's lamb, the ram that was caught in the thicket and offered instead of Isaac, the paschal lamb in Egypt and all those offerings that were consumed upon Israelitish altars taught to all who had ears to hear and hearts to understand that there was no other way by which a man's sins could be covered and his transgressions forgiven.

Yet in those countless altars and sacrifices God had no pleasure. He had no pleasure in Israel's offerings because of the character of those that brought them. "To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices to Me? saith the Lord: I am full of the burnt offerings of rams,

and I delight not in the blood of bullocks." There was only wickedness and no sincerity in the hearts of those who brought them and the blood of their sacrifices could not change this; but the great, the fundamental reason was that the blood of bulls and goats could never take away sin. Hebrews 10 is the great chapter which shews us the futility of these offerings, there we learn that they called sin to remembrance every year, for it is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats should take away sin, and nobody could suppose that they could please God. Then why were they offered? They were a *shadow* of good things to come, and they filled up the period of waiting until the *Substance* appeared. The substance is Christ; it was to Him that all those ancient sacrifices pointed and of His coming they spoke with tongues that were eloquent to the ear of faith. Theories are wearisome and doctrines are of no value unless they centre in Christ. IT IS HE whom God hath set forth, a propitiation through faith in His blood (Romans 3. 25). He is the propitiation for our sins, but not for ours alone, but also for the whole world (1 John 2. 2).

The word atonement does not occur in our New Testament, except in Romans 5. 11, and it is well-known that in that passage it is a wrong translation, and should be "reconciliation." It is an Old Testament word which means "to cover" and does not mean "atone=ment" as theology declares. It means that the offence is blotted out by the offering; an equivalent is rendered to the aggrieved party which covers the crime. Yet atone=ment, or to use the New Testament word, reconciliation, is very closely allied to it,

for as a result of the atoning sacrifice and death of Christ men are reconciled to God and they could not have been by any other way.

And further if there has been awakened in our souls a sense of need, our eyes are turned upon Him to whom God Himself looks and in Him we have a common object with God. What an hour that was when the Son of God rose up and coming into the world said, "Sacrifice and offering Thou wouldest not, but a body hast Thou prepared Me: In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin Thou hast had no pleasure. Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of Me) to do Thy will, O God" (Hebrews 10. 5-7). We are sure that all heaven was stirred, and the attention of every creature in those realms above was entirely concentrated upon that great event, but who shall tell what it meant to God? His holy will, His glory, the vindication of His character, the revelation of His love were all committed to His beloved Son, to Jesus—the Babe in Bethlehem. And to Him we must look, for the words of the Baptist are as much for us as they were for the crowds that heard them on the banks of Jordan, "Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world."

Suppose that when mankind had proved itself to be an incurably sinful stock, God had cast the whole race out of His presence, executing His judgment upon every member of it, for He could certainly have done that in pure justice, what then should we have said of Him? We should have said, God is just, and our sins are great in His sight but we are of small account. Suppose on the other hand He had waived the

question of our sins aside as though they did not matter and had lightly pardoned and blest us all without any reference to righteousness, what should we have said of Him then? We should have said, God thinks a great deal about us, we are very important in His eyes, but sin is nothing, He thinks very little about sin and He is not righteous. I need not say that this latter supposition is an impossible one, for God cannot pass over sin as a thing of no account, it calls for His judgment and upon it His judgment must fall.

Then if God must punish sin, what of the sinner? Shall God be robbed of His joy in man for ever, and shall sinners never know the love that fills His heart towards them? In short is it possible for God to pour out His just judgment upon sin and yet save the sinner? Can His justice and mercy be harmonised, and His righteousness be upheld, while His love flows out to men? Hebrews 10 is the triumphant answer to the questions. "Above when He said, Sacrifice and offering and burnt offering and offering for sin Thou wouldest not, neither hadst pleasure therein; which are offered by the law; then said He, Lo, I come to do Thy will O God. He taketh away the first, that He may establish the second. By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once."

"Wouldst thou know in My great
creation
Where the rays of My glory meet?
Where to My awe-ful righteousness
The kiss of My peace is sweet?
Where shine the wisdom and wonder
Of God's everlasting plan?
Behold on the Cross of dishonour
A cursed and a dying Man.

It has been argued that the doctrine of the atonement is an immoral

doctrine, for according to it the innocent is compelled to suffer in the place of the guilty. But this is a perversion of the doctrine, and it falsifies the fact. When the Son of God came forth to suffer for guilty men, there was no compulsion but that of love. The love of God was the spring and motive of His coming. To prove this we do not quote the well-known John 3. 16, though that wonderful word would be enough most surely to decide the question for ever, but we draw upon other texts not so often used, "We have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world." "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins" (1 John 4). "God commendeth His love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5. 8). And when the Father sent the Son He did not send One who was unwilling to go at His command. "Lo, I come to do Thy will, O God," proves beyond question that His coming was voluntary. He was one with the Father in this, and He took up that body which was prepared for Him by God—He became Man that He might accomplish in manhood all the will of God in regard to men. Nor did the innocent suffer for the guilty when Jesus died. We cannot attach that word to Him, for it means without the knowledge of good and evil, and He had full knowledge of all things. He was holy and not innocent; He knew what the sin of man was in its exceeding sinfulness and hated it and was Himself sinless though a Man, and He knew what the righteousness of God was and loved it and was God's righteous servant to manifest and establish it.

Yet He did suffer for the guilty, the Bible tells us this in the plainest language, "Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the Just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God" (1 Peter 3. 18). Yes, that is it, "the Just for the unjust," and in that suffering He rendered to Justice a full atonement. Atonement was accomplished when the blood flowed forth from the spear-riven side of Jesus, and in virtue of it the sinner is brought to God. By it God is glorified and the sinner redeemed. The love of God and His mercy and grace are exercised in the sinner's salvation in absolute accord with His holiness, righteousness, justice and truth; the majesty of His throne is upheld and His heart flows out in blessing to men, and all who believe can say He is our God and we are His people.

There is the *Godward* aspect of it and the *usward who believe* aspect of it. The *Godward* aspect of it is *propitiation*, which is brought out in Romans 3. 25. It was typified in the sin offering that was consumed without the camp of Israel on the great day of atonement. The fact that it was consumed outside the camp indicated in figure God's abhorrence of sin, and the great anti-type of that comes out in those solemn words, "He hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him" (2 Cor. 5. 21). Here, we must confess, is a holy mystery, as deep and impenetrable as was the darkness that for three hours enveloped the cross. But we know that having taken the sinner's place Jesus endured the judgment that was against the sinner, even to being forsaken of God. There was no mitigation of the judgment for Him, but because of who He was,

the holy Son of God, He was able to endure and exhaust the judgment, and cry, "It is finished."

The blood of the sin-offering that was burnt without the camp was carried by the high priest into the holiest in the Tabernacle and sprinkled there upon the golden mercy seat and seven times before it, and that was the propitiation, that was the place where God could meet with His people. Because of the blood the throne of God has become a mercy-seat without any diminution of its holiness. This is what is meant when it is stated, "Being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood." The requirements of His justice have been met, and He has been glorified in all His attributes and nature by that great sacrifice; the blood is equal in its value to the gold; and the gold symbolises what God is in His absolute righteousness. Now He is just and yet the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus.

The *usward who believe* aspect of the atonement is redemption and reconciliation. In Christ, who has so blessedly glorified God about the sin question, "we have redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins," and we "have been reconciled to God by the death of His Son." Could it be otherwise? All enmity must die out of our hearts as we see God's great desire for our blessing as it has been displayed in the death of His Son, and the more we consider His death the more we are filled with wonder at its suitability to the situation. Nothing else could have met God's claims, nothing else could have

met our need; Christ crucified is the power and the wisdom of God and the present and eternal boast of all who are saved.

It should not be difficult to understand that the carrying out of this great work depended wholly upon what the Lord is. If He had not become man He could not have been our substitute and representative, but having become man, He was lifted up for us, as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness; and if He had not been the sinless Man He could not have stood for us, for how could one who had sins of his own to suffer for, be a substitute for others? But if He had not been more than man, if He had not been God in His own eternal being, His sacrifice would have had no atoning value. Who could measure and meet the claims of God's eternal justice but God? Who could understand how sin had challenged the very majesty of God and threatened the stability of God's throne but God; who could put one hand upon God and one hand

upon a guilty sinner, and glorify the One and bless the other, and bring the two together in righteousness and peace, but One who in His own Person was God and man? If He had not been man He could not have died, if He had not been God His death would have been without value.

We rejoice in a full atonement; great peace fills our hearts as we consider it, for what He our Saviour God has done will abide for ever, His blood can never lose its value. We know that by His one offering He has perfected for ever them that are sanctified and we know that all things in heaven and on earth are to be reconciled to God on the sure foundation of that same offering. And when that has been effected the throne of God and the Lamb shall be the great centre from which streams of blessing and life will flow to multitudes of men who own the authority of that throne. Thus we return to our beginning, "And He that sat upon the throne was to look upon like a jasper and a sardine stone."

Preacher, it is no use going to sinful men for God, unless you have been to God for sinful men.

For spiritual health and strength you must feed wisely and well, breathe fresh pure air and take sufficient exercise. Wonder not that you faint if you do not feed upon the word, or that you become dull and listless if you neglect to pray to your Father in secret, or that you lose the joy and spring of your spiritual life if you neglect to labour for the Lord.

THE TWO-FOLD BLESSING.

A word to those who preach the gospel.

IN a published lecture by the late J. B. Stoney, he threw out a challenge to the preachers of the gospel who were present. Said he, "If you are sent to a suffering person with three or four distinct gifts which the mind of the donor, who is fully acquainted with the need of the sufferer, considers requisite, are you at liberty to give him one only, because that one gives great relief, and to withhold the others? Certainly not. You would err in a double way. You would not fulfil the commission entrusted to you, you would misrepresent the donor, and you would deprive the needy one of the favours given you for him."

He was speaking of the two-fold blessing which the gospel proclaims for the needy sinner: first the forgiveness of sins through the Name of Jesus, and then the seal of the Holy Ghost. In preaching the first, the second should most surely be in the view of the preacher. It certainly is a matter of the greatest importance.

One of the Lord's miracles and one of His parables emphasise this two-fold blessing. To the man helpless with paralysis, He said not only, "Thy sins are forgiven thee," but, "Arise, take up thy bed and walk." The first was an unspeakable blessing, but it would not have been complete without the second. He required a new power to live as a forgiven person. The Good Samaritan poured wine and oil into the wounds of the man he found on the road side, but he also set him on his own beast. How wonderful it is that we can tell the sinner that the great Saviour can cure him, can

relieve him for ever from the penalty of his sins, but that He can do more, He can confer upon him His own power, for that is what setting him on "his own beast" means. Ponder the story, it is full of meaning and blessing.

The preaching of the Apostles by the power of the Holy Spirit sent down from heaven, confirmed this shewing of the Lord. They could not have been satisfied with anything less than the reception of the Holy Spirit by their converts. "Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed?" asks Paul.

The responsibility rests with the preachers to so preach Christ that those who believe shall be sealed by the Spirit, to so preach Christ that those who hear shall bow down in faith and obedience before Him, owning Him, the once crucified Saviour as their Lord. Peter and his brethren brought these two sides of gospel blessing strikingly together in Acts 5. "God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew and hanged on a tree, Him hath God exalted with His right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins. And we are His witnesses of these things; and so is also *the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey Him.*" A man has no power to live according to God, and no capacity to enter into the joys of eternal life apart from the Holy Ghost. It is a subject upon which volumes might be written, and it is surely one that ought to give every gospel preacher much exercise of heart and earnest thought before God.

THE DIVINE PRESENCE.

James Green.

"In Thy presence is fulness of joy" (Psalm 16. 11).

IT has always been the desire of God to hold intercourse with men. Indeed it was for this object that God in the first case created man with the intelligent capacity to receive His communications, and enjoy the Divine presence. True, God did not dwell with Adam, but He visited him and talked with him. This was ruined by the invasion of sin, by which disobedience man and God also were robbed of the delight of such intercourse.

In order to restore this in a far higher and heavenly way than was possible in the case of the first man, who was of the earth, earthy; the Lord from heaven came, Jesus the Son of God. In Him there has been exhibited here on earth, a man who lived constantly in the Divine presence, enjoyed communion with His God and Father of the highest character. In this He was alone, until His death and resurrection opened a new realm of blessedness for all who receive Him and believe in His name. Not only a new way but a new power was needed, and this God has provided in the gift of the Spirit from the Father, by whose indwelling a new communion is established, and the joy of relationship in the Divine presence becomes an abiding reality. It may be confidently asserted that all real Christian increase in joy, worship and service is in proportion to the constant experience of this communion.

Paul's desire for the Colossian saints was that they might grow by the full knowledge of God (ch. 1. 10). The Holy Ghost is God, and good it is when the soul is

laid hold of by the fact that such an One has taken up His dwelling in our bodies; identifying Himself with our needs, joining His help to our infirmities, and making intercession for us according to the mind of God. God is one, hence it follows that when this fact of the presence of the Spirit becomes a reality, the presence of the Father and the Son may also be known. This latter however involves exercise and the practise of obedience, with definite desire for the knowledge of God in the blessedness of Himself. "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock and it shall be opened to you."

We are still in the body, with the flesh unchanged, and the clamour of the world around. There is also a wily and subtle foe, ever on the alert to hinder God from having His portion in the joy of fellowship with His redeemed, and they from having the part in His things which He so greatly desires for them. How earnestly did our Lord on the parting night assure His sorrowing disciples that they were not losing Him, for though they would see Him not with mortal eyes, yet they would truly see Him, and have the joy of His presence, the manifestation of Himself, the abiding consciousness of the Father whom He had revealed to them. What a blessed resource there is in the intimate knowledge of the Divine Presence, causing for the heart throughout this vale of tears the blest profusion of His comforts to flow.

Often is the mind perplexed by the multitude of its thoughts, but

the assurance of the presence of the wisdom of God brings calm and with it the rest of knowing that He that is perfect in knowledge is with us and thinking for us. Storms of sorrow may sweep our sky, and our frail bark be almost overwhelmed by tempestuous seas, yet let but His voice be heard so close at hand, and we rest, and trust, and wait, and find Him ready to sympathize, support and keep.

If He who is now supreme in death's dark realm, should take away the desire of the eyes with a stroke, and desolation seem to enwrap all, yet He, the Lord, the Victor o'er the last of foes is near. Ever ready is He to use such sorrow to bring about an experience of His love which even His angels cannot know. Ready to conduct the heart into a realm where death has no place, and where happy saints enjoy with a fulness unspeakable the joy of being with Himself. It may be that the future path is all unknown, yet His presence banishes every cause for fear. He knows that which is veiled to your eyes, and calmly may you put your hand in His, and lay your head upon the bosom of His infinite love, to find that as the days pass, His wisdom ever waketh, His sight is never dim.

Closing scenes dark with portent are in evidence around, change and decay on every hand, still can the soul that knows His presence say, "Thou that changest not, Thou art with me." His presence means peace and rest, fulness of joy and comfort

of love. Though we see Him not with mortal eyes, yet believing in His nearness, we may rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory, receiving the end of our faith, soul salvation. For what is the end of our faith but His presence in glory, and believing His word we anticipate in the knowledge of His presence, the blessedness of that day. Hath He not said, "I will never leave thee, no never forsake thee"? What a blessed resource then we have in the intimate knowledge of the Divine presence.

Then if so be that the earthly house of this tabernacle is laid aside, there is no loss of His presence, but the clearer, fuller vision and revelation of the Lord. Only a parting from, a leaving behind of earthly trammels to be with the Lord, present with Him. O death where is thy sting? if all that thou canst do is to usher us into the presence of Him whom we have known and loved, and who died to secure the full joy of this for eternity, that we should live together with Him. Soon shall we hear His voice calling us from faith to sight and the infinite bliss of His presence, face to face.

Then the blessed joy of meeting,
All the desert past,
Precious, wondrous words of greeting
He shall speak at last.

Past the shadows of the valley,
Past the weary plain,
Past the rugged mountain pathway,
Ne'er to be again.

He and we in that bright glory
One deep joy shall share,
Ours to be for ever with Him,
His that we are there.

There is no sorrow, Lord, too light,
To bring in prayer to Thee,
There is no anxious care too slight,
To claim Thy sympathy.

“HIS STEPS” AND “FOLLOWING HIS STEPS.”

F. B. Hole.

Read Psalms 16 and 17.

THE statement that Christ has left us an example, that we should “follow His steps,” is made by the Apostle Peter in his first epistle (2. 21). It is one that obviously could not be made until He had been manifested, and thereby His steps had been uncovered before human eyes. In earlier days however the Lord had said, “Ye shall be holy; for I am holy” (Lev. 11. 44, quoted in 1 Peter 1. 16); and in other Old Testament passages a similar thought is enforced. The two Psalms before us illustrate the point. Psalm 17, especially its last verse, breathes a spirit which reveals to us a saint who is in the steps of his Lord.

The path trodden by our Lord Jesus on earth was one of perfect and unsullied light. Having become Man, He was characterized by every grace and perfection that is properly human, when manhood is seen according to the pleasure of God. Being God, there was of course displayed in Him every Divine perfection: but having become Man there was equally seen in Him every human perfection also. These human perfections are specially set before us, according to the spirit of prophecy, in Psalm 16. The perfect light of His humanity is, so to speak, broken up into the prismatic colours that compose it.

The opening words of the Psalm formulate a prayer, expressing complete *dependence* upon God. Man was originally made a dependent creature; and the attitude of independence of God which he took up was the very essence of his sin. Perfect dependence marked our Lord.

He did indeed live by every word that proceeded out of the mouth of God, and not by bread alone. This it is that explains those remarkable sayings of His, found so plentifully in John’s Gospel—the Gospel which emphasizes His Deity—such as, “I can of Mine own self do nothing.” His whole life below was thus lived in dependence, which becomes a bright ray of His human glory.

But behind this beautiful dependence upon God lay His absolute *confidence* in God, set forth in the latter part of the verse—“for in Thee do I put My trust.” We can discern in Genesis 3 how the serpent aimed his first blow at Eve’s confidence in God in order to entice her into independence of God. The adversary knew right well that no one will preserve an attitude of dependence upon One whom they do not trust. If confidence goes dependence goes. Here too our Lord was pre-eminent. Who knew God as He knew Him? His knowledge of God was absolute, hence His trust in God was absolute. Another bright ray of His glory.

This is followed by a word expressive of His whole-hearted *subjection* to God. He “said unto the Lord, Thou art My Lord.” Jehovah was His Master in everything. This too sprang out of His trust; for we not only depend on those we trust but we are glad to accept guidance and direction from them. The Lord Jesus took the subject place in everything. He came down not to do His will but the will of the One who sent Him. Hence His whole pathway was characterized by

obedience. Adam became disobedient unto death: He was obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. His whole life may be summed up in the one word, *obedience*; and His death may be viewed as that great act wherein His perfect obedience was crowned and consummated. This is the view-point of such a scripture as, "By the obedience of One shall many be made righteous" (Rom. 5. 19).

There was no thought of inferiority in this place of subjection and obedience which our Lord took. Even amongst men, in the business world for instance, we often see subjection without any inferiority. Again and again has the young man in the subject place ultimately proved himself not only the equal but actually the superior of the seniors above him. Our Lord Jesus was "equal with God," for indeed He was God. Yet He took the servant's place that the will of the Godhead might be done, and the glory of the Godhead displayed.

Having taken this subject place the Lord Jesus was marked by a beautiful *lowliness* which was in keeping with it. The words in verse 3, "to the saints," are to be read, we understand, as in contrast to the words in verse 2, "unto the Lord." There is what He said to the Lord, and what He said to the saints, who are acknowledged as "the excellent." He speaks to them as those in whom is all His delight. What lowly grace was this! The mighty Son of God was amongst us as Man, and He delighted in and acknowledged humble and obscure people such as Zachariah, Elizabeth, Joseph, Mary, Simeon, Anna, Peter, John, James, and the rest. To Him they were a people of excellence and delight.

Nor are His saints to-day any different in His estimation. Let us get this fact well engraved on our hearts, so that it may control our attitude towards them. Let us have very great care how we treat them. If He found all His delight in such, who am I, or what are you, that we should wish to consider such associations as beneath our dignity?

Having thus associated Himself with the saints, finding His delight in the excellent, He was wholly separate from all that was not of God. This was His path, and this is our path; wholehearted identification with the Lord and His saints, and wholehearted separation from the world and its religion.

Verse 4, be it noted, does not speak of the shocking wars and fightings which mar the earth, nor of its lustful pleasures, nor of its crimes. It does speak of its false religion. Here indeed lies the fundamental error of this poor world, and from that error our Lord was completely separate. He had nothing to do with it. There was absolutely no compromise. Jehovah was His all-sufficient portion.

And having Jehovah as His portion He was completely satisfied. In the midst of an unhappy, complaining, dissatisfied world He was filled with *satisfaction*: so much so that, though Himself the object of opposition and persecution, He could speak of "a goodly heritage," and even of "pleasant places," and He turned in blessing and thanksgiving to Jehovah. Satisfaction is the necessary prelude to worship. The cup must be filled to the brim before it can overflow.

And then we see Him as the One who was wholly and always devoted

to Jehovah. There was nothing partial about His *devotedness* as there is with ours. He set Jehovah before Him *always*. Only *one* consideration weighed with our blessed Lord. The will of the Father was His one care and His constant delight.

We have just summarized these beautiful features which marked the Lord Jesus under seven heads; we might equally well summarize them under five heads, as follows:

1. Jehovah was His Lord (ver. 2).
2. Jehovah was His portion
(ver. 5).
3. Jehovah was His counsel, or direction (ver. 7).
4. Jehovah was His Object
(ver. 8).
5. Jehovah was His end (ver. 11).

His path as Man was one of such unsullied light and perfection that, on that ground alone, the only fitting place for Him was the right hand of God. He has that place also on other grounds, as the Epistle to the Hebrews shows. He is there because of the surpassing glory of His Person, because of the greatness of His priestly office, and because of the perfection of His atoning work. But He is also there because of His human perfections, as tested and proved in the race of faith; and it is of *that* perfection that we read in Psalm 16.

The path of faith that He trod truly led Him *into* death, and *through* death it was proved to be a path of life. The paradox is complete enough; but the life is discovered to be life in resurrection, and hence beyond the power of death for ever. The perfect Man is not merely in Jehovah's presence, for there indeed all the saints will ultimately be; He is also at Jehovah's

right hand, where are pleasures for evermore; and that is a place where saints will never be. It is a place of pre-eminence reserved for Him alone.

Now we turn from our brief contemplation of the pre-eminent One to consider the case of the saint upon earth, left to follow His steps in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, amongst whom he is responsible to shine as a light in the world. Psalm 17 brings this before us. It opens with a cry from the saint to Jehovah that He would hear the right; for at the moment right is being pilloried in the world, and "the paths of the destroyer" rather than "the path of life" is before our eyes.

Quite a different atmosphere pervades Psalm 17. The lovely picture of perfection that delighted us in Psalm 16 is not here: in place thereof we have a picture of a saint in the midst of evil, struggling against it and oppressed by it, yet finding his resource in God, counting upon Him, and being sustained so that in measure he displays the same likeness as his Lord. In Psalm 16 we have One who set Jehovah *always* before Him: consequently He was at His right hand and He could confidently say, "I shall not be moved." In Psalm 17 the saint speaks very differently. If he were to say, "I shall not be moved," he would be greatly mistaken, and ere long have to withdraw his words. If he knows anything rightly as to himself he has the rather to say, "Hold up my goings in Thy paths, that my footsteps be not moved" (ver. 5, margin). These very words however breathe that spirit of confidence and obedience which are so pleasing to God.

In the latter part of the Psalm there is a very striking contrast pursued between the wicked and the godly. Verses 9 to 14 are filled with the dark picture of the one, whilst one brief verse (15) contains the bright picture of the other. The contrast is very complete, and the saint is seen in a light which shows that he is in the steps of his Master. Perhaps the simplest way for us to note the contrast will be to take the last verse step by step, in its five details.

“As for me,” says the saint, “I will behold *THY FACE*.” That is the prospect before him, whatever may be the occupations and prospects of the world. And what are those occupations and prospects? “*They have set their eyes bowing down to THE EARTH*” (ver. 11). Earth is the one and only sphere before the vision of the world. An improved earth, an enjoyable earth, an earth where everybody can gratify his desires to the full, and some kind of a heaven (if heaven must be brought in, to satisfy popular demand) which shall be as much as possible like an earth where all can gratify to the full their natural desires, is all that enters their thoughts. The picture of “Muckrake” drawn by Bunyan in his great allegory was a very accurate one. Poor “Muckrake” had no eyes for the crown of glory held not far from his head. He was absorbed in the sticks and stones and dirt of the earthen floor.

The saint is not “bowing down,” nor does earth fill his vision. On the contrary, he is lifted up for he is to behold the very face of Jehovah. He is to live in the light of His countenance; that is, in the blessedness of the full knowledge of Himself. We know Him now as

revealed to us in Jesus, and we are to live for ever before Him in love. The right hand of God is reserved for Jesus, but His face and His presence are to be ours for ever and ever.

You have noticed of course how persistently modernistic religion concentrates on the earth. Anything that has a tinge of heaven about it is ridiculed as far away and unpractical, in fact a kind of dope to prevent people being occupied with what professes to rectify the inequalities of earth. “Earth, give us earth,” is their great cry. Earth they shall have right enough—six feet by three in due course. We know a heavenly Christ, a knowledge impossible to the Psalmist in his day.

The Psalmist did, however, anticipate beholding Jehovah’s face “*in righteousness*.” He knew that God had a way of establishing men before Him in righteousness, though perhaps that way was not as yet quite clear before his eyes. Who could behold God’s face except in righteousness? Except we can stand before Him, and in the light of His face, on a righteous basis we cannot stand there at all. The world knows nothing of this righteousness; they are characterized as “*the wicked*” (ver. 13). In Psalm 16 we see the Righteous One—intrinsically righteous was He. In Psalm 17 we find a saint who can stand before God in righteousness—not intrinsic but imputed: he stands before God in the righteousness of Another. His righteousness was wrought out by the Perfect Man of Psalm 16, when He trod the path of life, which led Him into death, and forth into resurrection. We share the Psalmist’s faith, thank God! Righteousness is ours, and we shall live in the light

of Jehovah's face, known to us as Father.

Hence the words follow, "*I shall be satisfied.*" Of course we shall be! The words however carry us forward into the future. The Lord Jesus was the satisfied Man even in the midst of circumstances which were wholly contrary and antagonistic, as we have seen. We alas, are not that, though there is no real reason why we should not be, for all things that pertain to life and godliness are ours. Still the plain fact remains that again and again we fail to utilize our resources and become dissatisfied and cast down. Notwithstanding we are going to reach absolute satisfaction when God's work with us and in us is finished.

The world is not satisfied and never will be. The wicked are described as being like "*a lion that is greedy of his prey*" (ver. 12). The wild beast knows not what it is to have restraint upon his passions. He ravens and slaughters more than enough to satisfy his cravings, and yet is not satisfied and slaughters again to-morrow. Man in his unconverted state is like this. The Apostle who speaks so much of practical Christian life has said, "*Ye lust, and have not: ye kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain: ye fight and war, yet ye have not because ye ask not. Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts*" (Jas. 4. 2, 3). This is indeed the way of the world, but let us see to it that we keep quite clear of this greedy, unsatisfied spirit.

By faith, and by the Holy Spirit given to us, we have been put into touch with that which can satisfy us

whilst in this world of dissatisfaction. We travel on to the moment and to the place where we shall be satisfied fully.

That moment will be when the resurrection world is reached; or, as the Psalmist puts it, "*when I awake.*" It is true of course that resurrection was not set before the saints of Old Testament times as their goal and hope as it is before the saints of to-day. Christ had first to appear. Then it could be said, "*Our Saviour Jesus Christ... hath abolished [or, annulled] death, and hath brought life and immortality [or, incorruptibility] to light through the gospel*" (2 Tim. 1. 10). Still, though the resurrection world was not fully and clearly set before their faith, they had glimpses of it. They anticipated a day when a heavenly country should be theirs, fairer than all the scenes of earth.

In contrast to this the wicked are described as those who "*have their portion in this life*" (ver. 14). With them it is all earth and greed and this poor life which is bounded by the grave. How great the contrast between such and that perfect Man who said, "*The Lord is the portion of mine inheritance and of My cup.*" There will be no small contrast too between the world and ourselves if we let go, and even "*hate,*" life in this world, to "*keep it unto life eternal.*" God give us grace to keep our eyes fixed on the resurrection world.

But the Psalmist reached his climax when he added the three closing words, "*with Thy likeness.*" Not only did he anticipate being in the resurrection, but also being there with the likeness of Jehovah stamped upon him. In so saying he re-

markably anticipated what the New Testament reveals, for at least he saw that he would be in Jehovah's likeness when he beheld Jehovah's face. We can go further than that of course, for we know Jehovah as Father, revealed in Jesus; consequently we can say, "We know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is" (1 John 3. 2).

Seeing Him, and being like Him, go together. Even now the more we really see Him by faith the more we are transformed into His likeness. When we fully see Him as He is, we shall be fully like Him. Indeed we must be fully like Him to see Him as He is, for without holiness no man shall see the Lord. The two thoughts occur again in Revelation 22. 4. It says, "They shall see His face:" and then it adds, "His Name shall be in their foreheads." That is to say, That which He is shall be most prominently displayed in them: for the forehead is the most prominent and visible part of a man.

And what of those who live without the knowledge of God? Well, once more the contrast is complete. The wicked who have their portion in this life are spoken of as, "*the men of this world.*" This world, this present evil age, claims them, and they bear its stamp on their foreheads. They are in its likeness.

The phrase, "a man of the world," has passed into current use even in the world. Two business men,

neither making any profession of Christianity, are talking. The name of a third comes up, and one of them enquires, "what kind of a man is he?" "Oh," says the other, "he's a regular man of the world." No more is said, but the effect of that remark is to put the enquirer on his guard; for if he is a man of the world, he is not likely to be too careful of what is strictly true, and straight, and honest.

As believers we are not "men of the world," though we are men, and in the world. We are men who have been called, and taken out of the world-system, and now sent into the world to display the character of Christ, and serve in His interests. This is our high and holy calling.

We may depend upon it then that the stronger the contrast that exists between the Christian and the men of the world the better it is for both the Christian and the world; the more the Christian will be worthy of the great Name that is called upon him; and the more the world will have the opportunity of seeing the excellence of Christ translated into human life.

The blessed, holy Man of Psalm 16 is seated at the right hand of God, awaiting the moment when He shall arise that His enemies may be made His footstool. We are left here for a season that as royal priests we may show forth His excellencies, while we wait for His advent. Then we shall behold His face in righteousness, and awaking with His likeness, shall be satisfied absolutely and for ever.

As Thou for me didst stoop so low,
 Warmed by love's holy flame,
 So let my deeds of kindness flow,
 To all that bear Thy Name.

THE LAST MESSAGE TO THE CHURCH.

T. Oliver.

Read Revelation 22. 16-20.

THE voice of the Lord Jesus is heard at the end of the New Testament encouraging the saints with the message, "I am the bright and morning Star." We have the privilege of moving in the light of that communication. They are the Lord's last words to His own.

The church had been set up by the hand of God in the power of the Holy Ghost, but as committed to man's responsibility, it had fallen. When the Lord had produced a movement by the Spirit answering to Philadelphia, it had failed (Revelation 3). Although its features have not ceased, it has passed as a general characteristic phase.

It is only as we get a true idea of the church at the beginning that we see the magnitude of the departure. As by faith we see the divine thought for the church, its sad state is recognised. The Spirit came displacing flesh and nature, in order that a clear testimony for God might be given. Peter then bore testimony that Jesus was made both Lord and Christ.

If we are not marked by the characteristics given in verse 17, we are not answering to His mind. It is a great encouragement to our hearts that when the failure had become fully evident, He should say, "I, Jesus . . . I am the bright and morning Star." He would attract them to Himself, the One they knew. He has not allowed one divine thought to slip. He brings Himself before us thus that our affections may move towards Him. Victory is in front of us, though everything is apparent-

ly against us. In the very darkest moment, He comes before us as the Morning Star, i.e., the herald of the coming day.

He is the root and offspring of David, because in Him all the sure mercies of David will be established. The faithful do not think of their blessings, but of Christ's interests. They rejoice in what is for His glory, and the whole circle of His interests is upon their hearts. We are responsible to be in accord with what God set up at the beginning, and we have the privilege of being used for the glory of Christ in accomplishing what will remain eternally. The Lord foresaw the failure of Philadelphia and so He said, "Hold fast that which thou hast that no man take thy crown." To be overcomers it is necessary to "hold fast." We should each seek grace to be characterised by the marks that were seen in Philadelphia.

The expression "I, Jesus," speaks of no change with Him, and every divine thought in connection with God's purpose will be fulfilled through Him. We have to stand where externally everything is against us, but in the light of victory. The Philadelphian overcomer will not yield one iota of the truth. He does not agree to tolerate error or compromise with evil. The divine position is true for all saints, where a heavenly portion is enjoyed. All the powers of darkness are united to dislodge us from it. We must, therefore, be overcomers, or we shall be overcome!

We belong to nothing more nor less than the church of God, which

is coming out with Christ as His bride. The individual's interests are Christ's interests. Bridal affections lead us to think of the whole circle of Christ's interests. If living in the light of the day of celebration, we should always think of ourselves as one of that company of privilege. The bride desires to see Him, and that He should have His place. So as "the root and offspring of David," the blessing is secured for Israel and the nations, and as "the bright and morning Star," the heavenly portion is made sure. In response, the Spirit and the bride say "Come" to Christ, that He may take up the inheritance. The Spirit is here to promote the interests of Christ, and when in sympathy with that object, we join in the cry. Unless that feature marks us, the others are lacking. When the day of glory is before the soul, the cry is "Come!" Then care for His own interest in the gospel marks those who say "Come" to Christ.

In Isaiah, after the thickest darkness we read, "Arise, shine; for thy light is come and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee" (Isa. 60. 1). In the physical sphere the coldest moment is just before daybreak. Does that not throw light on the present apathetic conditions?

It is not merely an individual saying, "Come," but the Spirit and the bride. So in the darkest day we have the privilege of taking our place in faith as belonging to the church. Throughout the centuries the Spirit has maintained the cry through faithful souls. But the features of the faithful at the close, in the darkest days are those in which bridal affections are manifest. Sometimes one wants the Lord to come and take us out of difficulties,

but that is not the cry of the bride. The bride has Christ and His interests before the heart. The whole earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, after the false bride has been judged and the true bride comes with the Bridegroom.

If we invite the Bridegroom to come, we have a godly care regarding all saints, and desire for the salvation of souls. If we were saying, "Even so, come Lord Jesus," the activities of the Spirit which were personally expressed by Christ would be seen. It is a great snare to think only of a few with whom we agree, because concern about the interests of Christ would lead to godly care for all His own, and earnest seeking after souls. We must care for the household of faith, and not merely those with whom we have intimate relation. A pastor is a gift to the whole church, and if we are in sympathy with the heart of Christ, there will be care for the whole church. The vital matter is that we should be faithful to Christ, and then the Spirit will lead us in saying, "Come." We shall then have spiritual food to give because first love leads to first works. So we read next of "he that heareth." The individual hears the collective cry and he is affected so as to join in that cry through the whole circle of Christ's interests coming before him. The "little flock" is the "whole flock," and the criterion is to be able to walk faithfully in the narrow path while maintaining affection for all. The principle comes out in the New Jerusalem, there is absolute separation and yet the rivers flowing out.

There is care for souls through being in communion with Him. If

in touch with the Lord, we pass on what He gives. It is because we do not receive from Him that we have nothing to help souls. Communion leads to sharing His mind as to all His interests, and that saves us from making a little circle of our own.

Then there is attractive power which affects those around. The overcomer maintains the thoughts of God concerning the whole. When the people of God in general have departed, the overcomer goes on with what was from the beginning. He keeps Christ's word, does not deny His name, and has the whole circle of His interests before Him. The bright features of the beginning are seen in an overcomer. The individual has to overcome in the church, and then he will be a cheer to others who are overcoming. We belong to the church of God, not to a "meeting," and we have the privilege in subjection to the Lord of enjoying the fulness in the Head. The coming of the Bridegroom will fill the universe with joy. The bride, the friends and others, will all stand in their own relation to Him.

Have we the features that characterised Christ on earth? Our beloved Lord was here for God, He cared for thirsty people like Nathanael, and He proclaimed the gospel to all.

The expression, "I, Jesus," conveys a thought that must appeal to the heart. It brings the light of the love of God upon our path. His Spirit would reproduce in us the features seen in Him. While the church on earth has become unfaithful, every individual should have a pastoral and evangelical spirit, so as to have a godly concern about the saints, being ready to make known the mind of the Lord towards all. A pastor is a gift for the whole church. He may work locally, though his gift is for all. The church was set up on earth by divine hand, and in the hands of man in responsibility it has fallen. The false bride will be judged and the true bride will come with Him in glory. Until then we have to bear in mind He is unchanged, and every divine thought is secured in Him. "Till He come." There is also the grace of our Lord Jesus to enable us to keep His word.

"When I am weak, then am I strong."

Paul, you are full of paradoxes, and this is one of them. What do you mean?

I mean that I am no match in my own strength for any circumstance in which I may be placed, the flesh within and temptation without, Satan's power and wiles, the world's opposition and my difficult circumstances and infirmities are all too much for me, I have faced them in my own strength and never gained a victory but with Christ as my strength they are all defeated, the very giants become bread for me.

And Peter, you both sank in the sea and walked upon it, tell us how it was.

Why, that is simple enough, it was Simon that made me sink, it was my Saviour that held me up and made me walk where no man could walk apart from His power. I trusted myself and went down, I clung to Him and was sustained.

THE CHURCH'S ONE FOUNDATION.

"THOU art Peter," i.e. Petros (lit. a little rock, or a movable stone) "and upon this rock," Petra, a stable rock, "I will build My church" (Matthew 16).

"*This rock.*" May not the demonstrative pronoun have been accentuated by a motion of the hand, pointing to Himself. *This*, i.e. *Himself*, as in John 2. 19, "*This temple*" (or this body), and again, in John 6. 55, "*This is that bread . . . this bread.*"

Our Lord thus establishes a strong contrast, as though He would say, "Not upon thee, O Peter, a moveable stone, but upon Myself, 'this rock' I will build My church."

The Romanists say Christ built His church upon Peter—and others say "upon Peter's confession." But Christ puts this grave matter beyond all doubt, speculation, and human pretence, saying, "Not upon a mere, moveable stone as Peter, but upon Myself, *this rock, will I build My church.*"

Peter's confession was *doctrinally* the rock foundation, but Christ Himself was the same *personally*.

The Lord said in Isa. 28. 16, "Behold I lay in Zion for a foundation, a stone, a tried stone, a sure foundation, and he that believeth shall not make haste." But the Spirit by Peter himself carries us farther, saying, "To Whom coming as unto a living stone"—chosen, rare or costly, or precious, and v. 6, he that believeth on *Him*, not *it*, shall not be confounded (1 Pet. 1. 2). Christ Himself is both Foundation and Builder. He is the "tried" or tested one: the chief Stone of the corner, or "Headstone" (Zech. 4. 7). The footings unseen, but safe and sure, and the rare and beautiful "Head Stone" or "chief Corner Stone" above. Absolute safety beneath, incomparable beauty above.

Such is the church's foundation; impregnable, immutable, indivisible, indestructible, invincible, immoveable, and eternal.

I would rather give one hungry man a loaf of bread than lecture to a thousand people upon its origin. Let us heed the apostolic exhortation, "Preach the Word" (2 Tim. 4. 2). "Give ye them to eat" (Mark 6. 37).

"Should all the forms that men devise,
Assail my faith with treacherous art;
I'd call them vanities and lies
And bind Thy gospel to my heart."

It is recorded of Fenelon, the gifted mystic of the age of Louis XIV, that at the close of his long and bitter controversy with Bossuet, he was heard to reflect that, "It was a thousand pities they had both consumed so many valuable years in hair-splitting and theorizing when they might both have been teaching Christ to the village children."

THE JEWS AND CANAAN.

J. T. Mawson.

"Thy land, O Immanuel" (Isaiah 8. 8).

WE fear that some of our friends who are endeavouring to interpret prophecy by current events, and in their enthusiasm for the Jews, are very likely to lose sight of the Lord's right in the earth, and this specially as regards Canaan and the Jews, and also His holy and just government of these people. The results of "the Balfour Declaration" may be remarkable in the way that industrious Jews have taken full advantage of it and have taken up the land to cultivate it, with a success beyond their hopes, but if in this there is any fulfilment of prophecy it can only be that of the early part of Isaiah 18. where we read: "For so the Lord said unto me, I will take my rest, and I will consider in My dwelling place like a clear heat upon herbs, and like a cloud of dew in the heat of harvest. For afore the harvest, when the bud is perfect, and the sour grape is ripening in the flower, he shall both cut off the sprigs with pruning hooks, and take away and cut down the branches. They shall be left together unto the fowls of the mountains, and to the beasts of the earth; and the fowls shall summer upon them, and all the beasts of the earth shall winter upon them."

It is all to come to nothing and will involve those Jews who are in the land in sufferings far more terrible than their compatriots will endure elsewhere. The matter is being treated as though their having the land as their national home was only common justice to them, the fact is they have no more right to it than the Patagonians; they have forfeited every right that they seemed to have.

Their tenure of it depended entirely upon their obedience to Jehovah, their God; nothing could be clearer than that in all His words to them through Moses, His representative. They were put into it by His power to hold it for Him, as Adam was put into Eden to keep and to dress it. But they did not hold it for Him, they sold it away, as Adam sold Eden, which neither he nor they had any right to do. They sold it to God's enemies and theirs, until it became demon-ridden, and every false god exercised dominion in it; and they sold themselves also and became so corrupted that the land was more defiled than ever it had been in its long history.

That they would sell the land is clearly indicated in the remarkable Jubilee chapter, Leviticus 25, as well as in chapter 27 of that same Book; and having sold it and forfeited every claim to it, they were expelled from it according to the sure word of God.

To carry out His own intentions and in pity for them He intervened on their behalf and they were allowed to return from their exile, but never as a sovereign people; they went back under a foreign yoke, which yoke has never been lifted from them or the land; the times of Gentile supremacy had begun. When Immanuel came into it, though it was His land, He had no place to lay His head in it. And who was to blame for that? The people who had sold the land and themselves into bondage, and did not recognise the Kinsman-Redeemer when He dwelt among them. "He came to

His own (things) and His own (people) received Him not." They crucified Him, and cried, "His blood be upon us and upon our children" and consequently they are scattered to the ends of the earth. They are living in that period in which as a people "Lo=ruhamah" and "Lo=ammi" is written upon them, which being interpreted is, "I will have no mercy on the house of Israel," and "Ye are not My people, and I will not be your God" (Hosea 1).

But God has said, "The land shall not be sold for ever: for *the land is Mine*" (Leviticus 25). It is His and He has the right to redeem it and the year of Jubilee shall surely come; until then it will be trodden under foot of the Gentiles. When that time does come God will not require diplomatic declarations, whether made in response to services rendered, or from the exigencies of international politics. Mandates from Geneva will have no place when He acts; He will not allow men and nations to have anything to say in the disposal of the land that is His and not theirs. He will act sovereignly, supremely and swiftly, and all the inhabitants of the world and the dwellers on the earth shall see when He lifteth up an ensign on the mountains, and when He bloweth a trumpet they shall hear (Isaiah 18). But that trumpet of Jubilee shall only sound in relation to atonement; the release of the land from its bondage and the liberty of the people shall be in relation to Calvary (Leviticus 25), and not in relation to anything that

men can do. God will fall back on His own electing grace and upon the precious atoning blood of Christ, and because of the value of that blood He will be able to carry out His grand designs righteously. Let no Jew say within himself, I have Abraham for my father and so I must come into favour, for God is able to raise up from the stones children unto Abraham (Matthew 3); never on that ground will any be blest, for on that ground all is forfeited. But He has the right to redeem what is His and He will do it.

When God sets His hand to this great work, He will bring about a change of heart in His elect ones, and they will recognise their Kinsman=Redeemer; and He will own them again when their national pride has given place to brokenness of spirit and humble repentance for their own sinfulness and the blindness of their fathers; and though they have sold themselves for naught they shall be redeemed without money, and the land which is Immanuel's shall be apportioned to them according to His own decree; and then they will lift up their heads and boast, not in the wisdom of their intellectual leaders, or the riches of their financiers, or the might of any power or powers that have been favourable to them, but they will glory in this, that they understand and know Me, that "*I am the Lord which exerciseth lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth: for in these things I delight, saith the Lord.*"

The busy mart, and crowded street,
 No less than in the still retreat,
 Thou Lord art near, our souls to bless,
 With all our Father's tenderness.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENCE.

Questions on the Revelation, "The Temple of My God"

"I should like help on Revelation 3. 12, "the temple of my God." In chapter 21. 3, I read of "the tabernacle of God." What is the difference? This temple is mentioned in connection with the city of God. But the city of chap. 21. 22, has no temple though there is a temple in heaven, chap. 11. 19. Do you identify the city of 3. 12, with the city of 21. 10?"

THE opening verses of chap. 21, describe the condition of things that will obtain when the present order of things have given place to what is eternally perfect. There will be no need then for God to dwell in a temple, a holy shrine, separated from what is profane, for everything will be holy, and God shall be all in all (1 Cor. 15. 28). He will dwell in the midst of men without distance or reserve, just as the Lord tabernacled amongst us (John 1. 14), when here in flesh. God will be in free and joyful intercourse with men according to His desire (Proverbs 8. 31). This we suggest is the meaning of the *tabernacle of God* being with men. Chapter 3. 12 describes the rewards to be given to overcomers during the millennial reign of Christ over the earth; during that period, though evil will be held in check, it will not be wholly absent; righteousness will reign (Isa. 32. 1), not *dwell* (2 Peter 3. 13). Hence God will be compelled to maintain a reserve in respect to the world. The tabernacle and the temple are the same, the holy city, new Jerusalem, the church, but viewed in respect to men in these different conditions. In the city itself, while it is both the temple and the tabernacle in relation to men, there is no temple, because all there have free access to God, He

pervades the whole of it.

The temple in heaven (ch. 11. 19), seems to us to present a different line of thought and activity. Israel and Jerusalem, and the activities of Satan in regard to both are specially in view in this section of the Book, but "the Lord is in His holy temple, the Lord's throne is in the heaven: His eyes behold, His eyelids try the children of men" (Psalm 11). And though He cannot speak from the temple on earth, and none can find the ark of the covenant, and the "holy city" is trodden under foot of Gentiles, Christ the great anti-type of the ark is in heaven and God has not forgotten His covenant with Israel. He falls back on that and displays His faithfulness to it. He has His own place from which He acts in accordance with His own glory (Psalm 29. 9).

The "lightnings and voices and thunderings, and an earthquake and great hail" of Revelation 11, are the snares, and fire and brimstone and horrible tempest that He shall rain upon the wicked of Psalm 11. These are types and symbols and we must read them as such.

We should certainly say that the city of Revelation 3, and that of chapter 21 are the same.

A Pillar in the Temple.

What is the thought of "a pillar in the temple of my God"? I think I can understand the metaphor in 1 Timothy 3. 15. The excellencies of people are recorded on pillars, so the church bears witness to the glories of Christ. But is this the thought of the pillar here?

WE suggest that to be "a pillar in the temple of My God" is the suitable reward for one who has but a little strength, but keeps the Lord's word and does not deny His Name (verse 8). Such a one will have no conspicuous place in the religious world to-day, and probably will be despised and looked upon as useless, out of date and bigotted, but the Lord will give to him a place of prominence in the

temple of God; and that faithfulness, and steadfastness in the truth that may make him an object of contempt here in the eyes of proud and pretentious men, will make him an ornament there; what is of God in a man's life here will be displayed in its true beauty there, and abide in its permanence where everything is according to God's glory. The pillar here carries the thought of prominence, beauty and permanence.

God's Name written on him, and the Name of the City of God.

"Is the Name of God written upon the overcomer for his own blessing, or that God might be displayed and glorified in him, and what about the name of God's city? Do you identify it with the city of chap. 21. 10?"

THE Name of God written on the overcomers will be the public proof that they belong to God and that they bear His character. As they have borne it when it was in reproach among men so will they bear it when that Name, the Name of Christ's God, will fill the earth with its glory.

"The Name of the city of my God" will give those upon whom it is written a public identification with that city which cometh down out of heaven from God. It will be the centre of God's administration for the earth, and its name will be written upon those who have overcome the prevailing lawlessness of these days by being subject to God's

administration now. It will be a high honour bestowed for faithfulness. The city, we should say, is undoubtedly that of ch. 21. 10. To be looking for it as Abraham did (Hebrews 11. 10), will keep us in subjection to God now, undazzled and unallured by the glamour of men's cities, and separate from the world. Emphasis should be laid throughout this verse upon the words "My God," four times repeated. It shews how prized and precious God is to Christ; first when He was a Man upon earth, and now as being exalted to His right hand; He did live and does live unto God, and He delights to bind up His faithful saints with Himself in this.

Christ's New Name

"Further what about Christ's new Name being inscribed upon the overcomer?"
— DEVON.

WE all gladly confess that the Lord has won great renown in relation to what is old. The name Jesus is above every other name, for He who bears it came into the world to save His people from their sins and to bear away the sin of the world. None other could do this; in no other name is there salvation. But He takes away the old, sinful, unprofitable, decaying conditions that He might establish the new, that will never fade or pass away. "Behold I make all things new" He says, (chap. 21. 5). We should say that the new is what God is as revealed by Jesus displacing all that sin had brought in. What a great Name Jesus will have in this new and incorruptible creation! What renown! All His suffering on earth, and His death on the cross had this in view, and He has not failed.

"All trace of sin shall be removed,
All evil done away;
And we shall dwell with God's
Beloved,
Through God's eternal day."

With what lustre will His new Name shine throughout that eternal day. But it will shine also in His kingdom, which we might almost speak of as a preface to the eternal state, and it is to be written on the overcomers. These, we should say, are those who refuse to be trammelled by what is old and who run with patience the race that is set before them, looking off unto Jesus, who set their affections on things above where Christ sitteth, and bear His reproach before men. He will write His new name upon them. What an honour it will be to any man to bear the Lord's signature before men and angels in the day of His glory.

LOOKING UNTO JESUS.

J. A. O. Allan.

O Son of God the Father's heart,
Fair flower of His delight,
Fragrant within a village home,
Beautiful in His sight.
The world of men went heedless by,
But there was joy, great joy on High.

O Christ of the Journey of Love,
None ever loved like Thee,
Thou Christ of the lone mountain side,
Lord of the surging sea.
Friend of sinners and tempest-tossed,
Seeker and Saviour of the lost.

O Christ of Calvary's cross of pain,
By all left desolate,
Thorn-crowned head, pierced hands and feet—
Love's triumph over hate.
Man of sorrow and grief and shame,
Lamb of God for the guilty slain.

O Head of Thy Church beloved,
In countless hearts enshrined,
Build Thou in us Thy gold undimmed,
Silver by love refined,
And the bright precious stones that
flame
With the glow of Thy glorious Name.

O Lord of the wilderness road,
We need Thee all the way,
Lord and Leader of all Thine own,
Through night to perfect Day,
Until life's journey ended be
Grant us to serve and follow Thee.

O Star of the long looked for Dawn,
Light of the Home above,
We long to reach Thy dear Homeland
Of life, and light, and love,
For though the desert still we roam,
THOU art our everlasting HOME.

THINGS MOST SURELY BELIEVED.

J. T. Mawson.

No. 9. The Resurrection of Christ.

NEVER had brighter hopes been buried in any grave than in the grave of Jesus, and never had hearts been more bereft than the hearts of the disciples and of those women that loved and followed Him. How they must have shuddered in their sorrow as the great stone was rolled to its place at the door of the sepulchre, and shut from their tear-dimmed vision the body of their Lord. The night that followed that last Passover feast was a woeful night for them, and for all who loved the Hope of Israel; it was a night unrelieved by any solace from without or faith from within, for having, as they supposed, lost their Lord, they had lost their all and could do nothing but mourn and weep. Yet there was one thing that kept the broken hearts of those women from refusing to perform their office: they would go on the first day of the week and anoint His body. His Kingship had been rejected by the Jews: His claim to it was the charge upon which Pilate had condemned Him to the cross; the multitude had gone to their homes saying, He was no king at all or He would have come down from the cross and saved Himself; but to those women He was King, and more; and though He had lost the kingdom, yet He should lie in His tomb as like a King as they could make it possible. By some means or other they would force their way into that sealed and guarded grave and fill it with the fragrance of the spices that they had prepared, and with the sweeter fragrance of their love; this should

be their last tribute to Him, and then they would return—yes, but how, and where, and to what?

Mark tells us that they reached the sepulchre at *the rising of the sun*. Were they blind to the golden glow of that wondrous morning? It is more than likely, for a grave was their goal, and to pour their best upon the dead their purpose; this was the only balm they knew for their death-stricken and hopeless hearts; and what charm could a sunrise have for such as they?

But what a sunrise that must have been, though their eyes did not appreciate it! Let no man tell me that the day dawned as other days, or that all nature did not exult in that great hour. There must have been a triumph and a fragrance in it that never rising of the sun had known before. If when He died—He, the Creator become flesh—the sun drew a veil across its face, and all nature wrapt itself in sable garments, and the earth trembled to its very heart in horror at the deed that men had wrought, there must have been a corresponding joy when the conquering heel of life was placed upon the neck of death, and the shame of the cross was answered by an empty tomb. "*HE IS RISEN.*" The glad news had sung its triumphant music to the ends of creation, and "the sun, moon and stars," "the mountains and hills and fruits, trees and cedars," the heavens and the earth were the glorious orchestra that accompanied the angel's proclamation.

What wonders greeted those women when they reached the sacred spot. The stone was gone, and instead of Roman soldiers, brutal men who would have found a wretched joy in casting insults at them, they found a heavenly guard in possession, a messenger from God in white apparel. Heaven was not in mourning; its messenger wore the garments of victory and joy, and only waited for human ears to listen to his story. And these women were the first to hear it, and as they heard, the silent chords in their hearts awoke to song, and they turned their backs upon the empty grave, and forgot their useless spices and themselves also, and with fear and great joy did run to tell the tidings. Blessed women, they were the first of ransomed sinners to be swept by the rapture of the resurrection triumph, the first of that countless host whose singing shall be sweeter and more joyous and more prolonged than any raised by sun, moon and stars, or even angels.

The proofs of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ are so many and infallible that nothing but blind unbelief would deny it; but the modernists deny it, they think, like their forebears, the first century Sadducees, that it is an incredible thing that God should raise the dead. The fact is it does not fit in with their evolution doctrines, which doctrines reveal their wish to be free from all responsibility to God. "The wish is father to the thought." The solemn fact of death, not as the debt of nature, but as the wages of sin, the judgment of God upon man because of sin (Genesis 3. 17) and resurrection from the dead, which is God's intervention in a scene of death, put an impassable gulf between man and the beasts, and shew

clearly, in spite of all the efforts of these men to prove the opposite, that their pedigree cannot be traced to a common ancestry. These great facts prove that man was created entirely apart from the beasts, a being accountable to God, and that he has fallen from the high estate in which God set him, and that God only can deliver him from the death that has passed upon him by and through resurrection. But these men rather than bow to the truth of God as to their hopeless sinful state, and receive from Him the life, through Christ, which He as the God of resurrection gives, reject the truth and love the lie. As to resurrection, say they, the idea sprang up in the mind of Zoroaster, the Persian philosopher, and that the Jews brought it back from their exile in Babylon, and that the Lord and His disciples incorporated it into their teaching, and that He never rose from the dead.

But the resurrection of the Lord was "according to the Scriptures," Scriptures that existed centuries before Zoroaster breathed. Take the words of David in Psalm 16, "Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell (sheol): neither wilt Thou suffer Thine Holy One to see corruption." We might well ask, Of whom spake David this, of himself or some other man? Not of himself surely, for he was not God's Holy One. Simon Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost answers our question. "Men and brethren," said he to the assembled Jews, "let me speak freely to you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day. Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, He would raise up

Christ to sit on his throne; he seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that His soul was not left in hell (hades), neither His flesh did see corruption. *This Jesus hath God raised up whereof we are all witnesses*" (Acts 2. 29-32).

That which we have most surely believed was predicted by the prophets in the Scriptures and proclaimed by the Apostles who were chosen of the Lord to be witnesses of His resurrection. How interesting and convincing are the witnesses cited by Paul in 1 Corinthians 15. The women are not called, for their evidence in those days would not have greatly counted, but says Paul, "I delivered unto you first of all that which also I received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures; and was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures: and that He was seen of Cephas." How like the Lord it was to appear first to Cephas; by that act He not only proved that He had risen up from the dead but He shewed that He was unchanged in His unwearied grace towards the most failing of His beloved disciples. He was the same Jesus. And this fact had impressed itself upon them all, for we remember how they said when gathered together on the evening of the Resurrection day, "The Lord is risen indeed and hath appeared unto Simon." "The Lord is risen," that was the revelation of His glory, "And hath appeared unto Simon," that was the revelation of His grace. His grace is as great as His glory. "Then of the twelve." Could they be deceived, who knew Him so well? They evidently did not expect to see Him, for when He appeared in their midst they were troubled and affrighted and thought that they had

seen a spirit, but His well-known voice dispelled their fear, and when He shewed them His hands and feet and side they were glad, for they knew and recognised their Lord. And would they ever forget the peace that filled that upper room, when He had said, "Peace unto you"?

"After that He was seen of about five hundred brethren at once." This appearance is probably that recorded as having taken place in the appointed mountain of Galilee, where they bowed in worship before Him, though some doubted. But worshippers and doubters alike had become witnesses, and the greater part of them remained witnesses to the day when Paul wrote of them, at least twenty-five years after.

"After that He was seen of James," who was one of the Lord's brethren, who did not believe in Him in pre-Calvary days, but that sinful unbelief was atoned for by the Lord's death, and dispelled by His appearance in resurrection, so that James delighted to speak of himself as the servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ; "then of all the Apostles." This may not have been that occasion when phlegmatic, unbelieving Thomas fell down at His feet and exclaimed, "My Lord and My God!" but it was an outstanding appearance to which all the apostles bore witness and of which all the christians talked.

"Then last of all He was seen of me also," not on earth but in the glory of God, exalted to the Father's right hand, but the same Jesus of Nazareth whom men despised and slew, and whom Saul of Tarsus persecuted. But what a

change that sight of Him made in the persecutor! for him from hence forward the world's prizes were but dross, and His risen living Lord became the sole object of life and love and service for him

“Christ was his end, for Christ was his beginning
Christ his beginning, for his end was Christ.”

And need we go beyond the witness that Paul added to that of those who were in Christ before Him? except to confirm and seal it all by the Lord's own words to John in the Isle of Patmos. “When I saw Him,” said John, “I fell at His feet as dead, and he laid His right hand upon me, saying unto me, ‘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 death’” (Revelation 1. 17, 18).

Now consider the alternative that Paul by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit sets before us. He says, “If Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is vain also. Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God; because we have testified of God that He raised up Christ: whom He raised not up, if so be that the dead rise not . . . And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins” (1 Corinthians 15).

If Christ be not raised the gospel is a myth and salvation a dream.

If Christ be not raised, His mission to earth has failed. His words have been proved to be false, He has perished, and we mourn a defeated Christ.

If Christ be not raised, the Scriptures have not been fulfilled, the Bible itself has deceived us and there is no word that we can believe.

If Christ be not raised, God has lost His Son and men have no Saviour, God Himself is defeated and no power can ever hope to break the power of death.

If Christ be not raised, all faith is vain, there is no forgiveness, and we are yet in our sins.

All this and more is involved in Paul's dread alternative to the resurrection of Christ. How welcome then is the declaration, “But now is Christ raised from the dead and become the First-fruits of them that slept.”

The resurrection of the Lord Jesus is the great witness to His greatness and glory, and to the Father's approval of His life and work on earth. He came forth from the Father to declare to men the great love wherewith He loved them; but they gave Him hatred for love; they despised and rejected Him; they could not endure His presence in the world, and though He was the Lord of glory the princes of this world crucified Him. He was numbered with the transgressors; the cross of a malefactor was the sentence passed upon Him and duly executed by the world. What was God's answer to that? Again and again the Apostles declared God's answer to man's crime. “Ye denied the Holy One and the Just,” said Peter to the Jews, “and you desired a murderer to be granted to you; and killed the Prince of Life, whom God hath raised from the dead; whereof we are witnesses.” We do not wonder that “God hath

made this same Jesus both Lord and Christ" (Acts 2. 36), having exalted Him to His own right hand, the marvel of redeeming love is that thus exalted He should be a Prince and a Saviour to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins (Acts 5. 31) and not to Israel only but to every sinner that bows at His feet.

We rejoice and are glad that the Prince of life could not be holden

by the power of death. We look within that empty tomb and behold with the wondering disciples the perfect order of it and learn thereby how complete is Satan's defeat, and how signal is God's victory over all the power of death; and we bow in adoration before Him as we believe the gospel of God concerning His Son Jesus Christ . . . declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead.

CHRIST, THE ETERNAL SON.

Selected.

THERE are some who hold that Christ was only Son as come into this world, but you lose all that the Son is, if the relationship only belongs to Him when incarnate; and besides lose as well all the love of the Father in sending the Son. This is of immense import, because I have not the Father's love in sending the Son out of heaven, if He was not Son before being born into this world. Hebrews and Colossians are conclusive; in both it is the Son who created (Heb. 1. 2; Col. 1. 13-16). The words of our Lord also bear witness to His being Son in the eternal state, "I came forth from the Father and am come into the world: again, I leave the world and go to the Father" (John 16. 28). The denial of the eternal Sonship would also deny the eternal Father for you have no Father if you have no Son. God is love, it is His eternal nature, and love cannot be without an object, hence the Son addressing the Father in John 17. 24, says, "Thou lovedst Me before the foundation of the world." That the Son came forth from the Father is the source of the deepest joy of

the saints, as it will be their witness to the world when glorified (John 17. 23), "That the world may know that Thou hast sent Me." It is the knowledge of this that makes the notion of Sonship in Christ only when incarnate, so abhorrent to those who have communion by the Spirit in the truth, for it is destructive of the holiest and sweetest relationship which it is our privilege to know, and into which Divine grace has brought us and made known to us in its fulness by the Holy Ghost, the Spirit of Sonship. As born into this world, Christ is called "The Son of God" (Psa. 2. 7; Luke 1. 35), because in becoming flesh, He did not change the relationship which was His eternally. "Son of the Father" (2 John 3), and "Son of God" are essentially the same only the first is relationship and the second is nature. It is this that makes our Lord Jesus Christ unique in His manhood, for though His grace has made us sharers in His own holy relationship to the Father and we are sons, He is ever "The Son" being God over all, blessed for ever.

CANST THOU BY SEARCHING FIND OUT GOD?

H. Wilson, Inkongo.

CANST thou by searching find
The Almighty God? Can puny
man

Take in the One who was ere time
began,

With his own finite mind?

I use a microscope, and scan

A tiny parasite,
Brought to the light

Of my research and vision as a man;

Yet is that tiny mite

Unable quite

To understand that I not only see

And know it, but control its destiny.

So it would seem that puny finite
man

Can never scan

Or know the mighty God, who fills
eternity.

Some say God can be found

In Nature; and 'tis true indeed

We there His wisdom and His might
can read,

And see His skill abound.

The tiny animalculae,

More wonderful by far

Than man's inventions are,

Display His handiwork with cer-
tainty.

Each plant that grows

Most plainly shows

The imprint of a wise Creator's
hand,

On viewing which amazed and awed
I stand.

But 'tis His work, not God Himself
I see,

Nor can it be

That viewing Nature only I shall
understand.

Behold the starry sky!

What human mind can comprehend

Where the beginning is or where
the end

Of such immensity?

What do the many names convey?

The 'Serpent' shining bright,

The 'Cross,' emblazed in light,

The 'Crown,' the 'Wounded Con-
queror,' what are they?

Again I stand amazed;

The mind is dazed

Before the sky's expanse, so great,
so wide:

And yet one's longing rests ungrati-
fied;

And life's hard problems and its
deepest need

Remain indeed

Unsolved, unmet. The heart is not
thus satisfied.

Turn now and view with me

A group of humble men gathered
around

A central One, for in that One are
found

A lofty majesty,

Surpassing wisdom, gentleness,

A knowledge of men's needs,

A tenderness that heeds

The faintest cry of sorrow or dis-
tress.

Then Philip speaks this word—

'Shew us the Father, Lord,'

And thus the Lord replies with voice
serene

'He that hath seen Me, hath the
Father seen.'

O wondrous, glorious mystery, that
God,

The eternal God,

Has revealed Himself in this our
earthly scene.

Then onward to the Cross,

Displaying God's great love to you
and me,

Behold the Lord, advance unflinch-
ingly,

Unmoved by shame or loss.

But, risen now at God's right hand,

Upon His glorious face
 God's glory we can trace,
 And seeing Him, our hearts can
 understand.
 He knows our every need,
 And He can read
 Even the longing we can scarce ex-
 press,
 And knowing, 'tis His great delight
 to bless,
 The weary heart can find in Him its
 rest,
 And, fully blest,
 Be filled with heavenly peace and
 joy and happiness.

While He is still away,
 His people here are left to set Him
 forth,

And shew His glory and His match-
 less worth,
 And God Himself display.
 We well may own with grief and
 shame
 How much we fail to show
 God's nature here below,
 And how we do dishonour to His
 Name.
 Yet let us fix our gaze
 On Him, whose rays
 Will brighten, change us, cause us
 now to be
 More like Him, so that all around
 may see
 In us a little of that radiant light,
 And glory bright,
 Which we shall bear throughout a
 glad eternity.

The Angel's Gospel.

What a story it was that the angel had to tell on that resurrection morning.
 "Fear not ye, for I know that ye seek Jesus, that was crucified. He is
 not here: for He is risen, as He said. Come see the place where the Lord
 lay ' (Matthew 28).

"*Ye seek JESUS.*" Blessed Name! revealing the grace of His Person.

"*Which was crucified.*" Wonderful sacrifice! revealing the love of His
 heart, that made Him give Himself for us.

"*He is risen.*" Mighty victory! revealing His power that was more than
 a match for death.

"*As He said.*" Infallible word! revealing the fact that no word of
 His can fail. Hath He said it? Then it shall stand for ever.

"*Come see the place where the Lord lay.*" Glorious title! He is Lord,
 yes, Lord of the dead and the living. "To this end Christ both died,
 and rose, and revived that He might be Lord both of the dead and the
 living" (Romans 14. 9).

And the empty tomb into which the angel invited the women, was the
 proof of the great triumph. This was the angel's gospel, and it is as good
 for us to-day as it was for those women who first heard it.

“A WORM” YET “JEHOVAH OF HOSTS.” F. B. Hole.

A SERIES of great and wonderful contrasts is found in Psalms 22, 23 and 24. Psalm 22 divides very naturally into two parts, so that we have four sections in all; and the main contrast lies between the first part of Psalm 22, where the sufferings of Christ are prophetically set forth, and the remaining three parts, which furnish us with glimpses of glorious results which follow. One of the striking contrasts we have chosen as our title. The One, who speaks of Himself as a worm in the early part of Psalm 22, is discovered to be the Lord of hosts when we arrive at the end of Psalm 24.

The first part of Psalm 22 ends in the midst of verse 21. The colon which occurs there in our Authorized Version is supplanted by a full stop in Darby's New Translation, which renders it thus:—

“Save me from the lion's mouth.
Yea, from the horns of the buffaloest thou answered me.”

The first sentence of the verse is thus the last cry of the suffering Messiah. The second sentence is His first utterance of triumph as He comes forth in resurrection to declare Jehovah's Name unto His brethren.

In the first place, then, we have an amazing prophetic forecast of the atoning sufferings of Christ, when as the single grain of wheat He fell into the ground and died. Then we discover how great a harvest is to be reaped from that sowing. The latter part of Psalm 22 shows that Jehovah is to reap a satisfying harvest of praise and worship.

The prophetic forecast of the sufferings of the cross is given with

great fulness, only equalled by Isaiah 53. We need not pause to point out how minutely all was fulfilled, as recorded in the four Gospels; and others have dwelt upon the marvel that all the physical horrors of death by crucifixion should be accurately described, centuries before that dreadful form of capital punishment had been invented. We will briefly trace the varied sufferings which combined in that dread hour. May we do so with reverent and adoring hearts.

He had to explore vast fields of suffering which came upon Him as the result of the activities of fallen men and of that malignant spirit of evil by whom men fell. Verses 6 to 8 present most graphically *the reproach of men* which came upon Him. This was we judge the least part of His sufferings, for Hebrews 12 tells us that He “endured the cross, despising the shame.” Nothing cuts us more to the quick than reproach and shame amongst our fellows. But that is just because they *are* our fellows. He was infinitely above those who shamed Him. Both in His Deity, and in His spotless and incomparable Humanity He towered above them so that the taunts they flung were as nothing to Him. Yet on the other hand He keenly felt it all, for He had a keenness of sensibility of which we know nothing. He despised the shame, yet He felt it according to God.

Then in verses 12 and 13 we have *the persecution of the Jews*. The leaders of that people attacked Him with the strength and ferocity of bulls. The militant Pharisees were like strong bulls of Bashan, and, inasmuch as they were the special

agents of Satan in the matter, they partook of his character. He bears the character of "a roaring lion."

Verses 14 and 15 portray *His bodily sufferings*. In these of course He was not unique. The two thieves crucified on either side must have shared them, as indeed all others who at any time have been executed in this terrible way. What was unique was His power of feeling, for in Him no sensibility had been blunted by sin; all was tuned to the highest pitch of perfection. And all ended in "the dust of death." *The power of death* is terrible indeed to us; it was far more so to Him, for He knew it right well as the original judgment of God imposed on man because of sin. As such He entered into it. He was brought there by God.

Then also there was *the cruelty of the Gentiles*, pictured in verses 16 to 18. It was the Roman soldiers who fulfilled these three verses. They were not marked by the ferocity of the bull, for they had no particular animus against the Lord; but there was an utter lack of decency and feeling. They were like the unclean dog, an assembly of evil-doers. All this He keenly felt.

And behind all this, behind the sword and the dog, lay *the power of Satan*. It is the devil who wields the power of death, according to Hebrews 2. 14; and so in going into death He was going into the very mouth of the lion. He came thus to grips with the devil in the very stronghold of his power. At this point we reach the end of the section which predicts His sufferings.

But in this brief survey of the sufferings we have thus far omitted

that which is immeasurably first and chief of them all—that which is indeed the main theme of the passage. There were these minor ingredients in the cup of His sufferings, but the major ingredient was this—*He was forsaken of God*. The atonement that He made lay in this, that He bore the judgment of God against sin, even unto death. As bearing sin He was forsaken of God who is holy, and who yet is to inhabit the praises of Israel, and of many others besides.

This forsaking is, as we have said, the main theme. It fills the opening verses, and then the holy Sufferer recalls the way in which the fathers had been supported and delivered in their hours of need, which makes it all the more striking that He should be forsaken at this supreme moment. Then, in verse 11, it is again reverted to. He had been the dependent One from the very outset, never deviating from that attitude, so more than all He had the title to Divine support, all others having forsaken Him. This was the hour of trouble when most He needed the sunshine of the face of God.

Then follow verses 12 to 18, in which, as we have seen, the persecution of the Jews, His bodily sufferings, the power of death, the cruelty of the Gentiles, are all recounted. They are urged in verse 19 as furnishing potent reasons why He should enjoy the sustaining presence of God; so that again the fact of His being forsaken is reverted to.

When this is observed it at once becomes apparent that the fact of His being forsaken is the main theme. His other sufferings, great as they were, are only mentioned in order that the supreme sorrow of

His being forsaken of God may be apprehended by us. The other sufferings, the reproach and persecution from both Jew and Gentile, even the power of Satan, were *incidental*. What was *essential* to His great work of atonement was the fact that as made sin upon the cross He was forsaken of God, He died as the Victim. As our Psalm puts it, "THOU hast brought Me into the dust of death"—it is not viewed as the work of evil men. Isaiah 53 says, "THOU shalt make His soul an offering for sin." In both cases the act is an act of God. Men played their evil part, but the great transaction really lay between Him and God.

The sin of man created the necessity. The sin of both Jew and Gentile furnished the occasion. But the work itself was wholly divine. The Father had sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world, and the work lay wholly between the Sent One and Him who sent Him. We may well rejoice that this is so. It guarantees at once and for ever all that then was accomplished.

The grain of wheat having been sown, having fallen into the ground and died, the glorious harvest that is to be reaped, begins to appear. First comes the "much fruit" that is to appear for the pleasure of God Himself. Praise and worship is His rightful due, whether we consider Him as Elohim in creation, or as Jehovah in covenant faithfulness, or as Father revealed to us in the Son. That which is His due He is going to get.

In the latter part of Psalm 22 we find that He who suffered is to become the Master and Leader of the praise. It is true of course that apart from His atoning death there could have been no praise. It is

equally true that, His death being accomplished, He came forth in resurrection to declare God's name, and thus start the praise; and also to take the lead in offering the praise for the word is, "in the midst . . . will I praise Thee," and yet again, "My praise shall be of Thee" (verses 22, 25). So that which was set forth typically in Asaph, Jeduthun, Heman, and "their brethren that were instructed in the songs of the Lord" (1 Chron. 25. 7), is seen antotypically in Christ, and His redeemed.

Verse 22 finds its fulfilment to-day, as Hebrews 2 indicates. He has declared God's name as Father to us, and in the midst of the assembly—of those called out for heavenly privilege and destiny—He leads the praise. The first notes of the song that will ultimately swell into the great universal orchestra of praise are struck in the assembly on earth to-day. It is indeed true that, "On earth the song begins," and the character of that song is very high, for it is in response to the declaration of the Father's name; though on the other hand it may be very feebly taken up by us, for the assembly on earth is in a condition of weakness.

After the assembly is gone from the earth there will still be found among various peoples those who fear the Lord, and more particularly so among the seed of Jacob or of Israel. These in their turn will praise and glorify Him, even amidst the afflictions that will come upon them. The Lord Jesus was pre-eminently the afflicted One, and they will find encouragement in the way in which He had been heard even from death itself. This verse 23 brings before us.

Yet again there is to be "the great congregation," when all Israel is saved according to Romans 11. 26. When at last He who once scattered Israel has gathered them as a born again people, redeemed, cleansed, reunited; then their great Messiah in His glory shall lead the praise of Jehovah, and incite their praises, as verse 25 indicates. Here is found the beginning of millennial praises, till all that seek the Lord shall praise Him, and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship.

Not only will all that are blessed and enriched—spoken of as those who are "fat upon earth"—be worshipping at His feet, but those who go down to the dust will have to bow before Him. Here apparently we have an allusion to those who are spoken of as the "sheep" and the "goats" in Matthew 25. 31-46. Whichever way it is in that day, whether men are blessed or judged, they will have to acknowledge the Lord and yield glory to Him. Those who are truly "a seed"—the fruit and result of the travail of His soul—will serve Him and be reckoned as the new generation who enter into the enjoyment that God originally promised to His people. The old unbelieving generation (see Matt. 24. 34) will then have passed away, and to those yet to be born as the Millennial age runs its course will be told the story of the Saviour's sufferings, thus provoking further praise.

Thus we see the harvest of praise being reaped, beginning in the church of to-day and extending into the world to come.

Psalm 23 shows very plainly what a harvest of blessing we reap as the result of the death of Christ. He

who died as the Victim on our behalf, lives in resurrection as the Shepherd of our souls. In having the living Shepherd we have everything. Not only is the wolf of "want" kept from our door, but we have satisfaction, and restoration, and righteousness, and comfort, and overflowing provision. There are found "goodness" and "mercy" like two faithful watch-dogs following all our steps, while before us stands the house of the Lord as our eternal dwelling-place.

Our path is not to be marked by the absence of trouble, as the Psalm plainly shows. On the contrary, there are enemies, there is evil, there is even death, for these are all mentioned. This world becomes to the saint "the valley of the shadow of death."

But here lies another striking contrast which we do well to remark. If we want to see death in all its force, death as the weighty judgment of God against sin, we have to turn to the early part of Psalm 22. Into the dust of DEATH was Jesus brought by God Himself when He stood in our place and bore our sin. Only the *shadow* of death is left for us. Of this fact we venture to make a twofold application. In the first place this world is for us shadowed by His death. Here He died, and this fact casts its shadow over the whole scene for every loyal heart that loves Him. In the second place, when the saint comes to the hour of dissolution and departure to be with Christ, he finds that he does not properly speaking see death at all. It is but the shadow of death that he has to face. Death itself was long ago faced by Christ on his behalf.

Psalm 23 is so well known, and so much has been said as to it, that we content ourselves with these few remarks; and turn to consider Psalm 24, which shows us that He who suffered is not forgotten when the results of His death are enumerated. He is to reap a harvest of great glory.

When at last the millennial day is reached the earth will be very manifestly the Lord's and the whole world be in subjection to Him. The hill of the Lord and His holy place will be elevated amongst men, and the question is raised as to who will be fit to ascend the one or to stand in the other. The answer is given in verses 4 and 5. The fitness required is moral fitness. Those holy places are reserved for the holy; those whose hands are clean, whose hearts are pure, who have eschewed all vanity and deceit. The godly, who will enter the millennial age, will be such in a general way. They will be the generation who seek the Lord, the seed who serve Him and are accounted a generation, as we saw in Psalm 22. But there is One who was all this, not merely in a general way but in an absolute way—intrinsically and perfectly and without any qualification whatever.

The Passover lambs and all other lambs used for sacrificial purposes, had to be without blemish. Their perfection qualified them to be so used. In this they were types. The Lord Jesus was the "Lamb without blemish and without spot." Had He not been He could not have suffered sacrificially on our behalf, as portrayed in Psalm 22. His perfection qualified Him to go *down* into death for us. It also qualified Him to go *up* into the hill of the Lord.

The last four verses of the Psalm picture Him as ascending into the hill of the Lord, and entering His holy place. The scene is one of millennial splendour, and the holy places as pictured by Ezekiel, chapters 40 to 48, pass before the prophetic view of the Psalmist. Not infrequently the passage is taken up by way of application rather than interpretation and made to refer to the entrance of our Lord into heavenly glory. This is quite permissible doubtless, for He has been glorified "straightway" in the presence of God, according to His own words in John 13. 32. Still the public glory which is yet to come is strictly speaking the point here. It is not enough that He should be glorified in private (as far as this world is concerned); glory of a public sort must also be His. And, more particularly, He must be abundantly glorified in the very scene of His public dishonour. When the gates and doors are lifted up, He shall enter, not only as the One in whom all moral perfection is found, but also as the King of glory.

But, "Who is this King of glory?" The question is repeated, and a two-fold answer is given.

First, He is, "Jehovah strong and mighty, Jehovah mighty in battle." He will come fresh from His victories—those victories foretold in Psalm 2, when He will have the kings of the earth and the rulers in derision, when He will break the rebellious nations with a rod of iron, and dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel. But then He who will ride in triumph to victory then, once suffered and was forsaken that He might win victory of another sort at the cross.

So we may make an application of these words, rather than interpretation, and speak of how once

By weakness and defeat,
He won the meed and crown;
Trod all our foes beneath His feet,
By being trodden down.

Because He proved Himself strong and mighty in this way He is to enter into His glory.

But there is the second answer. He is the Lord of hosts, for others are associated with Him. Revelation 19. 14 shows us that, when He shall come forth as a Warrior to judgment, there will be the armies of heaven who follow Him—His heavenly saints who are to wear His likeness and share His triumphs. In them, as in others besides, He will see the fruit of the travail of His soul.

We began by remarking that there were many contrasts in these Psalms,

taking one of them as our title. We close by pointing out a few more. Once for Him it was all *reproach, despising, scorn*. Ultimately He is to appear as *the King of Glory*. Then He appeared as the *dependent One*, trusting on the Lord, and made to hope upon His mother's breasts. He shall yet be manifested as the Lord *strong and mighty in battle*. Then He was *forsaken* of God, and of men too for He had to say, "There is none to help." He shall then stand forth *surrounded* by the hosts of His redeemed, and He the Lord of hosts among them. Once He took the *outside* place of forsaking. Then the King of glory shall *come in*.

God shall be praised. Saints shall be shepherded. Last, but not least, Jesus shall be abundantly covered with glory. May God haste the day *when the King of glory shall come in*.

Soon, soon, we shall see Him; and all of perplexing
Shall shrivel and die in the bliss of surprise;
And earth with its sorrow and turmoil and vexing
Shall drop far away as we mount to the skies.

It comes day by day, our expectant hearts thrilling,
The rapturous hope our Belovèd to see;
And oh—while we wait for its certain fulfilling,
What manner of people His chosen should be!

Two principles are commonly found working on human lines of action: first, that a man may be known by what he values; and second, that what he values he acquires. The same principles hold good among saints. In proportion as I appreciate divine things am I controlled by them, and the higher my estimation of them the more am I bent on their acquisition; in result, "The soul of the diligent shall be made fat" (Prov. 13. 4).

SONSHIP.

James McBroom.

THE goodness of God and the sovereignty of His favour to man has come out in Christianity as nowhere else. His gracious dealings with men in other dispensations call for earnest attention and prayerful consideration, but to-day He is seen in the full blessedness of all that He is in nature and character, having given expression here in time to what engaged the Godhead: Father, Son and Spirit, in the timeless scenes of eternity past. It was then, mid scenes of celestial glory and eternal love, a love which is the nature of God, that believers were chosen of God to be before God for God's own pleasure and marked out for a place of association with God's Son in richest bliss for ever (John 17. 5-24: Eph. 1. 44, 5).

This choice for blessing and glory supposes for these a new relationship, namely, that of being made sons of God, the adoption, but the way it is brought to us and the time it comes calls for careful attention. It is brought to us in the Son of God; no less a Person could do this, and it reached us when we were at the lowest point of helplessness and ruin. The height of the blessing can only be seen in the light of the grace that has stooped so low, it is brought to us in the Son but at a time when we had wandered from our created state and place; so that we come not into it directly by creation but by redemption. The counsels of eternity pre-suppose man's creation and even his fall, for known unto God are all His ways from the beginning.

The calling of sonship therefore refers to the new state and place we are brought into by redemption

and supposes a previous history as sinners at a distance from God that nothing could lift us from but the grace of God in Christ. That grace does not stop at mere recovery to where we were as created, but carries us into what God had in mind for us before we were created. It is brought to us in the Son of God's love; the blessing is seen in the Blesser and for us it means a new nature, relationship and calling, which has the Father for its source, the Holy Spirit in our souls the immediate cause and the Son Himself its model and expression.

All this dates back to the counsels of eternity which are indeed the outcome of Who God is, and which display God in a Trinity of Holy Beings; Father, Son and Spirit, in eternity past where so to speak the revealed and the unrevealed meet. We are taken back across the ages to eternity, in thought, to contemplate so far as creatures can, the Holy Trinity in the eternal and internal reciprocation of all that is native and proper to the Being of God, in thought, movement, plan and counsel, in the home of love, which is the very being of God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. There in a glory suitable to such a God, because taking its character and existence from His wondrous Being, lay the counsels, which, after we had fallen and wandered far away, would become operative in the Son in a relationship far beyond our first created state. Whatever may be our conception of the Being of God, infinite and glorious, omnipotent and omniscient, yet we may learn from this, that, at the centre from which all emanates, there beats a heart of eternal love, a love which is power-

ful and supreme and which makes all these other mighty attributes of Deity the willing and obedient servants of that same LOVE. "GOD IS LOVE."

As sinners living in alienation from God, we must begin with repentance and forgiveness by the gospel of God. This leads on to the sense of deliverance from the power of evil and complete salvation, so that we can be at home with God in the sense of His love and favour. This may be defined as soul history as it speaks of the internal struggle which is passed through in the passage from darkness to the light of God. It is the moral journey from Adam to Christ, in which is apprehended, the transfer from the status of a fallen sinner, to a new creation in Christ before God.

It is clear however that God begins from His own side and from His own height, having in view that we should be "holy and without blame before Himself in love." The whole Trinity is engaged, as we have seen, to bring this about, and the fifteenth of Luke is a beautiful expression of it from the Lord Himself in parabolic form.

The spring and source of all is in the Father's love, but the relationship itself is in the Son. This excludes, in His glorious Person, all thought of generation, offspring or subordination. Such thoughts are not consistent with the co-existence, mutuality and co-equality of that God Who is One yet God all Three. "I and the Father are One," and again, "I am in the Father and the Father is in Me," (John 10. 30; 14. 10), speak of the relations and intimacies of Godhead, from eternity to eternity, yet spoken in Manhood

in time, by the Son. In coming out to reveal, He is Himself what He reveals, and being Man, while still abiding in the unity of Godhead, all the blessed joys and affections proper to the filial relation are His without a break, in the Manhood He took. In this way the communications that belong to the relationship, in its heavenly and eternal blessedness, is brought before us from the Son's own lips, in the seventeenth chapter of John. There, God the Spirit records, through John, the words of the incarnate Son in His prayer to the Father, and as units in the great aggregate that was before Him in that prayer we are privileged to listen and adore and to link ourselves with the home of Divine Love, and the counsels of eternity from which all has come.

The relationship of Son is seen in our Lord in different ways. He is "The Son of Man" though not begotten by man, and "Son of David" though not begotten by David. Character, and not offspring evidently is what we are to learn. Son of God is predicated of our Lord in a three-fold way. 1. Abstract Godhead; the Son in relation to the Father in the unity of the Godhead. 2. Incarnation: the Son of God a Divine Human Person. 3. Resurrection. "Declared to be the Son of God with power by resurrection from the dead. The first is Godhead and expresses His own place with the Father and the Spirit distinct from the creation. In the second, while eternally Co-Equal by virtue of the hypostatic union, yet, having become Man He is the Son of God, a Divine Human Person. In the third we see Him risen from the dead in His glorified Humanity, with all power in heaven and on earth given to Him, (Matt. 28. 18)

all things in His hand, (John 3. 35; 13. 4) and all put under His feet (Psa. 8. 6; Heb. 2. 8).

1. *Sonship before time and in the ages preceding Incarnation.*

It might be said that our Lord is never spoken of as Son till He became Man. This would deny the prophetic testimony of Scripture and endanger, not only the truth of His relationship but also the truth of His Godhead. It calls for consideration, however, for it affects both the progress of revelation, and its prophetic and anticipatory scope. We could not, in the progressive line of revelation, have the name of the Person till the Person Himself was revealed. Such a thing would have militated against the testimony of Scripture. It was necessary that the testimony, *then*, should be, "The LORD our God is One LORD. In the New Testament the Holy Trinity is revealed, and along with that the names distinctive of each Person in the Godhead.

On the other hand it is well known that we can go back with the light of New Testament revelation, and see certain hints of a Trinity in the Godhead, coming out in the Old Testament in such passages as Gen. 3. 22; 11. 7; Numbers 6. 23-26, and perhaps also Isaiah 6. 3. If these dim allusions to the plurality of Persons in the Godhead may be gleaned from the Old Testament may we not also see, coming out, some allusion to the Names distinctive of each One. Surely we cannot fail to see the name of the Son both in Isa. 9. 6, and Prov. 30. 4. But besides this if we compare Psalm 45. 6, with Hebrews 1. 8, we get full proof both of the Person and the Son, and His relationship to the Father as

such. The Spirit, who inspired the Psalm, brings out its latent fullness in Hebrews, and thus we learn, that, long before Incarnation, the Father addressed the Son as God coequal. "Unto the Son He saith, 'Thy throne O God is for ever and ever.'" Thus we get N. Test. proof that our Lord is Son in eternity and O. Test. proof of the same in the ages preceding His becoming Man.

2. *The Son of God in Incarnation, the Man Christ Jesus.*

In His becoming Man, we pass from Sonship in abstract Deity, to the Son of God a Divine Human Person on the earth. The union in Him of the Divine and Human constitutes Him One glorious but unique Person. Since God, the Eternal, can never be less than God, He remains coequal with the Father and the Spirit, sharing of the same necessity, in all the mysterious operations of the Godhead; upholding, ruling, controlling, both in the moral and physical orders of creation, while by virtue of Incarnation, He is something which the Father and the Spirit are not, He is Man. It is this that constitutes the mystery of the Person of our Lord. In these other great and glorious Beings of Godhead the One who is Father ever remains such in His own eternal Being, and the Holy Spirit also is eternally the same, but in our Lord we have God set forth in the Son of Man, and Man set forth in the Son of God. One glorious Person Who is both God and Man.

At the beginning of His ministry our Lord was owned by the Father as His beloved Son (Matt. 3. 17). Then immediately afterwards challenged by the devil (4. 3) in the

words, "If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread." Next, He is owned Son of God by the demons (8. 29), acknowledged by those in the ship (14. 33), and confessed by the Centurion after He had delivered up His Spirit to the Father. Nathaniel confessed Him Son of God (1. 49), so also did Martha (11. 27), and above all, note the confession of Peter (Matt. 16. 16), which drew forth from the Lord the revelation of His future work in building His Assembly in the resurrection sphere. We are reconciled to God by the death of His Son (Rom. 5. 11), the Son of God gave Himself for us (Gal. 2. 20), and, in His own Son, God condemned sin in the flesh (Rom. 8. 3, 22).

The Gospels describe our Lord in the mystery of His Person. To faith and affection He may be seen as possessing all things, yet having nowhere to lay His head, there is supreme Majesty, combined with dependence and obedience. He is the Child born, but the Son given (Isa. 8. 20). He clothes the heavens with blackness, and dries up the sea, yet gives His back to the smiters, and His cheek to them that plucked off the hair (Isa. 50. 2-6). When in abstract Godhead, the Son created (Heb. 1. 2) having become Man, He still upholds all things, but by virtue of Manhood He can suffer, serve and obey.

As sons then we can meditate upon the glory of God's own Son, He is also called the Son of the Father (2 John 3). We are privileged to know Him, love Him, and adore Him. Heaven owns Him, earth owns Him, and to do so, hell will be compelled. The whole vast arena is necessarily brought in because of

who He is. How marvellous that this earth is the centre of the conflict between good and evil. When He spoke of being Son of God who would clear the tomb of all its dead, they took up stones to kill Him. The glory of the Son of God shines forth at the grave of Lazarus (John 11. 4), in His muzzling the storm on the lake (Mark 4. 39), in His walking on the water to meet His distracted disciples, and in numberless other ways, but in spite of all, He was charged with blasphemy, because He said He was the Son of God.

But all this had to come to an end, for He had come down to die. In the days of the flesh He abode alone (John 12. 24). It does not mean that He did not go out and in among men, for this He did; He was alone a sinless spotless Man of a different order from the poor sinful creature He came to save. He did not take flesh to adorn a fallen race, but to go to the cross that the history of man in the flesh might reach its end in death. He laid down flesh and blood, to establish in resurrection an entirely new creation. The true Corn of wheat must die to bring forth fruit, and in this way, surround Himself with a race after His own order in resurrection. On the part of God, His death was a necessity, on the side of Man it was called for in the way of relief, both are perfectly met because of Who He is, the Son of God in Manhood.

It is most remarkable how the power of evil seems to come into close cooperation here, with the working out of the will of God. Such was the malevolence of the combined forces of evil, that short of His death they could not stop. Heaven

claimed that He should die; earth needed that death as a means of deliverance from sin and the judgment of God, and hell demanded it on account of hatred to all that is of God. And so all combined, however different the motive, to bring to an end that wondrous life of devotedness to God, which shed its heavenly lustre on all around. It was not the death of God for that could not be, nor was it the death of a mere man for that could not avail; it was the death of One who is both God and Man. Nothing less would meet the claims of God with regard to our state, and nothing more was needed because of who He is. Sin has been condemned in His Person, and removed in His death, and now He is seen, in the potential power of life, in a new state; having left behind in death that state to which sin is in us attached. Before the cross He stood in the condition He had taken in view of death that sin might be dealt with in Him. The desire of divine love was that His banished might be brought back (2 Sam. 14. 14), so the Son becomes the sin-bearer in all its full dread

reality though, indeed, He never could be more precious to the Father and the Spirit than at that moment He bears God's judgment, meets man's need, and submits to the power of evil, down to death itself. In this way God is declared in love, man is met in his need, and the forces of evil are defeated, in a victory which abides to all eternity.

Such was the death of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, and such is its efficacy that God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, shall be adored for evermore. We can think of that death as the vindication of God's glory in the assertion of His rights and the recovery of His place in the heart of the creature, and His authority as moral Governor of the universe; but in a richer and deeper sense the death of our Lord Jesus Christ has so covered the Being; Throne and Majesty of God with glory as not only to meet all the effects of sin in every part of the creation, but to lay a basis for the bringing into effect all that was in His heart before sin came in.

To continue.

Not when Christ raised the dead, not when He rebuked the sea and the winds, not when He expelled devils—but when He was crucified, pierced with nails, insulted, spit upon, reproached, reviled—had He strength to change the evil disposition of the robber, to draw to Himself that soul, harder though it were than the rocks around, and to honour it with the promise, "To-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise." That promise was a revelation of the depth and height of His redemptive power; it was a flash of His Godhead, illuminating the true meaning of His humiliations as Man. (Liddon.)

What you learn on your knees you will never unlearn.

THE NINE SIMPLE WORDS.

Inglis Fleming.

"JOHN'S nine monosyllables all of a row
Are my delight and my comfort
wherever I go."

This was the saying of a devoted Christian years ago. He was referring to John 4. 17 where nine words of one syllable each tell a story of wonderful grace and blessing. The words are these

"AS HE IS SO ARE WE IN THIS
WORLD."

They speak of the marvellous truth that Christ's own place is the place of every believer upon Him. He is risen and beyond the judgment of sin which He endured at the Cross on our behalf. And we who have fled to Him for refuge are placed by God "in Christ" who is now in glory. "AS HE IS." As Christ is clear so are we clear. As for Him the judgment is over, so for us the judgment is over. As He is in fullest, blest acceptance in the presence of God, so are we in present blest acceptance in the presence of God. Can the tides of divine wrath ever reach to Him where He now is? No indeed! and we are before God "in Him" and the tides of divine wrath can never reach to us. "AS HE IS SO ARE WE." These six little words, thirteen letters altogether should speak peace to any doubting soul. The "He" is Jesus the Son of God in highest heaven now. His work of Calvary completed. His cry, "IT IS FINISHED" as He bowed His head in death is echoed by His empty grave where the angel said, "He is not here, He is risen." And by the occupied throne of God where He sits having "by Himself purged our sins." The absence from sepul-

chre and the presence on the throne alike witness to God's acceptance of the work of atonement done on our behalf. The glory of the 'Father visited that silent tomb and raised our Surety, our Saviour from among the dead. The same glory has placed the One who bore our sins at His own right hand. Our Lord had our sins upon Him when upon the tree, but no sins are upon Him now as He adorns the throne of the majesty on high. They are forever put away, And we are before God "AS HE IS." Thus no fear of judgment is ours. We have boldness in the day of judgment as this truth of the gospel becomes known to us.

"AS HE IS SO ARE WE IN THIS WORLD." Yes! now while here waiting for Him to come. While "in this world," God would have us in the peace and joy of complete clearance from every charge which devil or demon or man or our own consciences can bring against us. He took our place in the darkness. We share His place in the light. As we learn our place we are set free from all our fears, set free that we may serve and worship the living God in spirit and in truth.

"AS HE IS SO ARE WE IN THIS WORLD." Yes! here and now we are in His acceptance. His life and nature are ours. But who are the "we." I repeat *every Christian* is in that acceptance. It is God who Himself places one and all those who receive Christ in that position.

In this blessed glorious liberty of grace "we" stand. Whatever is our age as believers, whatever the measure of our growth or experience, whatever our changeful experiences or feelings, that place is ours.

PREACH THE RISEN CHRIST.

J. T. Mawson.

"PREACH Jesus and the resurrection;" proclaim a risen, triumphant Christ. Tell the people that God has put His seal upon the great work of Calvary by raising the Workman from the dead; tell them that the price is paid and is enough; that Satan's power has been annulled; that death has been defeated. If you leave this out of your preaching it will be weak and ineffectual, "If Christ be not raised, your faith is vain: you are yet in your sins" (1 Cor. 15), but now is Christ raised from the dead, and He was raised for our justification. Tell the whole truth of the gospel, for sinners need it all. Think of that solemn statement of Holy Scripture, "By one man sin entered into the world and death by sin, and death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned" (Rom. 5. 12). Every man lies under the sentence of death—it is a risen,

living Saviour that all need. Would you not be glad to carry to a man lying under the sentence of death in the condemned cell the news that another had suffered the full penalty of the law in his stead? And if you could tell him that this one whose love for him was so great was alive again and was waiting to open his prison door and set him righteously free, and wanting henceforward to be his friend and companion, would you not rejoice and make haste to tell him the good news? Such a thing could never be; but that which is impossible with men is God's gospel, and His gospel is much more than that, for those who are delivered from the power of death that lies upon them are set in Christ before God, for ever clear of all condemnation; they stand instead in everlasting favour, accepted in the Beloved.

THE BLOOD OF CHRIST.

C.H.M.

"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."

When a man duly takes his place as one possessing no title whatsoever to life—when he fully recognizes God's claims upon him, then the Divine record is, 'I have given you the life to make an atonement for your soul.' Yes; atonement is God's gift to man; and be it carefully noted, that this atonement is in the blood, and *only* in the blood. "It is the *blood* that maketh an

atonement for the soul." It is not the blood *and* something else; the word is most explicit. It attributes atonement exclusively to *the blood*. 'Without shedding of *blood* there is no remission" (Heb. 9. 22). It was the *death* of Christ that rent the veil. It is "by *the blood* of Jesus" we have "boldness to enter into the holiest." "We have redemption through His *blood*, the forgiveness of sins" (Eph. 1. 7; Col. 1. 14). Having made peace by *the blood* of His cross." Ye who were afar off are made nigh by *the blood* of His cross." "*The blood* of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin" (1 John 1. 7). They washed their robes and made them white in *the*

blood of the Lamb" (Rev. 7).
 "They overcame him by *the blood*
 of the Lamb" (Rev. 12).

I would desire to call my reader's earnest attention to the precious and vital doctrine of the blood. The blood of Christ is the foundation of everything. It is the ground of God's righteousness in justifying an ungodly sinner that believes on the name of the Son of God; and it is the ground of the sinner's confidence in drawing nigh to a holy God who is of purer eyes than to behold evil. God would be just in the condemnation of the sinner; but through the death of Christ, He can be just and the justifier of Him that believeth—a just God and a Saviour. The righteousness of God is His consistency with Himself—His acting in harmony with His revealed character. Hence, were it not for the cross, His consistency with Himself would of necessity demand the death and judgment of the sinner; but in the cross that death and judgment were borne by the sinner's Surety, so that the same divine consistency

is perfectly maintained, while a holy God justifies an ungodly sinner through faith. It is *all through the blood of Jesus*—nothing less—nothing more—nothing different. "It is the blood that maketh atonement for the soul." This is conclusive. This is God's simple plan of justification... If I look from the third chapter of Genesis down to the close of Revelation, I find the blood of Christ put forward as the alone ground of righteousness. We get pardon, peace, life, righteousness, all by the blood, and nothing but the blood. The entire book of Leviticus and particularly chapter 17, is a commentary upon the doctrine of the blood. It seems strange to have to insist upon a fact so obvious to every dispassionate, teachable student of holy Scripture. Yet so it is. Our minds are prone to slip away from the plain testimony of the Word. We are ready to adopt opinions without ever calmly investigating them in the light of divine testimonies. In this way we get into confusion, darkness and error.

THE INDWELLING SPIRIT.

THE Holy Ghost dwells in the believer on the ground of accomplished redemption. He is there, not as the sanction of what is of nature, but as the seal of what is of Christ; and His presence and fellowship are enjoyed just in proportion as the evil in us is habitually judged. Will anyone assert that we can realize and delight in the Spirit's indwelling while allowing our indwelling depravity, and indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind? Far away be the impious thought! No; we must judge ourselves and put away everything inconsistent

with the holiness of the One who dwells in us. Our "old man" is not recognized at all. It has no existence before God. It has been condemned utterly in the cross of Christ. We feel its workings, alas! and have to mourn over them, and judge ourselves on account of them, but God sees us in Christ—in the Spirit—in the new creation. And, moreover, the Holy Ghost dwells in the body of the believer, on the ground of the blood of Christ; and this indwelling demands the judgment of evil in every shape and form.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Interest in the Young.

"I must call your attention to a statement in your March issue, "If a christian is not interested in the young one way or another, he is not a christian at all." Does interest in the young make one a christian? Are men christians because of what they do? I am not much interested in the young, so, according to this, I am not a christian at all, yet I am interested in the old, every redeemed one is interested in somebody"—CORK.

THE speaker, whose words you take exception to, was evidently describing one of the characteristics of a christian; a christian is interested in the spiritual welfare of the young, for he is characteristically like his Lord, like Christ. We think that from that point of view his remark is plain and easily understood.

Nothing that a man can do, of course, can make him a christian, a christian is one who belongs to Christ, because redeemed by His

blood, but having become the Lord's he begins to shew that He is a christian by following in His steps and bearing His character. If he does not shew the characteristics of Christ we are justified in questioning his reality, "By their fruits shall ye know them."

We are sure that you, along with every other Christian who is walking with the Lord, rejoice in His work among the young, even though it is not your special line of service.

Rewards in the Millennium.

"Arising out of your answer to a question as to the place of the church in the millennium, I should like to ask another, Are not rewards for present service connected only with the millennium and not with the eternal State?' It seems to me that the scene of service will also be that of the display of rewards"—ONTARIO.

YES, the Scriptures indicate that rewards for faithful service will be enjoyed during the Millennium. When the Lord is publicly honoured then will He honour those who have been faithful to Him during these days of His rejection and suffering: "if so be that we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified together" (Romans 8. 17), "if we suffer we shall also reign with Him" (2. Tim. 2. 12). But we suggest that honour will be bestowed in those spheres in which the service has been rendered. In such parables as the Talents (Matthew 25), and the Pounds (Luke 19), the Kingdom is very

especially in view, and the labour and trading carried on by His servants as representing the absent King, and in view of His returning. The fort is held for Him while He is away. In 1 Corinthians 3, the labour in building is in relation to the church, and when everything is tested, the one who has built gold, silver and precious stones will be honoured in that sphere. So Paul will have a special honour and joy in relation to the Thessalonians in that sphere. Then there is the family which stands in special relationship to the Father. John did not want to be ashamed of the children in this circle, at the

coming of the Lord, hence his labours and solicitude for them (1 John 2. 28). Those who labour in this same spirit in this sphere will be honoured in it. There are these three special spheres of service, the kingdom, the church and the family, and it is the privilege of every Christian to labour in view of all three, and it will delight the Lord to reward them for their labour.

But there arises another question also, and that is the development of the divine life in the soul, and the transformation into the likeness of Christ that is going on by the work of the Spirit in the believer now. This will run concurrently with faithfulness and service to the Lord. What of this? We cannot speak of re-

wards for this, but will it not have its result not only in the millennium but in eternity? This is the life that lies behind all service, and it will not come to an abrupt end when service here is over, nor will our life beyond this time sphere be something entirely new, will it not be the continuation of this new life that we have now, in its own sphere truly, and free from the trammels of time and sense and the flesh?

Whatever is done in us and through us now and whatever the results may be hereafter is all of grace, but we cannot ignore the seriousness of the lives we live now, they have not only the millennium but eternity in view.

The Word of God.

The Word of God must settle and govern every conscience. There must be no appeal from its solemn and weighty decision. When God speaks, every heart must bow. Men may form and hold their opinions; they may adopt and defend their practices; but one of the finest traits in "the Israel of God" is profound reverence for, and implicit subjection to, "every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord."

Our Pattern.

To make *self* the ground of action or the standard of ethics is not only presumptuous folly, but it is sure to set one upon a descending scale of action. If *self* be my object, I must, of necessity sink lower and lower every day. but if, on the other hand, I set the Lord before me, I shall rise higher and higher as, by the power of the Holy Ghost, I grow in conformity to that perfect model which is unfolded to the gaze of faith in the sacred pages of inspiration. I shall, undoubtedly, have to prostrate myself in the dust under a sense of how infinitely short I come of the mark set before me; but then, I can never be satisfied until I am conformed in all things to Him who was my Substitute on the cross, and my Model in the glory.

ROMANS I.

THESE is no chapter in the whole Bible that exposes the falseness of evolution and reveals the cause of the condition of men like Romans 1. It carried us back to the day when men knew God as the great Creator and the source of all good; it shews us that they rebelled against giving Him the place of supremacy in their lives which was His right; they preferred their own way to His, and *were not thankful*; they did not receive His good gifts with gratitude, nor acknowledge Him as the Giver; they took every mercy as their right and as though they had secured them by their own ingenuity or toil. In debasing God in their thoughts they exalted themselves, and their foolish hearts becoming darkened, they imagined gods of their own desire and defiled their lusts, degraded themselves and descended swiftly into the unspeakable pollutions of idolatry.

The coming of the gospel was a

great deliverance from this condition of corruption, and wherever it has gone it has purified things outwardly, apart altogether from the true emancipation of souls, but even in Christendom, in the case of those who do not desire the true knowledge of God, how base man's heart is, whatever the outward veneer may be. We have but to compare Romans 1. 29-32 which describes in the first place the worshippers of idols, with 2 Tim. 3. 1-5, which describes Christendom, and read the Lord's own words in Mark 7. 20-23, to learn what man is, and he is this, not because of "the remains of the beast that is in him," but because he did not desire to retain God in His thoughts, but preferred to serve sin and Satan. In Romans 1, we see not the ascent of man from a bestial ancestry, but the descent of man into what is worse than bestial, into the denial of God, the degradation of self, and into sin and all iniquity.

The Obedience of Christ.

"Lo, I come to do Thy will" was the principle of His life. Here we are made to realize the wondrous privilege that is ours—the solemn responsibility that lies upon us. For we are "sanctified unto the obedience of Christ," and "He has left us an example that we should follow in His steps" (1 Peter 1. 2; 2. 21). The principle of His life must be, then, the principle of our lives. If with Him the governing motive was to do the will of God—if He rejected every motive that could be urged from His own necessities (as when the Tempter came suggesting He should command that the stones should become bread) how simple is it that, for us also, the will of God must be our motive for action; apart from this there is no right motive possible.

"Blessed is the man that trusteth in the Lord and whose hope the Lord is."

COMMUNION.

J. T. Mawson.

WE may well bless the Name of God that He has revealed to us the worth of His beloved Son and brought us into fellowship with Himself concerning Him; for it is that that has become a fact since His Beloved is ours. What pleasure the Father found in Him as He lived His life on earth! We are glad and rejoice that it was so, that in the world, dominated by the devil, its prince, the Father found in Jesus one who in every thought, word and deed answered wholly to His mind. We have no greater joy than to follow in thought His footsteps through the world, always speaking the Father's words and doing the Father's works; never pleasing Himself, though indeed He only, of all the men that ever lived, had the right to do so, and if He had done so all that He did would have been right, but it was the Father that He pleased, "I do always those things that please Him," He said. His Father was the sole object of His living, He had no other motive but His Father's glory.

He was here to do His Father's business, and it caused Him to wonder, and must have pained His holy and sensitive soul that His mother and Joseph did not understand this when they found Him in the temple at the age of twelve. We through grace understand it and acknowledge that it was wholly right.

We read the record of the Father's pleasure in Him, expressed in words that shall never be forgotten. "This is My beloved Son in whom is all My delight," and our hearts are moved to praise and we cannot forbear from saying, "He is worthy."

Infinite perfection called for divine approbation; the heavens could not be silent, the excellent glory must speak, the Father Himself must declare His delight in the lowly Man of sorrows, and we respond to heaven's joy in Him. Those words of the Father's that thrilled the hearts of the disciples awaken a chord in our hearts, and our joy and the song that we raise thereat is our fellowship with the Father—our oneness of thought with Him by the illumination and power of the Holy Spirit.

Would it be right to say that the Father's pleasure in Him increased with every day that He lived on earth? To us it seems so, for the deeper depths of His devotion to the Father's will were more and more revealed as the opposition of sinners and the hatred of men increased against Him, and as the cross came into view. Hard must that heart be that can pass indifferently such a saying as that that came forth from the mouth of Jesus in John 10 when the cross was not far away, "Therefore doth My Father love Me, because I lay down My life that I might take it again," and if we put alongside of it that other saying, "That the world may know that I love the Father; and as the Father gave Me commandment, even so I do. Arise, let us go hence" John 14. 31., we have before us the full and uninterrupted love that flowed between the Father and the Son. And we stand by and rejoice with a deep and subdued joy that to us, even to us, this blessedness should be revealed, and that we should have our part in it, for if the Father loved Him because He

laid down His life, we know that He laid down His life for us and we love Him because of it. His love to the Father and His love to us burned in one great flame that the many waters could not quench, and we love Him whom the Father loves and this is the basis and the spring of our communion with the Father.

We contemplate those words of the Lord, "Let us go hence." That *hence* meant Gethsemane, Gabbatha and Golgotha for Him, the agony of blood, the assaults of the power of darkness; the shame and the insults and the injustice of men; and those deeper and mysterious sufferings under the just and holy judgment of God. Never shall we understand the full meaning of that cry, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" it must be for ever beyond creature-comprehension; but we do know, and as divinely taught we can understand the words, "Christ also hath loved us, and hath given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour" Ephesians 5. 2. We are assured that if the suffering He endured when He was made sin for us has endeared Him eternally to us, He must have been in those hours of darkness unspeakably precious to His Father, "an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour." If that sacrifice was to God, it was for us, and if it was precious to God, it is also precious to us, and here we are truly brought into oneness of thought with the Father concerning Him.

The Father's glory visited the Garden, even before Mary of Magdala reached it, and the empty tomb into which she peered with tearful

eyes proclaimed the fact that God had raised Him from the dead; and now we know that He is set at the Father's right hand in heaven, and He has been invested there with glories that surpass all other glories; a Name has been given to Him that is above every other name; and at His Name every creature must bow the knee. We follow His exaltation to the highest place in heaven with full approval, as we have followed His humiliation with wonder. The first and the most willing of all who shall acknowledge His worthiness are surely the ransomed saints who form His church, we belong to that favoured company, and we bless the Father's Name who has exalted Him who has become so precious to us.

We await His coming again for the crowns and the kingdoms are His, and His church shall share His glory, for so hath God decreed. But when the splendours and the triumphs of His kingdom shall have reached their termination, and Time shall have ceased to be, the Father's house shall abide and we shall be there "conformed to the image of His dear Son, that He might be the First-born among many brethren." For ever He shall be pre-eminent, the eternal object of His Father's love and of the love of all His saints, and thus it shall be that for ever we shall have common thoughts with the Father concerning Him. And we shall share in the love that rests upon Him, for to us He has declared the Father's Name, that the love wherewith His Father loves Him may be in us; not only on us, but in us, the enjoyed portion of hearts that are wholly given up to Him. Thus shall our eternal joy be fellowship with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ.

TO BE CONTINUED.

W. Bramwell Dick.

THE Gospel according to Luke is of very special interest, and has a charm that is all its own because of its introduction and general structure; and also on account of its soul-inspiring and edifying contents. While we may learn certain things from other sources, we ascertain little from the Holy Scriptures as to who either Luke or Theophilus were, their origin, their history, or when and how they became interested in divine things. Luke, known as "the beloved physician," (Col. 4. 14) was evidently one of Paul's most devoted companions and fellow-labourers.

In chapter one of the Gospel that bears his name, he strikes a note of certitude most refreshing at all times, but particularly so at a time like the present when "*WE DON'T KNOW*," seems to be considered a virtue by those who claim a monopoly of education, and who are looked up to for instruction in matters that concern the soul.

Luke, inspired by the Holy Spirit writes in chapter one:—

(a) "Of those things which are most surely believed among us. (verse 1):

(b) Of those things as having been delivered by "those who from the beginning were eye-witnesses of, and attendants on the Word," (N. Tr.); and

(c) Of himself as "having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first." (verse 3).

We note at the outset how very carefully the Holy Spirit guards, as He ever does, the glory of Christ. He Who is set before us in this Gospel as the perfect Man is none

other than "*the Word*" Who in the beginning was "with God;" Who "was God;" and Who "became flesh," (John 1. 1 to 14), in order that He might bring the grace of God to, and bestow the blessing of God upon the needy children of men.

As we peruse the Gospel we are not surprised that those in the synagogue of Nazareth "wondered at the gracious words that proceeded out of His mouth" (4. 22).

We listen to His words, we contemplate His excellencies; we view His acts; and we wonder and worship.

We read in chapter seven of His sympathy with the widow of Nain; and of His grace to "a woman in the city, which was a sinner;" of the tale of mercy in the story of the Samaritan (chapter 10); the incomparable unfolding of God's love in chapter 15; His dealing with Zaccheus (chapter 19); His prayer for His enemies, and the blessing of the thief who hung by His side on the cross (chapter 23). All this and much more, found only in this charming Gospel fills our heart with delight and fills our lips with praise. Events are recorded here not in historical but in moral order; that is, incidents, separated from each other in point of time, are grouped together that we may learn therefrom the lessons that the Holy Spirit would seek to teach us. Following the touching account of His death comes the story of His resurrection; His appearing to His own; His memorable journey with the two going to Emmaus; and, lastly, the lovely scene at Bethany when, while

in the act of blessing His disciples, "He was parted from them, and carried up into Heaven" (24. 51). Was that the end? Oh no! Had that been the end it would have looked like defeat and that could not be. There is no such thing as defeat with our adorable Lord.

How do we know this? Because of what follows. Those whom He had led out, and from whom He was parted, "worshipped Him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy: and were continually in the temple, praising and blessing God" (verses 52, 53). For the first time, a company upon earth worshipped a *Man* in Heaven, who is nevertheless over all God, blessed for ever, and that has continued till this day. They proceeded after having received the Holy Spirit, to preach in His Name repentance and remission of sins, (verse 47), and that testimony still goes on. So that at the end of the Gospel according to Luke we write :

TO BE CONTINUED.

We pass to THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES, and there we have, from the same inspired pen, the continuation of the narrative. Not now do we listen to the gracious words that proceeded out of the Lord's mouth, nor do we witness directly His acts of power. We give ear to the words of Spirit-filled men, and we observe the acts of the Holy Spirit through them.

Consequent upon Christ's ascension to glory, the Holy Spirit had come down, had taken possession of those few humble folk, and the world was to be mightily moved as they bore witness to the resurrection, the ascension, and the Lordship of Jesus, whom men had taken, and

with wicked hands had crucified and slain. Now we are to see the fierce opposition of the enemy on the one hand, and the irresistible and all-conquering power of God on the other hand. Let us see how it worked. The apostles were persecuted; Stephen, the first man on earth to see the glorified Man in the glory of God, was stoned to death, and thus a tremendous effort was made to crush the testimony.

The opposition increased; the disciples were scattered and so was the good seed of the Word of God. Philip went down to Samaria, and *from there he was sent to Gaza*. Thus witness was borne "both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria" and was carried, we doubt not by the Eunuch, "to the uttermost part of the earth" (Acts 1. 8).

Then Saul of Tarsus went forth on his murderous expedition, determined to blot out the Name of Jesus and to exterminate those who dared to confess it. Suddenly smitten by a light from heaven, arrested by a voice from heaven, transformed by the vision of a Man in heaven, he was convicted, converted, consecrated (Acts 9). Thenceforth his business was to preach the faith which he once destroyed (Galatians 1. 23); and "Then had the churches rest throughout all Judaea and Galilee and Samaria, and were edified, and walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, were multiplied" (Acts 9. 31). If Peter was "witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed" (1 Peter 5. 1); Saul, "who is also called Paul," was a witness of the glory of Christ, and a partaker of His sufferings. Not, of course, His atoning suffer-

ings, but he was to learn and experience "how great things he must suffer," said Christ, "for My Name's sake" (Acts 9. 16). He was a chosen vessel to proclaim the glad tidings, and to receive and communicate the great revelation of the Mystery. The remainder of THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES is taken up almost entirely with the service of this honoured servant of Christ, his work and his suffering, till at the close we find him taken as a prisoner to Rome, and the record ends with him dwelling two whole years in his own hired house, etc. (Acts 28. 30, 31). This is obviously an unfinished finish to this noble book, so once again we must write :

TO BE CONTINUED.

Now however we may naturally inquire—HOW? The Word of God has been completed (Colossians 1. 25 New Trans.). We are in possession of the full revelation of the heart, the plan, the Mystery of God; the secrets of His mind have been disclosed; what then is to be continued? The Holy Spirit is now writing C=H=R=I=S=T in the heart and life of believers; hence they, we, are spoken of as "The Epistle of Christ . . . written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God" (2 Corinthians 3. 3).. Just as the Apostle could tell the Corinthian believers in the preceding verse, Ye are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read of all men, so are we the Epistle of Christ. We read the Epistles in the New Testament, "written with ink," the world reads "the Epistle of Christ" as they read us, shall we ask ourselves—DO THEY?

Let us see then. We have the Gospels in which we have the marvellous record of the life of Christ

as a man upon earth. In the Acts of the Apostles we have the account of His ascension to Heaven, and telling of His place at the right hand of God; also the descent to earth of the Holy Spirit, and His taking up His abode in the House of God and in the bodies of those who compose that House. Then we see how the story of the Gospels were continued as the Holy Spirit worked to reproduce the life of Christ in the lives of the Apostles and disciples. In the Epistles we are instructed by the Holy Spirit in "the deep things of God" (1 Corinthians 2. 10). We learn that everything has been established for us in Christ where He now is in the glory of God, and is to be made good in us by the Holy Spirit down here upon earth. All this in order that the features of Christ may be seen now in those who belong to Him, and that this wonderful story may be continued.

Let us consider this still further. Right down through the ages when things were bright and when they were dark; when the lamp of God burned clearly and when its light was flickering; when a multitude followed the Lord and when only a few seemed prepared for it, there have been those in and by whom Christ was expressed.

In this year of grace, nineteen hundred and thirty-five, just on the eve of the Lord's return, the Holy Spirit is still writing, the story is being continued, and there are those, not a few thank God, in whose lives we delight to read CHRIST.

The story is

TO BE CONCLUDED.

It may be to-day we shall reach a full stop so far as individual service and the testimony of the Church

as a responsible witness for Christ, are concerned. When the story has been concluded and the Church is with Christ in glory, what a story it will be! Shall we not then see how perfectly God was revealed in Christ when He was here; and how the excellencies of Christ were manifested by His saints from the ad-

vent of the Holy Spirit till their translation to the Father's House? Shall we pray that the Holy Spirit may be free to write CHRIST large on our heart and upon our life until the day of privilege and opportunity over, we reach

THE END.

"WE MUST OBEY GOD RATHER THAN MAN.

Numbers 3.

IT was this that enabled the Gershonite, in the wilderness to look after those rough, unattractive-looking "badger-skins," and that enabled the Merarite to look after these, apparently, insignificant "pins." Yes, and it is this which will enable the Christian, now, to address himself to that special line of service to which his Lord may see fit to call him. What, though to human eyes, it seems rough and unattractive, mean and insignificant: it is enough for us that our Lord has assigned to us our post, and given us our work; and that our work has direct reference to the Person and glory of Him who is the chiefest among ten thousand, and altogether lovely. We, too, may have to confine ourselves to the antitype of the rough unsightly badger skins; or the insignificant pin. But let us remember that whatever has reference to Christ—His Name—His Person—His Cause, in the world, is unspeakably precious to God. It may be very small in man's account; but what of that? We must look at things from God's point of view, we must measure them by His standard, and that is Christ. God measures everything by Christ.

Whatever has even the very smallest reference to Christ is interesting and

important in God's account. Whereas the most splendid undertakings, the most gigantic schemes, the most astonishing enterprises of the men of this world, all pass away like the morning cloud and the early dew. Man makes *self* his centre, his object, his standard. He values things according to the measure in which they exalt himself and further his interests. Even religion itself, so-called, is taken up in the same way, and made a pedestal on which to display himself. Everything, in short, is worked up as capital for self, and used as a reflector to throw light upon, and call attention to, that one object. Thus there is a mighty gulf between God's thoughts and man's thoughts; and the shores of that gulf are as far apart as *Christ* and *self*. All that belongs to Christ is of eternal interest and moment. All that belongs to self shall pass away and be forgotten. Hence, therefore, the most fatal mistake into which any man can fall is to make *self* his object. It must issue in everlasting disappointment. But on the other hand, the very wisest, safest, best thing that any man can do is to make Christ his one absorbing object. This must infallibly issue in everlasting blessedness and glory.

THE HOUSE OF THE LORD.

F. B. Hole.

(Psalms 23-29).

THE opening chapters of Genesis disclose to us the fact that God not only created man with a capacity for holding intelligent intercourse with Himself, but also actually desired and sought his company. Directly sin entered, this happy intercourse was broken up, and Adam and Eve hid themselves from the presence of the Lord when He walked in the garden in the cool of the day. Mankind soon lost any desire for the company of God. God has never deviated from His desire for the company of men, and He purposes ultimately to secure it.

Moreover God never left Himself without witnesses in the shape of those who did desire His company. In the age of the patriarchs, whether before or after the flood there were those who walked with Him; such as Enoch, and such as Abraham, who was called the friend of God. These however were but individuals; 'it was when He called Israel as a people out of Egypt, and brought in a national redemption from Egypt that His purpose to dwell amongst men comes clearly to light. The oft repeated word to Pharaoh was, "Let My people go that they may serve Me." And, directly they began to sing on the eastern shore of the Red Sea, they said, "He is my God, and I will prepare Him an habitation." If no one else did, Moses at least seized the Divine thought to dwell in the midst of His redeemed people.

This purpose of God comes fully to light in the New Testament, but it also appears at intervals in the Old Testament, both in history and in prophecy, and notably so when the great redeeming sacrifice of Christ has come into view prophetically.

The great Messianic prophecy of the later part of Isaiah is a case in point. Chapter 53 predicts the atoning work of Christ: chapter 54, the consequent blessing of Israel: chapter 55, grace flowing out to the Gentiles: chapter 56, the house of Jehovah established and becoming the available centre where all who fear His Name shall be gathered in a place of nearness—His house "an house of prayer for all people."

The only other Old Testament scripture which equals Isaiah 53, in its clear and full prediction of the atoning sufferings of Christ, is Psalm 22; and here again this feature comes into view. With one exception each Psalm from 23 to 29 inclusive has some reference to the house of God. Different features connected with that house are stated, and we may now briefly consider them.

In the opening verses of Psalm 22 Jehovah is addressed as, "Thou that inhabitest [or, dwellest amid] the praises of Israel." In order that Jehovah might eternally dwell amid His people—and they be a praising people, so that He dwells amid their praises—the blessed Saviour suffered and died. The latter part of the Psalm shows prophetically how fully this purpose is going to be realized in the days to come: how that, beginning with the godly remnant of Israel, who became the nucleus of the church, and widening out to a restored Israel and gathered Gentiles, and even generations yet unborn when the Millennial Age begins; praise and worship shall rise, and He shall indeed dwell amid the praises of His saints. The house of the Lord is not actually mentioned, but one of the great purposes that is to be attained as the fruit of

God dwelling among men is very manifest. The house in which He shall dwell shall be filled with praises; each family whether heavenly or earthly (see Eph. 5. 15) having its own distinctive note.

The house is however named very distinctly in Psalm 23, when we come to the last verse. The primary thought of the house is that it is the place where *God dwells* amid the praises of His people; but it is none the less true that it is also the place where *saints will dwell*, and dwell for ever. The Psalm celebrates the activities of Jehovah as Shepherd. We very rightly refer it to the Lord Jesus in His risen activities, for He is Jehovah. But it not only speaks of His activities on our behalf; it speaks also of *His abiding with us*, both in the presence of our enemies and in the valley of the shadow of death, and ultimately of *our abiding with Him* in His own house.

The last two words of the Psalm, "for ever," stand in contrast with the words, "all the days of my life." This shows, we judge, that in the mind of David this dwelling in the house of the Lord was something beyond any drawing near to God in connection with earthly dwelling-places, even millennial ones. His faith looked on to something akin to that which Abraham saw when "he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God" (Heb. 11. 10). The patriarchs desired an heavenly *country*, and looked for the *city* that God would build: David had his expectation centred on something more intimate still, for to dwell in the *house* of the Lord bespeaks a nearer intimacy.

We share this happy expectation with David, and neither he nor we shall be disappointed. In the New

Testament the expectation becomes enlarged and clarified. We have the Lord's parting words, "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." The temple in Jerusalem, with its many chambers and abodes, had been a pattern or type of the real dwelling-place of God. If the reality had not been according to the type, the Lord would have told His disciples as to the difference. The type however had been accurate. The house that Solomon built had been surrounded with chambers, so that when God granted His presence in the most holy place He dwelt there surrounded by those who were put into priestly relation with Himself. Thus it is going to be in the true house of the Lord which shall fill eternity. In that house David shall find his place. In that same house a place has been reserved for us, who are called to follow the Lord during this time of His rejection and absence from this world.

In that house we shall dwell. The passing and the evanescent will have given place to the abiding and the eternal. David evidently realised this. What he did not know was that we shall dwell in that house of Jehovah in company with the Son of God. We shall reach it by His coming again to receive us unto Himself; and His own words are, "that where I am, there ye may be also." So we have before us not merely a place, but a well-known and well-loved Person filling the place. This it is that makes the house of the Lord a *home* to us, so that the thought of dwelling in it for ever becomes a delight.

In Psalm 24 the house of the Lord again comes before us, spoken of as, "His holy place." The *holiness*

of the house is clearly the point here, for that becomes His house for ever; and constitutes a challenge to everyone who would draw near. "Who shall stand in His holy place?"

The demand which this challenge makes is very sweeping. Hands, hearts, soul and mouth are all brought under review, and perfection of holiness is required. Of all the myriads who have trodden the earth only One has ever manifested holiness such as this. There has been this One, and as a consequence He enjoys what we may call, the freedom of the house. Its doors are flung wide open before Him, and He has full liberty of entrance. Not only does He enter, He enters in a blaze of glory, and as the leader of hosts who are associated with Him.

So, after all, there *are* to be others who answer the challenge and finally stand in His holy place. There is to be this "generation of them that seek Him," (verse 6) who also are characterized by holiness. They have *become* that which He ever *was* in intrinsic perfection. Their clean hands and pure heart are the result of a work of God, both for them and in them.

So if Psalm 23 gives the saints the confident expectation, "I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever," Psalm 24 indicates that "the generation of them that seek Him" will be so established in holiness as to be altogether suitable to that "holy place." They will enter as hosts identified with the King of glory, who has a perfect and absolute title to the abode of Jehovah's holiness, both on account of what He is and of what He has done. Since it is going to be thus with us in the day

of manifested glory which is approaching, let us see to it that we are characterized by holiness now. "Without holiness no man shall see the Lord," is a saying capable of a double application; a present as well as a future. We may be perfectly clear in our doctrine: we may stoutly maintain the priesthood of all believers: yet if we do not pursue holiness we shall be lamentably poor and weak in drawing near to God, and in the exercise of our priestly functions.

Psalm 25 makes no allusion to the house of God. It concerns itself rather with the varied features of godliness in the saint which qualify him for having to do with God. "Shew me Thy ways, O Lord; teach me Thy paths," is the prayer; and the condition in the saint which enables him to discern the Lord's way is described in the verses that follow. He must be marked by meekness (verse 9), obedience (verse 10), absence of guile (verse 11), the fear of the Lord (verses 12 and 14), a spirit of continual dependence on the Lord (verse 15). If characterized by these things the house of God will be to him a centre of attraction.

The attractiveness of God's dwelling-place comes before us in Psalm 26, where again the house is referred to. It is spoken of as "the habitation of Thy house," which seems to lay stress upon the fact of its being Jehovah's dwelling in the midst of Israel. It is also "the place where Thine honour [or, Thy glory] dwelleth." Glory is the outshining of excellence. When the saints are glorified it will be the outshining of an excellence which has been conferred upon them. With God it is the outshining of intrinsic excellence. All creation declares His glory, save such parts of it as have

been invaded by sin; yet there is a spot where His glory is concentrated. That spot is His house.

How significant a fact is this. With most of us our glory—such as it is—does not dwell where we dwell. Our glory lies far afield in places where we only visit, and where consequently the things that would tarnish our glory are hardly noticed. At home our blemishes become painfully manifest. With God the very opposite is the case. The nearer one is to Him the more His glory is perceived, for it dwells where He dwells. David had a spiritual understanding of this, and hence the house became an object of his affections. He loved it. And surely so do we.

In David's case this was the more remarkable inasmuch as there was no proper house of God in Jerusalem in his days. The altar of burnt offering was in the high place that was at Gibeon, whilst the ark was at Jerusalem in a tent which he had specially pitched for it after bringing it up from Kirjath-jearim. Had he been swayed by considerations of a materialistic or ceremonial or ritualistic order, he would never even have discerned the house of God in the lowly tent that covered the ark of the covenant. He was swayed by faith: and faith discerned the presence of God. He was swayed by love: and love delighted itself in the One whose presence he discerned. He proved that he loved the Divine habitation by the immense provision he made for the building of the house by his son, though he himself was not to have the glory of erecting it, nor even to see it.

No material house of God have we to-day; not even a simple tent such as David had. There is the

Father's house on high in which our place is prepared, and into which we shall enter when the Lord Jesus comes. The only house which God has on earth to-day is composed of the saints, who are "builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit" (Eph. 2. 22); and so we read of "the house of God, which is the church of the living God" (1 Tim. 2. 15).

To-day, then, the true church of God is the house of God. There His Name is set: there His Spirit is: there His glory dwells, in so far as it is found at present upon earth. Do we love it, as David loved the habitation of His house in his day? Do we love the church of God? Are we able in any degree to see it as God sees it? We may love certain individual saints who happen to accord with our own thoughts. We may be loyal to those who are attached to the community where our own attachment lies. But that love and loyalty may count for very little before God. Do we love saints as *saints*, just because they are members of Christ, because they have been "built up a spiritual house." That is the thing that counts. The Apostle Paul is a pattern to us in this, for he said, "I endure all things for the elect's sakes, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory" (2 Tim. 2. 10).

David's affection for the house of God is revealed yet further in Psalm 27. It was the one object of his present desire. He had full confidence that he would dwell in the house of the Lord *for ever*, as Psalm 23 shows. Now we find that in keeping with this his present desire was to dwell in God's house *all the days of his life*, inasmuch as His beauty is beheld there, and in

His temple enquiry can be made of Him.

“Beauty” in this verse apparently has the sense of *pleasantness* or *graciousness*. If 1 Chronicles 17 be read, we may see how the graciousness of the Lord was made known to David, and how he “came and sat before the Lord.” The verse in Psalm 27 seems to be reminiscent of that. On several occasions too we read of David inquiring of the Lord, and he knew that His temple was the special place for that. To withdraw from the noise and distraction of the world into the quiet of the Divine presence is the way in which the mind of God may be known and His graciousness be realized.

A somewhat similar thought marks the allusion to the house of God that we find in Psalm 28; where David speaks of, “the voice of my supplications . . . when I lift up my hands toward Thy holy oracle.” An “oracle” is of course a speaking place, and it is a term applied both in Kings and in Chronicles to the innermost sanctuary of the temple. Owing to the failure that supervened so soon after the temple was built, it may be that God hardly ever, if at all, spoke from His holy oracle in Jerusalem; yet that was the Divine intention. The intention was only realized in full when the Lord Jesus appeared; for He could speak of the temple of His body, and in Him was found not only the speaking place, but the Spokesman. All that God has to say to us is in and through Him. This particular thought in connection with the house is realized not in the church, but rather in Him who is the church’s Head. In the New Testament, as has so often been pointed out, the church does not teach but is taught.

It is “Paul, an Apostle of Jesus Christ . . . unto the church,” whether at Corinth or elsewhere. Paul was the human teacher, but all his authority was derived from Jesus Christ, who is the Spokesman of the Godhead; and the church was taught.

Psalm 29 is the last of this series speaking of the house, and again it is the temple that comes before us: the place where God sits, abidingly enthroned in His glory. The whole Psalm celebrates His majesty and calls for the ascription of glory to Him. In the poetic imagery of the Psalm, Jehovah is seen sweeping through the land in might which is irresistible. His advent is like a mighty thunderstorm and an earthquake combined. Trees and mountains—symbolic of all the great powers established in the earth—are broken or moved before Him. The centre is His temple, for there “doth everyone speak of His glory”—“in His temple doth everyone say Glory!” (N. Tr.). In His temple there is no discordant note; the praise is universal and for ever.

That of course is the climax. It will come to pass when Jesus is revealed in His majesty and glory at His second advent. Then all who would not say, Glory! will have been removed in judgment.

How happy for us that we anticipate this blessed service before that day dawns. Indeed we *are* the temple of God, for it is written, “Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?” (1 Cor. 3. 16). As in and of that temple we say, Glory! And so it comes to pass that we often sing,

“Glory, glory everlasting,
Be to Him that bore the cross!”

SONSHIP.

James McBroom.

Continued.

We have considered, "the Sonship of our Lord before the ages of Time," and "His incarnation and life on earth;" in this paper His Sonship in resurrection is in view.

3. *The Son of God in resurrection.*

Resurrection may be spoken of as a great key truth of the New Testament. It is closely linked with the truth of the Lord's Person. He is marked out Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by resurrection from the dead (Rom. 1. 4). This passage calls for careful consideration. God's gospel is concerning His Son, it unfolds the fulness of His unique Person, the Son become Man. Next, the Scripture opens out to show both the Divine and human in Him. Come of David's seed shews His humanity, marked out Son of God with power according to the Spirit of holiness, His Divinity. The first statement is to shew who He is, the next two statements declare the Divine and the human in Him. We cannot understand the working out of the ways of God in the whole mediatorial order apart from this; every official position He fills hangs upon it. In abstract Godhead He creates but becoming Man he redeems, then follows His place as Reconciler, Head of the body, the church, and Head of all principalities and powers (Col. 1. 13=14=16=18, 20=21). The Son of God the risen Man builds His Assembly (Matt. 16=18), and is supreme in administrative authority in the House of God (Heb. 3. 6). Lordship, Headship, Priesthood, everything right down to the execution of all judgment are His. It is because the Son has become the Son of Man that all judgment is committed unto Him (John 5. 22, 27).

There are certain operations of our risen Lord where Godhead is prominent and others where we see plainly demonstrated that He is true Man. This calls for careful attention. As revealer He acts on the part of God manward: only a Divine Person could do this. On the side of our approach, He is on man's part Godward, the risen glorified Man.

These two great thoughts might be followed out with profit, as shewing the characteristic difference between certain New Testament Epistles. The one to the Colossians shines with the glory of God the Son, while Ephesians unfolds His glory as the risen Man, both thoughts centering in the same blessed Person. In the former it is the Son, in eternal dignity, as Creator, going on to give all the weight of what He is to the work of the cross, and as the Head of the body, linking up the church with Himself in the vast scheme of reconciliation (Col. 1. 16=20). In the latter it is the one Man under whom God has put all things in heaven and earth: the same, Who, having descended, has now ascended far up above all heavens, that He might fill all things. In Colossians the Creator Son is Redeemer, the latter bringing in His Manhood. In Ephesians the glorious Man fills all things, which brings in His Godhead.

This beautiful combination is seen from another point of view in the Epistle to the Hebrews. May we

follow with deep adoration, apart from all thought of speculation, dissecting, or prying into the unrevealed. There the heavenly calling is set forth as including a new Priest (chapter 5), a new inheritance (chapter 6), a new law (chapter 7), a new covenant (chapter 8), a new Sanctuary (chapter 9), and a new company of worshippers (chapter 10), but before these things are mentioned all is introduced by the Godhead and Manhood of our Lord Jesus Christ. In chapter 1, the Son Who created has made purgation for sins, for this He had to take flesh and blood (chapter 2. 14). This brought Him down past angels, but now, having accomplished His mission, He is seen in the centre of the glory, having carried Manhood, in Himself, to the right hand of God.

It will thus be seen that apart from the union in our Lord of the Divine and human we could have nothing. No Atonement, and hence no salvation; no Saviour for sinners, and hence no escape from the eternal consequences of our sins and sinful condition. By His becoming Man, God and Man are brought together in one glorious Personality—not transformation but Incarnation which is the crowning miracle of eternity. By it, the eternal Son came into time in view of going down into death itself, thus becoming in Himself the fulfiller of every promise, type, shadow and prophecy, that came out in the ways of God in the Old Testament, and going beyond everything to the accomplishment of the counsels of eternity.

To continue.

Be Christ our true centre, the Holy Ghost our Guide;
 "Love in the truth" be flowing to saints on every side;
 One hope our hearts possessing—our coming Lord to see;
 Thus shall we dwell as brethren, in holy unity.

Thou art *my* life, my everlasting stay
 And canst Thou fail when heart and flesh give way?
 Not only peace, but victory Thou dost give
 To all who simply on Thy Name believe.
 No more the king of terrors—death shall be
 A servant to conduct my soul to Thee.

Lord, Thou art mine! and nought of earthly things—
 Not all the charms of pleasure, wealth or power,
 The fame of heroes, or the pomp of kings—
 Could tempt me to forego Thy love one hour.
 Go, worthless world, I say, with all that's thine,
 For I my Saviour's am, and He is mine.

NOTES ON JONATHAN.

J. Houston.

JONATHAN is one of those Old Testament characters that draws out our admiration and sorrow. We cannot help admiring him when we see the great faith he demonstrated in a day when everything was against him. Nor can we help being drawn to him when we see the great love he had for David. On the other hand, we feel great sorrow for him when we see the fatal choice he made in taking the inside place with Saul, instead of the outside place with David. All this is intensely and solemnly instructive to us, and deserves our close study. And since we are exhorted to prove all things, and hold fast to that which is good, we can well imitate him in his faith and love, while we should earnestly avoid that path he chose, being identified with Saul, the enemy of David, and his kingdom. In this way, we shall benefit by the good he has to teach us, at the same time, shun the evil into which he fell, and the inglorious end he met, when he was slain by the Philistines on the heights of Gilboa.

The circumstances under which he was placed, when his faith shone out with uncommon brilliancy, are worthy of notice (1 Samuel 14). When we see how he was situated, we shall all the more readily appreciate his noble action, to defend the honour of Jehovah's name, and deliver His afflicted people.

The history of the Judges had drawn to a close. Israel added this evil to all their sins, in that they desired a king to rule over them, thus rejecting Jehovah as their King and Ruler. And though Samuel solemnly warned them what manner

of king they would have, and the heavy taxes he would levy, they were obstinate and said, "Nay; but we will have a king over us; that we may be like all the nations; and that our king may judge us, and go out before us, and fight our battles" (1 Sam. 8. 19-20). So the Lord granted them their request.

But the king of their choice, when submitted to the test of obedience, failed, and God rejected him, and gave the kingdom to one who was better than he. Still Saul retained the outward semblance of rule, and persecuted the true anointed of Jehovah. So the position was this: the rejected king retained the throne, and the anointed king of Jehovah's appointment was driven outside the kingdom, and hunted like "a partridge on the mountains." Now it was clear Jonathan could have no kingdom from his father. His hereditary claim, as heir to the throne, was worthless, since there was no throne to heir. He could expect nothing from his father; his only hope was with David. Full well he knew this, as may be seen from his own words to David, "Thou shalt be king over Israel, and I shall be next unto thee."

So long as it pleased God to allow Saul to retain the throne, and suffer David to go in the outside place of rejection, the former held the army, the priest wearing the ephod, and the official recognition of ruler. This signified nothing, since God had rejected him as king, and had withdrawn from him. Naturally, the only authority to reign was from God. When this authority ceased to exist, as was the case with Saul,

neither king, nor army, nor priest, had any significance whatever.

At a time when Jonathan distinguished himself as a man of God, his father had an army of about six hundred men, all unarmed. "There was neither sword nor spear found in the hand of any of the people that were with Saul and Jonathan." We may observe this was a very useless army. Saul's sword was more an ornament of regalia, than an effectual weapon of offence, since he had no valour to use it. There was but one sword left, that of Jonathan; on it depended the victory. As for the priest wearing the ephod, nothing need be said beyond the fact that Saul did not benefit by him, any more than he did by his army of unarmed men. He was entirely in the dark as to God's purpose of deliverance for His people. To add to the irony of the picture, king, army and priest retired to the uttermost part of Gibeah, under the cool shade of a pomegranate tree, far removed from the danger of combat. This ignominious spectacle presented itself to Jonathan, when he determined to remove the reproach from Jehovah's name, and deliver His suffering people from the heel of their oppressors. We cannot help noticing that Jonathan was placed in circumstances of a very trying nature. In man there was no help; his help must be in God.

But great men are often raised up at the time of a great crisis. In the case of Jonathan it was so. He stood forth at the critical moment. The enemy had to be faced, and there was no one who would do it. His faith was equal to the occasion, and he determined to go forth in

the name of the Lord of hosts. And it is well to observe, he did not count on the army for any help; nor did he disclose his purpose to Saul; nor did he consult the priest wearing the ephod. He seemed to consider the whole thing as a negative quality; a useless, good-for-nothing *show* of power without an atom of *reality*. If there had been but *one real man* there, we feel certain he would never have left him in ignorance as to his purpose, but would assuredly have sought his help in the plan laid down for execution. But he was in God's secret, and as God's man he stepped into action, and "conferred not with flesh and blood."

He overcame the difficulties of the way in a spirit of dependence, as indicated by the fact he "climbed up upon his hands and upon his feet." And when he reached the enemy's camp, he saw nothing formidable in the host; nay, he could speak of them with righteous contempt, calling them "these uncircumcised," a name of reproach which spoke of their alienation from God, as God's enemies. Numbers signified nothing in faith's computation, "for there is no restraint to the Lord to save by many or by few." So he utterly routed the enemy, vindicated the honour of Jehovah's name, wrought great deliverance for His oppressed people, and that in single-handed combat!

What effect this victory would have upon the son of Jesse, we are unable to say. It is very probable that he would hear about it, and that it would call forth his admiration for Jonathan. At all events, when the shepherd lad returned from the slaughter of Goliath, Jonathan

was filled with admiration for him, and a mutual love sprang up between them, which bound them together in a bond of friendship that has become proverbial. Both were great men, who had distinguished themselves for their extraordinary faith. And in proof of the fact that tender and mutual love is not effeminate, these great men were as warm and sincere in their love for one another, as they had been valiant in their faith to achieve the highest honour amongst their fellowmen.

The extent to which Jonathan's love for David went may be seen in the surrender he made. He "stripped himself of the robe that was upon him, and gave it to David, and his garments, even to his sword, and to his bow, and to his girdle." His princely robe, and royal garments, bore with them the honour of the noblest in the land. His sword, bow and girdle, were the armour of a great and distinguished warrior. To lay all this at the feet of David was a token of unfeigned love, a love that surpassed the love of women!

Nor was this love for David spasmodic and changeful. Throughout the whole of his life it remained firm and genuine, as if it were an essential part of himself. Dark days followed the act of this wonderful surrender to David; but we never find him prove unfaithful to David. His faithfulness to him often brought him into serious conflict with his father; but he never changed towards the man he dearly loved. He would speak kindly of him when Saul planned for his hurt; he would seek to turn away his father's unwarranted wrath from him, when evil was surely determined against him, even at the risk of his own life, as

we see from the fact the javelin was thrown at *him* by Saul, as well as at David. In all, and through all, his "soul was knit with the soul of David," and he loved him "as his own soul," even to the day of his death. And it is this that makes it so sad for us to consider another side of his valiant and lovely character, in which we see a weakness and failure that tarnish his testimony and deprive him of the place of highest honour that might have been his in David's kingdom.

The Lord Jesus said to the rich young man who desired to inherit eternal life, that there was one thing he lacked, namely, to sell all that he had, and give to the poor, to abandon the treasures of earth for the treasure of heaven, and to take up his cross and follow Him, the lowly and despised Son of Man. This he failed to do. And so it was with Jonathan, there was one thing he lacked; he could not abandon the court of Saul, relinquish the comforts and amenities of his princely station, to identify himself with the reproach, and share the hardship, of the man whom he truly loved and honoured in the secret of his soul. It was very sad, especially when he assuredly knew that he was God's anointed king to reign over Israel.

If we now candidly inquire, without drawing too freely upon our imagination, into the cause of his failure, we are led to conclude that many and plausible arguments would present themselves to his mind, to sway him over to the side of ease and comfort, away from that of reproach and hardship. Very little is needed to turn the balance in the direction of ease and comfort, since all the inclination of the flesh leans that way. Then to clinch matters,

it is argued, that if God has given one all things richly to enjoy, then it goes without saying they were never intended to be given up. This subtle form of reasoning has swayed many a devoted Christian in the direction of carnal ease and comfort, and the practical denial of the cross he is called upon to bear. We say "practical" denial, for he would never think of making a "verbal" denial. The doctrine he will hold fast; but the practice he fails to conform to. It is in the latter we see so much failure

Then, if more argument is necessary to convince, the following is often employed. One in high station is able to exercise influence on behalf of the cause or person one seeks to represent. Most likely this argument would weigh heavily with Jonathan. He was an intelligent man, and desirous of helping the cause of David. And how could he serve him better, than by holding his princely influence and using it in David's favour? And where could he serve him better, than in the palace, the very centre of power? By retaining his position as prince, he could do far more for David, than those outlaws (such were they esteemed) that followed him to the cave of Adullam. By remaining in the palace, he could effect far more to bring about his kingdom, than if he accompanied him in his haunts amongst the caves and secret places of his exile.

While these and kindred arguments are freely used to convince the saint, that the place of carnal ease and power, is where he should be, faith readily detects one flaw in all this reasoning that exposes it to be false namely, that as Christians we are called, not to act first of all

for Christ, but to be *with* Him. Where He is, there shall His servant be also. Moses, whose position was akin to that of Jonathan, chose "rather to suffer affliction *with* the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompense of the reward." Moses acted by faith, and came *out*; Jonathan acted by sight, and remained *in*. And in doing this he signally failed.

It remains to be noted, that the reward for faithfulness could not be given to Jonathan. He did not realize his ambition, namely, to be next to David in his kingdom. If by unbelief he denied the cross, then by righteousness he must be denied the crown. Thus it was. He did not sit with David in glory, but fell by the hand of his enemies in ignominy. We feel profoundly sorry that such an outstanding man of God should meet an inglorious end. "How are the mighty fallen in the midst of the battle! O Jonathan, thou wast slain in thine high places. I am distressed for thee, my brother Jonathan . . ." David's lament for him is full of the tenderest feeling and deepest sorrow. The memory of a truly noble man come to an ignoble end!

And what has this to say to us? Simply this: if we will reign with Christ, then we must suffer with Him. We must be outside the camp now, if we will be on the throne with Him then. "If we suffer, we shall also reign with Him: if we deny Him, He will also deny us." And this is not salvation, which is on the principle of grace; it is reward, which is on the principle of righteousness.

DEPTHS AND HEIGHTS. Psalm 77. L. A. Anderson.

BY dividing this psalm into three sections, verses 1-3: 4-9: 10-20; we observe three distinct experiences through which the Psalmist passed. Some christians seem to be so taken up with the experiences as dealt with in the first two sections that they never get any further; with the result that they always live in the depths and never reach the heights of section three. We will look briefly at the psalm.

Section 1. His troubles (v. 1-3). The psalmist does well certainly to cry to God in his troubles, it is a good start, and a good lead for us who so often rely too much on others, instead of God. He found that God listened to his cry. Of course He did. He never yet turned away His ear from a cry of need. It was not just a casual cry for he sought the Lord in his trouble (v. 2).

Even in the night his troubles accompanied him, but see, his soul "refused to be comforted." Here lies the root of many a prolonged sorrow: he cried to the Lord, the Lord heard him, and yet he refused to be comforted. Have we sometimes turned away from the God of all comfort? (2 Cor. 1. 3) and so had to go along alone in our sorrow?—This is a strange and I might say a selfish folly, but it is by no means uncommon. Let us receive and benefit from the comfort so richly given by God in His Word.

He "remembered God" (v. 3). He was not oblivious of God but the thought of God *troubled* him. Then he *complained*, and as a consequence he sank right into the depths—his spirit was *overwhelmed*. He seems to have lost all communion with his God and everything

is dark and dismal. Then he cries Selah!

The word "Selah," I understand may be translated, "Think of that." Think of the folly of it. For let us remember that Asaph was writing after he had come out of the gloomy experience, and he would have those who hear his words to consider his experience and profit by it.

It is worthy of note that the psalmist refers to himself no less than eleven times in the three verses and to God five.

Section 2. Himself (v. 4-10). To be occupied with ourselves and our own experiences is not good for us. It is all very well and proper occasionally to take a retrospect, but to dwell in past results is not a spiritually flattering process. The psalmist gets into such a state that he cannot speak, and inwardly mourns over his troubles and himself. He looks back over the days of long ago and recalls to remembrance his songs in the night. We almost hear him say something like this—"Yes, I was happy, *then!* those days were very different: I can think of the years long since gone and what times they were!" How like him we are. Have you not often heard the complaint? "The presence of the Lord in our midst was more real and His Spirit seemed more powerful in other days, things have degenerated and altered; they are not the same as they once were." This may all be true but we shall *never* improve matters by brooding on these lines. Let us see if we cannot make things better by being ourselves more true to God's purposes and more in communion with Him. I know of no

other way. God does not change even if we do.

Then the psalmist goes on to say there were times when on waking in the night his soul burst into songs of rejoicing and thanksgiving (v. 6), but that is all finished and gone now—The Lord will be favourable no more. His mercy is clean gone, and His promise fails. Was that true? *Had God forgotten?* And what of us? *Are we* no longer the recipients of His tender mercies? Have we ever got into such a low state as here described? No wonder that Asaph calls upon us to “think of that.” Was it possible that a child of God could ever think of Him like that?

In this section the writer refers to himself nine times and to God eight times. Self is still uppermost, but he is getting to the bottom, and then it is that he turns to God.

Section 3. God (v. 10-20). From this point onwards the psalmist begins to look in another direction. He first realizes that all this dwelling in the past is but a sign of great

weakness (v. 10). Instead of thinking of his own past experiences or the years long gone, he says, “I will remember the years of the right hand of the most High.” I will *remember* the work of the Lord; surely I will remember *Thy wonders of old*” (v. 11).

So he goes on in verse after verse referring to himself but six times (and never once after v. 12), and to God sixteen times in this last section. He ponders and thinks over all that *God has done*, so much so that before he has finished his meditation he breaks forth at the end of verse 15 with his Selah—“Think of that.” It is indeed well for us if we do likewise. The gloom has entirely vanished in the sunshine of what God is and what He has done, and the psalmist rises to the heights.

May we not learn a lesson from all this, or is this portion of the Holy Scripture to be lost to us?

Help us, O Lord, always to look to Thee and *ever* remember Thee, Thou art the Omnipotent One, so that we may never despair of Thy love and Thy goodness. Amen.

“Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my thoughts: and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting” (Psalm 139).

“I know that the Lord will maintain the cause of the afflicted, and the right of the poor” (Psalm 140).

Saviour and Lord, Thou wilt sustain
Our feeble faith with Thine own might,
Who follows Thee, midst joy and pain
Will find Thy yoke and burden light;
Peace and repose possess the soul,
That walks beneath Thy blest control.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENCE.

Joy at the Supper of the Lord.

A Correspondent in VANCOUVER comments on a paper, "The Supper of our Lord" December 1934 issue. He has concluded that if at the Lord's Supper the sufferings of our Lord are dwelt upon, the result would be gloom and depression, and thinks that the resurrection and ascension to glory ought to be associated with the cross, and that the place to afflict ourselves before God and to meditate upon Gethsemane and the hours of darkness is in our closets prior to going to the Supper and that that occasion should be characterised by cheerfulness and joy.

IN answer we would say that on no occasion should the Christian be more deeply joyful than at the Supper of the Lord. In the paper in question we made a point of pressing, that as the Lord introduced the Supper by giving thanks, so we should be together as a "thanksgiving" company. It is an eucharistic feast, i.e. a thanksgiving feast. We should be together in the spirit expressed by Paul, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in the heavenly places in Christ" Ephesians 1; by Peter, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to His abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead" 1 Peter 1. 3. and by John, "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us that we should be called the children of God" 1 John 3. 1.

When the Lord is introduced in Revelation 1. 5, there is a burst of praise from His blood-bought church, and again when He appears as "a Lamb as it had been slain" in Revelation 5 there breaks forth the new song, "Thou art worthy." So it should be when we come together to meet the Lord and remember Him in His death. We should greet Him with a song of praise.

Further, we most heartily agree with this correspondent that we should bind up the resurrection and ascension with the death of our Lord, and so glory in Him and rejoice in His triumphs. Had He not overcome the power of death and been exalted to heaven, from whence He sent down the Holy Ghost, there would have been no Assembly to come together at all; it is in this glorious character that He is in the midst of "two or three" gathered together unto His Name; (Matthew 18) and it is as the One alive from the dead that He sings in the midst of His assembly (Ps. 22. Hebrews 2). There can be no gloom or depression when we are conscious that this glorious Lord is with us.

Yet the Supper of the Lord is a memorial feast, as well as a feast of thanksgiving, and the contemplation of His death for us, should have a sobering effect upon us. There is no room at the Supper for that superficial lightheartedness—"I feel like singing all the time." On no other occasion are we brought more blessedly face to face with great spiritual realities, and nowhere else can we be led more deeply into the knowledge of that love that many waters could not quench, nor the floods drown. In remembering the Lord in death we should not banish from our minds what caused His death; the holiness of God was

there revealed as well as His love; His judgment was poured out upon our Substitute that His grace might be poured out upon us. It is this that brings us to a right judgment as to ourselves, and gives us a deeper knowledge of Him. Yet it is not our relief from judgment or our blessings that are to occupy us, but His love for us, and what He suffered on our behalf for our blessing and God's glory.

It is our privilege to enter the holiest—the very presence of God, but we must not forget that in the

holiest in the Tabernacle where all was gold, the blood of the sin offering was sprinkled. We may be filled with wonder at the glory, but we must not forget the blood, and this will preserve us from all levity and from that restless spirit that must keep things going.

In secret with the Lord is certainly the place for self-examination, or self-judgment, as is plainly taught in 1 Corinthians 11. 28. It is there that confession should take place and not when assembled together.

The Kingdom of God.

“What exactly did Paul mean by the Kingdom of God in Acts 14. 22? Something present or future? He preached the Kingdom of God at Ephesus, Acts 19. 8 and 20. 25. and again at Rome, Acts 28. 23, 31, but not, as far as we are told elsewhere. Is there anything to be learned from this?”

Do you think the thought of the Kingdom (1 Thess. 2. 12; Romans 14. 17) as a present thing was gradually superseded with the Apostle's mind by the thought of the Kingdom as a heavenly and a future thing as in 2 Timothy 4. 18? ^B—
INVERNESS.

IS it not a fact, as has often been said, that the kingdom of God runs throughout this present period and on to the Millennial glory? Now it is *in mystery*, i.e. it is not displayed in outward power subduing all evil, but it is working in a hidden way in the hearts of men, subduing them to God's will and producing in them God's own character. In the future it will manifest its power in world-wide judgment and in a reign of righteousness; now it shews itself, to those who have hearts to understand, in the reign of grace through righteousness, resulting in “righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Ghost,” in all who receive it” (Romans 14. 1). These are its great moral characteristics, they will be universal in the coming day of glory as all prophecy declares; but whether now in mys-

tery or hereafter in public display it is the same kingdom of God.

As to the texts quoted by our correspondent. We have been helped by a comment on Romans 14. 22, by J. N. Darby in his “Synopsis.” He remarks that we are to *inherit* the Kingdom by much tribulation. This would put the passage alongside Romans 8. 17, “If children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified together,” and 2 Timothy 2. 12, “If we suffer we shall also reign with Him.” The future glory of the Kingdom seems to be in view in the passage.

We should say that the preaching of the Kingdom of God, according to the texts quoted, was Paul's prac-

tice wherever he went; it is involved in the proclamation that Jesus is Lord, for the power, authority and administration of the Kingdom are vested in Him. It may be that emphasis was given to this particular side of the preaching at Rome because it was, and will be again, the centre of world-government, and of the kingdom of darkness over which Satan rules; and we can only suggest that the definite references to it in relation to Ephesus would teach us that the truth of the Assembly which was so fully developed at Ephesus can only be rightly known as the Kingdom of God, is a reality in the soul; just as in Israel David's victorious kingdom had to be established before Solomon could build the temple of God. It should be easily understood that only as we are subject to Christ as Lord and receive of the grace of the Kingdom

of which He is the Administrator that we can enter into the deeper truth of the Assembly which is the body of Christ and the temple of God. (See the Ephesian Epistle).

We do not think that the thought of the Kingdom in its present aspect was superseded in the mind of the Apostle by its heavenly aspect in 2 Timothy, for it seems to us that as a present power it has a large place in that Epistle; but it was natural that as he was about to be martyred his mind should turn very definitely to its heavenly character and glory, and that he should set it in this character before Timothy and before us in view of the fact that, except to faith, it appears to have failed of its present purpose. Faith knows that it has not failed, and looks on to and loves His appearing (chapter 4. 8).

Samson's Riddle.

"My purpose in writing is in reference to Samson's riddle (Judges 14. 14): "out of the eater came forth meat, and out of the strong came forth sweetness' I am sure there is some precious truth hidden in this, and I fail to find anything in the N.T. that will answer to it, except, perhaps the death of Christ which yields sweetness to the Christians. What do you think the eater was, and what can you suggest the sweetness is, can it be put into N.T. language, I have searched over my books and can find no help anywhere from them?"—WALTHAMSTOW.

WE should certainly say that the first answer to Samson's riddle is the blessing that has come through the death of Christ to all who believe. The devil and all the powers of darkness roared against Him at Golgotha, but in His death He gained the victory over them, and out of His death has come meat and sweetness for us; nourishment and joy, life and blessing are ours because He met the foe and overthrew his power and revealed His great love to us in doing it. As Samson with his own hand distributed the honey from the lion's car-

case, so all blessing is now in the hand of our victorious Lord and Saviour, and He delights to dispense it freely and without price to all who come to Him.

But we believe that the riddle has a solution also in the lives of the children of God now. The outstanding instance of it would be Paul's thorn in the flesh and the grace that made him more than a conqueror over it. The messenger of Satan buffeted him and would have eaten up his faith in the Lord's care for him, and destroyed his peace

of mind and heart; but in the strength of his Lord he triumphed over the foe, and what sweetness and meat did the grace of the Lord yield to him, which he would not have known if he had not had the buffeting, and not to him only but to tens of thousands since his day, for the Lord's words to him have been full of sweetness and comfort to the saints of God ever since when assailed by the devil.

It is God's way that good should come out of evil, and that in the furnace of suffering the saints of God should gain a knowledge of the Lord that will be eternally sweet to them.

But we await the full answer to this often perplexing problem. It will most surely be given to us. "I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us" (Romans 8. 18). "Our light affliction which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory" (2 Corinthians 4. 17). We shall feast for ever upon the meat and sweetness that the great efforts of the devil to destroy everything that is of God have yielded. Christ who loves us has triumphed over the devil, and we are more than conquerors through Him.

Must a Christian purge himself from vessels of dishonour (2 Timothy 2. 19-22)?

"Lang, in his very thorough analysis of 2 Tim. 2. 19-22 says, amongst many other things:

"2 Tim. 2. 19-22 is a passage generally urged by some as demanding drastic discipline. They say that a man is thereby commanded to purge himself from vessels unto dishonour if he would be fit for the Master's use....

"Upon this Darby (Synopsis v. 187) comments: 'The Christian cleanses himself personally from every vessel which is not to the Lord's honour'; and so other writers also. No interpretation of scripture is accurate which mars the figure of speech employed. How a man can purge himself from vessels is incomprehensible. Darby himself is clear enough upon this at least, that the individual Christian is alone viewed as acting.

"The critical point is—What is meant —by 'these' in the sentence 'if a man purge himself from these'? 'These vessels' yields no possible sense, but makes the picture absurd. Is not the true antecedent to be found in the words 'wood and earth'? Such baser elements are in every man by natural birth, but by heavenly birth the precious qualities of the divine nature are imparted—the 'gold and silver'.....

"With the rejection of the hopeless incongruity of a person purging himself from vessels the powerful plea it contains for individual purifying of heart and walk is recovered." ("Departure" p. 15).—S. AMERICA.

HOWEVER "incomprehensible" and "without possible sense" and "absurd" and a "hopeless incongruity" it may appear to the author of this paragraph for a man to purge himself from vessel to dishonour, we are going to hold to it, for we believe that it is this that the passage urges, and obedience to it is the way by which a man may be a vessel unto honour, meet

for the Master's use.

"Purge out therefore the old leaven" was said to the church at Corinth when it was possible to do that; but when it is no longer possible and we have reached a condition of things such as is described in 2 Timothy, when the many won't believe sound doctrine, what then? Here is our relief. Let a man purge

himself out from the vessels to dishonour.

The view of this author seems to be that a man can only purge himself from something within himself, but in John 15 the Lord tells us that the Father purges the branches of the vine that they may bring forth more fruit. Is it from something in the branches that they are purged, or from parasites that attach themselves to them, and from unclean conditions and surroundings? The latter surely.

There are scores of passages in the Word that are powerful pleas for the "individual purifying of heart and walk," but here we are instructed as to our associations, we are told the sort of men we must purify ourselves from, and also the kind with whom we may consort. "Let every one that nameth the Name of the Lord depart from iniquity" (verse 19); which surely means that he separates himself from it. Then as to these special vessels, men whose words eat as a canker and are vessels to dishonour because they dishonour Christ by calling in question the truth as to His Person—His holy birth and life, His atoning death and blood, and His bodily resurrection,—and yet retain the name of Christian. What of these? We accept fully Darby's translation of the passage, "If therefore one shall have purified himself from these in separating himself from them, he shall be a vessel to honour, sanctified, serviceable to the Master, prepared for every good work." Of course it is individual, but it is imperative, and apart from it a man cannot have His Lord's

approval, and every sensibility in a heart that is faithful to Christ calls for it.

The purging of oneself from these evil vessels is the responsibility of everyone who would be faithful to the Lord, but it leads to fellowship with others in the truth, and there follows a description of those with whom one must follow righteousness, faith, charity and peace; they are "them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart" (verse 22). Do the vessels to dishonour who deny the truth of the Lord and bring in "damnable heresies" call upon Him out of a pure heart and follow righteousness, faith, charity and peace? They do not. Then with them we are not to walk or we shall be guilty of sanctioning and supporting their pernicious ways (2 Peter 2. 12). We do not see how the author of "Departure" can make the words "wood and earth" the true antecedent to the purging, for the subject is not wood and earth, but "VESSELS of wood and earth . . . to dishonour.

"A powerful plea for individual purifying of heart and walk," is not wanting in the passage, it is found in the words, "Flee also youthful lusts," but we have also this powerful plea for separation from those who are enemies of the truth, and who "overthrow the faith of some" (verse 18). Let us not be misled as to it. "Evil communications corrupt good manners."

We commend the whole passage to the earnest and prayerful consideration of all who name the Name of the Lord.

"Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity" (Psalm 133).

REVELATION, EXPERIENCE, PRACTICE. J. T. Mawson.

IT is my purpose to address my younger brethren and sisters in Christ in view of the rapidly rising apostasy in Christendom. I know that I shall be looked upon as a pessimist when I say that evil omens are crowding around us. Not long ago, in conversation with a Christian man whom I met on a railway journey, I quoted 2 Timothy 3. 13, "Evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived." He answered, "I know what you are," and he proceeded to describe certain brethren, who, he thought, stood in the way of their own usefulness because they expected no improvement in world conditions. Well I will quote from two men, whose warning words appeared in the same issue of a leading morning newspaper, to whom my friend's charge against such as myself could not possibly apply. The first quotation is from a speech by Mr. Stanley Baldwin, at a great political gathering.

"I little thought, as you could have little thought in those days before the War," said Mr. Baldwin, "that we should live to see ministers of the gospel—and I use that word in its widest sense—suffering for their belief, in countries that we believed to be civilised.

"I wish to say no more about that, but I do not want you to lose sight of certain anti-Christian movements in Europe at the present moment, but to resolve firmly, in this country at least, there shall not be one inch of ground that shall ever be ceded to those who fight a battle against whatever we may mean by religion."

The second is from the pen of the Bishop of Durham. He writes :

"We in England have hitherto enjoyed comparative immunity from the dangers and conflicts which have befallen our fellow-believers on the Continent. But many facts indicate that our insularity is passing away, that we can no longer stand outside the prevailing tides of thought and practice, and that we may have before long to pass under the same cloud as that which enwraps the Christians of Russia and Germany.

"If it should fall out with us also that the State became hostile to the Church, and invested British citizenship with an anti-Christian character, how should we who profess and call ourselves Christians behave? The materials for conflict are quite plainly accumulating as secularism dominates our public life. Certain it is that Christians can never give to the State an unconditioned obedience. There is "another King, one Jesus," whose claims must be first satisfied.

"If I mistake not, the 'Signs of the Times' suggest that the time draws near when we also shall be put to the test. As I reflect on the state of Christendom as a whole, and observe how the tendency to repudiate the Christian tradition seems to be gathering strength, and the agencies of religion steadily decline, I find it increasingly difficult to indulge the mood of complacent optimism which is reflected in our official and semi-official publications. I think the outlook in Church and State far graver than is generally realised."

Such utterances coming simultaneously from men eminent in their own circles are arresting and impressive, but I venture to say that the danger is more menacing than they indicate. The movements in

Europe that they deplore are not only antichristian, they are anti-God, and most definitely pagan. Of course, whoever is against Christ is against God. "Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist that denieth the Father and the Son. Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father" (1 John 2. 22, 23). But hatred of God and His supremacy seems to be the driving force behind these movements. It is "the mystery of iniquity," no longer working out of sight to undermine in men's souls the fear of God, but coming into the open with the avowed determination of completely eliminating God from human life and affairs.

We may feel that things are not likely to develop so rapidly and in the same blatant way in this land as on the Continent, and we can hardly imagine the State persecuting Christians for their faith; moreover we know that there is a divine check upon the full development of the apostasy, for "He who now letteth [hindereth] will let [hinder], until He be taken out of the way" (2 Thess. 2. 7). Yet the attack on the Faith is not less real if more subtle.

In a recent issue of a popular weekly Review a well-known writer said, "I suggest that the most ambiguous word in the English language is the word God. There is perhaps no word that means so many different things to different people as the word God. It stands for many differing concepts of what the word taken as a symbol, or for that matter, as a fact, means. No doubt in many cases in the interest of clearness it would be better if another word was used."

He proceeded to give some concepts and definitions of God put

out by leading men in literary, scientific, philosophical and religious circles, and without controversy these are both ambiguous and strange. He is "a creative process," "the Life force," "The great design," "the all embracing personality," "the universal mind," "the First Cause," "the Final Principle," "the completed harmony," etc. etc. Now these masters of learning who express their views of God in these vague terms have a great following among those who wish to be thought intellectual, and their influence is great, for they are the men who are moulding the thoughts of the young men and women by their books and in schools and universities, and the whole force of their influence is to put God at a distance from men, not to deny Him altogether, perhaps, for that would not serve the devil's end in this land, but to rob them of Him, as a supreme Personality, who is interested in every one of us, and whom we may know and love and worship, and to whom every one of us shall give account (Romans 14. 12). Violent persecution would be preferable and far more healthy for Christians than that.

How shall we resist this influence, which is casting its blight over the Christian profession? and stand and contend for the truth upon which the eternal well-being of the souls of men depends? There can be only one answer to that question, we must have a deep and experimental knowledge of God as He has revealed Himself to men. As to this, I quote from another widely read author. He says, "The centre of gravity in religion has shifted in our day from authority to experience." I wish that by authority he had only the decrees of a false church in mind, but the spirit of the age is

to refuse the only true authority, the infallible word of the living God, for if that can be got rid of men may give the rein to their own imaginings and speculations. But apart from the infallible Word of the living God there can be no true experience. We must have experience, but if our experience is to be true and satisfying and not one to be repented of, it must be an experience of the truth. There must be first, the Revelation of God to us if we are to have an experience of God. Apart from the revelation there could be no experience, apart from the experience we might be strictly orthodox yet dead; we might even be fiery Fundamentalists, yet without a pulse of life in our souls towards God. More is needed than an intellectual assent to the revelation, there must be the experience of the revelation, and I would add one other thing in order to describe the complete Christian, we must have a practice that is consistent with the revelation and the experience. Indeed it would be right to say that our practice is the measure of our experience of the revelation. Put these three things together then, the revelation, the experience and the practice. The man who has these three things, will answer well to John's young men, "Ye are strong, and the word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one." Yet to such this word of warning is needed, "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall," for we are not ignorant of Satan's devices.

REVELATION.

For the revelation I might quote such texts as John 3. 16, but we are so familiar with these great sayings that sometimes they lose their force for us. Instead I ask you to con-

sider three remarkable incidents. The Lord stood by the closed grave of Lazarus; it was a great occasion. He was about to manifest His glory as the Son of God by His mastery of death. But before He uttered the commanding word, He lifted up His eyes to heaven and said, "Father, I thank Thee that Thou hast heard Me. And I knew that Thou hearest Me always: but *because of the people which stand by I said it, that they may believe that Thou hast sent Me*" (John 11).

In the following chapter the Lord had reached the great crisis in His life on earth, He who had shewn that He was the Master of death stood face to face with that hour in which He was to submit to its power. It was an hour such as never had been nor would be again. No human words could express all that was involved in that hour for Him and His soul was troubled. Should He ask for deliverance from it? No, He had come from heaven for this very hour and His only prayer was, "Father, glorify Thy Name." And that prayer received an immediate answer from heaven. The Father Himself spoke, "I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again." The multitudes that stood by heard the voice, and the majesty of it compelled them to say, "It thundered or, an angel spake to Him." But "Jesus answered and said, This voice came not because of Me, *but for your sakes*" (John 12).

In 1 Corinthians 14, the apostle Paul instructed the Christians at Corinth how they should behave when they came together in assembly. It was by the direction and inspiration of the Holy Spirit that he did it; and in verses 23-25 we learn that the same Holy Spirit was not indifferent to the "unlearned

and unbeliever" that might come into their gathering, and Paul urges upon them that they should speak the word plainly and in the Spirit's power. The result of this would be that if "*there come in one that believeth not, or one unlearned*, he is convinced of all, he is judged of all; and thus are the secrets of his heart made manifest: and so falling down on his face he will worship God, and report that God is in you of a truth."

Here then it is recorded for us that the Son of God on earth spake to His Father in heaven for the sake of the people that stood by; and the Father in heaven spake to His Son on earth for the sake of the people that stood by; and the Holy Spirit would speak through His chosen vessels in the church, for the sake of the unbeliever and unlearned that stood by. The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit all speaking for the sake of the bystanders, that they might believe and worship. This surely reveals the heart of the Triune God and the interest that Father, Son and Holy Spirit have in men. And if we consider the occasions and the circumstances in which this revelation of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit were given it becomes the more impressive. And how infinite appears the difference between God as thus revealed and the vague and ambiguous definitions of the scientists and philosophers that would rob us of God and His interest in us.

Consider further the people that stood by and for whose sake the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit have spoken. The publicans and the sinners were there, for they always "drew near unto the Lord Jesus to hear Him." Of what use

would it have been to them to have talked to them of "the life force" or "the final principle"? But to tell them of God who knew "all things that ever they did," and yet could "frankly forgive" their "sins which were many," was to tell them good news and to open up the way to a life of righteousness, peace, and joy. And such God was, as revealed in Jesus, and for the sake of such as these, the Father spake to the Son and the Son to the Father. The children were there also, and does God care for the children? The disciples thought not, for when some brought young children to their Lord "they rebuked" them and would have driven them away. But—

"Jesus saw them e'er they fled
And sweetly smiled and kindly said,
Suffer the children to come unto Me."

He was "much displeased" with His disciples but "He took the children up in His arms, and put His hands upon them, and blessed them." What can save the children from the blight and horror of godlessness? Not vague talk of "the universal mind" or "the completed harmony," but the story of Jesus who welcomed the children to His arms; the divine record in the four Gospels of His life and death and resurrection, this will save them for it is the knowledge of God that children need, and in Christ God was manifested in flesh. And though the full glory of that manifestation cannot be compassed by even the highest created intelligence, the children understand it, for "Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent and hast revealed them unto babes." Scribes and Pharisees were there standing by also, bold and presumptuous men, who hated the Lord and were determined to kill Him; yet the voice of the Father

spake for their sakes also, for divine grace endured even these with much longsuffering and waited with patience even for them.

It was a motley multitude that gathered round the Lord, and we feel as we consider them, how suitable to their needs was the revelation of God in Christ, and the centuries that have passed since then have not changed the needs of men and we may thank God that the revelation abides, and that God is proclaimed in the gospel as "God our Saviour, who will have all men to be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth."

EXPERIENCE.

If we are christians we have experienced this revelation of God. Once we "stood by," we were outside the blessing and had not the knowledge of God, but grace drew us near, and enlightened our eyes, and what God is and His feelings toward us are no longer matters of debate or theory with us, but of soul experience. God has not made us dry-as-dust theologians, but His happy children through faith in Christ Jesus.

This revelation of God's grace and our experience of it is described in the threefold parable in Luke 15. We were the sheep that was lost, we were the lost silver, we were the rebellious prodigal. But the Shepherd-Son sought us until He found us, and the Holy Spirit sought us diligently until he brought us out of the darkness into the light, and when we were yet a great way off the Father saw us, and had compassion, and ran and fell on our neck and kissed us. It was so with me, and with everyone who has believed the gospel. The Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit each had

His part in the salvation of our souls. And let us note the joy in each case, it was not the joy of that which was lost and found, but the joy of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. "Likewise, I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth." Father, Son and Holy Spirit rejoice, and no words in Holy Scripture convey with greater force the yearning of the heart of God for sinful men.

What an experience ours has been! If David described the blessedness of the man . . . whose iniquities are forgiven and whose sins are covered, we can describe the blessedness of the man who has been sought and found by the Shepherd, and placed in safety on His strong shoulder; and of the man whose soul has been illuminated by the Holy Spirit; and of the man who has been kissed by the Father's pardoning kiss, and welcomed to His heart and home. And this experience is not a memory of something that happened in the past only, but is a present and continuous experience, for "the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost that is given unto us," and "the Spirit beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God."

PRACTICE.

I need not say much as to the practice which is consistent with our experience of this revelation of God. It should be clear to all that, if the light of the knowledge of God has shone into our hearts it should shine out in the darkness for others. We are to be "blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom we shine

as lights in the world ; holding forth the word of life" (Philippians 2. 15, 16). We are to be "imitators of God as dear children;" "kind one to another, tender hearted, forgiving one another even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you" (Ephesians 5. 1 ; 4. 32). From us should sound forth the word of the Lord and our faith to Godward should be spread abroad (1 Thessalonians 1). For since we have received the revelation we are "the salt of the earth" and "the light of the world" and should "let our light so shine before men, that they may see our good works, and glorify our Father which is in heaven" (Matthew 5. 13, 15).

CONCLUSION.

I am persuaded that if we hold fast to the revelation that shews us

that God is not far distant from men, indifferent to their struggles and sorrows and sins, but that He draws near to them in grace and mercy and is "longsuffering, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance;" and if we can say, we know that this is so, not only because His word declares it, but because we have proved that word to be true in our own experience; and if we can shew to men that this knowledge of God is a treasure which we prize as dearer to us than life itself, but which we desire to share with them, and if we are the exponents of the blessing before their eyes, we shall serve our day and generation by the will of God, the rising tide of apostasy will only move us to great zeal, and we shall be hastening the coming of the day of God.

The Love of Christ.

Revive your consciousness of the Lord's love to you by considering Him. We know that His cross is the greatest proof of His love, but consider Him in resurrection. He did not immediately ascend to heaven, He lingered with His disciples. He shewed that they were His chief care, more to Him than crowns and kingdoms. His service and patience towards them reveal Him in His knowledge-surpassing love. We are told that on this wise He shewed Himself to His disciples, and what is recorded is for our learning. As we contemplate Him, His words to Thomas come home to us, "Reach hither thy finger . . . be not faithless but believing ;" and to Peter, "Lovest thou Me." As He shows Himself thus to us we cannot but respond and draw near to Him and exclaim, "My Lord and My God," and "Lord, Thou knowest all things; Thou knowest that I love Thee."

Faith, Hope and Love.

Faith, Hope and Love were questioned what they thought
Of future glory which the Bible taught.
Now Faith believed it firmly to be true,
And Hope expected so to find it too ;
Love answered smiling, with a conscious glow,
"Believe ! Expect ! I know it to be true !"

DEFEAT AND VICTORY.

F. B. Hole.

(Read Psalms 44 and 45)

THE experiences of God's saints, if considered in detail, present a picture of almost endless variety. The dispensation in which their lives are cast differ. The ages comprised in any one dispensation often differ greatly. The circumstances surrounding them in any given age are different. And even where the age and the circumstances are the same, the characters and temperaments of individuals differ. Yet, with all this, there are certain underlying features which are the same in all cases. These two Psalms furnish us with an illustration which is to the point. No saint is to be found, no matter what his dispensation, his age, his circumstances, but knows the bitterness of defeat: and none but shall know ultimately the joy of victory. Some there may be who lose ten thousand battles, but even they are victors in one battle—the last.

Psalm 44 is very obviously a Psalm of defeat. It begins with very confident expectations which are not realized, and it ends with an agonized cry from the dust for help and succour from on high. Psalm 45, with equal clearness, is a Psalm of victory. The Victor is introduced and immediately everything is changed. Both Psalms are highly prophetic and await their fulfilment at the end of the age. Yet, of course, they abound with instruction for us. If we begin by noting their prophetic interpretation standpoint we shall better be able to make a right application of them to ourselves.

In Psalm 44 we hear the voice of godly Jews, who will be a true remnant of Israel in the coming day of trouble. Right through the Psalm it is "we" and "us" with the ex-

ception of verse 6. This is striking, for practically all the preceding psalms are in the first person singular, the plural only occurring very rarely. Psalm 44 then is the voice of a company, though verse 6 lets us know that the psalm is the work of an individual, who was inspired to utter the thoughts of many. It falls quite naturally into four sections; verses 1 to 8; 9 to 16; 17 to 22; 23 to 26.

In the first section this true remnant allow us to hear *how confidently they expect to be used of God to accomplish a great deliverance in the earth.* They unbosom to us three steps by which they have attained this confidence. The three steps follow one another in a logical sequence, in which it is not easy to find a flaw. In the first place, they have heard and believed the tidings of God's mighty intervention for their fathers in the days of old. They are not of the liberal or modernistic type who believe in nothing miraculous, and hence discredit even the well attested facts of their own national history. On the contrary, they wholeheartedly accept them.

Then, in the second place, they know that the God who thus wrought in ancient times is their God to-day. They can say, "Thou art MY King, O God;" and He is ever the same. He is to be trusted therefore by them, just as He was trusted of old.

From this they deduce, in the third place, that victory must be on their side. In verses 5 to 8 this confidence is expressed. They do not trust in their own prowess.

They know that there is no salvation in their own weapons. They make their boast in God, and they do confidently expect to push down their enemies in the name of the Lord.

In the second section of the psalm *their failure and disillusionment* is very graphically described. Instead of victory all is defeat. They are put to shame, spoiled, scattered. They become a scorn, a derision, a byword, a shaking of the head among the people. The transition from verse 8 to verse 9 is very striking. From confident boasting in God and the praise of His Name they fall as with a crash into dejection and shame.

Two or three expressions in this part of the Psalm are very interesting from a prophetic point of view. In verse 16 an individual is mentioned as, "him that reproacheth and blasphemeth." In the same verse "the enemy and avenger" is spoken of. Both these expressions may refer to the coming of the "beast:" the first one clearly does so, in the light of Revelation 13, 6. 7. The second expression also occurs in Psalm 8. 2, and it may refer rather to the false prophet, the second beast of Revelation 13, who exercises the power of the first beast and avenges amongst the Jews all resistance to his authority. However that may be, we have here an unmistakable reference to the great antichristian powers of the last days; just as, in verse 9, we have reference to the armed resistance to that power which will be offered by zealous sons of Israel, many of them doubtless really godly people anxious to preserve the pure worship of God when the attempt is made to foist upon them abominable idolatry.

In Revelation 13 we are told that it is given to the blaspheming beast "to make war with the saints, and to overcome them:" and in verse 10 of that chapter a warning against armed resistance is conveyed in the words, "He that killeth with the sword, must also be killed with the sword. Here is the patience and faith of the saints." We believe that our Psalm shows that the warning is not unnecessary, and that, notwithstanding the warning, armed resistance is just what they have recourse to, in the full expectation that God will be miraculously with them as once He had been with their fathers before Jericho, and as He had been with the valiant Maccabees when Antiochus Epiphanes defiled God's holy land and temple.

One line of Scripture foretold the doings of the Maccabees, which took place during "the four hundred silent years" which preceded the coming of Christ—"The people that do know their God shall be strong, and do exploits." (Dan. 11. 32). Now it seems that, in the days of antichrist, God-fearing Jews will feel that they too know their God, and they also will do wonderful things. They overlook the Lord's own warning recorded in Matthew 24, to the effect that, when the abomination of desolation appears, not fight but flight is to be their action. Whatever God may have done through His people in the lesser crises of earlier days, it is plainly revealed that in the last great crisis all human instruments will be set aside and He will fight the great fight, and deal the one mighty, effectual, knock-out blow by Himself *alone*. The word is, "I have trodden the winepress alone; and of the people there was none with Me." (Isa. 63. 3).

In keeping with this Revelation 19 shows us the beast and false prophet plunged into ruin and unutterable damnation, not by God working through saints on earth, but by the revelation of the Lord Jesus in flaming fire from heaven. Saints are there, but they are heavenly saints, and they do nothing but merely follow the One who does everything.

When it has been a question of God acting in government, then again and again He has been pleased to use His people as instruments of His government. Now that it is a question of His grace being heralded through the earth, His normal way of acting is through human servants. But when it is neither grace nor government, but God executing wrath and vengeance on men in whom human sin has risen to its dreadful climax, then He acts alone. He has said, "Vengeance in Mine; I will repay." It is His sole prerogative. No other may share it with Him.

The third section of our Psalm is very touching. In it these godly souls, though weighed down by defeat and terrible sufferings, express *their integrity of heart, and fidelity to the Name of the Lord*. Broken and overthrown they may be, even as Job was of old, yet their faith is divinely sustained, and it holds fast. They have been self-confident, as once Moses was, thinking that by them God was going to effect a mighty deliverance. They may not have grasped what the Divine programme really is, yet they are wholly devoted to God: killed all the day long like sheep. And in being "counted as sheep for the slaughter," approximating in likeness unto their Lord.

The forth and last section of the Psalm is *one intensive cry for deliverance*. All hope of any success or victory on their side is gone. If deliverance is to come it must be as the fruit of God's redeeming mercy. It must be His work alone. They fully realize this now.

So much for the prophetic bearing of this Psalm. But has it any voice for us? It most certainly has.

What Christian is there, who has not tasted the bitterness of defeat? We are not face to face with anti-christ, though antichristian forces are very manifestly in the world to-day. Still we have all the power of the world, and the flesh (that most subtle inward foe), and the devil against us; and again and again, when singly or in combination, they have come against us, we have fallen before them. We know what is right, yet we fail to perform it.

So often too, our experiences run just after the pattern of this Psalm. We begin by knowing right well how God can and does deliver. We can say that we have heard with our ears of all God's delivering power, since we listened to the "fathers" of the Christian faith. Ever since we listened to the Apostle Paul, by reading the epistle to the Romans, have we known how God commands deliverances for His people. Then we are apt to take it for granted that victory is ours as a matter of course: and then comes the disillusionment! We are shamefully defeated. Yet though broken and humbled and sorrowful, we are conscious of a certain integrity. We do not turn aside from the faith of Christ, nor do we for one moment contemplate the possibility of doing so.

Sometimes, too, the Christian is oppressed by persecution, and he remains undelivered. Then the Psalm has an even closer application. Such an application is made by the Apostle in Romans 8. 36, when he quotes verse 22. We may be living sheltered lives in these favoured lands, but many a saint in the last few years has suffered even unto death, apparently unheard.

If it be a question of the defeats we suffer when battling against the spiritual forces of evil, we shall find in verse 5 of our Psalm that which largely explains them. What they say is, "Through Thee will WE push down our enemies: through Thy name will WE tread them under that rise up against us." The idea is that we accomplish a victory by utilizing the power of God. That is not God's idea for them, and we think we may say it is never His idea for any. His power is not placed at our disposal for us to use as best we may. It is rather that we are to be at His disposal, for Him to use us. If God placed His power at our disposal it would leave us in the primary place with the responsibility of planning the campaign. NO, He has the primary place, and the plan of campaign must be His. Our places are very, very secondary—just instruments that He is pleased to use.

It is when we realize this that we cease from ourselves, our plans, our efforts, and cast ourselves wholly upon God, in keeping with the cry that fills the closing verse of the Psalm. This is, of course, the lesson of Romans 7. It is when we cease from ourselves, and our eyes are turned to Another who is outside ourselves that deliverance comes. For so long as our attitude is, "How shall I deliver myself?" difficulties

and defeat dog our footsteps. When at last our cry becomes, "Who shall deliver me?" then we discover the delivering power of Jesus Christ our Lord, and of the Holy Spirit, who is "the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus."

As we commence reading Psalm 45, it is as though we have been transported into a new world. Excellence, splendour, victory, blessing, fill the whole scene. The agonised cry that concluded the previous Psalm is suddenly exchanged for a heart which is bubbling over with good matter, and a tongue which utters praise with the flowing ease of a ready writer. What has brought about this change?

The answer is simplicity itself. The Christ of God, who acts *for* God and yet *is* God, has appeared upon the scene. As part of the heading of this Psalm appear the words, "A song of loves," or more accurately, "A song of the Beloved." We know who the Beloved is, seeing we ourselves are "accepted in the Beloved" (Eph. 1. 6). Well, the Beloved, in whom we are accepted is going to appear in His glory. Everything hinges upon that. He will execute judgment. He will accomplish deliverance in victorious power. And He will do it by Himself alone.

In verses 3, 4 and 5, He is pictured as He comes forth to lay low every enemy. It is very similar to the picture presented in Revelation 19. He is everything and man is nothing—it is, "Thy glory," "Thy majesty," "Thy right hand." His arrows never fail of their target. The people fall under Him, and victory is achieved.

The Divine Victory however will not merely be a display of power: it will also be a vindication of those qualities and features which please

God. He will ride prosperously in His majesty "because of truth and meekness and righteousness." His victory will mean the establishment of these excellent things. The world, as we know it, is full of untruth and pride and unrighteousness. These former things must pass away and a new order of things be brought in.

When the saints of the coming time of tribulation pass through the sad experiences of Psalm 44, they will be under the oppressive domination of "him that reproacheth and blasphemeth...the enemy and avenger." These men, who are elsewhere designated, "beasts," will in their characters sum up all the evil that is found in them. In them Satan's lie will find its embodiment. In them human pride will rise to its climax. All their actions will be characterized by "the deceivableness of unrighteousness." These things are plainly seen if we read 2 Thessalonians 2. When the Lord Jesus appears in His majesty He will "consume with the spirit of his mouth . . . and destroy with the brightness of His coming" these evil men, and the whole system of things that they dominate, with a view to bring in an order of things wholly according to God.

We too are waiting for His coming. But while we wait for Him, and for the public display of the glory of God, it is not God's thought that we should be overcome by evil of the world without or of the flesh within. We have already noted how our spiritual experiences often run very much on the lines indicated in Psalm 44: we have now only to point out how victory for us lies exactly upon the lines which are celebrated in Psalm 45.

The world is full of programmes, for fallen man is very fertile in ideas.

One and all however combine in this feature—they SHUT CHRIST OUT. The Divine programme is very simple and effective—BRING CHRIST IN. Now a great many of our spiritual struggles proceed on exactly analogous lines. We want to be in the enjoyment of victory; so we resolve, and try, and pray, and seek God's help, and yet realize we are very ready to bring Christ in, if it be a question of the forgiveness of sins and our fitness for heaven; yet are not so ready to bring Christ in, if it be a question of practical sanctification and holiness and victory. Yet there is no other way to the desired end.

We have already alluded to the end of Romans 7. We refer to it once more, coupling with it the closing verses of chapter 8. In the last verse of chapter 7 Jesus Christ our Lord is brought in. Through Him God delivers the wretched man who is utterly sick of himself and all his struggles. In the last verse of chapter 8 the delivered man finds himself in the embrace of the love of God "which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." That is it. God's delivering power is *through* Him: His enveloping love, from which nothing can separate us, is *in* Him. Christ is all.

BRING CHRIST IN—that is the way of victory. Let Christ be enthroned in the heart's deepest affections, let Him dominate the thoughts, the aspirations, the life of service, and all must be well. It is simply impossible to overthrow Him. He is victorious always and everywhere. He rides prosperously in His majesty through hearts and lives, though even of the feeblest character in themselves, if simply yielded up to Him.

SONSHIP.

James McBroom.

(Continued)

WE are now to consider the way in which man is brought into this relationship with God. God's counsels had marked out a company for association with the Son by adoption. The fulfilment of these counsels was comparatively late, hence the order of divine operations must be carefully noted. Man's creation, the permission of the fall, with the protracted period of divine dealings, in Providence, Grace and Government had to run their courses. Created beings have, of necessity, to be tested, and this explains the riddle of divine dealings, during the ages preceding the coming of the Son. The Son of God appeared at the end of these ages, to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. (Heb. 9. 26). His rejection, and death, completed the story of man's broken down responsibility, and in this way, all the grace and goodness of God, seen in the times of Prophets, Priests and Kings, in His marvellous forbearance with men, was sinned away. This brought the Son which concluded the story, and the creature's worst and darkest crime, was seen at Golgotha's hill. Thank God, all have been foreseen long before. In promise, type and shadow, the death of our Lord Jesus Christ was fore-shewn in the Old Testament, on the side of man's need, as well as of his guilt. (See Lev. 1 to 7, and compare Gen. 37 to 45.).

It was just at the moment when the creature had reached his lowest point that the pent up fulness of God's love broke forth. Instead of coming forth in judgment on the murderers of His Son, the very best of all that He is, comes out by the

resurrection of Christ from the dead. By the bearing of sin's judgment, a basis had been laid for the perfect settlement of all moral questions, and the sin-Bearer came forth from the dead in a new state, the beginning of a new creation into which neither sin nor death, can ever enter.

Note carefully the meaning of resurrection. We can conceive it to be a return to the life before lived, as in the case of Lazarus. The condition of life in which our Lord rose from the dead was different altogether from that which He laid down in death, although, in Him, that flesh and blood condition was perfect. His resurrection takes us back across the ages to the plan of eternity. The attempt to bring back our Lord to the life of flesh and blood, constitutes the great failure of Evangelic Christendom to-day. "Beware that thou bring not my son thither again" was said of the typically risen man. (Gen. 26. 6). The Son had been marked out for glory, constituted Heir of all things; in the volume of the book, namely, the decree of eternity, all have been written. Since this had to be reached by redemption we can see the necessity for His taking flesh and blood, but the order of Manhood that abides for eternity is a new creation. This He reached not merely, by the Virgin's womb, but by the travail of the cross, and His glorious resurrection, which was the birth of a new creation. (See John 16. 21 to 22).

To tarry a moment on this should call for no apology, for the cross is God's final reckoning with this world.

There, the history of man in his responsibility is brought to an end. It may be said how can this be so when we see man in his sinful condition before our eye to this very day? The answer is that moral questions are not affected by time. As God passed over the sins of men in view of the cross, during the ages preceding it, (Rom. 3. 25. margin). and dealt with the fallen race, though in a condition that was irretrievable, so He does in the ages which follow in the working out of His own ways relative to His nature and character as moral Governor of the creation. His doing this fits in beautifully with the great truth that in the death of Christ every question of creature responsibility was settled for eternity. The new creation is so definitely in view in Ephesians that God passes over the first man's world and its history and begins by raising Christ from the dead, and opening out the scene of glory, which has Christ the risen One as its head, and Centre. It may be said that the last three chapters, which are the practical part of the Epistle have the time scene in view. It is there that those who are brought by faith into a new creation in Christ Jesus as belonging to the first three chapters of the same Epistle, fill in the remains of their responsible life in connection with the testimony of God in His world.

By apprehending the above, we see the resurrection of our Lord as the dawn of another world, the doorway from the Adamic order of life into the eternal order. We are brought into it, as having been chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world (Eph. 1. 4) and in this way, to use the words of another, "We belong in the counsels of

God to a system set up by Him in Christ before the world existed, which is not of the world when it does exist and exists after the fashion of this world has passed away for ever."

Turning to the bearing of this upon ourselves, we come at once to the place and work of the Holy Spirit. In the working out of divine counsels His is the subjective side. While it is true that we come into it by faith in Christ Jesus, on the divine side it is by adoption. As children of God we are begotten by God, but as sons we are adopted. This shows a clear distinction between the blessing of children and calling of sons. The former is indeed sweetest of all, as giving the birth tie, and shewing a new beginning, a new generation in this world formed in the divine nature; the latter gives the dignity of the new place and calling, but implying that past history which necessitated the cross. It connects with the Father and the Son in a new life death cannot touch. We have entered a new chapter in our history, which connects us with heaven and eternity, and knows no end, wherein we have imparted to us a sympathy in every interest of heaven, and a susceptibility to every divine touch, and which binds us to the testimony of God in this world for the rest of our life in flesh and blood.

This complex position the Lord had before Him with His own, the last night before He suffered. (John. 13 to 17). A glance at this will shew the perfect way He took to lift them not only from the hopes, joys and sorrows of nature and the time scene, but to transfer them in thought from Judaism and the earthly system, with

its Messianic connection, by linking them up with Himself and the Father in the new heavenly order where eternal thoughts and purposes come to light.

“Part with Me” is the ruling idea in this section of the Gospel. It anticipates what came out of the message sent through Mary later. (Chap. 20. 17). Between chapters seven and twenty all the requirements of God concerning the state of His people, had been met in His death. All being met, the new thing comes out. “Go to My brethren and say unto them I ascend to My Father and your Father, and to My God and your God.” He had said to them before He suffered, “Ye now therefore have sorrow but I will see you again, and your sorrow shall be turned into joy. (Chap. 16. 22). This wondrous relationship with Him and the Father is confirmed, and enjoyed in the Assembly, for in chapter twenty, the risen One comes among them saying; “Peace unto you.” In this way Hebrews 2. 12. is antedated, where He now declares the Father’s name and leads the brethren’s praise, while all is linked together with the prophetic statement of Psalm 22.

It is not difficult to see that the words—“Part with Me” are intended to convey the thought of association with Himself, in the glory system beyond death. The mystical bearing of the feet-washing shews how He would maintain His own unrivalled claim on our affections by ministering to us from heaven in such a way as to keep up the sense in our souls of our place with Him there in the joy of the Father’s love. Having gone to prepare a place for them He will come again

and receive them to Himself, but counting on their affections that He is indispensable to them He would during the interval come to them. (John 14. 18). Meantime, He bequeaths to them, and may we say ourselves, all that is His. “My peace, (14. 27). My love, (15. 9. 17. 26). My joy (15. 11). and the glory (17. 21), and to crown all, the Spirit would be with them and in them, that they might be conscious of His company in all the requirements of the testimony.

All was to be carried on with a feeling of holy intimacy, and a sense of the favour that makes us trustworthy; He brings us into the intimacy of friends and unfolds the secret of His own and the Father’s heart, and then goes on to shew that we are the objects of the Father’s affection (John 16. 27) because we have trusted in His Son.

This leads to the innermost circle of all where we are permitted with holy reverence, to listen to the communings in time of the Son with the Father concerning the interest of the Godhead from eternity to eternity; in all that which concerns the Holy Trinity from that eternal past where creature thought must stop, right on through time’s all-changing flight to an eternity of bliss where God shall be known, unveiled in the Son in all that He is and does, in endless glory and satisfied bliss. What grandeur of glory is here? “If the Son shall make you free you shall be free indeed.” We are introduced, as it were, by the Son into the counsel chamber of eternity to hear words which speak of the love and glory proper to Godhead in His holy being and nature; and as linking us up with It

self in the revelation now brought to light by the unveiling of the counsels of eternity. Surely we find ourselves here in the place of sons with holy liberty attaching to it and which, so to speak, is its life, with the plenitude of holy communications which feeds the affections, moulds the will, and bows the whole being down with richest praise and adoration. When we reflect that all this came out from our Lord in almost the same hour as that prayer and agony which drew forth the sweat of blood, (Luke 22. 44) and within a few short hours of the abandonment of the cross, what can we do but adore.

Holy Peerless SON OF GOD how great and glorious Thou art, surpassing all our creature thought. When we think of Thy love, and the place it led Thee to for us, we can but wonder, worship and adore. Soon, at the centre of the vast creation of God Thou shalt have full praise, when everything, animate and inanimate, shall unite to give Thee Thy dues in God the Father's ear, and when, with Thee, that glorious company of sons which Thou art not ashamed to call brethren shall worship God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit for evermore.

To be continued.

Prayer, like Jonathan's bow, returns not empty ; never was faithful prayer lost. No tradesman trades with such certainty as the praying saint. Some prayers, indeed, have a longer voyage than others, but then they return at last with richer lading ; the praying soul is a gainer, by waiting for an answer.

The devil comes in when saints fall out. Times of contention are great opportunities for Satan. He is the spirit of hate and feels much at home where ill-will is rampant.

Death and the Saints of God.

What a difference the coming of the Son of God has made to the outlook of the saints of God ! This is specially notable in view of death. When King Hezekiah was told that he must die, he was full of grief, a glorious future had not been opened up to him ; but when Christ appeared, the aged Simeon could say, "Now Lord lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace for mine eyes have seen Thy salvation," but Paul could go further and say, "To depart to be with Christ which is far better." The Son of God has come, and has been through death, subduing it to His will on His triumphant way and has risen up from the dead and entered heaven, and has opened up the way to that destiny for all His own. Stephen had learnt this great fact when he cried, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit."

“GOD MOVES BEHIND THE SCENES.” Ingليس Fleming.

“I KNOW that Thou canst do everything and that no thought of Thine can be hindered” (Job 42. 2 margin).

So cried the patriarch of old, as he saw “The end of the Lord,” in all His dealing with him.

And well it is to retire into our high tower and to know that there is One who still

“Sits as Sovereign on the throne
And ruleth all things well.”

God, the unhurried God, is carrying out His plans and purposes for the glory of Christ and for the blessing of all those who receive “the truth in the love of it,” that they may be saved. And “none can stay His hand, or say unto Him, What doest Thou?” as “He doeth according to His will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth” (Dan. 4. 35), as proud but penitent Nebuchadnezzar was brought to say. Man boasts himself of his powers, vaunts himself of his progress and prides himself of his skill. But it is still true that “Every man at his best estate is altogether vanity . . . Surely every man walketh in a vain show : surely they are disquieted in vain.” (Psalm 39. 5, 6).

Christ the Son of God manifested in the world in grace has been rejected. He sits on the Father’s throne exalted, as for the rest expecting till His enemies are made His footstool. Meanwhile the church, to be the Bride of Christ in the day of His kingdom glory, is being gathered out from the world by the gospel of the grace and of the glory of the blessed God which is being proclaimed.

Amid all the workings of man’s busy will God is in peace and He

is working out His own purposes and would have His own in peace also. As they confide in Him they may be and go on with His work.

“Calm amid tumultuous motion.”

Great waves and billows may roll and roar around them but they may be in “peace, peace,” with their hearts stayed upon Jehovah because they trust in Him.

Thus it has been all down the centuries of man’s history, God has shown that though unseen He has not been indifferent to men’s actions, but has ruled or overruled in everything.

So it was that after the deliverance of Israel from the lash of the taskmasters in Egypt, when Pharaoh’s hosts had perished in the waters, Jethro exclaimed “Now I know that the Lord is greater than all gods: for in the thing wherein they dealt proudly He was above them” (Exodus 18. 11). Or as Solomon declares “If thou seest the oppression of the poor, and violent perverting of judgment and justice in a province, marvel not at the matter: for He that is higher than the highest regardeth, and there be higher than they” (Eccles. 5. 8). And God even makes the wrath of man to praise Him though He may use it for the cleansing of His loved ones from the love of the world which passes away.

The secret, all-controlling power of God has been well expressed in the following passage, which has in view John being banished to Patmos, where he wrote the Revelation, “The persecuting Emperor little thought what he was giving us when he banished the apostle; no more than Augustus, in his political plans as to the census of the empire, knew

he was sending a poor carpenter to Bethlehem, with his espoused wife, that Christ might be born there; or the Jews and Pilate's soldiers, that they were sending the thief to heaven, when they broke his legs in heartless respect for their own superstitions of ordinances. God's ways are behind the scenes but He moves all the scenes which He is behind. We have to learn this, and let Him work, and not think much of man's busy movements: they will accomplish God's. The rest of them all perish and disappear. We have only peacefully to do His will" (Synopsis on Rev. 1).

Rest of heart is ours as we rely on Omnipotence and know that in ways inscrutable to us, God is working out His own will.

It may be that open persecution may arise against the Christian as the world plunges on to its doom. It may be we may be called to the

honour of a martyr's death for witness to our Lord, but let us not fear. "Martyr grace" will be ours "for martyr days" and "If ye suffer for righteousness' sake happy are ye: and be not afraid of their terror neither be troubled" (1 Pet. 3. 4).

What then are we called to do at such and at all times? "Sanctify the Lord Christ in your hearts."—or as another has said,

"Care only for this, that your hearts may be a temple of Christ, in which becoming honour may be given to Him as Lord; then will nothing further disturb you."

"Rest," then, tried and troubled "in the Lord and wait patiently for Him" until He shows His almighty hand. Ever remember that "The Lord on high is mightier than the noise of many waters, yea than the mighty waves of the sea."

The Authority of the Word.

It is of the utmost moral importance that the heart and conscience should be brought into complete and absolute submission to the Word of God; it is a man's duty to bow without question to the authority of the Word. It may be that often a man's reason raises questions, and no wonder if his mind is alienated from God, but that is not the point; the all-important and conclusive point is this, Has God spoken? If He has, *that is enough*.

Reason and the Word.

The Word of God is above and beyond reason altogether; it is as far above reason as God is above the creature. Reason blinded and wrecked by sin can only lead us astray; the only safe ground for the soul is divinely wrought faith in the paramount authority, divine majesty, and all-sufficiency of the Word of God. To the one who believes, whose mind has been renewed by the Holy Ghost, every word of God is reasonable, and he has part in the blessedness of the man whose delight is in the law of the Lord.

A FEW SCRIPTURE FACTS ABOUT ETERNAL LIFE.

IN Colossians, chapter 1, the Spirit points to the Lord on earth, saying, as it were, "Behold the One in Whom all the Fulness was pleased to dwell, making peace by the blood of His cross." In chapter 2, "Behold Him now on the Throne as the One 'in Whom dwelleth all the Fulness of the Godhead bodily.'" "All the fulness" on earth. "All the fulness now in heaven." Then in chapter 3 comes that glorious truth in verse 4 of "*CHRIST OUR LIFE*."

Eternal life therefore is, in the first place, A PERSON: not an attribute.

"God's Son Jesus Christ, He is true God and Eternal life" (1 John 5. 20). He Himself said, "I am the life" (John 14. 6). And again (Rev. 1. 18), "I am He that liveth," the Living One, and "I am alive for evermore." The ever-living One, He is life itself—not merely *hath* it. The Spirit through John utters eight words full of resurrection power, with a heaven in each. "He that hath the Son hath the life" (1 John 5. 12).

He does not write: He that hath orthodoxy, morality, or piety, but he that hath the Son, hath the life. Neither does he say, he that *saith*, but he that "*hath*." The great triumph of possession over profession.

An inspired spokesman says it, (John 3. 36). Christ Himself says it (John 5. 24), and John the Apostle says it (1 John 5. 12). It is not Deity. That is incommunicable. Those who have it are not impeccable, though the life they have received is a sinless life. The Lord alone was *sinless*.

The Spirit says, (1 John 1. 8), "If we say that we have no sin we deceive ourselves." But speaking of the Son in chapter 3. 5, he says, "In Him is no sin."

THE NEW BIRTH introduces us into this wondrous life. There is development and growth, but the same life. Three stages: "Children," "Young Men" and "Fathers," but the same nature (1 John 2. 12-14).

In John 3 we read of being born in vv. 3, 5, 7, and of *seeing* life in verse 36; the Holy Spirit shewing us *how* to see life in chapter 4. It has been said that one may be born into a country, yet never leave his native village: true enough, and one may be born into the Kingdom of God, yet know next to nothing about it.

The babe in arms and the trained athlete alike have life, but the latter has it in abundance. Thus in John 3. we have *ETERNAL LIFE AS A FACT*.

But the Holy Ghost comes on the scene in chapter 4, (i.e., in *doctrine*, in *fact* at Pentecost) and changes the "Bottle" for the "Well" (Gen. 21. 15, 19) the babe for vigorous manhood; babyhood for abundance of life, giving us *ETERNAL LIFE IN ITS FULNESS*. For the Holy Spirit is there seen as a "well," inexhaustible. *Living water*; springing, sparkling, bubbling, with no limit but eternity. But still further, we have also in chapter 4, *ETERNAL LIFE AS A FELLOWSHIP*.

It is strictly individual in John 3 for men must come in, like Nicodemus, as individuals: but here we

have the true worshippers, with the "Father" as the *Object* of worship—the "Son" as the *Subject*, and the Spirit as the Power, using the "Truth" as the governing principle. Then the Spirit associates us with the "true worshippers": a corporation or company of men, Spirit-filled and truth governed.

FACT (ch. 3); *FULNESS* and *FELLOWSHIP* (ch. 4); *FOOD* (ch. 6); *FORCE* (ch. 7. 37); *FLOCK* (ch. 10).

In John 3 eternal life as an *Indubitable Fact*.

In John 4, eternal life as a springing well that never runs dry; and also as a spiritual and heavenly fellowship made a *living experience* by the living Spirit to the true worshippers here below and springing up unto everlasting life.

In John 6 the Spirit gives us a profound and varied meditation of the food of eternal life. Food which endureth unto everlasting life (27). Five times Jesus says, "I am the Bread of Life." Four times Jesus says, "I will raise him up at the last day." He calls Himself, "The True Bread" (32); "The Bread of God" (33); The "Living Bread" (50). We eat to live (54) and we live to eat (57). Christ is God's Bread (compare verse 33 with Num. 28. 2) and ours.

Then in John 7. 37, we have the Holy Spirit under the figure of flowing rivers. Springing up in worship; like a springing well in John 4; and flowing out in life and service in John 7. There is a most beautiful and exhaustive type of this in Ezekiel's river (Ezekiel 47). A feast awaits the one who will study it. Here the dominant thought is

force, recreative, cumulative, and *fruition*. Further, after speaking of the Spirit coming *personally* in chapter 14. 17, our Lord says in verse 18, "I will not leave you orphaned, I will come unto you" i.e., His *spiritual* coming. Thus we have the *doctrine* of the Spirit and His relation to eternal life in John's Gospel, whilst we have it *actually* at Pentecost; with the Acts as a book of historic fact as an illustration of *ETERNAL LIFE IN THE SPIRIT*.

Alas! How little we know of it! A life of noonday splendour, lived in an atmosphere of perfect love. The love of God in the early chapters of John, and the love of the Father in the later, like Ezekiel's river, more as you go on.

In John 3. 16 we see *ETERNAL LIFE AS A GIFT*.

God loved; God gave His only begotten Son, and Eternal life in Him; whilst the "gift of God" in 4. 10, is the fulfilment of John 1. 33. The Christ as the One "Who baptizeth with the Holy Ghost." Study His three-fold character in John 1.

The "Word"—The "Lamb" and "Baptizer with the Spirit." Christ the Word in heaven—the Lamb on earth, then again in heaven shedding forth the Spirit. Rom. 6. 23, says, "The gift of God is eternal life in Jesus Christ our Lord." A gift to the sheep (John 10. 28). A gift to the "given" ones (John 17) where believers are seen as "given" seven times; and the verb "to give" is conjugated about seventeen times.

But this *eternal life* is "in Jesus Christ our Lord." IN HIM: perfection of security, for what can touch Him where He is? Endless

life, for "because He lives, we shall live also" (John 14. 19). "The first Adam was made a living soul." "Made." He *received* life. "The second Man and last Adam is "a quickening Spirit." And He gives it in Himself.

ETERNAL LIFE AS A HOPE. Hope, not in the sense of doubt, for in 1 Tim. 1. 1, we read of "The Lord Jesus Christ, our hope." Needless to say there is no doubt where He is concerned, for in Him all the promises of God are yea, and in Him, Amen (2 Cor. 1. 20).

Consider also *ETERNAL LIFE AS A PROMISE* (2 Tim. 1. 1). "Paul an Apostle . . . according to the promise of life which is in Jesus our Lord."

Paul's apostolate was governed by it: the great redeeming fact of LIFE THROUGH DEATH radiated back into the Trinal Council Chamber, and forward into Paradise and the Tree of Life. It gathers into itself all promise and performance, all figures, emblems, symbols, shadows and types. All prophecies, contributory or attributory: primary or corollary. Moses, Psalms and Prophets all alike swell the chorus which acclaim Him as dying to bring us into His life. As rising in the power of His endless life that we who are *in* Him, by death, might be *with* Him in all the unutterable joy and perfection of that life for ever and ever.

But let us note in conclusion that the Spirit gives a very practical turn to this inspiring theme by treating *ETERNAL LIFE AS A PRIZE*.

"Laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life" (1 Tim. 6. 19). In order to lay *hold* you must lay *up*. In order to lay *hold*, seize, or grasp eternal life as a present realization, you must lay *up*, (verse 18). You lay *hold* by fighting, (in verse 12) whilst in verse 19 you lay *hold* by laying *up* "good works." If you want a rich experience of the life, you must be rich in good works.

Whilst eternal life is a free gift to the sinner, the real enjoyment of it, for the saint, depends upon "fighting" and "good works."

Finally, the synoptic Gospels present *ETERNAL LIFE AS A FUTURE REWARD* (Luke 18. 28-30).

The blessed Apostle Peter was referring to what they had left, lost or forsaken, but our Lord replied, as it were, Look at what you have *gained*, for that is manifold more. Oh joy of joys! Oh bliss beyond compare! Seize it, lay hold upon it O my serious reader. It is within your grasp: this fruitful life of holiness below, and the everlasting life in heaven (Rom. 5. 22).

Look not back, forget the things behind,
 Look never down; none do that would ascend;
 Look not around, the scene will daunt thee soon;
 Look up! look unto Jesus to the end.

THE GRACIOUSNESS OF JEHOVAH.

F.W.C.

Psalm 27. 4.

THE heart reposes in God its strength; and God becomes its one desire and sufficiency. "One thing have I asked of Jehovah; this do I seek after; that I may dwell in Jehovah's house all the days of my life, to behold the graciousness of Jehovah, and to inquire in His temple."

One can imagine the attraction for a true Israelite of that place where Jehovah dwelt in the midst of the people, even though the inner Sanctuary could not be penetrated. Faith would still, as it were, penetrate it, and God could not withhold Himself from the heart thus longing after Him.

These longings the psalms exhibit to us, and they constitute largely the charm of this precious book. To us the "graciousness of Jehovah" has been displayed in a way which makes all that was known before to be but rudimentary knowledge. He has unveiled His glory. He has come out to walk amongst men. He has given us boldness to enter into the holiest, and an abiding peace in His presence as priests and worshippers.

And yet how little are we beyond the admonition of these yearnings of the men of an elder time! This "one thing" which some of them could speak of, this burning seraphic

longing after One to sense the Invisible,—have we no need of self-questioning whether to us it is the passion that these psalms express? Ah, have we not need of it?

Think of the complete revelation of God now made to us: think of the open volume of Scripture in our hand: think of how of necessity the soul thirsting after God must turn to these stores of heavenly treasures, infinite yet accessible, and exult in the search, with the Spirit given to us of "the deep things of God" (1 Cor. 2. 10); think of the intercourse, the communion, enjoyed by those who will come together to compare their individual gains in this way, sharing with others that which being divided increases the more we divide it. There is no need to ask the extent to which all this is realized; and there can be only deepest humiliation in thinking of how little beyond the surface of the Scripture we are or care to be. "To inquire in His temple," when its roof is the whole arch of heaven, when its length stretches from the beginnings of history to the end of prophecy—when His word and work unite in Christ as the Life-Centre and glory of all! ah, how is it possible to imagine how little in eighteen centuries of a completed Bible and the indwelling Spirit has been attained.

Faith.

Faith carries things in its own sphere, needing nothing but God's word. The sight of the eyes is constantly tending to dim the estimate which faith forms; and if faith is not nourished by the Word, it sinks down and fades away. If I am not feeding on the Word, faith is not fed, for it cannot be fed by the sight of things all around. Natural reasoning is fed by what we see, but faith is fed by what God has revealed to the soul.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Reward in Heaven.

"Your answer to ONTARIO, page 118, is excellent. But perhaps you will add a word of explanation as to two passages: i. 'Great is your reward in heaven' not in the kingdom, Matthew 5. 12. ii. 'Thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just' Luke 14 14."—LLANFAIRFECHAN.

THE Sermon on the Mount was addressed to the Lord's Jewish disciples and they represented the Godly remnant of the nation that would receive the kingdom while the bulk of the nation proudly rejected it. They would take character from their rejected King, as the Beatitudes indicate, and stand in witness for Him, and for *His Name's Sake* they would be persecuted, and the time would come when those that killed them would think that they did God service (John 16). That would be a surprise to these disciples who looked for an inheritance on earth, but here the Lord assures them that they would have a *better* recompense, their reward would be *great in heaven*.

This seems to be a greater thing than reward for service it is recompense for suffering. They were to share the suffering and rejection of Christ on earth and He would share His home and glory with them; so David's 600 shared his rejection first and afterwards entered with him into his glory.

This, of course, is true for all who suffer for Christ's Name sake now, but the emphasis was given to the words in question for the encouragement of those disciples who according to the prophecies expected an earthly inheritance under the rule of their Messiah.

As to Luke 14. 14. The Lord seems to be observing how people sought a great place and name in this life, both guests and hosts were alike in this; and in compassion for His host He gives this word of Divine wisdom. If he called the poor, the maimed, the lame, and the blind to his feast, he would get no recompense now, it would not pay him now according to man's reckoning but he would be acting as God acts, and in the resurrection of the just—the life beyond this, he would be recompensed. God keeps account and the manifestation of His gracious character now, however much it may be despised by men, will shine forth in its true value then. Incidentally the incident shows God's care for the poor, and His delight in those who feel toward them with His compassion.

Declared Son of God . . . by the Resurrection.

"In the paper 'Sonship,' page 111, the writer uses Romans 1. 4, as though it was the Lord's own resurrection that was in view, whereas it really is, 'by the resurrection of the dead' (plural), i.e. by the raising of dead persons. See note in Darby's New Translation"—S. DEVON.

THERE can be no doubt that the passage in question refers to the resurrection of dead persons. The re-

surrection of Lazarus (John 11) was the manifestation of the divine power of the Lord and that accord-

ing to the Spirit of holiness, i.e., He was here is such absolute superiority to sin that had brought in death, that He was the Master of death, but the Man who was Master of death was God manifested in the flesh, for who but God could challenge the power of the grave and raise up the dead?

But we do not feel that we can exclude His own resurrection from this statement. His own resurrection was surely the great proof that He was the Son of God, and it seems most fitting that this Epistle in which Paul unfolds "the gospel of God" we should start with resurrection. There is no gospel apart from it, no righteousness for us, no standing in peace with God.

We quote from Darby's Synopsis because we are sure his comments on this passage will do our readers good. "What marvellous grace to see the whole power of evil—that dreadful door of death which closed upon the sinful life of man, leaving him to the inevitable judgment that he deserved, broken and destroyed by Him who was willing to enter into the gloomy chamber it shut in and take upon Himself all the weakness of man in death, and thus completely and absolutely deliver

him whose penalty He had borne in submitting to death! This victory over death, this deliverance of man from its dominion, by the power of the Son of God become Man, when He had undergone it, and that as a sacrifice for sin, is the only ground of hope for mortal and sinful man. It sets aside all that sin and death have to say. It destroys, for him who has a portion in Christ, the seal of judgment upon sin, which is death; and a new man, a new life, begins for him who had been held under it, outside the whole scene and the whole effect of his former misery—and this life is founded on all the value of that which the Son of God had there accomplished. We have, then, the subject of the gospel, the Son of God, made of the seed of David after the flesh; and in the bosom of humanity and death, declared to be the Son of God, in power by resurrection, Jesus Christ our Lord. It is not said "by His resurrection, but "by resurrection" abstractly. His own was the great proof; but that of every other man is proof also."

That is a long quotation, but we commend it to the careful perusal of our readers.

Confession and Prayer.

Blessed God, Thou callest me to obedience, and fain would I follow Thee, but what good can this wretched heart of mine be capable of except Thou put it there? Thou knowest that I cannot so much as wish or think well without Thee; I have strong powers to offend Thee, my sins are my own; but whence should I have any inclination to good but from Thee, who art only and all good? Lord, work me to what Thou requirest, and then require what Thou wilt.

A PARABLE AND A FACT.

J. T. Mawson.

DON'T murmur, Christian, for it is a most unchristian, a most ungodly thing to do. Nothing dishonours God more, nothing does greater damage to the soul. It was the chiefest sin of all the sins that Israel committed in the wilderness, for it meant that they did not believe that their God was fit to be trusted. It did not change His merciful care for them, but it aroused His just anger against them.

"Be content with such things as ye have." Your circumstances have your greatest blessing in view, and God who considers and makes all things work together for your good, knows just where you live and how.

I read a parable that I will pass on to you in my own words.

A child wandered into a garden and was attracted by a beautiful flower growing there. "How lovely how sweet," she exclaimed as she inhaled its fragrance. Then looking down she saw the black soil in which it grew. "What a shame," she cried, "that such a sweet flower should be planted in such dirt; it ought not to be." And she pulled the plant up by its roots and carried it to the water tap to wash the dirt from them, but even as she did so the flower wilted and the plant

began to die. And the gardener said, "You have killed my choicest plant." "But I was sorry for it in that black soil," wept the child. "But I chose the spot and collected and mixed the soil in which it grew because I knew that only in them it would come to perfection and now my thought and care and labour have been in vain."

Have you read of the beautiful and useful things that Hiram made for the house of God in Jerusalem? The story of them is told in 1 Kings 7. 38-51, and we read, "In the plain of Jordan did the king cast them, in the clay ground between Succoth and Zarthan." The clay ground was a necessity if the house of God was to be furnished with vessels, just as the black soil was necessary to the growth of the fragrant flower. Neither the parable nor the divinely recorded fact require interpretation, the point for us is to receive the instruction. "Neither murmur ye, as some of them murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer. Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come. Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall" (1 Corinthians 10.).

"His mercies are new every morning." What an assurance this is to carry with us in all our wayfaring through this world! We have no anxious questions to ask. This is enough for all that is coming. Live a comforted, happy and thankful life! Take up each day as it comes, certain of this, that, whatever it lays upon you to do or to bear, it will bring new mercies for new needs.

God does not comfort us to make us comfortable but to make us comforters.

No. 10. The Exaltation of Christ.

THE Old Testament Scriptures hold a riddle that the Jew cannot solve. They looked for—and still look for—a glorious Messiah, the Son of David, but there are many arresting passages in these Scriptures that tell of One who should come in great humility and suffering, who should not be glorious in the eyes of men, but who should in fact be despised and rejected by them. Who could He be? They revelled in such exhilarating prophecies as, “My Servant shall deal prudently, He shall be exalted and extolled, and be very high;” even the disciples of the Lord looked earnestly for the outshining of that glory, but what could be the meaning of “His visage was more marred than any man, and His form more than the sons of men”? It was easy enough to discern the voice of Israel’s Deliverer and God in the words, “I clothe the heavens with blackness and I make sackcloth their covering. At My rebuke I dry up the sea” but Who is it that says, “I gave My back to the smiters, and My cheek to them that plucked off the hair: I hid not My face from shame and spitting” (Isaiah 50)? Of course, we find the key to the riddle in the New Testament; we know and believe that it is Christ and Him crucified; but this to the Jew is a stumbling-block; he will not have a suffering Messiah and abides in ignorance and unbelief.

It is clear from all Scripture that since man became a sinful, self-centred creature, and death lay upon him as God’s judgment, the way to the glory is through suffering;

it is “he that humbleth himself that is exalted.” I should hesitate to apply the saying, “No cross, no crown” to the Lord Jesus personally, for all the crowns were His according to His rights as the Creator-Son and Heir of all things, yet having descended from the place of His eternal glory and become man for God’s glory and our redemption, even He could not reach the joy that was set before Him apart from enduring the cross. He took the downward way of suffering to do the will of God and became obedient unto death even the death of the cross; it was the only way to the crown.

The disciples of the Lord were as blind to the fact that the way of suffering was the only way to the glory as the rest of the Jews, for when He told them that He “must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders, and chief priests and scribes and be killed and raised again the third day. Peter took Him and rebuked Him, saying, Be it far from Thee, Lord, this shall not be unto Thee.” He had no conception of God’s way, though he understood it afterwards when he wrote of the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow.

The exaltation of Christ cannot be separated from His humiliation. It is God’s answer to all that He suffered in a world dominated by the devil, and as a sacrifice for sins. His own words to His disciples unfolded the story that we love to tell, and which indeed, had been the burden of all Scripture, “Ought not Christ to have suffered these

things," He said, "and to enter into His glory," and Peter took up the same theme and enlarged upon it in his Pentecostal witness, "Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye crucified, both Lord and Christ." And Paul gives the full measure of that exaltation, as the consequence of the descent from Godhead glory to the shame of the cross. "Wherefore God hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a name that is above every name; that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow: of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father" (Philippians 2. 9-11).

That Christ is in heaven, a real living man, raised up from the dead, is fundamental to our faith and must be maintained and proclaimed. The Scriptures are so definite about it, that it may seem needless to stress it, but the fact is that multitudes have no knowledge of it at all, they think of Him as a spirit, and not as a man having flesh and bones (Luke 24. 39). A young man, a true but unstable Christian, said to me after we had listened to an address on the exaltation of the Lord, "I never knew that Christ was a real, living man in heaven before, I always thought that He was a spirit." I need not say that the knowledge he gained that day changed his life. I think it would be right to say that even as the disciples of the Lord during His life with them thought only of the glory, and in spite of His own words had no thought of the sufferings, for they were "slow of heart to believe all that the prophets had

spoken;" so now many sincere Christians think only of the sufferings and do not realise the glory to which Christ has been exalted; they sing, "Simply to Thy cross I cling," and have a very feeble conception of Christ "crowned with glory and honour" at the right hand of the Majesty on high. But our faith is not complete without this, it is the crown of it, and a full, robust and joyful Christian life is impossible if it is not known.

From whichever point we view the ways and counsels of God, whether for His own glory, the blessing of men, or the overthrow of all evil, we see that the exaltation of Christ is a necessity. Take these ways of God on their most simple and elementary ground, that of our blessing. The answer to the challenge, "Who can lay anything to the charge of God's elect?" is "It is God that justifieth." But everything that He does must be according to eternal justice, and how can He justify the ungodly? The answer is "*It is Christ that died*" by His death a full expiation was made for all our offences. "*Yea, rather, that is risen again*" and His resurrection is God's seal upon the value of His death, and the proof that the price paid in it was sufficient; had it not been, death would have held Him as its prey and even the power of God could not have raised Him. "*Who is even at the right hand of God,*" and His exaltation is the declaration of God's entire satisfaction and delight in His work which He accomplished for us. The believer's Substitute and Representative is at the right hand of God. Could He have been there if one sin had remained on Him? Impossible! Yet on the cross He was delivered for our offences; there

He was made sin for us and the Lord laid upon Him the iniquities of us all. Nothing else could prove how completely He has borne away "sin's heavy load" for us, like His exaltation to the Father's right hand. The devil himself could not prevent that exaltation and can say nothing against it, and consequently he cannot bring any charge against us for whom Christ suffered and died. But further, "*Who also maketh intercession for us.*" If He died and rose again for our justification, He lives and intercedes for us that we might live as justified people. It is in Christ that we have redemption; in Him we are justified from all things; in Him we are sanctified, and in Him we have an everlasting, inalienable acceptance with God, but it is in Him who is exalted and crowned in glory, beyond the reach of question or challenge. "This man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God; from henceforth expecting till His enemies be made His footstool" (Hebrews 10). The value of His death abides; His victory over death by resurrection abides; but He is in the glory and as glorified He is the measure and the pledge of our blessing.

The vindication of the Lord and the subjugation of all evil are involved in this exaltation. Let us consider the words of David in Psalm 110. "The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit Thou on My right hand, until I make Thine enemies Thy footstool." The Lord used this great saying in His conflict with the Pharisees as a challenge and a warning, giving them thereby an opportunity of discerning who He was and repenting their enmity towards Him. The words declare His Deity, for they tell us that He was David's

Lord, but they also proclaim His exaltation consequent upon His humiliation and rejection by men. Peter takes them up in this way in his Pentecostal appeal to the nation, and his appeal was most powerful; he set two ways open to his hearers, the one was that of surrender to Him whom God had set at His right hand, but refusing that the other was to be crushed beneath His victorious feet. And it must be one or other for every soul of man.

One most precious feature of our Lord's obedience to His Father's will was His complete committal of Himself to the Father. No thought of self-vindication entered His mind. "He is near that justifieth me" was always the spirit in which He moved onward to the cross. When one of His disciples drew a sword to defend Him in the garden, He said to him, "Put up again thy sword into his place . . . Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to My Father, and He shall presently give Me more than twelve legions of angels? But how then shall the Scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be?" And when at last His enemies had done their worst and He hung rejected and put to shame upon the cross, and the chief priest with the scribes and elders mocked Him saying, "He trusted in God; let Him deliver Him now, if He will have Him: for He said, I am the Son of God," He sought no deliverance, and died apparently unheard by heaven. But He was heard. "Thou hast heard Me from the horns of the unicorns," and His exaltation to God's right hand is God's answer to that complete obedience and perfect trust.

In His life of humiliation He proved Himself worthy to command

all things for God; and the Father has given all things into His hands. He has set Him "far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: and hath put all things under His feet, and has given Him to be head over all things to the church." And woe be to those who refuse to own His supremacy, be they men or devils. God's will and purposes shall be carried out to the last letter of them and all are centred in Christ in the glory of God.

It is clear that God created the earth as we know it for man's habitation, for His delights were with the sons of men, and He crowned Adam as the head of it, giving him a glorious dominion which he was to hold in fief for God. How soon he handed over his dominion to the devil and lost his crown and became subject to death, and every member of his race is like the head of it. Struggle as they may to regain the lost crown, and no matter how great their ambitions and powers, they cannot do it, all their efforts are brought to naught by death, and the crown lies beyond

death. Was then God's purpose that man should have this dominion to be frustrated? That could not be; but we must look away from the first man to the Second, from the first Adam to the Last Adam, even as God has done. And we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour. He has gained the crown, but He could only do it through death. By the grace of God He tasted death for everything. He came down into a ruined creation, groaning beneath the curse and the power of death to remove the mortgage that was on it; He became man to stand in the place of man who had ruined himself, and to take up all his liabilities and to taste death in all its bitterness that He might remove it; and having humbled Himself to the lowest point He has been raised to the highest and all things have been put in subjection under His feet. But not yet is this manifested. This is the "not yet" period, the period of faith. But faith has eyes that see things that are to come, and is assured that they must be, and has the present pledge of them in Jesus crowned with glory and honour.

Prayer.

Is your dependence upon Christ like that of an infant upon its mother? It cannot bear to leave her because, not only are its wants met by her, but it learns that she is the *source* of its supply.

The sense so peculiar to real prayer is that the greater our need, and the more we need, the nearer we seek to get to the Lord, as if the only chance and the only hope of relief is our being with Him.

One thing is fixed in my mind—that He has what I want, and that I have nowhere else to get it; this is the first great sense of prayer—absolute dependence on God, and His infinite ability to meet what I require.

The nearer we get to the Lord, the more we feel dependent upon Him, and the more we get occupied with Him instead of our circumstances.

“PREACH HIM.”

Inglis Fleming.

(Gal. 1. 16. *A word to fellow-workers.*)

MANY years ago I was about to speak at a meeting for young people. Taking me aside for a moment, a servant of God whispered to me “Speak well of Him.”

The words have echoed and re-echoed in my mind through nearly half a century. Now I pass them on to my fellow-christians and fellow-workers, in “the gospel concerning His Son.”

Is there not a danger of our preaching some IT instead of preaching HIM? The “IT” may be precious indeed and valuable beyond words to express. But while through it the conscience may be reached and purged, the heart may be left unattracted by and unattached to Him who is the true centre of the gospel story.

It is important to preach repentance (this is often overlooked, see Luke 24. 47 and Acts 20. 21), forgiveness of sins, justification, peace, eternal life and other glorious truths but all these should be made subservient to Himself—for He is the gospel, and the blessings professed in the glad tidings are through Him and in Him.

After Pentecost the apostles ceased not teaching and announcing the glad tidings that Jesus was the Christ (Acts v. 42). In Him the prophecies had their fulfilment. He the Messiah was their subject. The crucified now glorified Jesus was He. So in Samaria Philip preached the Christ to them (Acts 8. 5). They knew that Messiah was to come

(John 4. 25). He had come and the blessing was for them as well as for the Jews.

To the treasurer of Candace the same evangelist preached Jesus (Acts 8. 35). Jehovah—the Saviour the subject of the Scripture the eunuch was reading was announced as glad tidings to this seeker after God.

Saul of Tarsus having had the vision of the Lord of glory and being filled with the Holy Spirit “straightway in the synagogues preached Jesus that He is the Son of God” (Acts ix. 20). The full personal glory of the One he had scorned was revealed to him and now communicated to others. The Son of the Father come to bring the saved one into a new glorious relationship was proclaimed.

Peter in the home of Cornelius the Gentile presented Christ in His life of service among men, in His death, in His resurrection and in His appointment as Judge of living and dead. And then declared how all the prophets bore witness that whosoever believed on Him should receive the remission of sins. HIS person was the object of faith (Acts 10. 38-43).

So Saul, now Paul, at Antioch spoke of the bringing by God to Israel a Saviour Jesus, of His rejection and rising again and of His being witnessed to them. Then testifying that through this Man remission of sins is preached and that all believing in Him are justified (Acts 10. 38-39). At Thessalonica he

opened up and laid down that the Christ must have suffered and risen up from among the dead adding “This is the Christ, Jesus whom I announce unto you” (Acts 17. 3). To the Athenians he announced the glad tidings of Jesus and the resurrection (Acts 17. 18).

In the epistle to the Romans—the great treatise on the gospel—we find God’s glad tidings concerning His Son (come of David’s Seed according to the flesh, marked out Son of God in power, according to the Spirit of holiness by resurrection of the dead) Jesus Christ our Lord (ch. 1. 3, 4).

There we learn how the word of righteousness refers to Him as come down into incarnation and death then raised from the dead and made Lord. And that confessing Him as Lord with the mouth and believing that God has raised Him from the dead brings righteousness and salvation (ch. 10. 6-9).

Addressing the Corinthians Paul could say “We preach Christ crucified . . . God’s power and God’s wisdom” (1 Cor. 1. 23). Among them he judged it well to know only Jesus Christ and Him crucified. The Person and His rejection by the world were prominent. (ch. 2. 2). “We preach not ourselves but Christ Jesus the Lord,” he avers to them later (2 Cor. 4. 5).

Writing to the Galatian converts he says, “When God . . . was pleased to reveal His Son in me that I may announce Him as glad tidings.” And in this epistle solemnly warns against any pseudo gospel (Gal. 1. 8-10; 2. 15, 16). “Christ in you the hope of glory whom we announce” he writes to the saints at Colosse (Col. 1. 28).

While at Rome, a prisoner, he rejoiced that Christ was preached even though by some it was in a spirit of envy and strife. “Christ is announced whether in pretext or in truth,” he exultingly declares (Phil. 1. 17-18). “Christ is preached raised from among the dead” (1 Cor. 15. 12). He, God manifest in flesh, justified in the Spirit, has appeared to angels, has been preached among the nations (1 Tim. 3. 16).

Other Scriptures might be referred to but enough have been referred to to show how the glorious person of the risen Son of God, Jesus Christ was the preacher’s theme and that in Him all was Yea, and Amen, of the promises of God to the glory of God (2 Cor. 1. 19, 20). Paul’s glad tidings and the preaching of Jesus Christ lead on to the revelation of the long hidden mystery now made known.

It has been said that faith in the Person of Christ the Son of God is spoken of a hundred times in the New Testament while faith in His work is mentioned but seldom.

In conclusion may I add a word on “We preach not ourselves” (2 Cor. 4. 5). Is there not a danger of making ourselves prominent, in telling of wonderful conversions through our ministry, of remarkable conversations we have had with this one or that one, of surprising results through our preaching here or there and so forth? If we fall into this peril we may leave our hearers occupied with the preacher rather than with the Son of God the Saviour, to their serious loss.

Let us concentrate on Christ in preaching and teaching and announce HIM as glad tidings to all—so will He be glorified.

THE KING: HIS VICTORY, HIS CORONATION, HIS PALACES.

F. B. Hole.

(Psalms 45, 46, 47, 48.)

AN atmosphere of great enthusiasm and triumph pervades the whole of Psalm 45, which is made all the more striking by the sudden transition from the gloom of depression and defeat which pervades the whole of Psalm 44. In that Psalm, the heart of the Psalmist pours forth its confusion and its cries. In this, it overflows with a good matter. The Divine hand has, as it were, drawn aside the curtain and revealed THE KING. As HE steps upon the scene every cry is hushed, and every heart is turned to praise.

A vision of the coming King burst on the writer of this Psalm, whether David or another of the prophets, and he at once found no difficulty in voicing his feelings. His heart simply bubbled up with its glorious theme, and his tongue became as the pen of a ready writer. It is just the same for us to-day, though we are not inspired as he was. Let Christ fill faith's vision, and our spirits are moved, our tongues are free.

For the Psalmist it was a vision of Christ, riding in splendour at His second advent. We too may rejoice at this sight in faith and hope, while we have something of a more intimate nature which seems to go beyond it. In Revelation 4 the glory of God in creation comes before us, and all is as clear and as cool as the crystal sea which is before the throne. But in chapter 5 there appears in the midst of the throne "a Lamb as it had been slain," and all creation is moved to fervent adoration. Both love and praise begin to burn with a most

vehement flame. Nothing moves our hearts quite so much as the sight of the Suffering One who died to redeem us. Still the contemplation of Him in that glory, which presently is publicly to be His, is very moving to us also.

The first thing that impressed the Psalmist was *His personal excellence*. He eclipses the sons of men. He is the vessel of Divine grace, which is poured into His lips, that it may flow forth from thence. He is the One on whom the blessing of God rests, and who is the source of all blessing for others. We know, in the light of the New Testament, why He is fairer than the sons of men. It is not because He is the finest specimen of Adam's race, but because He is not of the first Adam at all. He is "the last Adam," the Head of a new race. He is "the second Man . . . the Lord from heaven" (1 Cor. 15. 45-47).

This fact at once reveals that He stands absolutely alone in His excellence. He is not the first among many who are more or less His equals: He is the altogether incomparable One.

Then, in vision, the Psalmist sees this incomparable One take to Himself *His great power*, and ride forth that He may be displayed in majestic splendour. Nothing stands before Him. He rides prosperously, "because of truth and meekness and righteousness;" that is, in order that truth, meekness and righteousness may be established in the earth. Truth stands in opposition to that which is false and unreal—to the devil's lie: meekness in opposition

to pride and self-sufficiency: righteousness in opposition to all that is lawless, and out of right relations with God. If truth is manifested man must of necessity take his true place in meekness before God, and thus the rights of God be fully established. He who rides forth in majesty to bring these things to pass is Himself the Righteous One. He is the Truth. He is meek and lowly in heart.

To accomplish this *He acts in judgment*. The prophet tells us that, "When Thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness" (Isa. 26. 9). Also he added, "Let favour be shewed to the wicked, yet will he not learn righteousness," and that is being abundantly verified at the present moment. The next age is to be ushered in by very sore judgments, and hence in this Psalm the Messiah is seen girding His sword upon His thigh, and sending His arrows into the heart of the King's enemies. The Psalmist is permitted to have a glimpse of the scene more fully described in Revelation 19, when the Rider on the white horse comes forth to tread the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. As a result of these judgments *the throne of God is permanently established* amongst men, and a sceptre of uprightness is wielded.

The Son of God is addressed in verse 6. This is hardly apparent as we read the Psalm, but is made very clear by the inspired quotation of the verse in Hebrews 1. 8. The deity of "the King" is plainly stated, for He is Son, and it is to "the Son" that these words are uttered. In His throne the throne of God is established in the earth.

But if verse 6 states His deity, verse 7 no less definitely presents His humanity. Having become Man, He is the perfect Man. God is His God: He is the lover of righteousness and the hater of wickedness. Moreover He has "fellows," or "companions," and amongst them He stands *supreme in His gladness*. He is not only more fair than the sons of men, but more glad than all His companions. And this is fitting, for in the days of His flesh He suffered more than any.

It is wonderful indeed that He should have "fellows" at all, for He had none in the days of His flesh. Then He was the single "corn of wheat," (John 12. 24) abiding alone. Here we view Him in the day of His triumph and glory, and the "fellows" are by His side, sharing in His gladness, though in a lesser degree. And it is still more wonderful when we remember that He is saluted as "the Man that is My Fellow, saith the Lord of Hosts" (Zech. 13. 7). He is Jehovah's Fellow in His Manhood, as much as He was in His pre-incarnate estate. Yet He associates others with Himself, who in His risen life become His fellows. A true Mediator He is indeed!

We may also place verse 7, in our minds, alongside verse 22 of Psalm 22, where the Lord is said to praise in the midst of "the congregation." This, when quoted in Hebrews 2, becomes "the church." Verse 7 is quoted in Hebrews 1. 9, and the word translated, "fellows," there is translated "partakers," in Hebrews 3. 14. Darby's New Translation renders the two passages thus: "God, Thy God, has anointed Thee with oil of gladness above Thy companions . . . For we are become companions of the Christ . . ." So

again we find how an Old Testament scripture has such as ourselves in view.

We may summarize, then, the first seven verses of this Psalm by saying that they set before us in prophetic vision the King in His beauty. We can perceive His personal excellence, His glorious appearing, His execution of judgment, His righteous kingdom established, and Himself crowned with supreme gladness in the midst of His glad companions. And we have the happy assurance that when the glad day arrives we shall be amongst His companions there.

The remainder of the Psalm portrays in symbolic language the blessing and glory of Israel in her cities, and even of the cities of the Gentiles, consequent upon the establishment of Messiah's righteous throne. Israel will no longer look back to her fathers and make her boast in them. She will rather (as verse 16 shows) boast in her children, who will be the princes of the earth in that day. And the Name of the once rejected Jesus will be remembered and praised for ever and ever.

We pass on to Psalm 46, and we find a very graphic picture of *the great victory* that will be achieved by the King when He comes forth in His glory. The first three verses give the confidence of the godly, when at last they see that all their help and strength and refuge is in God. The waters—symbolizing nations and peoples in tumultuous movement—may roar, and the mountains—the great established powers of the earth—may shake under the impact. This tidal wave of humanity, lashed into action by the power of Satan, is about to fling itself against the city of God.

But Jerusalem, the city of God, is "the place of the tabernacles of the most High." Faith therefore, recognizing the true character of Jerusalem, whatever may be its actual state at the moment, is full of confidence in the presence of God in her midst. At the actual moment, when the nations assemble against her like a flood, she will be defiled by the oppressions of Anti-christ, with the abomination that maketh desolate in her midst. Nevertheless she is the city of God, and faith lays hold of that fact, and expects God to manifest Himself in her midst for her deliverance. "God shall help her, and that right early."

"Right early," means, as the margin shows, "when the morning appeareth," or, "at the dawn of the morning." Faith's expectation will not be misplaced, for the dawning of the morning without clouds will take place when the King rides forth in majesty, and His right hand teaches Him terrible things in judgment. No true morning will rise upon earth's night until *that* morning appears.

Verse 6 is a very brief, but most graphic, description of God's great victory and man's utter defeat. The little verse is like a drama in four acts.

"*The heathen raged.*" We see the nations in a state of excitement bordering on frenzy. They are full of fury and threatenings and slaughter. The opening verses of Psalm 2 have told us why they are in this raging condition. Their real animus is against God and His Christ. They desire to break their bands asunder and to cast away their cords from them.

"*The kingdoms were moved.*" We now see the kingdoms of men in a

state of flux and dissolution. Some kings are overthrown, according to Daniel 7, as "the beast" rises to his place of dominating authority. All are in a condition of change and transition.

"*He uttered His voice.*" Quite a simple thing, this! None of the fuss, and scheming, and elaborate arrangements which characterize men when they go forth to war! The Lord Jesus appears in His glory, and "His Name is called the Word of God." Further, "Out of His mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it He should smite the nations" (Rev. 19. 11-15). He has merely to utter His voice and His adversaries are overthrown.

"*The earth melted.*" In these graphic words the overthrow is described. The whole earth is represented as reduced to such a state of fluidity as renders it ready to be remoulded by His mighty hand for the millennial age that He is about to introduce.

When these things come to pass Israel will indeed know that the Lord of Hosts is with them, and stripped of all their former self-confidence they will find their refuge in the God of Jacob. They will be able to address any who fear the Lord, and are the spared from among the nations, to come and behold the great work of God in judgment, how He has desolated the seats of man's pride and, breaking all his weapons of war, has made wars to cease. By the imposition of His supreme will upon men He will quell their fighting spirit.

In view of all this the way of the saint is very simple. It is to cease from fruitless efforts to accomplish what will only be accomplished when

the Lord Jesus appears in His glory. Our business is not to put the world right, but to be witnesses to our absent Lord. When He comes He will soon put the world right; and meanwhile the word to us is, "Be still, and know that I am God."

In Psalm 47 we are permitted, in the spirit of prophecy, to contemplate *the coronation of the great King*. All the peoples, that are found after judgment has taken its course, are invited to rejoice and triumph. Jehovah is seen to be the Most High—His Millennial Name—as also He was seen to be in the previous Psalm; and He has proved Himself to be terrible in the judgments He has executed. Also, as a result, Israel holds the primary place on earth with the nations subdued before them, and their inheritance enjoyed as chosen of God.

The Psalmist sees God ascending the throne. God reigns over the nations. God is King of all the earth. God is gone up amid the shoutings of the redeemed. It is not now God as shrouded in the Shekinah cloud, but God revealed and well-known in the person of Jesus Christ our Lord. He is the great King, and the crown rests upon His sacred head, that once was crowned with thorns. He becomes the theme of universal praises. Once He was "the song of the drunkards" (Psa. 69. 12), now He is surrounded with those who sing "praises with understanding."

"The heathen," (ver. 8) means, as in other places, the various Gentile nations who had not the knowledge of God as Israel had. When the Lord Jesus ascends the throne, then indeed will it be said, "God reigneth over the heathen." The nations will have been subdued by judg-

ment; but not only this, there will also be found those of the nations who have gladly received Him. In the New Translation the first part of verse 9 reads thus: "The willing-hearted of the peoples have gathered together with the people of the God of Abraham." This makes the matter pretty clear.

The people of the God of Abraham are Israel—the true Israel of God, who enter the millennial age. Then also there is going to be "a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues," who are going to stand "before the throne" (Rev. 7. 9)—"the sheep" of Matthew 25. 33. They will be in a very true sense the willing-hearted of the peoples. The "shields of the earth" which belong to God will have flung their protection around them, equally with the godly remnant of Israel, and brought them safely through the judgment to the age of glory. They, together with Israel, will clap their hands and triumph when Jesus assumes the crown. They will swell His praises, and celebrate earth's jubilee. That will be the day when "HE IS GREATLY EXALTED."

Lastly, in Psalm 48, we are given a prophetic glimpse of Jerusalem in her millennial glory, when she will be *the dwelling and palace of God on earth*.

Her excellence and beauty, as the place on earth where God manifests Himself, is celebrated in verses 1 and 2. The Jerusalem before the mind of the inspiring Spirit of God, is doubtless the one described in Ezekiel, chapters 40-48; and it is significant that this prophecy follows two chapters (38 and 39) which describe the final overthrow of the

nations by an act of God. The temple, which will be the crown and glory of that city is described as, "the place of My throne, and the place of the soles of My feet, where I will dwell in the midst of the children of Israel for ever, and My holy Name, shall the house of Israel no more defile" (Ezek. 43. 7). It will be "the mountain of His holiness."

In her palaces God is known. As Ezekiel tells us, "The name of the city from that day shall be, The Lord is there [Jehovah-shammah]" (48. 35). In the first place He will be known there as a refuge, or high fortress, for Armageddon has just taken place. The kings of the earth were assembled "to the battle of that great day of God Almighty" (Rev. 16. 14). They have been utterly discomfited and broken; so much so that the spared of Israel will say, "As we have heard, so have we seen . . ." They had heard of God's great work of deliverance in the days of old (See, Psa. 44. 1) and had been grievously disappointed when they expected Him to accomplish a like deliverance through themselves. Now, when the Lord Jesus has come forth in His glory, and accomplished at one stroke, and by His mighty arm alone, a deliverance which goes beyond the highest hopes of men, they acknowledge with thankfulness that the work is done. They have seen with their own eyes all that they had heard and more than they had hoped: and the beauty of it is that in contrast to any previous deliverance, which lasted only for a time, this deliverance abides, "God will establish it for ever."

And now God is known in her palaces in another way: not only as a refuge, but in that loving-kind-

ness which is proper to Himself. Now will be fulfilled that prophecy of Zephaniah, which is so exceedingly beautiful that we quote it at some length: "Sing, O daughter of Zion; shout, O Israel; be glad and rejoice with all the heart, O daughter of Jerusalem. The Lord hath taken away thy judgments, He hath cast out thine enemy: the King of Israel, even the Lord, is in the midst of thee: thou shalt not see evil any more. In that day it shall be said to Jerusalem, Fear thou not: and to Zion, Let not thine hands be slack. The LORD thy God in the midst of thee is mighty; He will save, He will rejoice over thee with joy; He will rest [be silent] in His love, He will joy over thee with singing" (3. 14-17). The great JEHOVAH, revealed as JESUS, will be rejoicing in His redeemed people, resting in His love. No wonder then that they think of His loving-kindness, and are filled with His praise.

They think of His love as those brought into nearness to Him. They can say, "We have thought of Thy loving-kindness, O God, in the midst of Thy temple." Formerly they had been thinking of their own desolations and sorrows, far from the house of God in the "land of Jordan, and of the Hermonites, from the hill Mizar" (Psa. 42. 1-6). All is altered now. The King of glory has been manifested. His right arm has been victorious. He has mounted His throne and assumed His crown. Mount Zion rejoices. She has towers and bulwarks, and she has become a palace, for God is there. From her as a centre there goes forth the praise of God to the ends of the earth.

That praise is to be according to the Name of God, as verse 10 tells

us: that is, the praise will be according to the way in which He will have made Himself known; it will be in keeping with it, for it will spring out of it. God will be known not only in a suffering Christ, but also in a victorious Christ. What praise will spring out of *that* knowledge!

We close with the last verse of Psalm 48. Here we seem to have the conclusion of the matter, as it concerned the Psalmist himself and the saints of his day—and as it concerns ourselves also. He speaks of "THIS GOD." What great depths are found here! The God who is known in this wonderful way is before us: and He "*is our God for ever and ever.*" Is it not so? We are to have the light and power of this knowledge of God. And we are not merely to have it as on-lookers, for we have a vital interest in Him: He is *our* God. Nor is it a transient interest, but *for ever and ever.* All this that we have seen God to be—revealed in the victorious Christ—He is abidingly for us. We may count upon Him. We may wait patiently for Him.

The difficulties that confront us to-day may be very different to those contemplated in these Psalms, but our God is no different. THIS GOD is our God, right enough. And everything hinges upon that. We may be defeated. Being ignorant of Satan's devices—though we ought not to be—we may be defeated a hundred times, but the last conflict, even for the church, is when the Lord intervenes. One battle, the last, lies altogether in His hands. He will break the bands of the grave for us, and meet the church as His completed body in the air, which has been the stronghold of the adversary's power.

NOTES ON JOSEPH.

J. Houston.

OF all the Old Testament characters, which God has been pleased to present to us for our study and profit, Joseph is unquestionably the most beautiful. When we review his lovely life, of which no outward blemish or fault is recorded, and contemplate his love and devotion to his father, his kind and gracious conduct towards his brethren, his tenderness of heart and readiness to forgive wrongs, his purity, integrity and righteousness towards the world, we cannot fail to see that he has a place above all others as a type of the Lord Jesus. Others may set forth, by the grace conceded to them, some particular trait of the Lord Jesus; but Joseph presents to us, in so far as the imperfect can foreshadow the perfect, a complete picture of Him in His lowly pathway, right on to His exaltation in glory. And so strikingly simple and straightforward is his life, in its typical import, that even a child can understand it. For this reason it is more read, more often referred to, by expositors, teachers and preachers, than any other Old Testament character.

His life is essentially divided into two parts; one part dealing with his humiliation, rejection and sufferings; the other, with his exaltation and glory.

He is a lad of seventeen years when he is introduced to us as the beloved of his father. "Now Israel loved Joseph more than all his children, because he was the son of his old age" (Gen. xxxvii. 3) We would not say here that Jacob indulged in favouritism. His predilection for Joseph was not a mark of paternal

weakness, but a fact recorded by the Holy Spirit to give us, in typical form, the unique and peculiar love God the Father had for His well-beloved Son. And it is to be observed, that whatever God's children may have of blessing and nearness of relationship to Him, there remains a unique place in His love which belongs exclusively to the "Son of His love." We read that the Father loves the Son, and has given all things into His hand. His place is never lost sight of as Son of the Father's peculiar love, however great the blessing of those who are accepted in Him. They are the objects of God's grace; He is the eternal Son, Who was ever in the bosom of the Father.

Jacob made a coat of many colours for Joseph. We may be sure this distinguishing garment was never intended to provoke the envy of his brethren, though, in point of fact, it had this sinister effect. It was the tunic which extended to the ankles, with sleeves reaching to the wrists, usually worn by young men or maidens of nobler rank (2 Sam. xiii. 18). And whatever it might signify, according to oriental usage or how it might appear before the envious eye of his brethren, Jacob viewed it with satisfaction and complacency. And may it not be taken as a type of that which adorned the Lord Jesus, and which ever came before the Father's eye, giving him infinite satisfaction and pleasure? And what was it that adorned the Lord Jesus, as perfect Man, here in this world? His beautiful life. That came under the Father's eye, and gave Him satisfaction and delight. We see this in the fact the

Father opened the heavens over Him and said, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." And, without forcing the type, the "many colours," or as it may be rendered, "many pieces," might be taken as prefiguring the various graces that the Lord Jesus set forth in perfection. What a perfect blend there was in Him of every grace, and all that was well-pleasing to the Father!

Coming to his dreams, we see in them the counsels of God. But in these, as in everything else with reference to him, his brethren see nothing but further cause for envy. They look on him with an evil eye, and everything they see in him, or hear from him, is misinterpreted. How this arrests us, as we compare it with what we have in the Gospels, where we see the blessed Lord viewed with jealousy as the Object of the Father's counsels, misunderstood as to His words, and hated without a cause!

The first dream was of the sheaves bowing down to his sheaf; the second, of the sun and moon and eleven stars making obeisance to him. We suggest the former refers to earth; the latter, to heaven, as the symbols would indicate. We have scriptural warrant for taking the sheaves as conveying the idea of ingathering or harvest, as may be seen from the 126th Psalm, where the restoration of Israel is contemplated. The bringing again of the sheaves is not the conversion of the heathen, but the restoration of Israel to their land. This, of course, is earthly. The sun, moon and stars are heavenly bodies, and would naturally indicate the heavenly side. It is remarkable that only *eleven* stars are mentioned, thus signifying that Joseph, who was the *twelfth*, would

be rejected before he would become the chief of the family.

We know that all that is in heaven and in earth will be gathered together in Christ, as is stated in Ephesians 1. 10. He is the Object of the Father's counsels, and everything will be headed up in Him. All the fulness of the Godhead dwells in Him, and from that fulness He will fill everything in heaven and in earth. Naturally, the great Antetype, the blessed Lord, goes far beyond anything foreshadowed by Joseph, or his dreams. Albeit in Joseph, and his dreams, we have an arresting type of Christ's exaltation, He being the great Administrator of all the fulness of the Godhead.

But the counsels of God, as set forth in Joseph's dreams, are not apprehended by his brethren, nor, indeed, by his father. On hearing these dreams, his brethren "envied him"; his father "rebuked him". Only by faith can God's counsels be apprehended. This faith was lacking in Jacob, to say nothing of his sons. The latter were altogether blinded by envy. How greatly tested Joseph must have been, knowing that according to the counsels of God, he was to be the deliverer of his people, and yet to be utterly misunderstood and hated by his own brethren. But he was but a feeble type of the Lord Jesus, Who came to His own, and His own received Him not, and was hated by His own without a cause.

And before Joseph gets to the place of power, he must needs go down in deep humiliation and suffering. Just as the sufferings of the Lord Jesus were before His glory, so Joseph had to suffer, and

suffer unspeakably, before he reaches his glory. He must learn by experience what it is to be despised, hated and rejected. He had to bear the still greater sorrow, of being sold by them into the hands of the Gentiles, when his soul was in anguish. No pitying eye saw his grief, and no sympathetic ear heard his cries for help. Into the hands of the Gentiles he was delivered, and carried away to Egypt, that is, figuratively into death.

In all this he but feebly typifies the Man of Sorrows. Here we are reminded of His humiliation and grief. All the power of evil was united to cast Him out. Of Him it might well be written, long before it had its fulfilment, and as being uttered by Himself: "Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by? behold and see if there be any sorrow like unto My sorrow, which is done unto Me." There never was sorrow like that endured by the Man of Sorrows. And how our hearts are drawn out to Him in love and gratitude, when we take cognizance of the fact that it was on our account He suffered it all! The theme of His sorrows and sufferings will be ours to ponder for all eternity. With glad hearts we will celebrate His victory over death; but with love and gratitude we shall ever go back to His sorrows and sufferings. His love that was stronger than death will fill our hearts, while we will worship Him as One Who loved us and gave Himself for us!

Turning now to the side of God's unerring providence, we see that the malice of hatred of Joseph's brethren carry out the purposes of God. This is wonderful! God's hand was behind the scenes, and it moved all these for the accomplishment of His

own will. If Joseph is sold into the hands of the Gentiles and given up as dead, God watches over him and turns all the evil to good account. Man is allowed to do his worst to him, while God is working out His best for him. The plan of evil so deceitfully wrought out for destruction, is used in the hand of Him Who is omniscient and omnipotent to work out good. The wrath of man shall praise Him! How the enemy is thwarted! Truly there is no wisdom nor counsel against the Lord. Joseph goes into Egypt, and is bought by Potiphar; afterwards is taken to prison, and from there is called to rule over the land.

And if we glance at the fourth chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, just for one moment we see Herod, Pontius Pilate, the Gentiles, the people of Israel, are all against Christ, the Lord's Anointed. And if we ask, what did this confederation of evil accomplish? One thing, and nothing else. They did but carry out what God's counsel had determined before to be done. How foolish is man in seeking to work evil against God! He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh; the Lord shall have them in derision. It is well said:

Deep in unfathomable mines
Of never-failing skill
He treasures up His bright designs,
And works His sovereign will.

"He sent a man before them, even Joseph, who was sold for a servant: whose feet they hurt with fetters: he was laid in iron: until the time that His word came: the word of the Lord tried him. The king sent and loosed him; even the ruler of the people, and let him go free. He made him lord of his house, and ruler of all his substance: to bind

his princes at his pleasure; and teach his senators wisdom" (Psalm 105. 17-22). This brief reference to Joseph is the inspired comment on his imprisonment and exaltation in Egypt. So that we see, the slave and prisoner is set on high, to bind at his pleasure, and teach Pharaoh's senators wisdom. All Egypt's store is placed under his care; and as wise administrator he distributes to the hungry people. From far and near they come to him, and he gives to them of Pharaoh's bounty. Whenever need is felt, and whatever that need may be, all come to him for the solution of all their problems. "Go unto Joseph," said Pharaoh; "what he saith to you, do." Honour, glory, power, wisdom are his to rule over all the land. And when we consider it in the light of his rejection, we see the answer of God to all his sufferings. What a position for him who was cast into the pit, sold to the Gentiles, imprisoned and wronged by all. But it was determined that blessings should be "on the head of Joseph, and on the crown of the head of him that was separate from his brethren."

Necessity compels his brethren to come to him. He would see then the truth of his dreams, for "they bowed down themselves before him with their faces to the earth." He assumed a hard attitude towards them, no doubt to lead them to repentance; but in his heart he had nothing but love for them. He ministered to their need, and sent them away, charging them to bring back his brother Benjamin. They returned with Benjamin. On this occasion, he revealed himself to them. Their embarrassment and fear were

great; "they were troubled (lit. terrified) at his presence." But he drew them near to himself, kissed them, and spoke kindly to them. Here we see his great love for them. And how this sets forth the way the Lord Jesus receives sinners! He receives them with love that knows no measure. No unkind feeling is found in His heart; no revengeful thought passes through His mind. He receives sinners kindly, and blesses them from His own fulness of grace.

When Joseph sent his brethren away to bring down his father, he gave them full provision. And when the old man comes down to Egypt, he is destined to the best place in the land, and is nourished near Joseph, his son. What grace we see in all this!

So clear is the foregoing in its typical teaching that comment is unnecessary. Christ will rule over all, the wise Administrator of all the fulness of God. His people Israel will be associated with Him in a very near way. "Thou shalt be near unto me" was the word Joseph gave to Israel; and in that place of nearness he and all his family were to be "nourished." This will have its fulfilment in Christ, when He rules and administers in all the universe. Then Israel will be near to Him in that day of His glory and power, and intimately associated with Him in the universal administration of blessing. And since His blessed fulness is now available to faith, may we take our place of nearness to Himself, that our souls be richly blessed, while famine prevails in the dark world around us!

SONSHIP.

James McBroom.

(Continued.)

IN full accord with all we have seen, the Spirit unfolds through Paul in the Epistle to the Ephesians the counsels of God, and the new creation. The link is given in the message to the disciples (John 20. 17). He spoke there of "My Father and your Father, My God and your God," and in this Epistle we get two remarkable prayers, one to the God of our Lord Jesus Christ and the other to His Father, now, through grace, become our God and Father. Could words be found to shew more clearly the difference of His Person, and relationship with the Father and ours who, by grace, come in by adoption. Never once did He say, our Father, as including Himself with them. God is leading many sons to glory, and for that He gave "His own Son." The message which reveals the new relationship which is founded upon His death, and gives association with Himself in life, and nature, maintains at the same time, His own proper place with the Father, in words which put the matter beyond the region of dispute.

The suitability of the Lord's words to the overcomer in the Philadelphian church as fitting in with His message in John 20 and with the two Ephesian Prayers will not be questioned. "He that overcomes, him will I make a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall go no more out; and I will write upon him the name of My God, and the name of the city of My God, the new Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from My God, and My new name" (Rev. 3. 12). How sweetly does He repeat the words "My God." Once only, in the history of Time had

these words been duplicated by Him, and well we know that that was in the hour which must stand alone for ever, in that same history.

Looking for a moment at the two prayers in the Ephesian Epistle, they seem to cover the whole ground of divine counsel, concerning the Assembly. It may be best to take each in its setting in the chapter in which it appears. The first chapter opens with the counsels of God, and closes with Christ the exalted Man, Head over all things to the Church which is His body. The closing words touch the truth of the mystery which is the outstanding feature of Paul's ministry and joins with the truth of chapter 3 and the prayer there.

The God of our Lord Jesus Christ (Chap. 1. 17) is the Father of glory, the origin and source of all that is morally excellent. The desire is that the saints might get the full knowledge of Him in a three-fold way, namely; that we may know what is the hope of His calling, and what the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the surpassing greatness of His power which he wrought in Christ when He raised Him from the dead. The hope of His calling refers to the consummation in glory when sons shall be at home with the Son in the unbroken joy of the Father's love for ever. The riches of the glory of His inheritance is the vast scene of glory which is for God and which He takes up in and by the Assembly. Our inheritance is contingent on our calling as sons and is given in v. 10 and 14. It connects with the first petition and speaks of the day of display when

all that is proper to sonship will be ours to enjoy with Himself for ever. God's inheritance is that world of bliss which is filled by the many families, but taken up in the sons which are His own workmanship created in Christ Jesus; that company which, indeed, will be His eternal dwelling place (Rev. 21. 3: Eph. 3. 21). It greatly helps to take the first petition of the prayer along with v. 3-8, the second with v. 11-14, and the third with v. 20-23.

What a blaze of glory is here and what marvels concerning the Son of God's love. Do not let us forget that the counsels of God centre in the Son; it is because of this that we are brought in, but if we are brought in it at all it is to nothing less than sharing with Himself all that He has won. The prayer gives what is necessarily eternal, but stops at the glorious kingdom display. The points of it are the calling, the inheritance and the power that operates in the new creation. God is its theme, Christ and His glory are the objective, and for this we are brought in. All is closely linked with the truth of the House of God. The saints are God's workmanship; He dwells in His sons: they are His household, to set forth the honour and glory of their God.

Chapter 2, shews God's house as the resting place of the glory, the centre from which His testimony of life and blessing emanates. There are salvation (v. 8) made nigh by the blood (13), the new man (15), reconciliation and the body of Christ (16), access (18), and citizenship (19) these necessitate the House of God, set up to be the depository of every blessed feature of the divine system. From this springs the parenthesis of chapter 3. The spirit lays hold of

one of the main items of truth from chapter 2; namely, the body of Christ (see 2. 16), and dwells on the great truth of Christ and the Assembly, as the mystery which had been hid in God, but was now made known, and which as we have said, is the outstanding feature of Paul's ministry.

In chapter 3, the place of the Assembly is shewn in relation to the creation. God created all things by Jesus Christ to the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in the heavenly places might be known by the Church the manifold wisdom of God." The tremendous greatness of all this puts the Apostle on his knees to pray to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. In chapter 1 the prayer was in three great petitions, to the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, here it is to His Father; there it was that we might know certain things; here it is that the Christ, who is the Centre of it all, might dwell within us. Here one great thought suggests another, or in other words, one great thing rises out of another till we reach the grand climax of being filled into all the fulness of God.

We do not dwell further on this. The link between sonship and the truth of the body of Christ, consists in the way eternal counsel has designed, that God should have a bride for His Son, and that those He has marked out for companionship with Him as sons, should be the company which form His body and bride to come out with Him in His splendour in the day of displayed glory. This shews what the saints are to God the Father in the calling of sonship, and what they are to Christ the risen Man in fulness of life. In the former we are

associated with God's Son, He the Firstborn, we His companions, the company He is not ashamed to call brethren; all being the work of the Holy Spirit, who is here to glorify the Father and the Son. If comparisons may be permitted in such an exalted sphere of blessing, the filial place must be first; the bride of Christ is for the display of Himself in that day of wondrous glory, when she is seen as "a bride adorned in holy splendour"; but what the saints are to the Father, as companions of His glorious Son, carries us, in thought, beyond the possibility of display to the inner circle of holy love, and the intimacies of the Father and the Son, as filled with the Spirit for ever.

The above may be beautifully amplified in the practical part of this epistle (Ephesians). Note the double bearing of the practical life in testimony and conflict. Passing over chapter 4 where the saints are seen as God's House we reach in chapter 5 the highest character of practice ever set before a creature. And just as the relationship is twofold so also is the bearing of the moral obligation. "*Be ye imitators of God*" concerns our conduct as sons with the Father but in chap. 6 we are to stand before the enemy, clad in the whole armour of God, as being set for the maintenance of *the rights of Christ here*.

"Be ye imitators of God as beloved children and walk in love" reminds us of the closing paragraph of Matt. 5 where we are to come out like our Father, by loving our enemies, and praying for them which despitefully use, and persecute us. Here we are exhorted to walk in love, and further down to walk in light (Eph. 5. 1, 2, 8). The two words "Love"

and "Light" are given by the Spirit as expressing who God is (1 John 1. 5 and 4. 8, 16). Being brought before God for His pleasure, we take on the impress of Himself in such a way, that we come out here through grace the moral reflex of Himself.

Who can estimate the greatness of the privilege seen in all this? The blessed God would set Himself before the creation, men and angels in the beauty of His Being in Love and Light but deigns to do it in His saints. That we may be capable for it He has suited us morally for Himself by associating us with His Son in the calling, nature and acceptance of the Son. Being made at home in this so that the feelings, tastes, joys and delights proper to such a relationship are ours now; we can, through grace, in the very place where our Lord was cast out and crucified, set forth the nature and character of God.

The other aspect of moral obligation comes out as we have said in Ephesians 6. The Lord Jesus Christ is coming soon to assert His rights with an helmet of salvation upon His head; and wearing the garments of vengeance for clothing, and clad with zeal as a cloak (Isa. 59. 17). Before He comes, He puts His own into His place here to meet the enemy clothed in the whole armour of God (Eph. 6. 10-20). The whole vast inheritance is His both by Creatorial and Redemption rights. These rights are refused and faith and affection are permitted, however weak, to stand for them till He comes again.

"Our struggle is not," says the Apostle, "against blood and flesh, but against principalities, against spiritual powers of wickedness in the

heavenlies" (Eph. 6. 12). These hostile powers are at work to-day in the Christian profession and there can be no quarter given. Joshua fought not for supremacy only but for the complete extermination of the foe, and that conflict in the land was the fore-shadowing of what is ours under the Captain of the Lord's host to-day. May the Lord raise up men for this, "able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness, men whose faces are like the face of a lion, and are as swift as roes upon the mountains" (Exod. 18. 21, and 1 Chron. 12. 8).

May we remember that we are dealing with the high and holy things of our God, "the precious things of heaven," at the moment when the coming of our Lord is just at hand, and when alas there is but little heart for such things, as indeed is evidenced among those to whom much has been given. Yet

there are, thank God, many hearts that beat true to the Lord at this moment. May the spirit of grace and of supplication be upon His people that God our Father may be praised according to His name and the revelation of Himself, and bridal affections be stirred up in all our hearts in view of meeting Him to Whom we owe our all for time and eternity.

"Father, I will that they also whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which Thou hast given Me: for Thou lovedst Me before the foundation of the world" (John 17. 24).

"Now unto Him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, Unto Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen."

Spiritual Revelation. 1 Corinthians 2.

"**BUT** as it is written, *Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for those that love Him, but God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit.*" The Christian faith has this crowning mercy, that it is a mystery without being mysterious. It could never be known except by revelation. You can never establish it by debate, or propagate it by philosophy, or interpret it by logic. It can never be known except as a communicated life, a revelation that comes, not of the wisdom of men but in the power of the Holy Ghost. He knows all that is in the mind of God, and He enables us not only to know what is revealed, but brings

the glorious truths of revelation home in power to our hearts. Note "the things" are not future, but for our present bliss—"God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit." Where is your worldly-wiseman who would have found the "church" in Adam's rib? or the rapture of the church before the judgment in Enoch? or a Jewish remnant carried through the great Tribulation, in Noah's Ark, or the Holy Spirit in Abraham's servant going forth to bring home the bride for Isaac, or the Messiah in Joseph, or Mordecai, or Boaz, or living saints in the boards of the Tabernacle, and a thousand other types, but "God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit."

“EVERY CREATURE OF GOD IS GOOD.”

J. T. Mawson.

THE ceaseless efforts of Satan are directed against every provision that God has made for the good of men, whether they are for “this life that now is or that which is to come.” Under his guidance are many seducing spirits. Some of these evidently direct their attention against the mercies that God has provided for the physical needs of men such as meats and marriage. 1 Timothy 3 speaks of these, they teach doctrines that are called “doctrines of devils . . . forbidding to marry and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth.” The idea conveyed by these doctrines is that a man who obeys them would appear to have a greater sanctity than his fellows, but this we know could only feed his fleshly pride (Col. 2. 20).

Let us consider these things as they are presented to us in the Word that we may know how to use them. They are to be received with thanksgiving. We give thanks for good gifts, and we recognise in so doing that God is the giver of them. We learn that “every good and perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning” (James 1. 17). As we enter into this, these mercies from His hand become the means of communion with Him.

God knows our needs. He is a faithful Creator and He remembers how He has fashioned us. He has given us *bodies* and they need to be nourished and He has provided meats for this. Every mouthful we eat declares our dependence upon

God, and should humble us before Him, we could not live without His provision for our daily needs. The knowledge of this would preserve us from independence of God and unrestrained appetites and keep us thankful to Him every day of our lives.

We have *souls* also, and the soul seeks companionship; it needs relationships in which its affections can be exercised and developed. God's desire is that His creatures should be unselfishly happy, and in His wisdom and compassion He has said, “It is not good that man should be alone.” So He has ordained marriage and the family life. It is true that the Word says, “They that marry shall have trouble in the flesh,” yet, even so, every sensible person realises that the greatest natural happiness that any can know is found in marriage and the family life. And for Christians who dwell together as heirs of the grace of life there is the added joy of the home being the Kingdom of God, in which He is owned in dependence and prayer. So that marriage yields a fuller communion with God than meats.

But we have *spirits* also for we are spirit soul and body, and the spirit can only be satisfied and at rest in God Himself. Hence we have the Word of God and prayer bound up with these creature mercies. “They are sanctified,” we read, “by “by the Word of God and prayer.” The Word of God directs us as to how to use God's mercies, and prayer is the expression of our need of grace from Him in order to use them for His glory. In the Word, God speaks to us, in prayer we

speak to Him. And the Word used for prayer here means we "freely address" Him. It should be a joy to us to know that in these every day, and what might be called mundane, things, God would have us commune with Him. If these gifts are received in the right spirit, every part of a man is benefited, and God is glorified by the thanksgiving. These seducing spirits would spoil all this.

There is always the danger of these good gifts of God being abused. The godless do nothing else, they are unthankful and in consequence make an unholy use of them, for unthankfulness and unholiness are linked together in God's description of men, they are twin features in the lives of those who do not know God. But the Word of God and

prayer will keep us right on this side. If we give thanks to God for His gifts, whether meat or marriage, we shall treat them as His gifts and especially so if we remember that we must give an account to Him as to how we have used them. What a spring of happiness and well-being they may be, sanctified by the Word of God and prayer.

Everywhere the standards of life are being lowered, especially the marriage tie is losing its sacredness, more and more is God being left out of the lives of people, and immorality and revelling given His place. The christian must stand out in contrast to this, and bear witness to the fact that "*godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come*" (verse 8).

THE HEART'S DESIRE.

A. H. Lycett.

Thou glorious light of endless day !
 The universe's Sun !
 Illuminate with living ray
 These hearts, which Thou hast won,
 That we may, filled with life and light
 And love, Thy glories show,
 And, gazing on Thy face so bright,
 Love's living fulness know.

Thus, changed by that transforming sight,
 Our glad rejoicing hearts
 In Thee shall find the full delight
 That knowing Thee imparts ;
 And so, with minds on things above,
 Thy graces we'll display,
 And, growing in Thy grace and love,
 Shall please Thee, Lord, always.

O arm of strength—great in Thy majesty,
 Yet greater still in love, I lean on Thee ;
 Beneath my head Thy circling clasp I find,
 And rest in peace !

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENCE.

"Take up his cross daily."

"Will you please give some help on what 'the Lord meant by a man taking up his cross daily (Luke 9. 22-25). It is perfectly clear what He meant in verse 22, but this other presents a difficulty"—MIDLOTHIAN.

THE question is an important one, and the answer to it is not the one so often given, that a man's cross is an unpleasant duty that he must shoulder daily and see it through; a conscientious man of the world would do that and expect no praise. But taking up his cross is only possible to the Christian, and can only apply to him. It cannot be dissociated from the fact that the Lord was crucified: that was the measure of His rejection by the world, and the disciple is not greater than his Lord.

The figure of speech would be understood when the Lord used it; its deep underlying meaning could not be understood until the Lord was actually rejected by the world and the Holy Ghost had come. Everybody would know in those days that a man carrying his cross was a condemned man on his way to death, but who could understand the moral force of that except by the teaching of the Holy Spirit, and we must go on to the Epistles for that.

A man's cross in those days would have a twofold significance: as to himself, he was as good as dead, and as to the world he had done with it, and both these sides come out in Paul's Epistle to the Galatians. He said, "I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me" (ch. 2. 20), and, "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" (ch. 6. 14). To admit this as truth is one thing, but to have it as a practical daily reality is more, and that is what is meant by taking up his cross daily. It is identification with the rejection and death of the Lord Jesus; the disciple bound in love to his Master follows Him regardless of consequences. It can only be done in the joy of the new life and by the Spirit's power. Hence Paul said, "The life that I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God who loved me and gave Himself for me."

John and Peter at the Sepulchre.

"Compare Luke 24. 12, with John 20. 4, 5, and please say whether it was John or Peter that looked into the sepulchre, and why the difference in the records"—WORCESTER.

It is generally accepted that John's record is that of an eyewitness; and the details that he gives prove it to be so. Notice how often he says, "he saw" (chapter 19. 35; 20. 5, 8, 20). So that we may accept

his account of the visit to the sepulchre as giving in full what actually happened. How far separated from each other were these two men when one denied the Lord with oaths and curses, and the other stood by the

cross; but how closely joined together they were by the sight of that empty tomb.

Luke's Gospel is the Gospel of grace, the Gospel of forgiveness. It is in this Gospel only that it is recorded that the Lord said to Peter when warning him of his fall, "I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not; and *when thou art converted strengthen thy brethren*" and only in this Gospel is it recorded that when Peter did deny his Lord, "*the Lord turned and looked upon Peter.*" Peter needed more grace shewn to him than any of the disciples, and a greater forgiveness, hence he is prominent in the resur-

rection chapter in this Gospel of grace, the Spirit of God makes him so. The fact to be emphasised is that *he* saw the empty tomb, and on his way back from that sight the Lord appeared unto *him*, (verse 34), the only place where this is recorded. He was drawn to the Lord and the Lord drew near to him. His running to the sepulchre was evidence of his true affection for the Lord, and the Lord's appearing to him was the proof of that restoring grace, that is greater than all failure. No wonder that Peter was able afterwards to write to the flock of God "Concerning the true grace of God." There is no contradiction between the records.

THE PROMISE.

W. M. Comer.

"Thou shalt be satisfied."

O, gracious Son of God,
Thou knowest all my heart's desiring flood,
My hunger and my thirst for heavenly food,
And Thou hast said—
"Thou shalt be satisfied."

"Thou shalt be satisfied."

Ah! Thou alone dost know
The strong, deceitful thoughts which taunt me so;
Thy love discerns my inmost, deepest woe,
Thy promise rings—
"Thou shalt be satisfied."

"Thou shalt be satisfied."

Thou knowest how I long,
Out of my impotence to be made strong,
To sing in earth's dark dungeon, Heaven's song,
And hast declared—
"THOU SHALT BE SATISFIED."

To all our wounds, how deep soe'er they be,
Christ is the one sufficient remedy.

THE ROYAL BANQUET.

J. T. Mawson.

HOW inconceivable is the honour put upon us when we are gathered together in the Name of the Lord. God is the Host and we are His guests, and He sets before us a royal banquet. "He brought me into His banqueting house and His banner over me was love." As the certain great King of the parable, made a marriage feast for his son, so has God made a feast, a joyful feast, for the honour of His Son. He would celebrate His delight in His Son and in all that He achieved in His lowly life and death in this world, and we are called to share in His delight and to feast with Him.

And the Holy Ghost has come to be the Servant at the feast. I speak with the greatest reverence of so august a Person—"He shall glorify Me," said the Lord, "for He shall receive 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" (John 16). And if, because we delight in God's beloved Son, we hasten to the time and the place where His own are gathered to feast upon His things, the Father, the Host at the feast, delights in us, "For the Father Himself loveth you, because ye have loved Me," "His banner over me is love."

It is necessary if we are to enter into the fulness of the Faith and its fellowship, to understand that the Father and the Holy Spirit are blessedly engaged in this matter. They have reached out even to us to draw us into the joy of this feast. Think of the Lord's words, "Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona: for flesh and

blood hath not revealed it unto thee but My Father which is in heaven." The Father had been at work preparing Simon for the feast, and He has been at work in every one into whose hearts this heavenly light has shone. And again "when the Comforter is come, whom I will send from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, He shall testify of Me." Thus spake the Lord of the Father and the Holy Spirit. If the Father draws us to the feast—and no man can come to the Son except the Father draw him—the Holy Ghost is there to unfold love's treasures and to spread before our souls the preciousness of Christ.

We feed, of course, for nourishment and strength; but feasting in Scripture also carries the meaning of joy and rejoicing and communion together. "I have eaten my honeycomb with my honey; I have drunk my wine with my milk: eat, O friends; drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved." I feel that we may with utmost reverence, consider these words as describing God's joy in His beloved Son, and His invitation to us to share without restriction in His joy. I know that our vessels are small, the limit is on our side, nevertheless our cups may run over.

We are conscious of course that preparation of heart is necessary if we are to partake of this feast. We are careful to appear clean and decent as to our dress out of respect for our brethren when we gather together, much more should we be concerned as to our spiritual condition before God. It would be a slight upon God who invites us if

we were not. He looks not on the outward appearance but on the heart. So we "draw near, with a true heart, in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water." May God Himself teach us the meaning of that, and also those words of the Lord. "If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with Me" (John 13).

The Father is the Host; His delight in His beloved Son is the

feast, and the Holy Ghost gives the capacity and the power to every guest to share in the feast. Truly we may ask, What manner of persons ought we to be upon whom such an honour is bestowed? And what attraction can the world have for those who have supped at God's table in communion with Him? May the Lord give grace to everyone, that we may each cleanse himself from all filthiness of flesh and spirit, and perfect holiness in the fear of God.

"Thou hast fully known my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering, charity, patience."

It is an immense thing for a servant to be morally descriptive of what he presents. You get this presented by Paul in Philippians. "Those things which ye have both learned and received, and heard and seen in me, do." It was not only what they had heard, but what they had *seen*. Could anything be more beautiful? There is a moral weight about a person who is characterised by what he presents. It is beautifully set forth in Peter's epistle, where an ungodly husband can be won by the chaste conversation of the wife. We should have a great deal more effect upon people, our families and so forth, if there were more of the moral weight of divine grace about us.

"He that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness" (Romans 4. 8).

That is within the reach of every christian. It is the last of the many gifts that have been bestowed upon us as being members of one body in Christ, and it is a great gift. It is not difficult to realise the way the Lord shewed mercy. We are to be like Him. Picking up a child out of the gutter and speaking a kind word to it would be shewing mercy with cheerfulness. To prophesy is the first of these gifts, and probably the greatest; but I would rather have the last without the first than the first without the last. It would be a poor thing to be a prophet and not shew mercy with cheerfulness, or shew a wretched temper at home. And what makes this shewing mercy so beautiful is, it is a service within the reach of everybody, even a child, but it does indicate a heart at leisure from itself.

A COMPREHENSIVE VERSE.

Inglis Fleming.

"For where two or three are gathered together in My Name, there am I in the midst of them" (Matthew 18. 20).

"FOR"

A DIVINE CONCLUSION.

THE conjunction "For" connects verse 20 with verse 19 preceding it. The two should be read together to obtain the complete utterance of our Lord on the subject which commences with the "Again I say unto you," of verse 19.

If two of those forming His assembly were in agreement on earth concerning any matter, they were to ask, and the petition would be granted by His Father in the heavens, "for" His presence—His authority, was with them on such occasions.

Solemn the consideration! The voice of two in feebleness here, supplicating in His Name, would be responded to by the Father of omnipotent power and unlimited resources.

"WHERE"

A DIVINE LOCALITY.

The geography of the place matters not at all. "Neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem" shall men "worship the Father," said the Lord at Sychar's well, His worship would not depend on earthly position, it must be in Spirit and in truth. It was such worshippers that the Father sought (John 4. 21-23). The land or nationality was of no account.

So it is with regard to the coming together of "His own." In any place from the torrid tropics to the frozen Arctic, amid waving palms in

sweltering heat, or wintry winds and ice and snow. All "the habitable earth," in which He rejoiced (because His loved ones found *there* their home), was under His eye. Where such came together He would be found, if they came "in His Name," in His interests and concerns.

"TWO OR THREE"

A DIVINE LIMITATION.

"In the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established." Two or three gave competent testimony. Against an elder no accusation was to be listened to save where there were two or three witnesses.

"Two or three" standing in witness for Christ in the world of His rejection are part of His august assembly on the face of the earth. Greater far is it than any of earth's gatherings. Washington, London, Paris, Berlin have not such an assembly as the assembly of God.

Broken it is as to outward witness, but the eyes of our Lord looked down the vista of centuries and provided for His own in the last days of the church's testimony on earth. "Two or three," out of the vast throng soon to be "gathered together" as one in glory, "two or three" should have His recognition.

"ARE" A DIVINE POWER.

The Holy Spirit is the power by which we come together. "By one Spirit are we all baptized unto one body, whether we be Jews or Gen-

tiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit" (1 Cor. 12. 13). Whatever religious, national or social distinctions were ours, as believers now upon the Son of God, we are formed into a divine unity and as such our spiritual instincts draw us into one another's company and by the Holy Spirit we are led to seek mutual edification and the enjoyment of the things of God.

The sheep of Christ like the natural sheep are gregarious. An unseen power, a spiritual instinct, impels them to seek to associate in a flock, in the one flock of which He is the One Shepherd. A sheep seeking to isolate itself is ill. Is it not so in the spiritual world? Men may seek to keep saints apart. A grieved Holy Spirit is hindered in gathering saints. But we are taught of God to love one another.

"GATHERED TOGETHER"

A DIVINE ASSEMBLING.

"TOGETHER" is one of the key words of the great church letter—the epistle to the Ephesians. It is used of our association with Christ in resurrection life and of our association with our fellow believers. The middle wall of partition has been broken down. Both Jewish and Gentile believers now are in Christ—one new man and as such are linked with one another in time and for eternity. One in nearness and dearness in Christ, we have through Christ "access by one Spirit unto the Father."

Though in a world of opposition we should acknowledge this and "not forsake the assembling of ourselves together as the manner of some is and so much the more as we see

the day approaching." "Gathered together" is the actual coming together in assembly, gathered together into one place (see 1 Cor. 5. 4; 9. 18).

It is not a gathered out from other sets of Christians as is sometimes erroneously stated, but two or three who are actually gathered in, or unto, the Lord's presence.

"IN MY NAME"

A DIVINE BOND.

"Then began men to call upon the name of the Lord." The family of faith in those antediluvian days were marked by this. Calling upon the name of the Lord, distinguished them from others.

And so it has been down the ages. So it was with the Psalmist, who cried, "I will take the cup of salvation, and call upon the Name of the Lord. I will pay my vows unto the Lord now in the presence of all His people."

The public recognition of the Name of the Lord was called for in those other days and it is called for now. Thus Christians are written of as those "that in every place call upon the Name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours" (1 Cor. 1. 2). And we are to "follow with those that call on the Lord out of a pure heart."

It is His Name alone in which the Spirit of God gathers believers. Not in the name of a nation or a great leader or of an important doctrine, or of a form of procedure. No, all these are to be set aside—our gathering together is in the Name of the Lord Jesus alone (see again 1 Cor. 5. 4).

“THERE AM I”

A DIVINE PRESENCE.

It is His presence which glorifies and gives importance to the gathering together. It is He Himself who is there before the heart. This gives a foretaste of the great gathering to Him at His coming.

It may be but “two or three.” There may be no eloquent sermon, or exquisite song. There may be evidence of weakness and poverty and illiteracy. But *He* is there and this gives a quality to everything of which nothing could take the place.

“We’re going to meet the Son of God,” said a servant of God to me on one occasion, when we were about gathering together with some of “His own” to partake of the Lord’s Supper. If this were recognized what solemnity and reverence would mark us when gathered.

His presence known by us will ever draw out our love to Him and praise will rise through Him to the Father (whose Name He makes known to His brethren) as

in the midst of the assembled ones He sings praise (Hebrews 2).

“IN THE MIDST OF THEM”

A DIVINE CENTRE.

Yes He has the central place. It is *He* who is prominent. Not a choir with their thrilling music. Not an organist with his instrumental accomplishments. Not a rite or ceremony however Scriptural. None of these is to engage our thoughts. It is Himself in the midst.

So will it be in a future day when gathered together in the glory of God. A Lamb as it had been slain is seen in the midst of the throne and to Him rise the praises of the redeemed from their glad hearts, as they cry “Thou art worthy . . . for Thou wast slain and hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people and nation.”

Wonderful grace it is that we—some of the redeemed to God—may know Him “in the midst” now and may give Him the worship of our renewed being in spirit and in truth.

Receptivity.

There is a matter that should cause us great searchings of heart; it is as to how far we have appropriated the truth of God that we acknowledge so that our spiritual life is formed by it. We may delight in clear expositions of the truth and yet be unaffected by it. It seems to me that the soul has to be prepared for the reception of the truth. As an example, it is “the good and honest heart” that receives the Word and brings forth fruit with patience, that is, a heart prepared beforehand by the grace of God. I can understand a carnal mind delighting in a well thought out and ably delivered address, but to be in a truly receptive state, there must be self-judgment, and “the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him.” It is a matter that we should pray about, we should earnestly desire that true subjective state that will rightly receive objective truth.

SALVATION AND SATISFACTION.

F. B. Hole.

(Psalms 62 and 63)

THE special character of Psalm 62 is more easily discerned if we observe that one word—"only"—occurs in it no less than six times. In our Authorized Version this is a little obscured since the word, "truly," is used in verse 1, and "surely," in verse 9. If any of our readers are able to consult *Young's Literal Translation*, they will see how strikingly the word marks the Psalm. If they cannot, at least they can for these two words substitute the word "only" in their minds, and so catch the idea.

We shall then see that no less than four times does the Psalmist express his confidence and hope in God *only* (ver. 1, 2, 5, 6). In verses 4 and 9 he exposes fallen man, and expresses his distrust in him, because he is *only* set for the downfall of what is good, and hence he himself, whether of low degree or of high degree, is *only* vanity and a lie.

We shall also see that this trust in God *only*, to the exclusion of every other hope, is the way of salvation, and also the *basis* of the assurance of salvation. While, on the other hand, this distrust of man, since in him there is *only* evil, to the exclusion of all good, brings us face to face with our *need* of salvation, shutting us up to God.

Verses 2 and 6 are almost identical. The only difference is in one word, "greatly," which is introduced in verse 2 to modify the statement. In the earlier verse the Psalmist speaks with a certain hesitancy, or at least with extreme caution. He is not going to say more than he

is absolutely assured of. He is sure that he will not be *greatly* moved—moved a little, perhaps; but *greatly*, No. Many of us, without a doubt, have been just like the Psalmist in this respect. Our trust has been in God, indeed in God alone; and yet we could not *altogether* forget ourselves. Hence an element of uncertainty remained in our minds. We hated the self-confident spirit. We felt sure, in a way; but we did not wish to speak too confidently. We believed and hoped that all was well; but we did not feel inclined to go beyond, "I shall not be *greatly* moved."

The fact is we remembered only too well earlier experiences when we *were* filled with self-confidence, when we *were* amongst the wicked of the world and feared nothing. We remembered too how all our fancied security collapsed like a house of cards, and we were terribly moved. Once bitten, twice shy. So we felt very reluctant to invite being let down again.

Now the Psalmist had had just such an experience, or at least he had seen it in connection with others—that is, if we may assume that David was also the writer of Psalm 10. In that Psalm "the wicked" is described. He shuts God out of all his thoughts, which is the exact opposite of trusting exclusively in God. He is marked by cursing, deceit and fraud; he is the persecutor of the poor. He declares that God has not seen his sin, or that if He has, He does not mind and will never require it of his hand. And so with the utmost assurance he

says in his heart, "I shall not be moved: for I shall never be in adversity" (10. 6). Before the end of that Psalm is reached however we find that he is moved. The God whom he contemns seeks out his wickedness, and breaks his arm, and destroys him out of the land. He is not only moved, but removed in judgment. His boasted security turns out to be a lie.

Psalm 62 corroborates all this. Proud, boastful men, who delight in lies, prove to be nothing but a lie themselves. Once lay hold of the fact that each of us, if we view ourselves simply as men in the flesh, are only *that*, and all our confidence in man, or in self, is gone. We turn to God and to God alone.

The Psalmist is very emphatic on this point. His soul waited upon God alone. Literally, it is that his salvation came from Him, and that He, and no one else, was his Rock and his Tower of defence. This being so, we might take it for granted that he was in a place of absolute security and of full assurance.

However it was not so! And some of us can look back to a time when it was not so with ourselves. We believed on the Lord Jesus Christ; we had faith in His blood, and in nothing else; we surely ought to have been marked by the full assurance of faith, but we were not. We did not get away from ourselves, and our experiences of earlier days. How glibly once we said, "I shall not be moved!" yet we were sadly moved. We will not repeat that folly, since our earlier expectations came to nothing.

Now it is just at that point that we discover a difference between

verse 5 and verse 1. Not only does he exhort his soul to wait only upon God, instead of asserting that he was doing so, but he states now that his *expectation* is from Him. It is not that he has any doubt of his salvation being from Him, for verse 1 states that plainly. But it is very possible to be quite clear that salvation is of the Lord while still cherishing expectations which have their centre in ourselves.

"My expectation is from Him." How great a secret of spiritual liberty and blessing is wrapped up in those simple words. True believers may be found who have a good deal of expectation from the flesh, just as Peter had when he so confidently announced his readiness to go with his Master to prison and to death. Having confidence in the flesh they have expectation from the flesh. Both the confidence and the expectation are utterly wrong, for when Christians are described according to their proper character, we read, "We are the circumcision which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh" (Phil. 3. 3). But we do not learn the true character of the flesh in a day. We may humbly accept what Scripture says as to its badness, but even so we are not exempted from an experimental *proving* of its badness until we say with Paul, "I *know* [and not merely, I *believe*] that in me (that is, in my flesh), dwelleth no good thing."

Most of us know that in our flesh there is a great deal of evil. But if that were all there might still be a little bit of good, and upon that little bit we might base certain expectations. But the truth is that in the flesh good is totally absent. The

fairest thing it produces is vitiated by selfishness and sin. If we have really learned its character, we shall have no expectation of sweet water ever proceeding from that fountain, nothing but bitter. With that lesson well learned, all our expectations of good will centre in God. And we shall not then be disappointed.

Let us join with the Psalmist, and each of us call upon our soul to wait in silence, or rest peacefully, upon God alone, basing all our expectations on Him. Then He only, to the exclusion of all else, will prove Himself to be all that we need—our Rock, our Salvation, our High Fortress. Each of us will then be able to say with the full assurance of faith, "I shall not be moved." The soul that finds all its expectation, as well as its salvation, in God is in an impregnable position. All that is then needed is indicated in verse 8—to trust in Him at all times, to pour out the heart before Him in every emergency, and He proves Himself to be a Refuge.

Salvation, and the assurance of it, however blessed in itself, is not an end, but a means to an end. The end is that God may possess Himself of the soul that is saved, and that the saved soul may possess itself of God. Psalm 63 is a foreshadowing of this, tracing out more particularly the experiences of the soul in its seekings after God. The keynote of Psalm 62, struck in the first verse, is, *My soul waiteth only upon God.* The keynote of 63, also struck in the first verse, is, "*My soul thirsteth for Thee.*" God Himself becomes our supreme desire, and that is exceedingly grateful to Him.

When David wrote this Psalm he was in the wilderness of Judah,

which he calls, "a dry and thirsty land, where no water is." It was a place of no resources, utterly barren of the most fundamental necessities of life; and yet in such a spot as that he was not crying out for food or water, and much less for any of the luxuries of life, but thirsting for God—His power, His glory, His lovingkindness. God had become infinitely attractive to him: he no longer feared Him but desired Him. His experiences, as related in the previous Psalm, had led him to say, "In God is my *salvation* and my *glory*," and this conducted him to a point where God also became all his *desire*.

Let us test ourselves as to these things. Are we at all equal to David as regards our desires? We should be, for the salvation that we enjoy is of a fuller and richer order than was available for him, just as the revelation which we have of God goes far beyond anything which he could have known. He thirsted for God up to the limit of the knowledge that was possible for him—"so as I have seen Thee in the sanctuary," are his words. He remembered how he had gone into the sanctuary and sat before the Lord; and then there had been to his soul rich unfoldings of His power and His glory and His love. Now that he was in wilderness circumstances, he desired nothing better nor beyond this.

We too are in the wilderness, for that is what the world becomes to those who have been saved out of it by the cross of Christ. There is nothing in it to feed the soul or satisfy spiritual cravings. We too have known God in His sanctuary, not now in that tent pitched over the ark, wherein David sought the

Lord; nor in the gorgeous temple that Solomon built: but in that far more wonderful sanctuary to which our Lord referred when "He spake of the temple of His body" (John 2. 21). We have seen God, revealed in Jesus, through His Word. Having begun to know Him thus, we thirst to know Him better.

Thirst such as this is bound to be fully met. Hence we find the Psalmist again speaking of his soul in verse 5: "*My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness.*" This signifies satisfaction of a very full and abundant order. Though in a dry and thirsty land without water, David was in the enjoyment of marrow and fatness: so too we are to be filled with satisfaction in the midst of an empty and dissatisfied world. Such is the desire and purpose of God for us all; and we venture to think that if Christians universally were characterized by a deep and abiding satisfaction, the men of the world would be more deeply impressed by it than by all the gospel sermons that ever could be preached.

The world is full of unsatisfied desire, which leads to covetousness. The word to us is, "Let your conversation be without covetousness: and be content with such things as ye have" (Heb. 13. 5). "Satisfied with your present circumstances" (N. Tr.). Are our present circumstances then so very desirable; are they just what they should be? They are the very reverse of that. They are so undesirable that a clean sweep will be made of them immediately this age closes. Why then are we to be satisfied with them? Because as Hebrews 12 has shown, they are appointed of God to act as chastening and discipline for us, and

also because He has said, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." That is it. We may be satisfied in the midst of present circumstances because there is guaranteed to us the abiding presence of the One for whom we thirst.

It is not that we are to be satisfied with the circumstances themselves. There can be no rest, let alone satisfaction, with circumstances that are full of sin and sorrow and death. We are to be satisfied with them by being in touch with Him who is the Source of satisfaction while we are in the midst of the circumstances: so satisfied that we are filled with praise. In the Psalm the words, "*My soul shall be satisfied,*" are surrounded with expressions of praise. "Thus will I bless Thee while I live." And again, "*My mouth shall praise Thee with joyful lips.*"

And further, the One who satisfies us with the knowledge of Himself and His love, also casts over us the "shadow of His wings." The present circumstances may be oppressive, they may be like the burning sun beating down upon us, but if so, we may find shadow in His wings, as well as satisfaction in Himself.

Once more, in verse 8, the Psalmist speaks of his soul: "*My soul followeth hard after Thee.*" We might have supposed that if, having thirsted for God, he had found full satisfaction in God, there was really nothing more to be said: there could be nothing beyond that. It is true of course that when our souls are in the full and absolute satisfaction of heaven the climax will be reached. But David was far from heaven when he wrote this psalm; he was in the wilderness of Judah.

We too are in a wilderness, and in Christ we have discovered the Fountain-head of satisfaction. So both for David and for ourselves the Source of satisfaction lies outside the scene and circumstances that surround us. Our satisfaction depends upon keeping in close touch with the Source of it, and to maintain that touch He must be pursued.

Hence the necessity for our souls to follow hard after Him. It is not that He avoids us; it is rather that the world, though a wilderness to us, is very full of distracting objects that appeal very strongly to the flesh within us, and so we are very apt to be like children who are diverted by every little butterfly that flutters across our way. Also there are times perhaps when our Beloved seems to withdraw Himself from us, that He may provoke us to a keener following. When the bride of Solomon's Song was somewhat lethargic, and felt for a moment that she could not put on her coat and defile her feet to open to her Beloved, she discovered that He had withdrawn Himself. Then she had to say, "I sought Him but I could not find Him" (5. 6).

But this stirred her exceedingly, and fanned her love to a very vehement flame. She began to speak about Him and to describe Him to others, and there follows that glorious passage that begins, "My Beloved is white and ruddy, the chiefest among ten thousand," and that ends, "His mouth is most sweet: yea, He is altogether lovely. This is my Beloved, and this is

my Friend, O daughters of Jerusalem." Ultimately she found Him, and came up "from the wilderness, leaning upon her Beloved" (8. 5).

These things are an allegory. Certain it is that if in the wilderness of this world we find a satisfying Object in Christ and our souls follow hard after Him, we shall learn how He can conduct us up from the wilderness to the heights of His own glory. We shall enter upon the experience so strikingly described by Paul in Philippians 3. We shall rejoice in Christ Jesus, and find that He eclipses all the best things connected with the flesh. We shall begin to count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus our Lord, and count them but refuse so that we may have Christ for our gain.

In thus following Christ we shall find that, as the Psalmist put it, "Thy right hand upholdeth me." We should put it thus, "Thy Holy Spirit upholdeth me." The Holy Spirit glorifies Christ, firmly attaching our souls to Him, and maintaining us as His followers.

He does more than this. He so fills us with satisfaction that we overflow in blessing to others. Out of our inward parts there flow "rivers of living water" (John 7. 38). There is not only the upward flow of praise, which our Psalm contemplates, but this outward flow of testimony. But these rivers of living water go beyond the Psalms and lead us into the full blessing of our Christian faith.

I have a great need of Christ ; but I have a great Christ for my need.

THINGS MOST SURELY BELIEVED.

J. T. Mawson.

No. 11. Our Great High Priest.

THE closing words of Luke's Gospel are most notable. They tell of the Lord Jesus being carried up into heaven and how His disciples "worshipped Him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy: and were continually in the temple, praising and blessing God." It is this "great joy" pouring itself out in *worship and praise* that arrests the attention. What was the cause of it? These men were distressed and troubled when they knew that their Lord was going away, and He had to comfort them by telling them of His Father's house and of His coming again to take them there. But now that He had actually gone they shewed no sign of being bereft, they were not sorrowing orphans, but men brimful and overflowing with confidence and joy. This must be accounted for. It is interesting and instructive to see that this Gospel by Luke opens with a dumb priest in the temple, and closes with these happy worshipping men in the same place. Clearly they were the true priests, offering up spiritual sacrifices to God, even though they were not sons of Aaron. Nothing but a great, and to them unexpected, event could have achieved this miracle.

It is not hard to discover why the official priest was dumb; an angel had brought good news from God to him, and he did not believe it. His dumb mouth was the outward sign of a dumb heart. A sad beginning to the Gospel, but what a joyous close. We catch the spirit of it, and share its gladness as we enquire the reason of it.

The understanding of these men, beloved of the Lord, had been opened to understand the Scriptures. They saw with hearts that believed that the road that Christ had taken was the only road; "it behoved Him to suffer and rise from the dead the third day." He had fulfilled 'the infallible word and glorified God in doing it, and God had given His righteous answer to His suffering and death by exalting Him to His own right hand. They had seen Him go into heaven and they exulted in His triumph, but the way that He had gone must have added to their joy. "He led them out as far as Bethany"—that shewed their willing subjection to His control, He was their Lord and Leader—"He lifted up His hands, and blessed them." Those uplifted hands and that benediction declared Him to be their great High Priest who had entered into the heavenly sanctuary for them. We must see the meaning of the place into which He has gone and the manner of His going if we are to understand His present High Priestly service. Highest exaltation was His, His going up shewed that, but in that exalted place He would not forget them, the manner of His going shewed that. No wonder they were filled with joy!

We were not there when He was parted from them and "carried up into heaven," yet the fact is recorded that we might believe it, and vision has been given us by the Spirit's indwelling, and "we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of

death, crowned with glory and honour," and we are exhorted to consider Him, the Apostle and High Priest of our profession. This we will now do.

But first we must see what our profession or confession, is. We are addressed as "holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling." This is our confession. We know that if He had not tasted death by the grace of God for us, and purged our sins by His own blood, and come triumphantly out of death, such a designation and confession could never have been ours. We owe it all to Him. He is our Sanctifier, "for He that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one," He has set us apart for God, even as He has set Himself apart" (John 17. 19) and we are one with Him; "for which cause He is not ashamed to call us brethren." If we are His brethren we are sons of God and the glory of God is our destiny. This is the revelation of God's grace to us, and being received by faith it sets us in motion towards the glory, and Christ is our Leader in that homeward march; He is the Captain of our salvation. But we need to be sustained and succoured in this way of faith, for we are beset with infirmities and the road is not always easy to travel; we need a great High Priest, to sympathise with us and to succour us and to save us to the uttermost as we come to God by Him; and this office has been bestowed upon Jesus, our Saviour.

"Lord, in all Thy power and glory
Still Thy thoughts and eyes are here;
Watching o'er Thy ransomed people
To Thy gracious heart so dear."

It is in the Epistle to the Hebrews that the Lord is shewn to us in this

attractive way, and it opens with the declaration of His Divine glory: He is the SON. None less than He could have made purgation for our sins, or could lead us to the glory of God. But He had to come down to us and take part in flesh and blood for this, and chapter 2 plainly teaches the truth as to His coming into manhood. There was nothing lacking in Him as to His eternal Deity. He was the SON. There was nothing lacking in His complete manhood, He was JESUS, and what He was He ever will be. This truth as to His Person is necessary for us; He only, who is God and man in one blessed Person, could be our Saviour, and He only could be our great High Priest. We have trusted Him as our Saviour; we have committed the eternal welfare of our souls to Him, we may with the same confidence rely upon Him to carry us right through to the glory of God by His intercession for us as our great High Priest.

We are dealing now, not with His finished work of atonement, which cost Him those unspeakable sufferings on the cross, but with the sufferings of His lifetime in the midst of sinners by which He qualified for His present service towards us in heaven: that of being our great High Priest. His finished work on the cross was for sinners, His present work in heaven is for those sinners who have become saints through faith in Him, it is for all who have believed. We read, "Wherefore in all things it behoved Him to be made like unto His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining unto God . . . for in that He Himself suffered being tempted, He is able to succour them that are tempted" (Hebrews 2. 17, 18). "For

we have not an High Priest which cannot be touched with the feelings of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we, yet without sin (sin apart)" (chap. 4. 15). And again. "Though He were a Son, yet learned He obedience, by the things that He suffered; and being made perfect, He became the Author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey Him" (chap. 5. 8, 9). "But this Man, because He continueth ever, hath an unchanging priesthood. Wherefore He is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them" (chap. 7. 24. 25).

Here is a theme for our meditation, it is a theme that might well fill volumes printed in gold, but it were better to have it deeply written in our hearts. In pursuing it we are permitted to speak of our great Lord as JESUS, for this precious personal Name occurs many times in this epistle. It is Jesus, who is the Author and Finisher of faith" (chap. 12. 2), which means that He has trodden every step in the way of faith. There is not a trial, temptation, or difficulty in that way that He has not encountered and overcome. That way lay through a world, in which all that are godly shall have tribulation, but He overcame the world (John 16. 33). He "endured such contradiction of sinners against Himself" (chap. 12. 3). "He hath suffered being tempted" (chap. 2. 18), and this because He was obedient. Everyone who will be obedient to God shall suffer in a hostile world of which Satan is the god and prince, but His obedience was absolute, nothing moved Him from it. Nothing, neither alluresments or terrors, diverted Him from finishing the road upon which He

had set His feet for God's glory, and that He might succour us. That road started at the manger—for He said, "Thou didst make me to hope when I was upon My mother's breasts, I was cast upon Thee from the womb: Thou art My God from My mother's belly" (Ps. 22), and it ended at the cross, when He cried, "Father, unto Thy hands I commend My Spirit."

Of course there is nothing strange in a servant being obedient, it is his life and duty to obey the word of his master, but the wonder here is "though He were SON, yet learned He obedience by the things that He suffered." The Son in the Godhead, whose prerogative it was to command and uphold all things by the word of His power, took the servant's place, but He did not cease to be the Son when He did that. He "was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death" (chap. 2. 9), but He was always the Lord of the angels, and they must always worship Him (chap. 1. 6). Though He took the subordinate place for the will of God, there could not be any question of inferiority as to His Person. How emphatic is the word that the Son is God: "Unto the Son He saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever and ever" (chap. 1. 8). And in chap. 3, we learn that Christ is "Son over His own house," which He has builded, and that "He that built all things is God." I stress this that the wonder of His path of obedience and suffering may grow upon our souls and that we might have a deeper appreciation of the outcome of it.

"Being made perfect, He became the Author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey Him." He has

fully qualified for this, there is not a test that He has not endured and triumphed in. Hence He is able to *sympathise* with those who are enduring trials and testings—for that is the meaning of temptations—and to *succour* them. He is able to *save* them to the uttermost seeing *He ever liveth to make intercession for them*.

Here is the revelation to us of His unchanging, unwearying love. It has been said, that if it were necessary He would come again from heaven to die for us, so great is His love. That is not necessary, "for by one offering He has perfected for ever them that are sanctified" (chap. 10. 14), but it is necessary that He should live for us, and intercede for us and succour us; we should be overwhelmed by the difficulties of the way if He did not, and He does this as being moved by the same love that made Him die. The birth pangs do not exhaust the mother's love for her babe; she would be willing to lay down her life for it at any time.

"Yet she may forgetful prove;
He will never cease to love."

To all who obey Him it can be said, "Seeing then that we have a great High Priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. For we have not an High Priest that cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities." He is Jesus, that carries us in thought down to the depths of humiliation and death into which His love carried Him, He is the Son of God, that presents His glory, His magnificent greatness, the splendour of His Person and inheritance. He is Jesus, that tells us of the tender sympathy of His heart for us. He is the Son of

God, that tells us of the power of His arm; the tenderest love and the greatest power in the universe abide in Him. He is Jesus, that tells of His preciousness to us. He is the Son of God, that tells us of His preciousness to God. Since He is Jesus, He loves us so well that there is nothing that would be good for us that He will not ask for when He intercedes before God for us; since He is the Son of God, there is nothing that He asks for us that God will deny Him.

Having such a great High Priest we are exhorted to draw near to God with boldness. First for the help we need in all the ups and downs of life, and second, to be worshippers before Him. We must not confound these two drawings near; they are distinct, and separated one from the other by five chapters in our Epistle. First, having such a sympathetic High Priest, we are exhorted "Let us come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace for timely help" (chap. 4. 16). We are put into contact by our High Priest with the inexhaustible resources of Divine grace, and we have but to ask at the throne of grace, and that succour that we need in the hour of trial will be supplied. We could not have a better illustration of this than Paul, when the thorn in the flesh oppressed him so sorely. Should it be taken away? that was his desire; or would he give way under it? that was unthinkable. The Lord soothed his spirit with infinite sympathy and succoured him with all-sufficient grace. We see how Simon Peter missed this wonderful sustainment because of his self-confidence. He did not cry to the Lord in the hour of trial as Paul did, and he fell. Yet even he was preserved from

despair by the intercession of the Lord. "Simon, Simon," said the Lord, "Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: but I have prayed for thee: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren." Paul and Peter were alike the objects of the tender solicitude of the Lord. He interceded for them, before the trial seized them. Paul was preserved from failure, and Peter was preserved in spite of failure. Grace to keep and grace to restore came to them through the Lord's priestly activities on their behalf. We might take another illustration from Peter's experience. He walked on the water to go to Jesus, and found that the circumstances were such as he could not overcome and he began to sink. But when he cried out in his fear and need the Lord stretched forth His hand and held him up, and he walked on the waves by His support. No picture could set forth more beautifully the gracious succour that is ministered now to those who are conscious that they have no help outside the Lord. He stretches forth the hand of a man to their aid, but in that hand is the power of God.

But He is not only our great High Priest to succour us in our weaknesses, He is over the house of God, and He would have us draw near with boldness, not to the throne of grace only, but into the holiest, into the very presence of God; where, not our needs are in question but where God's glories shine forth. We have the title to enter there, and we may do so with hearts full of thanksgiving, without any fear, being fully assured that it is God's delight that we should be there, having our conscience clear of all

sense of guilt through the one efficacious offering that Christ has made, and our whole beings consecrated to Him whose love has won our hearts. This is the great present end of the service of the Lord as our great High Priest, and we ought not to be indifferent as to it. It is sad that we would so often avail ourselves of the means without reaching the end, glad to have the relief that the grace gives, but not pressing on to have God as our exceeding joy and the object of our hearts adoration.

Those men of Luke 24 were in the joy of this in spirit, they do not seem in that glad hour to have had anything to pray for, it was all overflowing praise and worship with them. They had to pray later, and they did pray with real purpose, and we shall need to pray every day, but there is this other side, so near to the heart of God. He would have us draw near for His own sake and not simply because we have needs. He would have us near to Himself because He loves us greatly and He desires that our love should flow out to Him in response.

Time and space fails us to pursue this great subject now but "of the things we have spoken this is the sum. We have such an High Priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens," and this glorious person is Jesus the Son of God who loved us and gave Himself for us, and who ever liveth to make intercession for us. May we be stirred up to know the Lord and His present gracious activities on our behalf in a fuller measure.

BRIMFUL OF GOODNESS.

T. Oliver.

MY attention was greatly arrested in a recent public Bible reading by the expression "I myself also am persuaded of you, my brethren, that ye also are full (literally brimful) of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish one another" (Rom. 15. 14).

The previous verse states that abounding (or overflowing) in hope is due to the antecedent of the God of Hope filling them with all joy and peace in believing (i.e. faith in activity). The other day a very active Christian worker in parting abjured me to "keep on believing!" I do not know what was the specific context of thought in his mind. He may even have held some erroneous views on the subject, as judged by the only criterion, Scriptural evidence. But I am safe in adopting his words relative to the verse we have cited.

That the christians should be literally overflowing in hope, is perfectly normal. In these days of concentration on the present moment to the exclusion of the future evinced in "life changing" etc., a man who overflows in hope as to the future seems to the mass of people as a harmless lunatic who may be allowed safely to exercise vagaries of mind in any way he cares. But there is nothing really new in that phase of life-changing. Real christianity, although occupying its votaries with the politics of heaven, has always exercised a very potent influence on the Christian's life. A profession of Christianity which does not change the life is not worth much! But the great transcendent element in the Christian's life is faith. "The just shall live by faith" is a proposition

enunciated in that halcyon period of prophetic testimony, six centuries before Christ, which also received treble quotation nearly 700 years later to inculcate different contexts of Christian doctrine in the Epistles of the New Testament.

But this faith has a goal, viz. hope, and that is no mere occupation with the future of events in this world on which the League of Nations directs attention, but with the future of glory with Christ and its reflection on earth in the affairs of the world to come. Now hope does not introduce the idea of uncertainty, as it must necessarily do with relation to human affairs. But since that hope is controlled by the God of hope it is consonant with the will of God which ensures certainty and thus may be defined as a Prospect "bright unfailing." The verse says that hope or prospect is in the power of the Holy Ghost and thus immune from the disturbing influences of the affairs of time.

The sequel was that those Christians in Rome were brimful of goodness. In being occupied with heavenly affairs, they were so moulded that their actions on earth gave a first rate advertisement to the grace or giving attitude of God.

Oliver Goldsmith once wrote that "handsome is that handsome does." A handsome character performs handsome deeds and the character is judged by the onlookers through the deeds. No one can do things so handsomely as the Christian can! In the old dispensation the man of God was in the service of the Lord in whose hands were the cattle on a thousand hills. But in this des-

pensation of God's grace and mercy the whole realm of heavenly resources are added so that the Christian can do things even more handsomely than the Israelite could ever do.

The immediate context of the passage is antecedent to being "filled with all knowledge." Now that does not necessarily mean ability to answer all the questions in the Bible readings, or in the correspondence columns of the Magazines and such like. It is really personal knowledge of Christ which gives "spiritual discernment" so as to be able to do things as He would have done them if He had been here.

Now we pass on to the consequence of both antecedents. The Christians were brimful of goodness, filled with all spiritual discernment, for the specific purpose of being

able to admonish one another. One would have thought that courage was the main qualification for admonishing, because it is undoubtedly one of the most difficult responsibilities which falls to the Christian's administration of the Lord's business. Most of us will evade the contingency of admonishing if we can get anyone else to do it. But if we are to be faithful to the Lord's interests we must not shirk responsibility, no matter how distasteful it may be to us naturally. But we shall never be able to admonish properly if we are not imbued with grace (i.e. brimful of goodness), thus filled with all spiritual discernment so that we may be able to give the touch of the Master. May we covet such an attitude so that we may be found fulfilling even disagreeable responsibilities in the handsome way in which the Lord Himself would have fulfilled them.

DEPENDENCE UPON GOD.

TH**ERE** is nothing in all this world more deeply blessed than to lead a life of habitual dependence upon God; to hang upon Him, moment by moment, to wait on Him and cling to Him for everything. To have all our springs in Him. It is the true secret of peace, and of holy independence of the creature. The soul that can really say, "All my springs are in Thee" is lifted above all creature confidences, human hopes, and earthly expectations. It is not that God does not use the creature, in a thousand ways, to minister to us. We do not at all mean this. He does use the creature; but if we *lean* upon the creature instead of leaning upon Him, we shall very speedily get leanness and barrenness into our souls. There is a vast

difference between God's using the creature to bless us, and our leaning on the creature to the exclusion of Him. In the one case, we are blessed and He is glorified; in the other, we are disappointed and He is dishonoured.

How often do we speak of living by faith, and of trusting only in God, when, at the same time, if we would only look down into the depths of our hearts we should find there a large measure of dependence upon circumstances, reference to second causes and the like. Let us see to it that our eye is fixed upon the living God alone, and not upon man whose breath is in his nostrils. Let us wait on Him—wait patiently—wait constantly.

THE TWOFOLD WITNESS.

(L.)

“*The Holy Ghost also is a witness to us: for after that He said before . . . their sins and iniquities will I remember no more*” (Hebrews 10.)

“*The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God*” (Romans 8).

THE witness of the Spirit is two-fold: *external* and *internal*. In *God's Word*, and in *my heart*. Or, as described in Jer. 32. 13, 14, “Sealed and “Open,” *Objective* and *Subjective*. Read the whole chapter. Jeremiah buys a field of Haneel, to shew his faith in his own prediction of the restoration of Judah (verse 15). This very field was then occupied by the Babylonish Army. Beautiful faith in a covenant-keeping God! Surely the outlook was black enough for Jeremiah. He himself, the victim of the wrath of Zedekiah (a vessel of wrath) for having foretold it (vv. 2, 3), being shut up in prison. But the “Word of the Lord” (6) sufficed, so he weighs out seventeen shekels of silver, subscribed and sealed the evidence and took witnesses. Baruch—type of the Holy Spirit—is called in (12) and Jeremiah delivers unto him the evidences to place in an earthen vessel—the human heart—“For thus saith the Lord of Hosts, Houses and lands and vineyards shall be possessed again in this land.” Thus Jeremiah backed his faith with his money. This is a figure of our day. Satan is at present in possession, yet faith looks onward to the redemption of the purchased possession and places its trust in the divine Baruch. But my point is rather the two-fold nature of the evidence, i.e. “sealed” and “open.” According to Maimonides and others, a copy of the sealed deed was called the “open” evidence. Just as the Word of God is an open copy of the inward

sealing or hidden Word of God in the heart. The Spirit's witness *in the Word* and *in my heart*. The Holy Spirit first leads me to a firm reliance upon His Word, and then witnesses with my spirit that I am a child of God (Rom. 8. 16; 2 Cor. 4. 6, 7; Heb. 10. 16). The traditional school, and the theoretical school say, “We know we are saved because the Word of God says so.” All must begin there, of course, but they forget that the demons *believe* and *believing tremble*; whilst the merely theoretical professor believes it *and never trembles*. The true believer has the Word of God, not written with ink only, but also on the “fleshy tablets of the heart” (cf. 2 Cor. 3. 3, with Heb. 10. 16).

Salvation is not a syllogism, but a mighty work of grace in the soul. Now until the soul rests upon the witness of the Spirit in the Word, he will never receive His witness with his spirit. He that believeth—not doubteth—hath the witness in himself (1 John 5. 10).

The “sealed” evidence in Rom. 8. 15-25, produces the cry of “Abba.” It is the child's cry. The cry of the new nature. And the Holy Spirit adds His own all-powerful witness to that of the child-spirit. “The Spirit Himself witnesseth *as well as our spirit* that we are the children of God” (J.N.D.). The Holy Ghost not only seals me unto the day of redemption (Eph. 1. 13), but gives me the spirit of adoption

whereby I cry "Abba." The instincts of a child whereby I reach out to the Father as a river to the sea. The Holy Ghost crying, as well as my spirit, Abba, Father. O blessed liberty! O sweet confidence! Here the perfect love of the Father is known and enjoyed. The soul is no longer tormented with legal fear and can cry, "My Beloved is mine, and I am His" (Song of Sol. 2. 16). Again 2. 3, "I sat down" (rest) "under His shadow"—shade, retreat—"and His fruit was sweet unto my taste." Refreshment. "Stay me . . . comfort me" (5). Then the supreme satisfaction as His almighty arms are felt comforting and sustaining (v. 6). "His left hand is under my head and His right hand doth embrace me." The soul is satisfied (of Psalm 63 and so v. 7). Let others go on with their world love. Let the dead bury their dead. Let the world-patchers and menders

get on with their self-imposed task, as for us:

"Jesus, Thou art enough,
The mind and heart to fill,
Thy life to calm the anxious soul
Thy love its fear dispel.

Oh fix our earnest gaze
So wholly Lord on Thee
That with Thy beauty occupied,
We elsewhere none may see."

To know *Him*, to win *Him*, and to be found in *Him* is the final answer to all doubt as to one's own salvation. The Word of God, both in my hand, and written by the Spirit of the Living God on my heart, with the mighty witness of the Spirit not only crying "Abba" but also taking of the things of Christ and revealing them to me—this is heaven indeed, and is for every one that is *trusting* in our Risen Lord. And now may Rom. 15. 13, be yours and mine.

"Keep thy heart with all diligence for out of it are the issues of life" (4. 23.)

Not what a man says he is or thinks he is but the work that he does shews what he is; as is said of the wise woman, "Let her own works praise her in the gate" (Proverbs 31). If the internal machinery is right that which is visible will be indicative of the harmony and order that is within. As with a clock: you do not see the machinery, but you see the effect of it, whether it is right or not. If you are not right in your heart with Christ you are wrong everywhere. Of the wise woman it is said, "The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her." Let it be our ambition that our Lord may safely trust in us, but we prove by what we do whether this is so or not. "Ye are My friends if ye do whatsoever I command you," are His words to us.

God deserves blessing with the heart, and extolling with the mouth—good thoughts in the closet, and good words in the world.

A TENDER CONSCIENCE.

C.H.M.

WE know of few things more precious than a tender conscience. We do not mean a scrupulous conscience, which is governed by its own crotchets; or a *morbid* conscience, which is governed by its own fears. Both these are most troublesome guests for anyone to entertain. But we mean a *tender* conscience, which is governed in all things by the word of God, and which at all times refers to His authority. This sound description of conscience, we consider an inestimable treasure. It regulates everything, takes cognizance of the very smallest matter connected with our daily walk and habits; our mode of dress; our houses; our furniture; our table; our entire deportment, spirit and style; our mode of conducting our business, or, if it be our lot to serve others, the mode in which we discharge the service whatever it be. In short, everything falls under the healthful, moral influence of a tender conscience. "Herein," says the blessed apostle, "Do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God and man" (Acts 24. 16).

This is what we may well covet. There is something morally beautiful and attractive in this exercise of the greatest and most gifted servant of Christ. He, with all his splendid gifts, with all his marvellous powers, with all his profound insight into the ways and counsels of God, with all he had to speak of and glory in, with all the wonderful revelations made to him in the third heavens; in a word, he, the most honoured of apostles and privileged of saints gave holy diligence to keep always a conscience void of offence both

toward God and man; and if, in an unguarded moment, he uttered a hasty word, as he did to Ananias the high priest, he was ready the next moment, to confess and make restitution, so that the hasty utterance, "God shall smite thee, thou whited wall," was withdrawn, and God's word given instead, "Thou shalt not speak evil of the ruler of thy people."

Now we do not believe that Paul could have retired to rest that night, with a conscience void of offence, if he had not withdrawn his words. There must be confession, when we do or say what is wrong; and if there be not confession, our communion will assuredly be interrupted. Communion, with unconfessed sin upon the conscience is a moral impossibility. We may talk of it, but it is all the merest delusion. We must keep a clean conscience if we would walk with God. There is nothing more to be dreaded than moral sense that can allow all sorts of things to pass unjudged; that can commit sin and coolly say, "What evil have I done?"

Let us, with a holy vigilance, watch against all this. Let us seek to cultivate a tender conscience. It will demand from us what it demanded from Paul, namely, "exercise." But it is blessed exercise, and it will yield most precious fruits. Do not suppose that there is aught that savours of the legal in this exercise; nay, it is most thoroughly Christian; indeed we look upon these noble words of Paul as the very embodiment, in a condensed form, of the whole of a Christian's practice. "To have always a conscience void of

offence toward God and men" comprehends everything.

But alas! how little do we habitually ponder the claims of God, or the claims of our fellow-man! How little is our conscience up to the mark! Claims of all sorts are neglected, yet we feel it not. There is no brokenness and contrition before the Lord. We commit trespass in a thousand things, yet there is no confession or restitution. Things are allowed to pass that ought to be judged, confessed and put away. There is sin in our holy things; there is lightness and indifference of spirit in the assembly and at the Lord's table; we rob God, in various ways; we think our own thoughts, speak our own words, do our own pleasure; and what is this

but robbing God, seeing we are not our own but bought with a price?

Now, we cannot but think that all this must sadly hinder our spiritual growth. It grieves the Spirit of God and hinders His gracious ministry of Christ to our souls whereby alone we grow up into Him. We know, from various parts of God's word, how much He prizes a tender spirit, a contrite heart. "To this man will I look, even to him that is of a contrite spirit and trembles at My word." With such an one God can dwell; but with hardness and insensibility, coldness and indifference, He can have no fellowship. Oh! then let us exercise ourselves to have always a pure and uncondemning conscience, both as to God and as to our fellow-man.

LOVE ONE ANOTHER.

"These things I command you, that ye love one another."

CONSIDER these words of the Lord: do they not reveal the fact that He has a circle on earth that is very precious to Him, and in which He desires that what He is Himself might have full play? for the character and the measure of the love that must pervade this new circle is, "As I have loved you." There was never anything like this on earth before. These words indicated the gathering of His church, His assembly, the very life of which would be His love flowing into and flowing out of every heart.

This is the first and the choicest service, and if one fails here, can his service in any other sphere be

acceptable to the Lord? Impossible. Here the one who is gathered to Christ begins. Christ and His own are his first thought, and from that holy, happy circle he can reach out in gospel fervour and activity to the great outside world. But let us not marvel if the world hate us (John 15. 18.). Plainly there are the two circles, the "one another" where love must never fail, and the world, where hatred of all that is the Father's and Christ's reigns. Where am I living? Does the spirit of Christ or the spirit of the world control me? What answer am I making to the command of the Lord so often and so tenderly uttered?

THE IMAGE AND LIKENESS OF GOD. J. T. Mawson.

IT is interesting and encouraging to see how the yearnings of the saints of God of Old Testament times are answered by the truth of the New Testament. Who told Job for instance, that, raised up from the corruption of death, he would see God? Yet this was the faith that had struck its roots deeply into his soul, and made him cry out with hope in his distress, "As for me, I know that my Redeemer liveth, and the Last, He shall stand on the earth (shall stand up above the dust); and if after my skin this shall be destroyed, yet from out of my flesh shall I see God: whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another" (Job 19. 25-27. N. Trs.). His great hope was that he would be delivered from all his woes when he should see the Last, (see Isaiah 48. 12) who is also the First, triumph in His power over all the corruption that death had brought in. He knew that he would see that triumph, and so he will; for this is assured to "all who are Christ's (1 Cor. 15).

But David with more light goes further. "As for me," he says, "I will behold Thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with Thy likeness" (Psalm 17. 15). Every soul that has been taught of God can enter into the aspirations of this man of many experiences. They know the turning from self with loathing, the cry, "Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" followed by the discovery that all goodness, all beauty is in Christ, then the deep longing of the soul to be like Him, and the conviction that nothing can satisfy but this. God instead of

self, was David's desire; to change this marred image, this ruined life, for the beauty of the Lord! His hope would not be realised and his heart could not be satisfied until he reached this.

Moses, the man of God, was inspired by the same great thought, for in his immortal lament over the frailty of man, and the apparent futility of his fleeting life, he looks onward, beyond the gloom of death and cries, "Let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us" (Psalm 90).

All this is so wonderfully answered in the New Testament. God, who by His Spirit created these desires in the hearts of the patriarchal saints had even then His great purpose in view and with what wonder and worship we read, "For whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the Firstborn among many brethren" (Romans 8. 29). And the Spirit who dwells in us works unceasingly to bring us into moral conformity to that blest image even now, to displace self, from which there can be no satisfaction, and to make more room for Christ who makes the heart run over with gladness and praise. It is true that we of New Testament days will have the nearest place of all those who are blessed, yet the desires and hopes of these Old Testament saints will be more than satisfied in the day of the Lord's glory.

And this, when we come to think of it, carries us back to the creation of man, when God said, "Let us

make man in our image, after our likeness" (Genesis 1. 26). The likeness was marred and the image lost when sin came in, separating by moral death the creature from His Creator. But God has not been thwarted, for Christ is the true image and likeness of God. We have borne the image of the earthly, a marred vessel indeed, but we are to bear the image of the heavenly, to

be like Christ; and this was God's intention from the beginning. "For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, "Death is swallowed up in victory."

"THE SPIRIT AND THE BRIDE SAY, COME."

IN this passage (Rev. 21 17) we see Christ's chief interest on earth—the bride, it is His church. And in concert with the Spirit, the bride says, Come, to the Lord, who presents Himself as "Jesus, the root and offspring of David, and the bright and morning Star." What could delight His heart more than that? Christ the object and the desire of the heart of His church, as directed by the Spirit! How fitting indeed that is, for "He loved the church and gave Himself for it" (Eph. 5). This is first love, which was lost in the church at Ephesus; happy are those hearts that have been recovered to it. The Spirit and the bride say, Come, and what next? Let him that heareth say, Come. If we know a brother who is not saying, Come, we must urge him to do so; he must be encouraged and admonished. If he hears there is hope that he will join in this cry.

Then let him that is athirst, Come. There are hundreds of saints who are not happy; they have not discovered the fountain of satisfaction, to them we say, Come, taste of this love of the coming Bridegroom,

it is so sweet to those who know it that they will not rest on earth again, nothing will satisfy them, but His presence.

But shall we confine ourselves to those who are saved, and who are part of the church? No, we shall be evangelical and go out to men, wherever they are, and say, "Who-soever will let him take the water of life freely." Do you think a man will be a worse evangelist if his heart is going out in love and yearnings for Christ, and if he is deeply concerned as to the state of the Church which is Christ's chief interest on earth? Certainly not. No man could be in concert with the heart of Christ and be indifferent to the prosperity of the gospel, He will come out from Christ to speak of Him to others, even to the ends of the earth if he has the opportunity, and to tell of the waters of life, that in this last evangelical offer in the Word of God are free for all. Could anything be happier or more blessed than this, and it is for this revival that we look while we wait for the fulfilment of the word, "Surely, I come quickly."

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Bethany and the Mount of Olives.

“Luke 24. 50, shews beyond doubt that the Lord did not ascend to heaven from the Mount of Olives, but from Bethany. But in Acts 1. 12, we read that the Apostles returned to Jerusalem from “the mount called Olivet.” How do you explain this? Is it that the Apostles, feeling their need of consulting together as to their course of action, went off from Bethany to Olivet and from thence to the city?”—DEVON.

WE should say that the Scriptures themselves answer the question. Mark 11. 1, says, “Bethphage and Bethany at the mount of Olives,” and Luke 19. 29, says, “Bethphage and Bethany, at the mount called the mount of Olives.” In Smith’s *Dictionary of the Bible*, under the heading BETHANY we read, “It was somewhere here, on these wooded slopes beyond the ridge of Olivet, that the Apostles stood when they last beheld His figure, as, with uplifted hands—still, to the very moment of disappearance blessing them—He was taken up into the cloud which received and hid Him from their stedfast gaze.” The mount of Olives rose up between Jerusalem and Bethany evidently, and both places can be seen from its eminence.

We would suggest that the reason why Bethany is named in relation to the ascension, and the mount of Olives in relation to the return to Jerusalem may be, that for the ascension they were led away from Jerusalem, where they had hoped

He would reign (Luke 24. 21), and heaven into which He had gone claimed their hearts and their eyes. But to Jerusalem they had to return, and as they reached again the summit of the ridge, we can understand how they would linger there for a while. The great city lay before them, and what memories would be theirs as they beheld it. Often they had sat there with their Lord and looked upon that city; they had been sent into it on more than one mission from that spot; it was from there that He had ridden on the colt of an ass in apparent triumph; and it was here that they had heard from His lips of the woes that were to overwhelm the city. And now they were going back to it, the city that had crucified their Lord, and they were to proclaim in it, repentance and remission of sins in His Name. What emotions must have been theirs! We may be sure to return from that spot into that city called for obedience and courage at that time. Well, the obedient are always courageous.

Trust in God! be calm and fearless,
 Though the shadows darkly loom;
 Never night so dark and cheerless,
 But a light shall pierce the gloom.
 Though the hours be filled with sadness,
 Joy and morning song shall come;
 Pain shall but prepare for gladness,
 Storms are sent to drive thee Home.

WHAT IS THE GOSPEL.

David Ross.

"The gospel of God . . . concerning His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord."

"I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth" (Romans 1).

"I AM not ashamed of the gospel."

What is the gospel? The gospel is good news; not good advice but good news, and I want to speak to you about three things in connection with it. First of all, its *content*. Then, the *extent* of its appeal, and thirdly, its *intent*. Its content, extent and intent. The gospel is not about us. The content of this gospel is not the preacher, nor the people preached to. The content of this gospel is the Son of God, who has conquered death and the grave, the mighty Saviour of sinners. The apostle Paul is coming to Rome—Rome—a wonderful city built upon power and brute force, the centre of a great world-wide empire. And to it a man is coming, a man whose bodily presence he himself confesses is weak and contemptible. He is coming to the mighty citadel of power. And what is he coming with? A message, a word, a gospel, the good tidings of the grace of God. What is its content? He tells us in a letter to this very city of Corinth where he is writing this, that the gospel that he preached told that Christ died. What for? As a martyr? As an example to men to be faithful to death? Christ died, say some people to-day, as a disillusioned man who saw his mission had failed! But what did Paul say? "Christ died for our sins, according to the Scriptures," and that gospel he preached, and the gospel that we preach is Paul's gospel; it tells of redemption from the power and penalty of sin by the death of Jesus Christ.

But Paul's gospel did not stop at the cross. He continues "He was buried, and rose again the third day according to the Scripture." The gospel is based on historic facts. The life, the death, the burial and the triumphant resurrection of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Any other gospel a man may preach is not a gospel. He may call it a social gospel; he may give it all the fancy names that his imagination may invent, but it is no gospel, for there is but one gospel and it is that that Paul preached: the gospel of Jesus Christ the incarnate Son of God, the Lamb of God, who died upon the cross of Calvary; Jesus Christ, risen again from the tomb, the work of redemption having been perfectly accomplished. That is the dynamic that the Apostle Paul is bringing to Rome. And here is power. What! words spoken by a feeble preacher? Yes, a greater power than Roman might, for when Rome has perished, as it will, the kingdom that is built upon the gospel of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, will endure for ever. Well, it would be if modern dictators knew that, well it would be if all who are labouring to build up society and at the same time eliminate the gospel knew it, if they realised that when their petty empires have perished the kingdom of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, will endure for ever. Napoleon is said to have discovered it. It is recorded that he said, Alexander the Great, Charlemagne, Caesar and myself have built mighty empires, and we have built

them on brute force and they are gone. Jesus Christ founded a kingdom of love, He founded it by dying upon the cross and there are millions to-day who would die for Him. Yes, the only gospel that will abide is that that speaks of His death, that does away with sin, and His resurrection that manifests the power of God.

Young people, don't be alarmed by all the boastings of men who hate the gospel. More than a hundred years ago the French people abolished God, religion and everything else, just as the Russians have done. One of the great leaders after the revolution felt that they needed some sort of religion and started one called Theophilanthropy, or something like that. He complained to one of his colleagues in the Cabinet that his religion was not flourishing. "No, and it won't," said his friend, "if you want your religion to flourish you will need to get yourself crucified and be buried and rise again from the dead." The only power unto salvation is the gospel of the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. The content of the gospel is concerning Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

What is its extent? It is universal. There was the Greek, the Jew and the Roman. Of these society was made up at that time when Jesus died. These three civilisations, divided the world between them, and it is very significant that it was in letters of Greek and Hebrew and Latin that the superscription was written over the cross of our blessed Lord. The Jew, the religionist, what did he need? His religion to him was an intolerable bondage, and he needed a Deliverer. "Religion"

means binding, and it can be the most intolerable thing on the face of the earth without Christ. If you are a religionist you need the deliverance that the gospel brings. Then there was the Greek, the intellectual, the highbrow. Men think no end of themselves in this twentieth century, and yet the Greek race produced far greater men than have ever been produced in recent times. They had the brains, and yet they were rotten with immorality. Something more than knowledge is needed. It is well that young men and women should be reminded of that.

A young brother told me only last week that he was speaking to a middle aged man who said to him, "If ever your knowledge clashes with your faith give up your faith." Now, suppose I had done that thirty years ago. I was at the University then and I was troubled by what was called knowledge, and that knowledge that troubled me is scrapped now, and, thank God, my faith is preserved. Don't give up your faith for a knowledge that is going to be out of date in thirty years. There are fashions in learning as in dress and in thirty years they are changed and gone. But the faith of Christ does not change; don't let any of man's boasted knowledge rob you of your faith in Christ Jesus our Lord. The Greek was stricken with a moral plague, he needed a Healer. Knowledge cannot heal the plague of sin in the soul, it is the gospel that does that. Lastly there was the proud, imperial Roman—cruel, relying on brute force, without compassion for the weak. What did he need? He needed to know the love of God that subdues the proud will and changes the heart.

What does the twentieth century need? with its formal religion that becomes a burden; its seeking after knowledge that leads the greatest intellects that are without Christ into a bog. The best of them say they are agnostics—we don't know; its men of blood and iron who see no safety for themselves but in building armaments to destroy others! What do they need? The gospel is still the power of God unto salvation, and we still preach it to the Jew, the religionist, and to the highbrows, the intellectualists, and to those who believe that moral and religious and even intellectual considerations are of no avail, who look only to brute force. To the wise, to the unwise, to the Greek, the barbarian, the Jew and the Gentile, the gospel has as its extent every people and kindred and tongue and nation on earth.

Now the intent, that is, the purpose of the gospel. What does that gospel do? It is the power of God unto salvation. It makes dead men live. The voice of the Son of God cried, "Lazarus, come forth." And he came forth. That is what the gospel does—it delivers from death. Those who hear the voice of the Son of God pass out of death into life. I am a witness to that, as are all who have believed. Samuel Chadwick, the great Methodist preacher, was a man of God. He was not satisfied with getting people to come to his church. He was impressed when reading the 11th of John, with the power of the voice of the Son of God that raised Lazarus from the dead, and he pressed his congregation to pray that God would convert the worst man in the district. And He did. A man with a fearful record, sheer devilry had been the motive of many of his actions, came under the power

of the gospel. Before that, no one dared to speak to him in the quarry where he worked, so vile was his temper. When he became a Christian they persecuted him and laughed at him and he did not retaliate. One day when working the bar slipped and jammed and crushed his fingers and he swore. They laughed. It was what they'd been looking for. They released his fingers and then wanted to bandage them up, and there were tears in his eyes as he said, "No, mates. I have got a worse wound than that. I must settle that first," and before them all he got on his knees and cried to God to forgive him for swearing. Then he said, "It is all right now. God has forgiven me. You can bind my fingers now." How powerful the gospel is when it is backed up by a life changed by the power of God.

What else does it do? It is the power that can make lame men walk. "In the Name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk," Peter said to that man who had never walked, and he started to leap and dance about with joy—and you, and no man will ever walk as God meant us to walk until we experience the power that there is in that Name. The gospel makes foul men clean. It did that in Corinth. Corinth was a city devoted to the worship of the goddess of lust, a filthy city, an unclean place. Even heathen writers tell us it was not good to go there, but to that place Paul went, and he said, The only thing I am going to preach is Jesus Christ and Him crucified, and in his letter to the church which was the result of his preaching, he describes the life of the city, and he says, Such were some of ye, but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are

justified in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

It delivers the demon possessed—and there are demon possessed in this country. Do you know what happens when men give up God? They begin to believe in ghosts. And when they give up the Holy Spirit they begin to seek other spirits, and become Spiritists; and when they refuse the Christ of God they listen to any anti-christ that comes along and they come under the power of demons. Christ can break the power of demons. The man whose name was Legion, had been chained and bound, and he brake the chains, and he lived in the tombs and cut himself with stones. And Jesus came and with one word cured him and the man was changed and the people saw him sitting at Jesus' feet, saved, clothed, and in his right mind. What else can the gospel do? It can turn its antagonists into its most zealous defenders and preachers. That is what happened with Saul of Tarsus and it is happening to-day. On Thursday evening I met a young Russian lady. She had been a Communist in Warsaw, an enemy of the faith. We had an open air meeting and I could hear her singing, changed and blessed, with her foreign voice, along with us,

“Into my heart, into my heart
Come into my heart, Lord Jesus.”

The gospel changes enemies into friends of God.

What else can this gospel do? It can take a devout, seeking soul, like Lydia, and fill her heart with

responsive devotion to Christ so that her house and household and all that she possessed, is handed over to Him, her Lord and Saviour. That is a grand gospel, is it not? The power of God unto salvation.

A touch. That is what faith is. This power is available for you, but you must touch the Saviour. Some people say, I don't believe the gospel is the power of God unto salvation. No. If your great grandfather came in to this room and you told him you could flood this room with light just by touching that button, he would say, I don't believe it. And the people who don't believe are the people who never experience the power. We believe; we have touched Him by faith and that mighty delivering power which is in the gospel of God has been experienced by us in our souls. I wonder if everybody here can say, I am not ashamed of the gospel of God for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth. Are you ashamed of that old-fashioned word “salvation”?

Salvation, oh, salvation
Proclaim with joyful sound.
Shout, shout the word “Salvation”
To earth's remotest bound.

Salvation in a Saviour, Jesus Christ our Lord. Proclaim salvation to earth's remotest bound. Salvation from sin and death and uncleanness, and salvation that saves us to serve for His glory, and which gives that bright and wonderful prospect of worshipping before the throne for ever the One Who died for our sins, was buried and rose again from the dead.

If God be your guide, He will also be your guard.

A FIVE-FOLD CHALLENGE.

E. P. Brown.

"Wilt thou go with this man?" (Genesis 24. 58, 67).

"Why will ye go with me?" (Ruth 1. 11).

"Wherefore goest thou also with us?" (2 Samuel 15. 19-22).

"Who will go for us?" (Isaiah 6. 8).

"Will ye also go away?" (John 6. 65-69).

IN my first Scripture there is what I will call "Love's Challenge." The servant of Abraham went forth from his master on a great mission; he was pledged to bring back with him a wife for his master's son. Just as certainly as he went on that mission, so certainly was he directed by God to Rebecca. Rebecca was the object of his search and he found her, and here we see him in her company. What things he had to say of the worth and the excellency of his master and his master's son! What a display of the wealth and greatness of those who had sent him as he brought forth the jewels wherewith he adorned Rebecca! And how tender his words as he spoke of Isaac's need of a companion, and of Abraham's determination that she should be altogether worthy of him. But then came the challenge, Was Rebecca prepared to go with this man? How would she answer it? It would mean a change of home, a change of kindred, a change of circumstances. She must take a journey, hazardous probably in many respects. Was she ready to undertake that journey and take it without delay? Could she not remain yet a little while in her old and pleasant associations? What had the servant to offer against all the things that up to that hour she had enjoyed? He could offer her the love of Isaac, and the exalted position of companion and wife to the heir of the promises. The challenge is urgent: the decision cannot be delayed,

"Hinder me not," cried the servant. What will Rebecca answer? She must face the consequences of that challenge that had come to her heart. "Wilt thou go with this man?" How beautiful in its simplicity and decision is her answer, "I will go."

The Spirit of God has been sent into the world by the Father. He has come consequent upon the death, the resurrection and exaltation of our Lord Jesus Christ. He has come with an urgent appeal, and on a mission of unsurpassed importance. He is here to find a bride for God's beloved Son. His mission here in this world is one that challenges every one of our hearts. Has He spoken to us of the glories and love of Christ? If so, what shall our answer be? What shall we say to the challenge, "Wilt thou go with this Man?" What will it mean? A path of separation from all who are not treading that road. We call up all the consequences, our friends, our ambitions, our pleasures: are we hesitating in our decision and weighing these things in the balances against the love of Christ that passeth knowledge; against the One, whom having not seen we love; who has gone to prepare a place for us in the Father's house that we are to share with Him? The Spirit who has come from the glory appeals to us on behalf of Him who laid down His life that we might live. Are we prepared to take the journey to Him? for it is to Him we go.

How well repaid was Rebecca for her decision when she was taken to Isaac's home and heart, and she became his beloved wife. And this is but a picture of what Christ has for us and we must face love's challenge. Wilt thou go with this Man? Are we just as simply saying as Rebecca did, I will go?

In my second Scripture we have what I will call "*Faith's challenge.*" The book of Judges finishes on a very sorrowful note. Every man did that which was right in his own eyes. And there was a famine in Bethlehem-judah, the house of bread, and Elimelech went down to Moab. Was not he doing the best for himself and his family when he took the journey to accessible Moab? So he thought. A famine in his own land was a thing hard to face. But see the consequences of his departure from God. Sorrow and death. These will always be reaped when the flesh is in operation and where faith in God fails; that we learn from all the Scriptures. But God had visited His people and Naomi heard of it, and her heart is touched. There is a call from home. She would return to the house of bread, to the home of her heart and to her own people. But shall she go alone? A little bit of testimony for God had been rendered even there in Moab. There had been some indication of whom Naomi's God was, and it had attracted Ruth, but she had to be tested, and the test comes. "Why will ye go with me?" Naomi says to the two daughters-in-law. Mahlon and Chilon had died and they were left. Would they fall back on the resources of Moab or follow Naomi to the land of her God? It was a challenge to these women that only faith could accept. But how does faith meet it? Hear the devoted

and heroic decision of faith. "And Ruth said, Intreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God: where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried: the Lord do so to me, and more also, if ought but death part thee and me." She did not know that at the end of the journey there was awaiting her one whose wealth and greatness she was to share. There seemed to be nothing but a life of poverty in Naomi's company. She had nothing to offer her, but that little bit of testimony that had been rendered to the God of Israel had been effectual; it had moved the heart of Ruth and made her say, I am going to put myself under the wing of Israel's God, and share with Naomi whatever her lot may be in Israel's land. But what a recompense there was when faith answered the test! Her hap was to light on a part of the field belonging to Boaz, and there all her necessities were met, and at meal times from the hand of Boaz she received the parched corn: he gave her a place beside his reapers, and she had his care and protection. There was more for her than she could ever have dreamed. She discovered that the whole of his wealth and the love of his heart were hers to enjoy, because in simple faith she turned her back on her own kindred and people and land and said, "I will go." And the challenge comes to us, what answer are we giving? We may think that the circumstances in which we are are good enough for us, that faith demands too much, and that we can be good Christians without separation from the world and its

pleasures and ways. Let us beware lest we are like Orpah and not Ruth.

In the city of Rangoon I met a lady who professed to belong to the Lord, and she told me that she was going to a ball. I said, "How can you if you belong to the Lord Jesus?" She said, "I can serve the Lord there better than anywhere else." I said, "You are a puzzle to me. I don't know how you can possibly do it." Nor do I believe that anyone can serve the Lord faithfully by compromising with the world. If Ruth had clung to Moab she would never have met Boaz. She needed to step outside those circumstances in which she had experienced the life and pleasures of Moab, to realize that there are pleasures awaiting her that she had never yet experienced. There are difficulties, of course, for faith must be tested, but the path of faith leads to the true Boaz, the Christ of God, the One whose wealth and greatness and love can and will more than satisfy. Be this our one desire, to go where He is to be found and to know Him. "Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord . . . and I will receive you and be a Father unto you, and ye shall be My sons and daughters saith the Lord Almighty" (2 Cor. 6).

Our third picture I shall call "*Devotion's choice*." Listen to the challenge that David put to Ittai, "Wherefore goest thou also with us?" Look at the circumstances. Ittai was a stranger in Israel. The king was in exile. He had been cast out and was rejected, and here we find him in the outside place, without a home. The usurper is on the throne dominating everything. What will this Gittite do? How

will he answer the king's challenge? Is he prepared to go into the outside place, to leave the place where the usurper is owned, to turn his back on all the pomp and glory of the court of the usurper and all the pleasures that might be connected with that court, and to go out into exile with the true king? Listen to his splendid words. "As the Lord liveth, and as my lord the king liveth, surely in what place my lord the king shall be, whether in death or life, even there also will thy servant be." What could David say to that but, "Go and pass over."

Ittai was a stranger and such were we, aliens and strangers, without Christ, without hope, and without God in the world. But God has wrought in our hearts and given us a desire to be associated with His Christ who has been cast out of this world. The world has said, "We will not have this man to reign over us. Give us Barabbas; and it is dominated to-day by that fatal choice. And we have been brought into a place of favour with God. We had no right or title to this, but God's kindness towards us through Christ Jesus has touched our hearts. How far is it going to carry us? The challenge comes to us—"Wherefore goest thou with us?" Have you faced the meaning of association with Christ? Have you taken sides with God's King, bearing His reproach? Has your heart been taken captive in such fashion that you say, He has been rejected and cast out from this world and my place is wheresoever God's King is; Him will I follow? How far will we go? Are we ready to pass over and be on his side entirely, and delight His heart as Ittai must have delighted the broken heart of king David. "Jesus suf-

ferred without the gate . . . Let us go forth therefore unto Him without the camp, bearing His reproach."

In Isaiah 6 we have another picture. It is "Consecration's call." Isaiah sees himself exposed in the light and glory that shine from God's throne, and confesses that he is unclean and unclean. But if there is the throne of judgment there is also the altar of mercy. Swiftly and surely from the altar a live coal is carried and touches his mouth, and the one unclean is cleansed from iniquity and consecrated to the service of God. The sinner does nothing for his salvation, but he can do a great deal for his Saviour, and the call to consecration comes to every one who has been saved through the grace of God. "Who will go for us?" is the challenge. And Isaiah whose sin had been purged by the coal from the altar, answers without hesitation, "Here am I, send me." And the challenge comes to us, Who will go for us? Are we saying, "Here am I, send me"? Who will go for us? There is work to be done. There is service for each of us. God will have all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth, and this is the due season when testimony must be borne to the fact that Christ gave Himself a ransom for all. Are you prepared to carry that message without any thought for your own glory, not to foreign lands, but into your home and to your friends, for all truly consecrated service will begin in that nearest circle?

But I pass on to the last Scripture. It is the "*challenge of discipleship.*" Here we come into contact with the Lord of glory Himself, and we are tested, as having come close to Him, whether anyone else will satisfy our hearts. The challenge now is from His own lips. "Will ye also go away?" Others had gone. They perceived what following Him meant and they turned back. Ready enough they were for the loaves and fishes but not for the claims of discipleship—the blessings, yes, but the Blessor, no. To own that true life could only come through His death, and that they had no life, and could have none, except by eating His flesh and drinking His blood, was more than their carnal minds could accept, and "from that time many of His disciples went back, and walked no more with Him." Then came the challenge to the twelve, and Simon Peter answered it for his brethren, and I trust for every one of us, "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou has the words of eternal life, and we believe and are sure that Thou art the Son of the living God."

It is Himself now, the Source of our life and the Sustainer of it; without whom we have no life, no hope. To whom can we go? Let your answer to the challenge be clear and decisive. "Whom have I in heaven beside Thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside Thee."

"Whom have we, Lord, but Thee
Soul thirst to satisfy?
Exhaustless spring, the waters free,
All other streams are dry."

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 GLORY OF CHRIST.

J. T. Mawson.

"Father, glorify Thy Name" (John 12. 28).

"Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in Him" (John 13. 31).

"Father . . . glorify Thy Son, that Thy Son may also glorify Thee" (John 17. 1).

"Messengers of the churches, and the glory of Christ" (2 Corinthians 8. 23).

IF we are to answer to the five-fold challenge that has been put to us, we shall need to know the One of whom these great men of olden times—Isaac, Boaz and David, were but feeble types, and of Him and His glory would I speak to you. It is well for us to learn that the glory of man is as the flower of the field, but even having learnt that we shall still pursue it unless a brighter glory, the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ, shines upon our souls. This only will keep us.

But what is meant by His glory? The glory of God is the revelation of what He is. When we speak of glorifying Him we do not mean that we can add anything to Him or make Him more glorious than He is, but that having received the revelation of Himself by faith we respond to it and give Him that place in our thoughts and lives that the revelation claims. If we speak of the glory of a man, it is his achievements that we have in mind, but no man can achieve anything beyond what he is, and when we think of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ in manhood, we think of what He achieved in His life of sufferings, but His achievements are the revelation of what He is, the Spirit of God delights to bring His achievements before our souls, and in this way glorify Him, and as the Spirit glorifies Him to us we begin to count earthly glory all loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Him.

We are not surprised to find a great deal about His glory in the Gospel of John. Who He is in His eternal greatness is there declared. He is the Word, the Creator of worlds, and the only begotten Son in the bosom of the Father. But He dwelt among men full of grace and truth. And some beheld His glory. They were made to realise the unique place that was His in relation to His Father, a place that no creature could occupy. But His glory shone out for their blessing, for the glory of the only begotten was that of the Revealer of the Father, and that revelation was not in the fire, nor the thunder, nor the earthquake, nor even in the wisdom and power that made the worlds, but in the voice of love, a still, small voice that won their hearts and made them answer His challenge in a way that must have given Him great joy. "To whom shall we go, Thou hast the words of eternal life."

He achieved great things in His humiliation, when despised and rejected of men, for then He glorified God. In this twelfth chapter of John's Gospel He had reached the great crisis in His life. He had come, if I may use the word, to the fork in the road, and there He stood and said, "Now is My soul troubled." What was it that could trouble the soul of the Son of God? We can understand a shallow soul, such as ours, being lashed into trouble by some passing storm; but what could trouble the unfathomed ocean of His

soul? It must have been a most terrible thing that caused Him to say, "Now is My soul troubled, and what shall I say?" In the previous chapter He had revealed Himself as the Master of death. In this chapter He stood face to face with the hour when He himself would become subject to death, and His soul was troubled. Death, as the judgment of God because of sin, lay before Him, the sinless One. In view of that what could He say? Should He seek relief from that terrible hour, the darkness of which no eye but His could penetrate? Should He pray for escape from that hour in which the hatred of men and the malice of hell would break upon Him without restraint, and in which He would be abandoned of God for our sakes? NO! He would not seek relief. He said, "For this cause came I unto this hour. *Father glorify Thy Name.*"

Consider the absolute devotion to His Father and His Father's will revealed in those words. He was prepared, no matter what the cost might be to Him, to suffer that the Father's Name should be glorified. That was the one thing before His soul, and in His exceeding sorrow it controlled Him. The Father's glory depended upon Him. All things had been put into His hands, and He would not fail the Father. How could the Father's Name be glorified? How could that Name be fully revealed so that Satan's lie might be exposed and the light shine into the souls of men in all its blessedness, and every intelligent creature in the universe see that God is love? There was only one way, the beloved Son must go down into death. Having counted the cost, understanding well all it would mean to Him, He continued

in that way of the will of God. The crisis passed, onward to the Cross He went that the Father should be glorified.

In chapter 13 His soul is troubled again, for in the midst of the disciples is the one who would betray Him to death, how keenly He felt that; but when the traitor had gone out and He was absolutely free with those who loved Him, He said, "*Now is the Son of Man glorified.*" There did not seem to be very much that was glorious about His circumstances at that time. To be betrayed by one of His disciples, to be rejected by His own nation, to be crowned with thorns and put upon a malefactor's cross by the Romans—all that appeared to be defeat and shame! But it was at that hour, in view of all that suffering, that He said, "Now is the Son of Man glorified." Wherein lay His glory? The greatest glory that a man can have is absolute obedience to God. That is man's chiefest glory, for it was to this end that God created him.

When Adam was tested on this ground he was disobedient and, grasping at something God had not given him, instead of gaining glory he gained dishonour, disgrace and death. When "the man of sin" shall appear, in whom disobedience to God will reach its climax, who will exalt himself above all that is called God, and will sit in the temple of God as though he were God, he will be taken in the zenith of his pride by the hand of divine justice and cast down to the lowest hell. But the Son of Man, He Who as to His own Person is the Son, and who came forth from the Father, and came unto the world, was obedient even unto death, and that the death of the cross. What shall

He receive? He shall be raised up from the lowest place to which His love to God carried Him, and be seated in the highest place that God can give Him.

His glory revealed itself when He manifested that absolute obedience to the will of God. Men did not see His glory then, they saw only shame and dishonour, they did not know that He had come to suffer according to the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God; but God saw it and He has joined that glory with His own for ever. God was glorified in Him then. For when He hung upon that cross, what God is was made known. What God is in regard to sin, and in regard to Satan and in regard to man was revealed. He was made known in His justice, in His holiness and in His righteousness and His hatred of sin. His love also was revealed there. The full truth as to His most blessed nature came into manifestation in the midst of that darkness—all was made known by that rejected, despised Man.

The Son of Man was manifested in the perfection of His obedience and in the infinite value of His sacrifice, and God was manifested in the blessedness of His love. What could God do but glorify Him straightway? The Father's glory came down to His tomb and raised Him up into the highest place of glory where He was before. Do not our hearts beat in sympathy with God's heart in this? Do we not acknowledge with worship and adoration that the Man on the throne is worthy to be there? That He who glorified God amid shame and dishonour on the cross is worthy to be glorified on the throne? The universe will eventually be filled with

the glory of the cross, and though we have now a very feeble conception of what God's glory is, the day is coming when it will be known, and it will be the joy and light of the universe, which will have no need of sun or candle, for the glory of God is its light and the Lamb the lamp thereof.

Now hear Him speak again. "Father, the hour is come; glorify Thy Son." Why? "that Thy Son also may glorify Thee." His purpose is unchanged, the same purpose that carried Him to the cross fills His heart upon the throne. For He is most surely there, highly exalted, with a Name that is above every name. And in that glory He is glorifying the Father. How? By giving eternal life to such as we are, so that we may know God, the only true God. There is no treasure so great as the knowledge of God. The devil deceived Adam and Eve in the garden and has succeeded in deceiving the whole race of mankind, so that men suppose God to be a hard Master to be shunned if possible for ever. All sorts of thoughts they have about Him, and even some of them in these modernistic days would describe Him as a weak and indulgent Being, without justice and unable to govern, who does not care how He is treated, it will be all the same in the end. The mind of man has been blinded by the god and prince of this world, and God's creatures are lost to Him. Does God feel that? Does God feel that mankind, upon whom He set His love, cares not for Him? that they will seek any hiding place from His face and anything to satisfy their hearts but Himself? We may be sure God feels it, and His beloved Son feels it, and He is glorifying Him by winning men for God from

the darkness and giving them eternal life. He is reaching and touching hearts and dispelling the darkness in which they live and giving them the true knowledge of God, and there are in this world to-day, in the midst of the darkness, millions who find their joy in God, and He owes this to His glorified Son. There is on the part of these a response to His love and in that He is glorified. Blessed indeed if that is true of us.

What a triumph over the devil is this! If we are here responding to the love of God, it is Christ who has done it. He has glorified His Father, declared the Father's Name and made known to us the Father's love and it has become precious to us—it is more to us than all beside. Young Christians! this is your greatest treasure, would you not part company with everything else for this? Do you not esteem this knowledge which we have in earthen vessels as treasure indeed? Well, remember these words, "If any man love the world the love of the Father is not in him."

The light that has shone from the face of Jesus has shone into our hearts to give the knowledge of God. He has glorified God on the earth and in death and He is still glorifying God on the throne. From that throne He is achieving great things. There were these brethren whom Paul had sent to the churches and who were the messengers of the churches, and this could be said of them, they were "the glory of Christ." A very remarkable expression, an expression that we might well dwell upon—"the glory of Christ." There was Titus, a Gentile, and the other brethren with him, travelling from place to place mini-

stering to the needs of the children of God in the world; and, inspired by the Spirit of God, Paul wrote of them as "the glory of Christ." What can he have meant by that? He meant that Christ had fashioned them according to His own thoughts and achieved great things in them, and they were His glory. They made manifest what He is.

The artist paints his picture and there it hangs. It is his glory. The architect draws his plans and raises a magnificent edifice. It is his glory. There are great monuments in St. Paul's Cathedral, but Sir Christopher Wren has no monument there, and if you ask why, you will be told, as you stand beneath the dome of it, his monument is all about you—the building itself is his glory. Christ is building His Church. It will be His glory in the day of His glory. But has He no glory now? Yes, every saint whom He takes in hand and fashions in His own image is His glory. We read in this epistle (II Corinthians) of "the meekness and gentleness of Christ." Does that meekness and gentleness manifest itself in us? If so, we are Christ's glory. Here were men devoted to the service of Christ, regarding not their own lives, but at great inconvenience to themselves and much hardship, serving Christ in the midst of His saints because they loved Him and loved them for His sake, and because they were serving Him lovingly and devotedly instead of seeking greatness for themselves, the Spirit of God says they were Christ's glory. That is what He can achieve in men.

Think of it, beloved Christians, this is within your reach—you in your obscure circumstances, unknown and scarcely observed by others, may

be the glory of Christ! The greater part of your time may be spent in the kitchen, or surrounded by godless workmates, but if there the fragrance of Christ pervades your life and ways, heaven looks down on Christ's glory, and it will not go altogether unnoticed by others. If you are shewing the meekness and gentleness of Christ, caring for those whom He loves, unselfishly seeking to magnify His Name, it can be said of you that you are Christ's glory, for He is fashioning and forming you after His own likeness.

The Spirit of God is here to direct our thoughts to Christ in the glory and as we continue in the simplicity of devotion to Him and find our delight in considering Him and beholding His glory, we are transformed into the same image (chap.

3), for the light that shines in His face shines in our hearts and it transforms us and shines out from us in the darkness, and only thus can our lives be truly changed according to God.

Christ's glory—what could be greater than that? This is surely something to stir the ambition of our souls, make us ready to cast aside every false and transient glory, and count it all loss for His sake who has glorified God, and who has saved us that we might be His glory in this world, as we shall be when He appears in His glory, for when He appears we are to appear with Him in glory. "When He shall come to be glorified in His saints, and to be admired in all them that believe in that day" (II Thess. 1. 10).

' 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; they shall walk and not faint.'

E'en as the eagle leads her young—
 With tender care to soar on high;
 To look upon the noonday sun
 With fix'd and steady eye.
 To bathe their wings in dazzling light,
 Then swoop to scour the darker plain,
 And then to win with rapid flight,
 Their home of light again.

So may our souls Thy glory know—
 That glory brighter than the sun;
 Then stoop to shed in scenes below,
 The light our souls have won.
 And oft retreat to that bright place,
 Unknown, unsought by mortal eye,
 To bow our hearts before Thy face,
 Our secret home of joy.

CHRISTIAN ESSENTIALS.

R. Turnbull.

"And say ye! Save us, O God of our Salvation, and gather us together, and deliver us from the heathen, that we may give thanks to Thy Holy Name, and glory in Thy Praise" (1 Chronicles 16. 35).

I WILL put my remarks under four headings, *Salvation—Association or Fellowship—Separation and Worship*. Four Christian essentials which are brought before us in this verse.

SALVATION :—Salvation is presented to us in a three-fold way; past, present and future. So far as *the past* is concerned, most, if not all here are able to say, "Thank God I am saved." By the grace of God we have been brought under the power of the gospel and are saved, not merely by taking a text and believing that text, but we go back to a day in the history of our souls, when in the presence of God, and made conscious of our need, we cried to God for deliverance, and deliverance came. Salvation came to us in the person of our Lord Jesus Christ. We believed in Him and are saved.

As to *the future*, we are looking on to that day with gladness when body, soul and spirit we shall enter into the glorious fulness of that salvation, which is now ours in Christ. What a day that will be for our Lord Jesus Christ when we are with and like Him. Then surely "He shall see of the travail of His soul and shall be satisfied." That day is drawing nearer and still nearer, so that we can say "Now is our salvation nearer than when we believed."

There is also a constant and ever present way in which we need salvation. Salvation is present and continuous. You will remember the words of the Lord Jesus Christ in

John's Gospel, 17th chapter, where we are privileged to hear the prayer He addressed to the Father. "I pray not that Thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that Thou shouldest keep them from the evil." That involves salvation step by step. No matter how long we have been on the Christian pathway, we need to have a deepened sense of our dependence upon God, lest, like the Psalmist, we should have to say "My feet were almost gone, my steps had well nigh slipped.

This was brought home to me by an incident I was told last year by a sister in the Lord when we were here at Bangor. She had just returned from visiting an aunt in Germany, who had a very delightful house, surrounded by a most charming garden, but amongst the more important of the good things she was able to enjoy was a very abundant and refreshing water supply. This supply had been adequate for every need. The sparkling, bubbling spring had not failed for thirty-six years, and then something happened! The water supply gradually began to lessen in volume, which quite alarmed the good lady of the house. An examination was made at the source and at the supply taps but the fault was not found, with the result that the water after thirty-six years actually ceased altogether to flow. This, as you can understand, was a very serious matter and demanded immediate attention, so the water engineers were brought in, and beginning at the taps, lifting and examining the pipes one by one, they

worked towards the spring. At last the trouble was discovered. A tiny seed had taken lodgment in a joint of one of the pipes; it took root and there began to grow a pernicious evil weed, which grew and grew in the pipe and limiting the flow of water, until the whole section was choked and the water stopped. What do you think the lady did? Why of course she gave instructions for the weed to be completely cleared, the whole trouble removed, the pipes reconnected; and the water supply was as good as ever.

How long have you been converted; six months, six years, sixteen, twenty-six, thirty-six years? Is there a block in the line of communication? Do you find the supply as it was in the earlier days? When I heard that story, it went home to my soul, and in the words of our Scripture my heart said, "Save me O God of my salvation, save me." Is there in any life here some pernicious thing that is growing and developing and expanding, and will until it is judged and removed, every bit of it. Yes, we do need salvation as did king David. Look back at his history (1 Samuel). We see him in the first place chosen by God for a place of honour. Turn over a chapter or two and we find him, a stripling, facing the giant in the valley of Elah. The champion of the Philistines had defied the armies of the living God, and this youth, spoken of as a man after God's own heart, went forward to meet the enemy of the Lord, not in a power belonging to man, not in the armour and sword supplied by king Saul, they were of no help to him, they were untried. He stepped forward in apparent weakness, a sling and five smooth stones, but behind this was the Name of the

Lord of Hosts. A mighty victory was gained that day by young David, the man after God's own heart, and the Philistines to a man fled. You remember too the time, when as a young Christian, you delighted to go forth as David in the name of the Lord of glory to fight the Lord's battle. They were great days for you.

In following up David's history we find him again with the Philistines, but under very different conditions; sad indeed it is to relate. On this occasion he is in the Philistines' camp, not now going forth as God's champion against the people who were God's enemies, but feigning himself mad, scrabbling on the doors and his spittle falling down upon his beard. We read—"He changed his behaviour"—What, you say—David of whom they sang "Saul hath slain his thousands but David his ten thousands"? Yes, he was actually in the Philistine camp in that condition. Whatever was the trouble, what had happened to bring this about? The fact of the matter was, the little seed had got into the pipe, the line of communication had become choked. He had got his eye upon King Saul. He was filled with fear and fled.

We do well to challenge our hearts. What company do we keep? Are we going forth into the world in the Name of the Lord to fight His battle in the power of the Spirit of God, and with the sword of the Spirit, or are we associating with the world? If the latter, we have to change our demeanour or the world won't have us. What happened to David? The Philistine king at first wanted nothing to do with him, but soon he won his way into his affection, and then later on

we find David actually going into battle against the Lord's own people. The princes of the Philistines however did not trust him; they thought he would let them down, and believe me dear friends, if you, as a child of God, turn again to the world as David did in figure, you will find the world does not trust you, they do not want your company. As a matter of fact you have been spoilt for the world and the world for you for now you are a citizen of heaven. I believe, if one might draw upon this picture, it was when he discovered that the princes of the Philistines did not trust him and in their wrath said, "Make this fellow return, let him not go down with us to battle, lest in the battle he be an adversary to us," that just then David turned to God and cried in his anguish, "Save me, O God of my salvation!"

Do you think such a prayer could go unanswered? I am sure it could not. We see it in Jonah of old. You remember how God had to deal with him. He was thrown over the side of the ship into the sea, and God prepared a great fish that swallowed him. There he was in the belly of the fish, and then he began to think, which was followed by good resolutions. "I will look again toward Thy Holy Temple" but nothing happened. "I will sacrifice unto Thee" but nothing happened. "I will pray that which I have vowed" and still nothing happened. "Salvation is of the Lord" and at once the fish vomited out Jonah upon the dry land. Deliverance—and that is the way to-day. A cry to God like that brings its answer as surely as God is in heaven.

ASSOCIATION. The next point in our verse is "Gather us together."

David had his companions in the cave of Adullam. And here we must view him as a type of the Lord Jesus Christ, for in spite of his failures he was God's anointed man. A strange lot these companions were. They were men in debt, and distress, and discontented with prevailing conditions, but they clave to David. And whether would you have been with them, followers of God's anointed man in exile, or with king Saul at his royal court? There are those to-day who follow the Lord, and cleave to Him. Like David's men they were once debtors, some fifty and some five hundred pence debtors, they were distressed in soul and found that only Christ could give them peace, and discontented they were, but they have found satisfaction in Him. His Name is their boast and rallying centre. And hear what He has said. "Where two or three are gathered together in My Name, there am I in the midst of them." Have you noticed that those cherished words were spoken specially as to His own uniting for prayer? "Oh!" says someone, "I do not feel particularly interested in the prayer meeting, and do not care much for the people who attend it." My friend, you are on dangerous ground. Who then are your associates? Surely if your heart is right with the Lord you will seek the company of those who are sufficiently interested in His Name and glory to gather together for prayer in His Name. You may point to their weakness, and they may be weak and few, they probably are, but if the Lord is with them, does not that make a difference?

If we belong to Christ, we are no longer unattached units, we are His brethren, one with Him, and

of one family. "For He that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one, for which cause He is not ashamed to call them brethren." And to us comes the word, "Not forsaking the assembling of yourselves together, as the manner of some is, but so much the more as ye see the day approaching." The days were not easy when Malachi prophesied. There was great indifference then to God's claims, but there were some who "feared the Lord, and they spake often one to another, and the Lord hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before Him for those that feared the Lord, and that thought upon His Name. And they shall be mine, saith the Lord of Hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels" (chap. 3. 16, 17). They delighted His heart and so shall we if we follow in their steps.

SEPARATION. "Deliver us from the heathen." God draws a definite line of demarcation between those whom He calls His "own" and the world. We must not obliterate that distinction. Notice how this comes out in the Lord's final words to His disciples in John 14. 15. 16. 17, the "you" and "the world" stand out in striking contrast there. The call to separation is imperative. "Come out from among them and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing." We see the necessity for this, for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? What communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? and what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God, As God hath said, I will dwell in them and walk in them; and I will

be their God, and they shall be My people" (2 Cor. 6).

The call to separation comes to us also in view of the widespread departure from the Faith in Christendom. There are men whose lives are spent in overthrowing the faith of some, as Paul tells us in 2 Timothy 2. They deny what we know to be God's revelation of Himself to us, and we read, "Let every one that nameth the Name of the Lord depart from iniquity . . . if a man therefore purge himself from these (vessels to dishonour), he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the master's use." Some have excused themselves for remaining in association with men whom they know to be enemies of truth by the idea that they can be of more use where they are; but it is the one who truly separates himself from these false teachers according to the word of the Lord, who "is prepared unto every good work."

Speaking to a Christian I said, "How is young so and so getting on since he removed to your town?" The answer was, "He appears to be wanting to make the best of both worlds." But that is a thing that can't be done. If you try you will be compelled to "change your behaviour" and act a part before the world that will deny what you are before God. This comes home to one's conscience and makes one feel how necessary it is that we should turn to God and ask for grace from Him that we may make straight paths for our feet.

WORSHIP. In separation from evil and association with those who fear the Lord we shall have the privilege of those who worship the Father in spirit and in truth. "That

we may give thanks to Thy holy Name, and glory in Thy praise" are David's words. But note the words "in spirit and in TRUTH." Our worship must be in God's way and according to His ordering. We have a solemn lesson as to the results of David's indifference as to this. He wanted the ark of God—which we know was typical of Christ in the midst of His people—in Jerusalem. It had been in exile among the Philistines and had been cared for for a long time in Kirjath-jearim, but David wanted it in his own city, and stirred up all Israel to be of the same mind, but instead of enquiring as to God's way of carrying it, he imitated the Philistines' way, with the result that Uzza died before God (Chronicles 13). David had the right desire, but he carried it out in the wrong way and had to learn that "to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams." He learnt that lesson and in chapter 15 we see David subject to God's word and great joy and blessing followed.

Our desire is to give Christ His right place, not in our individual lives only but in relation to the worship of God when we gather together with "His own" just as David wished to have the ark in its true and honoured place in the midst of Israel. The desire is right, but we must not set about to work up a sort of enthusiasm as David did and do things according to the way of the Philistines but in lowliness

of heart and meekness of spirit seek God's way as He has revealed it to us. "If any man will do His will he shall know of the doctrine."

David was able to bless the people when he was subject to the Word of God, "a loaf of bread, and a good piece of flesh and a flagon of wine for every man and woman in Israel." And then he delivered this wonderful psalm to the singer.

"Give thanks to the Lord, Sing unto Him, Glory ye in His Holy Name. Seek the Lord and His strength; Remember His marvellous works," and so it goes on to the 29th verse, "Give unto the Lord the glory due unto His Name, bring an offering and come before Him, worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness."

Then turning to the people (verse 35) "And say ye! Save us O God of our salvation and gather us together, and deliver us from the heathen that we may give thanks to Thy Holy Name and glory in Thy praise," and the next verse comes in "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel for ever and ever, and all the people said Amen—Let it be so."

Is that the language of your heart and mine? As the Spirit of God brings these thoughts before us, do our hearts respond and say "Amen"—Let it be so. May the Lord grant that this might be so for His Own Name's sake.

"Judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts: and then shall every man have praise of God" (1 Cor. 4. 5).

THE FOREKNOWLEDGE OF GOD.

Roderick McCallum.

Gen. 9. 24-27.

Gen. 12. 2-3.

Deut. 29 28-29.

Jer. 32. 41-42.

Dan. 2. 31-35.

Hosea 6. 3.

[I]t may appear strange to you that to-night we have read entirely from the Old Testament, but, after all, a hurried calculation will reveal that four-fifths or at least three-quarters of this wonderful Book are Old Testament scriptures. Now I am not foolish enough to imagine that the heart of the Christian revelation is to be found in the Old Testament, but I am persuaded that the Old bears the same relationship to the whole as the spine does to the body. We are living in a modernistic age, and the Modernist's conception of the Old Testament is as relative to the truth as the schoolboy's definition of the spine, when he said, "The spine is a bundle of bones running up and down the back, to which the ribs are attached. The skull sits on the one end and I sit on the other." The Modernist feels under obligation to use only a very tiny portion of the Old Testament scriptures, but his posture is neither comfortable nor safe and like the schoolboy he has become detached from his skull. That is why his thinking is so muddled. And in his view this wonderful section of God's Word is only a bundle of bones.

Now, while I have read from the Old Testament, my text is really found in the New. This may be the very last Christian conference that shall ever be held—who knows?—and the burden of my address is to be found in the record of the first conference of Christian brethren—in some respects a much more auspicious one than this, for the apostles were there, but in other

respects not such a happy one, for there was much disputing. And when the others had held their peace, James stood up and said, "Men and brethren, hearken unto me; Simeon hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles to take out of them a people for His Name. And to this agree the words of the prophets; as it is written, After this I will return and I will build again the tabernacle of David which is broken down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up; that the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles upon whom My Name is called, saith the Lord, Who doeth all these things. *Known unto God are all His works from the beginning of the world.* The concluding statement is the summary of what I desire to bring before you to-night.

A year ago I spoke to you here on "The Prevision and provision of God." We saw that in the beginning, in the realm of nature, every need had been anticipated and provided for by God, so that then and there at least it was clear that "Known unto God are all His works from the beginning." But sin has entered; man's will has been at work; and as we look around to-day the world appears to have run amok and to have got out of hand. At times we may be tempted to think that things have got out of the hands of God Himself, and I desire that our hearts may be reassured to-night by reminding you that God is behind everything and everyone, and that there is no one behind God, and

known unto God are all His works from the beginning of the world. In our study a year ago we traced mankind back to one centre and one pair, male and female. The start was good Bible knowledge and it was good science.

To-night we begin with a world that has been swept by the flood, and I want you to see how, in the post-diluvian world, God in His Word traces all mankind through their generations and families to three distinct groups. This too, is good Bible knowledge and good science. The scientist with some show of learning speaks of the Negro, and the Mongol and the Caucasian races. More simply we would speak of the Black, the Yellow and the White races; and in the language of Scripture we would describe them as the descendants of Ham, Shem and Japheth. The filial descendants of Ham you will find were Cush, dwelling in Ethiopia; Mizraim in Egypt, Phut in Libya and Canaan, giving his name to the low lying coast land of Palestine. I mention these to show that, generally speaking, the descendants of Ham dwelt in Africa. And in the same way we may say that the Semitic or yellow races inhabited Asia, while the white or Japhethic races have populated Europe.

But note this, God did not merely give the origin of racial history, for the passage that we read in Gen. 9, is nothing less than a solemn prediction of futures and destinies of these races. The only barrier in the way of an immediate acceptance of the prophetic character of this passage is the apparent unsuitability of the occasion of its utterance. Noah, to whom government had been committed, had failed to govern

himself. He had just recovered from a drunken sleep. Let me remind you in passing, dear friends, that wine has ever made its appeal to men with the promise of much joy, but has brought as its entail sorrow and shame. To the parents I would say—See to it that you do not expose that which is your shame to your children; and to the children I would say, Honor thy father and mother. The first sin in the ante-diluvian world struck at the bond between God and man; the first sin in the new world was directed against the bond between parent and child. Ham enjoyed a brutal joke at the expense of his father and he suffered for it. You may say, Ham was not cursed. Wasn't he? He was cursed in his youngest son, and I am sure that you will agree that the severest punishment that God in His providential judgment can mete out to any man is to visit the iniquity of the father upon the children. Beware, my young friends, of entertaining brutal jests at the expense of your parents, for "Whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap."

But what was the curse? Cursed be Canaan; a servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren. The lot of Canaan was to be one of drudgery. For centuries the history of Canaan seemed to mock the prophetic word. The Sidonians were the merchant princes of the earth; the Tyrians and the Carthaginians enjoyed an equally glorious inheritance. The Hittites—and to the Modernists who once denied the very existence of such a people, we would say, Remember the Hittites—rivalled Egypt, Assyria and Babylonia in power. But the day came when the glory departed. The Canaanites of Palestine went down before the de-

scendants of Shem in the persons of the children of Israel. The Hittites succumbed before the superior might of the Semitic Assyrians. The Sidonians and Tyrians were completely conquered by the Japhethic dominions of Persia, Greece and Rome; and at last the great glory of Carthage vanished before the greater power and glory of Rome. Ever since over Canaan has been written the word "Ichabod." And who is there who will deny that the dark peoples of the earth have been the burden-bearers and slaves of the descendants of Shem and Japheth? The mills of God may seem to work exceeding slow, but they grind exceeding small.

But the prediction proceeded—Blessed be the Lord God of Shem; and Canaan shall be His servant. God shall enlarge Japheth and he shall dwell in the tents of Shem. In some very special way God in all His power and as a covenant-keeping God was to be made known to Shem and his descendants. And has it not been so? It is through the descendants of Shem that there has come to the world the knowledge of God preserved for us in the Holy Scriptures. Through the descendants of Shem there has come into the world the Saviour in Whom ye rejoice; so that truly Japheth has found shelter in the tents of Shem; for Israel's God is our God now fully revealed in Christ Jesus. This knowledge has surely been the greatest of all blessings brought to the marvellously enlarged Indo-European races—the descendants of Japheth.

In Gen. 12, we find God blessing Abraham, and assuring him that in his seed all nations of the earth would be blessed. To him and to his seed was the "land of promise"

promised unconditionally. But although the land was promised to him on unconditional covenant, Abraham never possessed a foot of it according to that promise. He paid the full price for the one piece of burial ground that he had in the land; and his seed never entered the land under the Abrahamic covenant. You will remember that under the bondage of Egypt his seed multiplied in number, and in due time God redeemed them by blood and with an outstretched arm He opened a way for them through the Red Sea. He guided them by His presence; He bore them as on eagle's wings and He led them in grace until they came to Sinai.

At Sinai the people voluntarily took themselves off the platform of grace and put themselves under a covenant of works, saying, All that God has said we will do. Before the children of Israel entered the land God set before them the blessing and the cursing. He made known the blessing that would be theirs if they walked according to His will and in obedience to His precepts, but He warned them in equally unmistakable terms of what would come upon them if they turned aside from that pathway. And they did turn aside. Did God then fulfil His promise bringing upon them the curse? He did. God is not the benevolent and indulgent old grandfather that some people imagine Him to be. Judgment is His strange work, but when He undertakes it He will perform it to completion. What did He promise them? He told them that if they departed from Him and turned to other gods He would fill their hearts with fear; their eyes would fail because of the sights they would see; sorrow would fill their minds; they would have no security

of life, but their life would hang perpetually in the balance. They would be dispersed to the ends of the earth and would have no rest for the soles of their feet. When night came they would say in their distress, Would God it were morning, and when morning came they would say, Would God it were even.

And has not that been Israel's portion? Led into a politically inspired idolatry they have been cast off by God, and since the two and a half tribes rejected their Christ and crucified their Lord, their beloved city has been laid waste, their sanctuary has been made desolate, they have been scattered about the earth and have become a proverb and a by-word and a hissing, they have become "the people of the restless foot." Their men have been broken on the wheel; flayed alive; burned; their women have suffered outrages worse than death; their children have been brutally rendered orphans. In barbaric times? Yes—and in twentieth century days with their civilisation, education and culture we see the same forces at work—for the heart of man has not changed. But mark this, whenever man resents the authority of God and fondly imagines that he owes his power solely to dynastic claims or to the sword or, it may be, to the ballot box, God claims the right to intervene and to demonstrate that "the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men and that He giveth it to whomsoever He will."

In the days of Nebuchadnezzar God took the sceptre that should have been Judah's and put it into the hands of the Gentiles. God's intention was that Israel should be the head of all nations and that in the land of Promise, as the geo-

graphical centre of the earth, with God incarnate as their King, there might be administered through Israel, blessing to all nations. But they rejected God's purpose for them and in the days of Nebuchadnezzar the sceptre passed, and there began the Times of the Gentiles. And so we have had now some two thousand five hundred odd years of Gentile rule. Looking back upon it we see from one point of view the glory of it—the sparkling brilliance of man; his genius; the exercise of God-given faculties, and that is how Nebuchadnezzar saw it—a great colossus wonderful to behold. Before touching upon the image as portrayed in Dan. 2, let me remark, my dear young friends, that a study of this book will repay you. It is history written beforehand, so accurate historically, that of course the critics have decided that it was never written by Daniel. I read the other day a schoolboy's answer to the question, Who wrote the Iliad? His answer was, "The Iliad was supposed to have been written by Homer, but scholars have now discovered that it was written by another man of the same name." That is just about as far as the higher critics can take you.

Let us look then at the image depicting Gentile rule as seen through the eyes of ambition. It is a God-like man—the head of gold; the arms and breast of silver; the belly and thighs of brass; the legs of iron, and the feet of iron and clay mixed. Now I am not going into details. We all know that the image sets forth the course of the Gentile rule—the Babylonian empire being succeeded by the Persian, the Persian by the Grecian and the Grecian by the Roman. The last phase of this last world empire exhibits the inter-

mixture of the iron and clay. Iron, of course, speaks of rule after that of character—iron rule or dictatorship, and clay denotes the democratic element. On this all expositors are agreed. Was there ever such a democratic age as this? Now, there is a vicious circle manifestly at work in the world to-day but which will be even more marked hereafter. Departure from God—the casting off of authority and restraint—leads ultimately to democracy run riot—to anarchy, and anarchy leads ultimately to dictatorship, finally, indeed, to anti-Christ.

On almost every side to-day we see democracy handing over the reins to a dictator. Let me say in passing, my dear brethren, and I speak to you not only as fellow-believers in Christ, but as those who have discarded all party names, unless we hold to the Headship of Christ, to His Lordship and to the administration of the Spirit in the assembly, we shall merely prove ourselves to be the most democratic religious polity on the face of the earth. Now God has put to the test all forms of government from the absolutism of Babylon right down to democracy, and with the extension of the franchise both sexes have been brought to collaborate for the good of their fellow-men, so that it cannot be said that failure has been due to the nature of the government or to the disability of sex. God has allowed time to demonstrate that failure is not due to the form of government, but to inherent sin.

At the end of this age ten kingdoms will emerge in the revived Roman Empire. Are there not even now signs of revival? What cruel barbarities and atrocities have been per-

petrated and will be practised by these Gentile powers. But, thank God, "Known unto God are all His works from the beginning of the world" and in spite of all that there is to depress in the world, the promise stands that the Stone, cut out without hands, is going to crush that Colossus to powder, and it shall be as chaff driven before the wind, and the kingdom, long prayed for will come and the will of God shall be done on earth.

Has God meantime forgotten His ancient people? Nay, verily. He says, I will rejoice over them with singing. I will plant them again in the land, assuredly, with all my soul and with all my heart. Think of it. The Omnipotent God is going to put His whole heart and soul into the work of taking His people back again into the Promised Land. Can we not see them going back to-day? I verily believe that the coming of Christ is very near. I am not forgetting that He will come for us, and that He must come for us before we come with Him. But Christ is coming for and with us. "The going forth of the Lord is prepared as the day" (Hos. 6. 3). Another translation reads, The coming of the Lord is as sure as the dawn. We have all passed through dark nights in our experience. Some of us passed through dark nights on service in France, but the dawn came and we went home. Some here have passed through dark nights in their domestic circles, and, even if that which caused the sorrow may not have been removed for them, if they have learned the sustaining grace of God, the dawn came. And surely this is a dark night in the world's history, but, brethren, The coming of the Lord is as sure as the dawn. Maranatha—the Lord is coming. I

am told that that word—Maranatha—had such sweet associations for the early Christians that in all translations the Aramaic word has been unchanged lest it should be robbed of its hallowed memories. In the dark days of persecution believers were wont to say one to another, Maranatha—the Lord is coming. And, my dear brethren, I say to you to-night, Maranatha, He is coming.

What will it mean for us now to keep this coming before us? Can there be anything more solemnly impressive than to remember that at any moment—not when world developments have taken place, but at any moment, the Lord may come and take us into His presence? In God's Word you will find that the coming of the Lord and the sanctification of saints are always joined together. To my young brethren I would say, My dear young brethren, you are not going to wait until you have been superannuated by the business firm that employs you, or until you have been superannuated from your profession and then serve the Lord, are you? You will not then have the physical strength. I would urge upon you to-night, in the Name of the Lord, and in view of the Lord's near return, to devote the vigour of your manhood to the interests of your Lord and Saviour.

The Lord is coming! What a wonderful day it will be for the earth when He comes! Then will the heavens be glad and the earth rejoice. The trees will clap their hands and the waves of the sea reverberate their Hallelujahs to the ends of the earth, for the sea will roar with joy and the brooks gurgle their praise. Yes, the whole creation, groaning and travailing until now will then be brought under the blessed administration of that One who is so competent to introduce and to maintain that rule of peace and righteousness and economic bliss for which philosophers and poets have sighed; for which philanthropists and politicians have worked; for which we in patience wait. The prophet looking on to that day could say, Unto us a child is born; unto us a Son is given, And the government shall be upon His shoulder and His Name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father and the Prince of Peace. He shall sit upon the throne of His father, David, and rule in righteousness, and we say to-night in truth, "Hasten that day!" Meantime let us live in the light of the coming of Christ, remembering that "the coming of the Lord is as sure as the dawn," and assured that "Known unto God are all His works from the beginning of the world."

"Who maketh thee to differ from another? and what hast thou that thou didst not receive? now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?" (1 Cor. 4. 7).

"Ye are bought with a price; be not ye the servants of men" (1 Cor. 7. 23).

HEARKENING TO JAMES.

F. B. Hole.

My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing" (James 1).

WHEN in the council in Jerusalem James began to sum up the matter before them, he started by saying, "Men and brethren, hearken unto me" (Acts 15). I have said to myself, Yes, I would like to hearken to that which God may have said to me by that remarkable man. And I want you to hearken for a few minutes to things the apostle James would be saying to us if he were standing here to-night. He would say to us, "My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations." It seems to me we don't listen to James as we ought. We have only one epistle written by him and that not a very long one, and also he seems to have been rather at a discount in many minds. So great an authority as Martin Luther, I am told, spoke in terms of contempt of this epistle and talked about it as an epistle of straw. Now in many things I bow down to the authority of the great reformer but I must rather stand up to him in that. The book to me seems much more like a great sledge-hammer than a bundle of straw. If any man knows how to hit heavy blows on the conscience of the average saint James is the apostle that does it. We get very straight talking if we hearken to James.

Is it not a rather extraordinary thing that he says to us in this verse? Temptation, of course, has the force not merely of certain things that tempt us, such as besetting sins. Practically all the circumstances of

our lives in this world provide us with occasions of temptation, in the way of trials and testings. We grin and bear them. That may be stoical, but it is not Christianity. James says, "My brethren, count it all joy." "Why, James," we might say, "you have asked us to do a very big thing." Candidly, I am not up to it. I hope I have arrived at this point that when trying things keep happening, I can say, God knows how ultimately to make all things work together for good to them that love Him. I can see there may be eventually what is profitable. But this is rather beyond me.

"Count it all joy!" not ninety per cent joy. *All* joy when you fall into divers, that is, various testings. Again and again we get tested, and not always by the same circumstances. First of all we are attacked, assaulted, tested, tried, tempted on this side. Then the wind seems to veer round and blows from the other quarter and we are tempted in a totally different direction. And suppose we challenged James as being very peculiar in his teaching he would look us in the face and say, I am only saying that which is the consensus of the apostolic testimony.

We turn to the Pauline epistles. There are verses in Romans 5 which say in other words very much what James is saying here. Paul says, We not only rejoice in the hope of the glory of God, and not only do we rejoice in God Himself, but, we

rejoice in tribulation also. We turn to Peter's epistles, so as to listen to the Petrine exhortation, and we find in his first epistle more about suffering than anywhere else in the epistles. Again and again he speaks of Christ's suffering and our suffering. We suffer for righteousness' sake, for Christ's sake, for doing good. We suffer in other ways, but we should be very, very careful, though we suffer as Christians, not to suffer as evildoers. But when you get to the end of Chapter 5 he sums up by saying, "The God of all grace who hath called us unto His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while make you perfect, stablish, strengthen settle you." Peter speaks of *sufferings*, Paul talks about *tribulation*. James talks about *temptations*, but, mark you, they all tell us of the great virtues that reside in these things.

Now it seems to me, if I am going really to listen to James, I shall have to revise some of my Christian thinking. Instead of trying to dodge suffering when it comes I shall have to welcome it. Frankly, I don't like temptations; temptations are very terrible things. Let me avoid them, I should say, at all costs. "My brethren," says James, "count it all joy when you fall into divers temptations."

Each apostle gives the same reason. Paul says, We glory in tribulation knowing that *tribulation worketh patience*—the very thing that James speaks of here—*patience works experience, experience hope, hope makes not ashamed*. It clears away obstructions and makes room for the inshining of the love of God. Find a Christian whose heart is filled with the love of God and you find a very remarkable man. And Paul knew

right well that, though the process was trying, the thing to be reached by the process was a thousand times worth while.

We turn to Peter. God has called us to eternal glory but, he says, *after ye have suffered a while*. We may connect that little phrase with the beginning of the verse, He has called us to His eternal glory after we have suffered awhile; but we must connect it with the end of the verse also. Suffering helps to make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you. Why is it, think you, that we often find a sad lack of stability, of settlement, of establishment amongst us as believers? I dare say it is that we have managed in this very favoured land of ours to escape so many of the sufferings others have endured. Again and again we see it, that suffering instead of knocking the truth of the gospel out of the young convert most effectually knocks it in, and if you want to find stabilised Christians, strengthened Christians, settled Christians, you will have to discover *tested* Christians.

The strong winter winds shake the sapling down to the utmost ramifications of its roots; and it is that shaking, that testing that the young tree gets, that enables it to break up the soil round the roots and get ready for the underground growth of the spring, when above the ground the fresh leaves and twigs appear. The process is going on beneath the surface and even the winter winds prepare the ground for the strengthening and establishment and settlement of that tree in the site where it has been placed.

We still listen to James and he tells us that the trying of our faith

"worketh patience," and patience, as you know, has in it the thought of endurance. It is the testing of your faith that works endurance. God permits the trials to come upon us in order that we may be tested, and patience having worked her perfect work we may be perfect—that is, carried to completion—and entire, wanting nothing. The common notion is that temptations and testings and trials are merely dreadful weights. We say, if only I were not tied down by these difficulties what a good kind Christian I could be. But again I have had to revise my thoughts on that subject. I discovered after all I was not right.

A little lad flies his kite in the March winds. It goes soaring into the sky and here he is down beneath. He has hold of the cord and if you could give that kite a mouth it might reason plausibly to itself after this fashion. "Look how well I am flying and, mark you, doing all this in spite of the aggravating circumstance that that stupid little youth continually hangs on to the end of the string. I don't know what it is for. I know why I have a tail and little side wings, but that string is the trouble, and that idiotic child hanging on the string. Does he think I am going to lift him as well as myself in the wind? Seeing I fly so well under this handicap, I think I could fly up and hit yonder moon if only I got free. What could I not do if I were not tied down in this foolish way?" Then the little lad is inattentive for a moment, the string goes slack, and the kite going up again with a jerk, the string snaps. The kite goes wobbling down and down, and gets tangled in the telegraph wires or the old oak. A poor, sorry thing it looks. Supposing the kite could

speaking what would it say now? It would have to revise its thinking and say, "Well, well, I never! The very thing I thought was keeping me down was keeping me up."

My little parable is not an original one. I have heard it used before and I have used it myself before, but it is a good one. It is the trials, the testings, the awkward circumstances you and I have to face that are God's education for us. We are learning what God can do for us in the midst of those temptations. We have an opportunity of gaining an experience we are never going to get in all the golden days of heaven.

There is no doubt about it, God knows how to deal with each one of us, and so James opens his epistle with this word. He has many things to say to us but he clears these great distractions out of the way to begin with. The temptations are distractions and stumbling blocks to us unless we harken to James. Look at these things in the home, in the business, in the meeting. It often seems to me that people are pig-headed and obstreperous and foolish. They may be all that, and I am not proof against being all that myself, but it is here in the midst of these testing circumstances, these temptations, I am going to learn myself by my failure, and I shall learn what the grace of God can do for me. I am thinking not so much of opposition from the world as things amongst the people of God—in this land of ours the trouble comes less from without than from within.

Supposing God saw fit in His wisdom to allow this country to pass into circumstances that have prevailed in other countries so much of late.

Supposing we got a measure of tyranny. Supposing things don't get better but worse, and the idea prevails of a totalitarian state—the State claiming to control the life of the individual in totality, not even religion excluded from its grasp—and you have to bow down or suffer. We have not got that yet, but if we did we should be a good deal more together, the line of demarcation between the world and the church would be much more definitely drawn. But the present tendency is to utter disintegration within. We fall apart and fight, the world meanwhile sitting by with a very broad sneer on its face, while we are in easy surroundings.

But either way temptations abound. They are going to work endurance, and teach us patience, and prove our spiritual mettle. And there is the day of the kingdom coming. What a wonderful thing it would be if the Lord could look upon such as ourselves and say, There are people approximating to a state of being "perfect and entire, wanting nothing." We may prove the grace and sufficiency of God,

by the Holy Spirit, in these difficult circumstances. We may discover the infinite resources in Christ in the midst of these circumstances. We may learn to know Him with an intimacy and knowledge of such a character as we will never get in heaven if we don't get it on earth.

So, let us be encouraged. Let us remember what God has in view in these testing things. And let us hearken to James when he tells us to count it all joy—not sorrow, nor something to be avoided at all costs. If God confronts you with testings again and again, say to yourself, "Look! a fresh opportunity of my experiencing something more of the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ; a fresh opportunity of proving the fullness that is in Him, of learning lessons that, once learned, will stand in good stead throughout the golden days of eternity."

"Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love Him."

The measure of our faith is the measure of our fruitfulness. If we only half believe in the promises of God or in the eternal realities, then the sinews of our soul are weakened and there comes of us the sad paralysis of doubt. How can we bring forth fruit except we abide in Him? And how can we abide in Him except by letting His words abide in us? But having His words abiding in us, His peace, His joy are ours also; and we who, without Him are poor barren things become strong and fruitful, and the Master Himself will gather His thirty, sixty and hundred fold the fruit of a wholehearted faith.

WHAT IS REALLY LIFE ?

A. J. Pollock.

Read Numbers xxi. 4-11; 16-18.

[I]t is our earnest desire that the ministry of the word given here should really lay hold upon the young, and that they should leave this place different in mind and in intention from what they were when they came, and that their lives should be blessed and, holy lives, redounding to the glory of the Lord, and abounding in blessing to those around them.

I was struck with a little incident I read the other day. The well-known D. L. Moody, the evangelist, of America, returned from a preaching one night, and he was asked, "How many converts did you get to-night?"

He replied, "I got two and a half."

The person, to whom he said this, replied, "I suppose you mean you got two grown-ups and a child?"

"No," said Mr. Moody, "I got two children and one grown-up."

"How do you make that out to be two and a half?"

"Well," replied the great winner of souls, "you see the two children have got a *whole* life before them, whereas a grown-up person has only got *half* a life before him."

These considerations impress me greatly, and give me a fresh sense of the value of reaching the young. So I desire by the grace of God to give a very practical address.

There are four great historical types of the death of Christ in the Old Testament, one of which we have just read. They are, (1) The Passover night in Egypt; (2) The crossing of the Red Sea; (3) The

uplifting of the Serpent of Brass; and (4) The passage of the Jordan. God has given us these types in order that we may visualise what God had for us when He first took us up for blessing.

There is a very feeble idea of the gospel oftentimes in people's minds, that amounts to this. Many a person says that God is so good and gracious, and has provided His Son as Saviour, and through accepting Him sins are forgiven, and assurance and going to heaven is given. The gospel to such is looked upon as little better than a benefit society, carrying with it no responsibility on our side as to walk and life.

Now look at it like this. Take these Old Testament types of the death of Christ, and apply them to our own spiritual experience. God on the Passover night told the Israelites that when the blood was sprinkled upon the lintel and door posts of the house where they were, the destroying angel would not enter. That surely was consoling, and when faith laid hold upon it, they could be in peace of mind when that dread midnight hour came. But supposing it had ended there. What if they had still been left in Egypt, making bricks without straw, and still under the lash of the taskmaster? They would begin to groan afresh in their affliction, and cry to the Lord again for deliverance. We can say surely, and we want to say it with all reverence, if nothing further had occurred in the type, we could only say God had not finished the work He had put His hand to. But, thank God, He does finish the work He

puts His hand to, and He brought the children of Israel out of Egypt, across the Red Sea, through the wilderness and into the land flowing with milk and honey.

Now, first of all, the children of Israel cried for deliverance from the taskmaster, but they had to learn on the Passover night that there was a question that had to be settled in connection WITH GOD HIMSELF. What a wonderful thing it is to know that the Lord Jesus Christ—God in undiminished Deity, stooped down and became a Man, and passed through the very unspeakable sufferings of the Cross under the judgment of God in order to glorify God as to the question of sin. But, dear friends, does that not put some obligation upon us? You remember the verse that emphasises this:—"The love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all then were all dead [*spiritually*]: and that He died for all that they which live [*spiritually*] should not henceforth live unto themselves, BUT UNTO HIM which died for them, and rose again" (2 Cor. 5. 14, 15). Now the great point is this. Should we recognise the responsibility that God puts upon each one of us, when He ministers to us such astounding grace?

We are justified in using this typical scene in this way because we have a New Testament verse to warrant our doing so. We read, "Even Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us" (1 Cor. 5. 7). And this is followed by the responsibility to "Keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth."

Then in 1 Cor. 10. 1-4, we read of the fathers of Israel being baptised unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea. This brings us to a further point. It is easily seen in the type because it was a matter of geography. The difference between these people being in Egypt, and having the Red Sea between them and the land of their bitter bondage, and finding themselves in the wilderness is easily grasped. They were under a new leader, and under absolutely new conditions. "They were all baptised unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea." They found themselves under a new guide, and were dependent upon heavenly resources, upon the manna that came down from heaven—angel's food—and the water that gushed out from the smitten rock.

With us it is a question of how far are we in the faith of our souls answering to this? It is not a matter of geography with us. It is more subtle than that. It is *spiritual* apprehension, the recognition of an obligation, which the death of Christ has put upon every one of us. *They* were delivered from Egypt; and *we* have been delivered from the world. *They* were delivered from the power of Pharaoh; *we* are delivered from the power of Satan. *They* had heavenly resources, the manna from heaven, and the water from the stricken rock; *we*, too, have heavenly resources—a heavenly Christ, the Food of His people and the Refreshment of their souls. He alone can sustain His people.

But I want to ask each young Christian here, Have you accepted the position that the cross of Christ puts you into, that you are not of the world as Christ was not of the world? That you have changed, as it were, spiritually, the order of

things in which you live, and that you are committed to something very blessed and yet very serious? Will you young Christians think that over?

In the natural order of things we do expect the Lord to come soon. We were all stirred last night as we were reminded of the early Christians in the catacombs of Rome saying, *Maranatha*—the Lord cometh. How much more we can say *Maranatha*, and how likely it is that we are on the verge of the Lord's return.

But, speaking in a general way, you have your life before you. What a responsibility! You may answer to it in the right way, or you may not answer to it. This is a very serious matter, because, while the Lord works on His side, and as we have been hearing just now about temptations coming to try our faith, and develop our Christian character, God often has to send these things into our lives to attain these results in our souls. But there is *our* side. You have your life before you. You are going to make it, by God's grace, a real success, or failing of that grace a failure, or, it is possible, actually dishonouring to the Lord. What kind of decision do you think of arriving at to-night in regard to your life? Is the thought of all the solemn character of the death of Christ, and all that He passed through to win you for Himself, going to control your life, to touch your affections, so that you will not live unto yourself, but unto Him that died for you and rose again?

We come now to this particular narrative which we read from Numbers 21, the incident of the Brazen Serpent. We find it alluded to in John 3. 14, 15, "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilder-

ness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up: that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish, but have eternal life." If you read on through the Gospel of John you will see the line of *life* running through it; and, mark you, eternal life is not just a first class insurance ticket for heaven. It is a life that is vital, it has powers and affections, and if it is to be lived at all it must express itself according to its own nature. And, therefore, what we are going to consider now in this passage is of deep importance.

Rom. 8. 3 is another Scripture which clearly uses the incident of the brazen serpent as a type of what comes out in connection with the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is interesting to see how the Apostle John uses the incident, as we have already seen in John 3. 14, 15. There he uses it on the *positive* side, that is, the death of our Lord brings LIFE, *divine* life, *eternal* life to the believer. Here the Apostle Paul takes up the incident from the *negative* side, and that is the condemnation of "sin in the flesh."

It is indeed a question of two natures, one divine, to which no sin or sorrow can ever attach. The other, the evil nature, from which no good can ever come, and therefore is set aside by God. So we read in Romans 8. 3, "For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh."

The brazen serpent was not a fiery flying serpent, but in the likeness of it. So our Lord was not "sinful flesh." He was infinitely holy, but He became a Man, came in "the likeness of sinful flesh." The

serpent of brass was lifted on a pole, emblematical of the Son of God being lifted up on the cross, as John 3. 14 tells us. *DEATH* and *death only* could meet the case.

We start by being concerned about our sins, that is the *FRUIT* of the evil nature. But if the fruit is bad the tree is bad, and this comes out in what the death of Christ sets forth. It is a great matter when the young Christian recognises this. You begin by being troubled about the *FRUIT*, that is sins. But later you are troubled about the *ROOT*, that is the sinful nature. The cross of Christ settles everything for us. Sins are atoned for. The sinful nature is condemned. What we are in sinful nature, fruit and root, lock, stock and barrel, is dealt with. Sins can be and are forgiven. The sinful nature cannot be forgiven, it is *CONDEMNED* and set aside.

Thus we find Paul and John meeting in beautiful harmony. Paul tells us the *old* nature is condemned in the death of Christ. John tells us a *new* nature is ours through the death of Christ. "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" (1 John 4. 9).

Let us resume the thread of our narrative in Numbers 21. The children of Israel were journeying, and as they journeyed they were discouraged because of the way. The circumstances were not easy. The desert was a terrible place to traverse. What a contrast are our circumstances here to-day. We come together as Christians, as we do here, and everything is very pleasant and happy.

It is good to roam about these grounds, and come across none but Christians, it reminds me of what millennium scenes may be. But in a day or two we return to our usual circumstances, and things are often small and difficult, and often meetings are very dry, and sometimes we find things almost, I was going to say, *choked*, for want of a better word. So we often get discouraged because of the way.

These children of Israel were so discouraged that they said, There is no bread, and there is no water. They got to such a pass of discouragement that they actually traduced the goodness of God and they said, There is no bread. We are accustomed to the baker bringing bread to our door every morning. God rained it down from the sky, and a double portion on Fridays to last over the Sabbath, and yet they said, We have no bread, neither is there any water. The wilderness is indeed a very dry place. And yet here was the stream from the smitten rock that followed them wherever they went, stiff-necked and rebellious as they were. God's goodness never abandoned them for a single moment. Yet they grumbled and murmured. In 1 Cor. 10. 1-10, you find that the chief crime of the Israelites was that they murmured. Why do people murmur? Because they are not content, and when it is a question of not being content *WITH GOD'S BEST*, it shows that they are in a very sad condition.

God allowed fiery serpents to come and bite them, and when the people turned in their misery to God—for they were dying, and a few minutes or hours at the most would take them out of time into eternity, God met them in His grace. God told

Moses to put a Serpent of Brass upon a pole, and those that looked would live.

Now this is the third lesson that is so deeply important. The first, the Passover night, is a very blessed lesson to us, setting forth that the question between us and God is settled according to God and for His glory. The second is the passage of the Red Sea, setting forth the great truth that we are not of this world, and our affections are now in a different sphere. The Christian should not find his joys in this world as such, in the system of things that crucified his Lord. Then the third thing is to find out in your flesh there dwells no good thing, that God can only recognize an absolutely new life, and that is set forth here in a very remarkable way. It is a very great matter in the history of the young Christians when they come to this conclusion that in their flesh there dwells no good thing, and that you have that new life given to you by the wonderful sovereign grace of our God, and thus you can go forward in a new way, because no Christian travels far as a Christian until they have learned to judge themselves in God's presence.

Now we find after this point they began to journey afresh, and there is a very significant expression here. It says, "They journeyed . . . toward the sun rising," and it is a great matter for the young Christian to be found journeying in the faith of his soul toward the sun rising. Things are darkening down here, evil and corruption abound, there is sorrow in the church of God, and man is seeking to bring about a millennium without Christ and is only heading for disaster. Things are getting worse and worse, and the political machinery is getting choked,

and men are wondering what is going to happen next. We know that the One who saved our souls, is coming by and by, and we are journeying to that scene of glory and blessing.

The children of Israel journeyed toward the sun rising. They were in their tents. The wilderness was not a very happy place to be in, and they struck their tents under the guidance of the cloudy pillar, and journeyed toward the sun rising. It is a very great matter when we realise that we do not belong to this earth-system of things. We are here for a little while, and we are here to learn wonderful lessons. We belong to a deathless scene, and are, thank God, journeying towards the sun rising in the best sense of the word.

Just a word now about verses 16 and 17 of our chapter. Beer in the Hebrew is the word for well. We read of Beersheba (well of the oath), and Beer-lahai-roi (well of Him that seeth me), but here it is simply *Beer*, that is THE well. "The Lord spoke unto Moses, Gather the people together, and I will give them water." They came to this well and they sang, "Spring up, O well; sing ye unto it." Does this not remind you of what our Lord said to the poor, erring sinner at the well, "The water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life"? (John 4. 14). Again we read, "He that believeth on Me, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living waters. (But this spake He of the Spirit which they that believe on Him should receive)" (John 7. 38, 39).

Evidently the springing-up well is typical of the work of the Holy Spirit in the heart of the believer.

The gift of the Holy Spirit from an ascended, glorified Lord is the great distinctive feature of Christianity.

Summing up what we have had before us, I make bold to say that until the young Christian has definitely made up his mind to be here for Christ, taking sides with Him against this world, finding himself morally in a wilderness down here, that until he judges that evil nature that is in him, and recognises that God begins with something entirely new, the communication of divine life to the believer, I think until that point is reached, there is not much power for the springing up well, not much power for praise and worship in the Spirit.

There is one remarkable thing here; the nobles of the people dug the well, and they dug it with their staves. We would say that was easy work. Let me tell you this, you will find when you are on the right lines that Christianity is not a hard thing, but is an easy thing. It is a matter of the soul's affection. The water that the Lord gives springs up in the heart unto eternal life, and there is praise and worship flowing to God.

And those children of Israel passed on until they crossed the Jordan. That is the fourth thing. They went out of the wilderness into the land, and in a little while everyone of us will be out of the wilderness of this world, and into the land of pure delight, the scene of new creation, and that is where we belong, and that is our permanent home.

I would emphasise with all my power that here we are in the place of testimony, and here we are where our lives are getting formed, and I ask the young people here tonight,

what is going to happen with your life? Some of us have practically our lives behind us, but you have the privilege of having your life before you.

My closing word is, What are you going to do with your life in the light of Calvary, in the light of the cross of Christ, in the light of the fact that things down here are for a moment and will soon pass away? Are you going to adjust yourself in connection with all that which is for eternity? What is your answer going to be? How is your life going to be found when that day of manifestation comes? "For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if One died for all then were all dead [spiritually] and that He died for all that they which live shall not henceforth *live unto themselves*, but *UNTO HIM* which died for them and rose again."

I have said my last word. What is *your* last word going to be? It is a very, very serious matter, and the opportunities of a very blessed life lies before each one of you in in wonderful way.

May the Lord give you willing hearts, and the grace to seize this wonderful opportunity of being definitely under the hand of God, and of the Spirit forming your life for His glory, and according to His intention when He first picked you up and blessed you, for in the type, when God sheltered the children of Israel at the Passover He had before Him the crossing of the Jordan, the end from the beginning. And so with us He has in mind the end from the beginning, the beginning nothing but grace, the end the glory of God.

THE SERVICE OF GOD.

W. Bramwell Dick.

Scriptures read, Genesis 5. 21-24; 17. 3, 22: Exodus 34. 8: 1 Chronicles 29. 1-5.

I want to speak to you, the Lord helping me, about serving God, and the necessary preparation for it. I am sure all who know anything of the saving mercy of God have a desire to serve Him. It is impossible to be a true believer and not to desire to serve God

WE HAVE BEEN SAVED TO SERVE.

The Thessalonians "turned to God from idols to *serve* the living God; and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come" (1 Thessalonians 1. 9, 10). But while our desire is to serve God, it will be apparent to every one that we cannot just exactly jump into His service. There has to be a divine education for it. If a young man or woman desires to follow a professional career he or she has to be prepared for years of intensive study. If on the other hand they decide to go into business or some industry, they have to serve a few years apprenticeship. If we are going to serve God, we have to be prepared for that service by God Himself in His own way.

Now I suggest to you that the four scriptures I have asked you to read with me, give us an outline of the preparation necessary for that service. Just let me summarize what we have read:—

- (1) Enoch WALKED with God.
- (2) Abraham TALKED with God.
- (3) Moses WORSHIPPED God.
- (4) David WORKED for God.

I am quite certain that is the divine order. We will go over them as rapidly as possible. To begin with; Enoch lived in the early days of the world's history, and twice over we are told in the verses we have read from Genesis 5, that he walked with God. This is supplemented in Hebrews 11. 5, by our being told that "he had this testimony, that he pleased God." It seems to me quite apparent that Enoch did not always walk with God, but that there was a definite point in his history when he commenced to do so. We read in verse 22 of our chapter: "And Enoch walked with God *after he begat Methuselah.*" Has there been a definite point in the history of every one here to-night when we commenced to walk with God? Enoch was a comparatively young man, as years counted in his days, only sixty-five years old, when he commenced to walk with God. His life was a short one, but over it could be written these beautiful words "He 'walked with God,'" and "he had this testimony that he pleased God."

It may be there seemed nothing very heroic or spectacular about walking with God, but there was that in it that pleased God. I have no doubt he had his difficulties; the world was in a bad state in those days, and was gradually getting worse, until in the next chapter we find everybody was swept away by the flood except Noah and his house. You and I may also expect difficulties; we do not want to shirk them, but to face them, and to count it all joy if they come upon us. I

could imagine some people saying to Enoch: "You know, it does seem a pity you are so very odd and queer; and that you have such peculiar ideas. You are simply wasting your life. You might be such a useful man if you would just associate with people round about you; join in their pursuits; take part in their pleasures, and be one of them. Come down to their level, and in that way raise them up to your level." I could imagine Enoch replying, "If I have to choose between walking with God or with the people of the world, then my choice is I am going to walk with God."

My young friends, here is something which we may well desire, and for which we may well pray, that in this world, where we have to rub shoulders with the men of the world, and where we may be confronted with many difficulties, we may be enabled to walk with God. Enoch evidently made an impression for when he mysteriously disappeared it would seem as if the people looked for him, hence the record he "was not found" (Hebrews 11. 5). You may rest assured, it may be in classroom or factory, where you live or where you work, if you are walking with God, whilst those who do not know God may give you a rough time, they will be impressed, and there will be a greater testimony for God in your *walk* than there would be simply in *talk* with no corresponding walk.

Now we turn to the second scripture. There we learn that Abram *talked* with God. More wonderful still, God *talked* with Abram. Is it not simply wonderful that God who revealed Himself to Abram as the "Almighty God," should condescend to come down and talk with

him. One result was that on this occasion Abram got his name changed to Abraham. What we learn is simply this, that the secret of our being enabled to walk with God will be our being maintained in communion with God. There was communion between Abram and God and that that is intimately connected with the walk we learn from the first verse of our chapter where God said, "I am the Almighty God, *walk* before Me, and be thou perfect."

What a happy thing to seek to be maintained in simple, unbroken communion with God. In the quiet of our own room, in the presence of God, to hear what God has to say to us, and then to be enabled to speak with Him. The result with Abraham was he was in the secret of God. God could tell Abraham things He would not tell Lot. My dear young friends, let me appeal to you. Allow nothing, absolutely nothing, to break that tender, delicate easy-to-be broken link of communion. If we are out of communion we cannot walk with God, we are of no use to God, and if there is one thing the enemy aims at more than another, it is to hinder our communion with God.

Now we come to the third scripture. Perhaps you will refresh your memory by reading at your leisure chapters 33 and 34. Moses had requested of Jehovah: "I beseech Thee, show me Thy glory." Jehovah had graciously replied, "Thou canst not see My face," but He had made a remarkable provision for His servant. Jehovah passed by, His glory passed by; I have no doubt Moses was conscious that he was in the presence of God, and of His glory, and the result was "Moses made haste, and bowed his head

toward the earth, and worshipped." As we have remarked, the secret of walking with God is to be in communion with God, and if we are in communion with God the first result of that will be that we will worship God. To what extent is that true of us? It means that our motto is "God first." We realise in the first instance God has to have His portion. It means further that if we are consciously in the presence of the light of His glory, we will fall down and worship. Oh, would to God that we knew more about this. It is intimately connected with what we have learned from Genesis 17, about God talking with Abraham and Abraham talking with God. Some can talk nicely on a gospel platform, but I have not yet heard them speaking to the Lord and pouring out their heart to Him in worship when gathered with His own in Assembly. That is a reversal of the divine order which is that God should have His portion first. May the secret of this lack be that we do not practise, as He would have us, listening while He talks to us and causing us to talk to Him? That which was impossible for Moses has been made possible for us; for "We all looking in the glory of the Lord with unveiled face, are transformed according to the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Lord the Spirit" (2 Corinthians 3. 18. N. Tr.). If that is the case, the first result will be that, like Moses, we will bow our heads and worship. That is what God desires, what is so grateful to His heart, and what the Holy Spirit seeks to produce in us.

Now we come to the last scripture. David *worked* for God. You may tell me it seems a long process. It is a happy process to *walk* with God; to *talk* with God; to *worship*

God; and thus to be fitted to *work* for God. There are one or two very interesting things to be noticed with regard to David. He was not allowed to build the house of God, but he was permitted to collect the material with which the house was to be built. David's enthusiasm for the house of God in the Old Testament was perhaps equalled only by Paul's enthusiasm for the house of God in the New Testament; and with their enthusiasm they sought to *en*thuse others. He speaks in verse 2 about "the house of my God;" and twice in verse 3 "the house of my God." At the end of verse 3 he speaks of "the holy house." With regard to the work he called it "great" (verse 1). He did not work in haphazard fashion, he had a definite objective before him and that was the house of God. He laboured not in a spasmodic way, not as something he could take up or lay down at pleasure. In verse 1, as already noticed, he says, "The work is great;" in verse 2 he says, "I have prepared with all my might." There was energy there; determination, because he was working for God, and that the work was connected with the house of God.

But there is still more. He told the people, in verse 3, why he did it. "Because I have set my affection to the house of my God." *Note.* (a) It was the work of God; (b) it was a great work; (c) he did it with all his might; (d) the reason was his affection for the house of his God. You say, "What have we to do with that to-day?" We have to work with a definite objective before us. "Have we to preach about the house of God when we preach the gospel?" By no means. We preach in order that souls may be saved; but we want to realise

that when saved they are going to be stones in the greatest structure that has ever been seen; a structure that will be the admiration of men and angels, and of the whole universe. Not a material house, but "a spiritual house, an holy priesthood to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ" (1 Peter 2. 5). It is a great work; it is a wonderful work; it is a work in which we are permitted to engage in fellowship with God; and no greater privilege could we have.

Now just a word as to David's challenge to the people in verse 5. "Who then is willing to consecrate his service this day unto the Lord?" It met with a grand response, first (in verse 6) from the chief of the fathers; the princes of the tribes of Israel, the captains of thousands and the rulers of the king's work. In verse 9 we read that the people responded, and the result was "the people rejoiced" and "David also rejoiced." David worshipped (verse 10) and "All the congregation worshipped" (verse 20). What a splendid response! Here was work for God of the right sort. I want to ask David's question here tonight. "Who then is willing to consecrate his service this day unto the Lord?" Observe it is "*this day*." We who do a bit of preaching sometimes tell our hearers that it is a case of "to-day," that to-morrow is not theirs. My dear young brethren "*this day*" is yours, to-morrow is not yours. The Lord is coming,

how soon we do not know. "*WHO* then is willing to consecrate his service *THIS DAY* unto the Lord?" Is it worth while? Every one answers "Yes." Is God worthy of it? "Yes." Is the work of God worth it? "Yes." Are the results commensurate with any so called sacrifice you may be called upon to make? Ten thousand times, Yes. "*WHO* then is willing to consecrate his service *THIS DAY* unto the Lord?" Perhaps you have had something else in your mind, and you may be saying to yourself, "If I consecrate my service this day unto the Lord, it is just going to upset all that I have mapped out for myself." That is quite possible, but you are prepared for that, are you not? We have been reminded that "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son;" that "Christ also loved the assembly and gave Himself for it;" and of the response of one who said "The Son of God also loved *ME*, and gave Himself for *ME*." We have sung

"Were the whole realm of nature ours,
That were an offering far too small;
Love that transcends our highest powers,
Demands our soul, our life, our all."

*"WHO THEN IS WILLING TO
CONSECRATE HIS SERVICE
THIS DAY UNTO THE LORD?"*

God help us in the quiet of our own rooms to say to Him *TONIGHT*, "By Thy grace I *WILL*."

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

THE GRACE OF GOD.

David Ross

"For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works." (Titus 2. 11, 12, 13, 14).

I want to shew you the comprehensiveness of this passage of Holy Scripture. In it there is the commencement, the continuation, the consummation and the present consequence of the grace of God.

In its compass there are the cardinal truths of Christianity: the Incarnation—mystery of mysteries—redemption accomplished, resulting in salvation; implied in it is the Ascension of the Lord into heaven, without which you could not have the truth of His appearing. Then there is His essential and absolute Deity, for the One that is coming is the great God, and He is our Saviour, Christ Jesus; and the purpose of God which has not only to do with the coming glory, but is to affect our conduct in this present world. God grant that everyone of us may seek grace to be answering to that purpose.

Let us look at the COMMENCEMENT of God's ways with us. In the twenty-seventh chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, there is a scene which always stirs me. It is Paul's shipwreck. For fourteen days neither sun nor moon appeared, and all hope that they should be saved was taken away. Note the word "appeared." We have got the same word here: "The grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared." It is the

word that is used for the uprising of the celestial lights.

What a world this was before Christ came. The people sat in darkness and in the region and shadow of death. Think of this island of Crete where Titus lived, and to which this letter was sent.

The archaeologists have recently revealed to us a long lost civilisation in Crete called the Minoan, which indicates a high state of culture.

There was a wonderful civilisation, and yet what kind of people dwelt on that island in Paul's day? It is a Cretan poet who calls them "liars, evil beasts, slow bellies." That is man, that is what man has come to—liars, voracious gluttons—and what were we, says the Apostle Paul; "foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another." And, if we are to believe the poets and historians of the first century B.C. and the first century A.D., the Roman world was rotten. A loathing had fallen upon men's souls; darkness covered the people, and something appeared—The people that sat in darkness saw a great light" (Matthew 4. 16). What was it? THE GRACE OF GOD! Does

that word charm your heart? "Grace is the sweetest sound that ever reached our ears." It is a beautiful word, but it speaks of a much more beautiful thing. The first use of that word in the Greek was something that caused joy in the beholder. Then it came to mean beauty, a thing that causes most joy. Doesn't Keats say, "A thing of a beauty is a joy for ever"? Then it came to be applied to a beautiful act. Then the inspired New Testament writers annexed the word, and they used it to describe the Son of God come into this world. What came? This grace, kindness and Divine Philanthropy. That is a grand word! Do you ever think of God as a great Philanthropist? What does the word "Philanthropy" mean? Love towards men.

The love of God, the philanthropy of God, the kindness of God, the grace of God appeared. It arose on the horizon of the world when Jesus, the Son of God, came into it. This was the true light that shone for all. And what did grace bring? This grace of God, that lovely, beautiful thing that appeared in Him of whom it is said "grace and truth came by Jesus Christ!" This grace brings salvation. For whom? For the worthy? That wouldn't be grace. Grace is love in activity; it is that which comes down from the Worthy to the unworthy; that which comes from the Offended down to those who have offended. The grace of God came; it appeared; it brings salvation for all men. Are there any worthy of it? No! but the grace of God does not look for worthiness, and in its scope, in its intention, it is boundless, it is universal, it appears not only for a select few or for a select nation or for a limited circumference in the

world, it was for all men. It has appeared, bringing salvation with it. That is the commencement.

GRACE CONTINUES. It is a grand thing to be in the school of grace? Some people put themselves into the school of law, and law is a harsh taskmaster. But let us keep ourselves where that grace has put us, in the schoolroom of grace. The grace that saved us goes on with its work of teaching, for God cannot be indifferent to the conduct of those He saves. It teaches us to deny ungodliness. What is ungodliness? Ignorance of, and indifference to God, the refusal to acknowledge God and His rightful claims. "And worldly lusts." And that may not be the grosser sins, it is simply self pleasing. Ungodliness and worldly lusts, means we won't have God but we will please ourselves. Were we any better than they? In no wise. But the grace of God has come into our hearts, and it teaches us to turn our backs on these things which displease God.

Now everybody has a three-fold life. There is a man's handling of himself; there is his relationship with others, and his attitude to God, and all three are here. What is the first? "Soberly," that is self-control. Greater is he that controlleth his spirit than the man that takes a city. Grace teaches us to take a just view of ourselves and to exercise self-control. The fanatic even in religious matters is of no use to God, neither the man of violent temper and hasty speech.

Then with regard to our fellows, we are taught to live "righteously." A servant of the Lord said to a convert who owed a big debt, "Man, you will have to pay your

debt now," but he answered, "Don't you know God has forgiven me all my debts?" He thought God had wiped out that debt to his neighbour; he had not learnt to live righteously. The reason why the gospel makes so little progress in this world is, that many who profess it are shady in their conduct: the grace that came unto us when we were unrighteous and forgave us all our indebtedness to God, is that very grace that teaches us to fulfil our obligations to our fellow men. And to acknowledge God, "Acknowledge Him in all thy ways, and He shall direct thy paths." That is godliness. Where are we to show the results of this teaching?—in heaven? No, in the present world.

This grace has given us a new outlook in life, we are looking for its CONSUMMATION—"Looking for that blessed hope and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ." The grace of God dawned upon men when He appeared in lowly grace, born in a stable, cradled in a manger, and only a few humble shepherds were aware of the fact that He had come, although the heavenly hosts wondered and worshipped. But the time is coming "When the heavens shall glow with splendour" and our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, the once despised and rejected and crucified, will appear. What a glorious appearing that will be! Do you love the appearing?

About the beginning of the Seventeenth century, during the thirty years' war, there was a butchery of the Protestants in Bohemia. Many nobles died on the scaffold for the faith, one of whom was named Wenceslaus of Budowa. As he came to die the Jesuit priest wanted him to

confess and return to the Roman obedience, but this martyr replied, "Leave me alone; I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness." "Oh, said the Jesuit Father, "you are making a mistake, that was for Paul, not for you." But the martyr said, "Yes, but what did Paul say, 'and not only to me, but unto all them that love His appearing.'" That word "love" could be translated "to set the heart on it." The very next verse tells us about a christian called Demas, and of him it says, "Demas has forsaken me, having set his heart on this present world." Upon what have we set our hearts? Are we living in this world in the light of that appearing? Who are prepared to defer the day of honour and reward and promotion and the prize till the day when the righteous Judge will give them? He is a fair Judge. He is the righteous Judge; there will be no favouritism there. And poor Demas, what did he want? He wanted a good time here. That is the great modern phrase "See and have a good time," and the poor christian, who like Demas, sets his heart on the present world to have a good time in it, doesn't get it, whereas the christian who sets his heart on the appearing, and is willing to wait for the reward of that day, he is the man that has a good time here, "for godliness has the promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come." This is the Consummation when grace begun shall end in glory.

But, says the worldly man, "That is all too fairy airy, we want something practical." The people who are the most practical christians, are the people who hope for the coming

of our Lord. This hope has a practical consequence. It says, "Who gave Himself for us." What did He give Himself for? To redeem us. He has purchased us; He has redeemed us, from what? From all iniquity and lawlessness. Lawlessness is characteristic of this age, and I believe it is heading up for the time when the man of lawlessness will be revealed. Young men and women are not going to have any restraint; they speak slightingly of these old-fashioned Victorian ideas that our grandmothers had or our grandfathers had—They are modern! And modernity leads on to lawlessness. Does someone say, "we are not under law; we are under grace"? Yes, but grace teaches you how to live, it teaches you how to love, and in love is the fulfilling of the law of God.

"Purchased by His precious blood"—what for? That He might purify us. He wants to purify us—"He that hath this hope in Him makes himself pure even as He is pure." That is why He redeemed us, to purify us and to make us for Himself a peculiar people. He would purify us that we might be a people for His possession, for that is what is meant by a peculiar people. We are His possession here and now, and He is going to claim that possession soon and to take it to be with Himself. And in it all the purpose of God for 'us' in this—that we might be zealous of good works. Grace will end by and by in the glory of God, but it results here and now in good works.

Let me illustrate, in concluding, the effect of grace—how it works:—

Robert Louis Stevenson, the author, was a native of Edinburgh. Edin-

burgh is no place for people with lung trouble, and he had to flee to the uttermost parts of the earth, to the Pacific Islands because he was consumptive. While he was there he found that the natives were governed, or misgoverned, by three European powers. There was a lot of trouble, and the Government said, "You must make roads." An excellent thing, the making of roads! But the natives said, "We won't make roads," and they were thrown into prison and punished. Stevenson sympathised with them. He thought they were hardly treated, and he went to visit them in prison and wrote to the people in the home country, and largely through his efforts and interference they were all set free. And one day all the chiefs turned up at his house to thank him for all he had done for them, and then they said, "We want to show our appreciation, and we want to do something." And, do you know what they proposed doing? They said, "We will make a road." They said, "We haven't the tools, will you let us have them, but everything else the young men will do," and, wonder of wonder, the road was made, what the law could not achieve, love and kindness did. They had a great celebration, and the road was opened. And do you know what they called it—"the Road of Loving hearts." That is Christianity. It is a road of loving hearts—are you on it?

The grace which commenced in Bethlehem and continues its teaching at this present time will shortly reach its consummation in the glory of God. Let us place ourselves more and more under its beneficent sway so that its consequence may be manifest in our good works so that men seeing them may glorify our Father which is in heaven.

UNWEARIED LOVE.

J. T. Mawson.

"Jesus, therefore, being wearied with His journey, sat thus on the well."—
John 4. 6.

HE had been driven out from Judea by the hatred of the proud traditional religionists, there was neither room nor rest for Him in their dead ceremonies, and could He find rest in the false pretensions of the Samaritans? No, "neither in Jerusalem nor in this mountain" was there rest for Jesus. He sat thus—just as He was—on the well, wearied, thirsty, hungry—how truly Man He was, feeling in His spirit the hatred and rejection of the Jews with a perfect sensibility, and feeling in His body the vicissitudes of life also—the heat of the midday sun, the roughness and the length of the way, the pangs of hunger and thirst. And yet He was God, the giver of living water. He was wearied in body but unwearied in His love, and at that well side He found both rest and food in doing the will of Him that sent Him.

Let us sit with wonder at His feet and learn of Him. It is not by the strict observance of rules and

traditions that He is pleased, HE CARES FOR SOULS, and the soul of a disreputable woman was precious to Him. What a sight for us to look upon, when rejected and driven out by His own people, He finds consolation and compensation in blessing this wretched Samaritan who had exhausted her life in the vain search for happiness. He spoke to her of the Father, of the Spirit, of Himself, and if He did draw back the veil from her life, it was but for an instant, that one glimpse of it in His holy presence might make her turn from it with loathing to find her rest in what God is—the giving God.

What heavenly light filled the soul of that once ignorant and unhappy woman when He had finished His gracious work with her! Was there ever a more ready or eager witness than she, when she went to the men of the city and cried, "He told me all things that ever I did, IS NOT THIS THE CHRIST?"

Prayer, Always and Everywhere.

Does it matter to the Lord whether we pray or not? It certainly does, for "He spake a parable unto them TO THIS END, that men ought *always* to pray and not to faint." And it is the will of God "that men pray *everywhere*, lifting up holy hands without wrath or doubting" (1 Tim. 2. 8). "ALWAYS" and "EVERYWHERE." No prayer, no grace. And the preacher who excels not in grace excels in nothing. His preaching may be soft and sweet as music; he may be gifted as Apollo, yet his work will be light as a feather, visionary, fleeting, if he lack grace; and grace comes through prayer, and prayer is the result of devotion of heart to God and Christ and the work of God on earth. The devoted man is the prayerful man, and the prayerful man is the man of grace, and he it is who is fitted to carry the Lord's messages.

NOTES ON THE PHILIPPIAN'S EPISTLE.

THE Epistle proves that the christian's joy is not dependent on his circumstances, for Paul's circumstances could not have been harder and his joy could not have been greater.

Notice the place that the gospel has in chap. 1. Fellowship in the gospel (verse 5). Defence of the gospel (vv. 7, 17). Furtherance of the gospel (v. 12). The faith of the gospel (v. 27).

Prayer and liberal giving would be evidences of the fellowship with the gospel; courage would be called for in the defence of the gospel, the energy of the Spirit would be a *sine qua non* in the furtherance of the gospel, and only the divine bond in the face of a common enemy would enable them to strive together for the faith of the gospel.

The Apostle was confident that God would perform the work he had begun in the saints until *the day of Jesus Christ* (v. 1), but he thought also of their responsibility, and prayed that they might be sincere and without offence *till the day of Christ* (verse 10). And he felt his own responsibility towards them in view of that day lest he had laboured in vain (ch. 2. 16). The work of God, as the source of all work, the work of the apostle as God's instrument, and the lives of the saints in response to the work within them through the word preached to them, will all come to light *in the day of Christ*. As we look on to that day, what are our feelings?

There was conduct that became the gospel of Christ, and the "strife and vain glory" which were beginning to shew themselves, and the

diverse thoughts that were being fostered were not such conduct. What was the remedy? It was seen in Paul's life. Christ is his life in chap. 1. Christ is his pattern in chap. 2. Christ is his object in chap. 3, and Christ is his power in chap. 4. "Be followers together of me" he wrote, and in following him our conduct will be such as becometh the gospel.

In the christian life there is joy. Joy in praying for others (v. 4), joy in the faith, and more abundant joy in Jesus Christ (v. 26), joy in the spiritual well-being of saints (chap. 2. 2), joy in the day of Christ for successful service (chap. 2. 17), joy in suffering for Christ (2. 17), joy in God's restoring mercy to His servant (2. 28), joy in the Lord (3. 1), and in Christ Jesus (3. 3), and again and again, joy in the Lord (4. 4).

If we are to be like-minded we must be controlled by one mind. And that mind not the mind of a teacher, or even a conference, in that way come divisions and parties, but the mind that was in Christ Jesus. Truly that mind can only be in us as we contemplate Him; most certainly it is not natural to us; but it is the mind that the Spirit will produce in us as we consider Christ. It is the mind of the new man in contrast to the old.

A joyful obedience to God is one of the chief characteristics of this new mind, as it controls us. "All things will be done without murmurings or disputings." *Murmurings* are directed against God, but if we are obedient to His holy will there will be no murmurings. "I have learnt," said the Apostle, "in what

soever state I am therewith to be content." There was no murmuring there. And *disputings* are against each other, but whence come these? From the desire to be great, from vain glory and envy and jealousy, but if the mind that was in Christ Jesus be in us there will be no disputings, for each in lowliness of mind will esteem others better than themselves.

Let us not suppose that the mind that was in Christ Jesus, is for us something idealistic and unpractical. It was in Paul when he said, "Yea, and if I be offered upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I joy, and rejoice with you all; it was in Timothy who as a son with a father served with Paul in the gospel; and it was in Epaphroditus when he was nigh unto death for the work of Christ, not regarding his life. What has been may be again.

Philippians is not a doctrinal epistle as is Ephesians, but it shews how the doctrine works in the life of a man who loves it. Self is displaced for Christ. A most casual reading of chap. 1 shews the place that Christ had in Paul's thoughts and life. If we want an explanation of Galatians 2. 20, "the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God" we find it here. If he longed after the saints it was in the affections of Jesus Christ; if he suffer bonds, they were in Christ Jesus; if he lived it was Christ; if he died it was to be with Christ; if Christ was preached he rejoiced. It was by the Spirit of Jesus Christ that he was sustained in his afflictions, and his one wish was that Christ should be magnified in his body. We have heard of the expulsive power of a new affection. We see it here. The proudest heart

that ever beat in a man was subdued, taken captive and found a new and all controlling object in Christ. Praise be to God!

One part of "the fruits of righteousness" would appear in the sympathy and compassion that the saints have for one another, as being members of one body. It is a great evidence of the good work of God in the soul when there are "bowels and mercies." Is a fellow saint afflicted? At once the heart goes up in prayer to God for that one and flows out in sympathy to him, and is ready unselfishly to help. The divine nature in the saints rejoices with those that rejoice, but it also weeps with those that weep. When there is this "looking on the things of others," the heart of the Lord must rejoice, for Paul's joy in these Philippian Christians was an expression of the Lord's joy through him. May God work in everyone of us this tenderness of heart and true Christ-like sympathy and compassion.

"*Of one mind.*" Where the spirit of the world is one mind and unity are impossible. J.N.D's hymn which we often sing, says "All the mind in heaven is one," but that is because, every knee is to Jesus bending. There is no room for the spirit of the world there. And here the Lord is presented to us in the perfection of His moral glory, stooping to the death of the cross, and His exaltation to the highest place in God's glory, and the contemplation of Him going down and being raised up surely compels us to bow the knee to Him. It is as we bow before Him that we shall have one mind.

There were certain great things that Paul knew these dear brethren

of Philippi had experienced, comfort in Christ, the consolations of love, the fellowship of the Spirit, and the tenderness and compassion of the new life, and by all these things he pleads with them, to keep out of their midst the spirit of strife and vain glory, for such a spirit, the spirit of the world, would utterly spoil their beautiful christian lives and it would cause Paul great sorrow instead of fullness of joy.

Let us consider these steps from the height of Godhead glory to the cross.

1. He made Himself of no reputation.

2. He took upon Him the form of a servant,

3. And was made in the likeness, not of a great angel, but of men,

4. Being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself.

5. He became obedient. His place had always been to command, now He takes the subject place.

6. That obedience led Him into death. This commandment have I received of My Father. He gave up His will. He gave up His life.

7. Even the death of the cross.' It was not what men would call a noble death, for crucifixion was reserved for the lowest class of criminals, and for criminal slaves.

He could not have been higher in His eternal majesty, He could not have gone lower in His path of obedience to God's will for our salvation.

Suppose there does come into the life of the saints "other mindedness" ought this to lead to disputings? It is quite possible that a man who has climbed up a thousand feet has a far more extended view of the landscape than one who has only climbed five hundred feet. Must the one, proud of his attainment, dispute with his less advanced brother, or the other become angry because his brother lays claims to a wider vision? No, if they are right in their spirits, they will walk together in that which they have attained to in common; and in that spirit, they will be teachable, and God will reveal this unto them; He will shew them the right path. Let the strong bear the infirmities of the weak, and the more advanced stoop to help his brother to the same level as he has reached and God will see to the rest. He says so and His word is true.

Chapter 1 gives the devoted mind, chapter 2 the lowly mind, chapter 3 the heavenly mind, chapter 4 the contented mind.

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

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Cleansing Ourselves from all Filthiness
of Flesh and Spirit.

“Will you please say something about the cleansing of 2 Corinthians 7. 1, and how it is to be done?”—WALSALL.

THE exhortation clearly belongs to the preceding chapter. In it the Apostle shows how incongruous it is for those who have been brought through grace into relationship with God to have fellowship with the evil things of an idolatrous world. If such put their necks into the same yoke with unbelievers, for what would they labour and which way would they pull? That is as serious a question for present day believers as it was for the Corinthians. Evidently there can be no communion between righteousness and unrighteousness, light and darkness, Christ and Belial, God's temple and the temple of demons, and the believer can have nothing in common with the infidel. Therefore the command to come out from among them and to touch not the unclean. To obey might seem to incur present loss, but consider the gain, “I will receive you and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.” He had revealed Himself as Almighty to Abraham, and as Lord to Israel, but He would be even more to those who separated themselves from an evil world to Himself; to them He would be Father.

That is a great and attractive promise, and having it we should be encouraged not only to turn our backs upon the evil things of the world, but to cast off its habits and ways, and as all conduct flows from our thinking there is the call not only to cleanse the outward life but to cleanse the inward spirit. “As a man thinketh in his heart so is he.”

And God looketh at the heart. For communion with God there must be the cleansing of the spirit; for testimony to the world there must be the cleansing of the flesh. But the end is to “perfect holiness in the fear of God.” That means the development in the inward life and outward character of what is suitable to God who dwells among His people.

How is it done? There are two sides to it: God's and ours. The Lord prayed that the Father would keep “His own” from the evil that is in the world, and sanctify them by the truth. The Father does not forget that prayer, and He chastens us, as His children that we may be partakers of His holiness. On our side, our purpose must be one with God's. We are responsible to discern and judge the tendencies to evil in ourselves. We are to use diligence in this, as obedient children, not fashioning ourselves according to the former lusts in our ignorance: but as He which hath called us is holy, so we are to be holy in all manner of conversation (1 Peter 1. 14, 15). We are to keep ourselves from idols (1 John 5. 21), and whatsoever things are true, honest, just, pure, lovely and of good report, of these things we are to think (Phil. 4. 8). It is in the fear of what is evil and the occupation with what is good that we shall obey the exhortation of 2 Cor. 7. 1. But there must ever be with us the consciousness that we have no strength for this in ourselves; our strength is in the Lord; without Him we can do nothing.

THE SERVANT OF THE LORD.

The servant of the Lord who would be used by His Master must have:—

HOLINESS OF CHARACTER.

“A vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the Master’s use, and prepared unto every good work” (2 Tim. 2. 21).

GENTLENESS OF CHARACTER.

“The servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, in meekness instructing” (2 Tim. 2. 24).

HUMBLENESS OF SPIRIT.

“He that is greatest among you let him be the younger; and he that is chief, as he that doth serve . . . I am among you as he that serveth” (Luke 22. 26, 27).

LIVING, ACTIVE FAITH.

“Verily, verily, I say unto you, whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in My name, He will give it you . . . Ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full” (John 16. 23, 24).

FERVENCY OF SPIRIT.

“Fervent in Spirit, serving the Lord” (Rom. 12. 11).

“Thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot” (Rev. 3. 15).

What Do We Remember?

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

A PÆAN OF PRAISE.

W. Bramwell Dick.

"Bless the Lord, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless His holy name"
(Psalm 103. 1).

WE do not know at what time in his career David expressed himself in this way, nor does that matter, for it seemed to be the habit of his life. In Psalm 34. 1, we hear him say

"I will bless the Lord at all times: His praise shall continually be in my mouth."

It would be difficult to find anywhere the story of a more chequered history than his. His path was certainly not strewn with roses. Persecuted by Saul; reproached by his wife; defamed by his son, pursued by his enemies; his was a life of ceaseless anxiety and danger. Yet as we read his precious, wonderful psalms we delight to note his unflinching confidence in God and we peruse with unqualified delight his triumphant songs of praise to Him.

He sang not only when the sun shone, but when heavy clouds darkened his sky; not only when things seemed to go well with him, but when he knew not what next awaited him. He said, or sang, "I will bless the Lord at all times, His praise shall continually be in my mouth." As the inscription of this thirty-fourth Psalm indicates, that was at a particularly trying time for him. It would seem as if, just at this point, there was a suggestion of failure, as if he had slackened somewhat in his confidence in God, and he was in danger of being trapped by his foes. Then God in His unwearied and faithful mercy delivered him, and then it was that he responded in this note of praise.

Psalm 103 appears to be the overflow of a heart delighting in the

Lord; in all that He is; as well as in all that He has done. Thus we have in verse 1 an ascription of praise; in verse 2 an acknowledgment of His grace and power; in verses 4 and 5 what He did for David, and its result; in verse 8, 11 and 17 he extols His mercy. In verses 13 and 14 he gratefully owns His tender consideration; while in verse 19 he proclaims His supremacy. In thinking in this way of the Lord, who He is, what He is, and of His superabounding mercy, he forgot himself and his troubles as again and again he blessed the Lord. Happy David!

We look back over the year, the closing month of which we have now reached, and, as we review it, how do we feel? We have no hesitation in saying that no two readers of "Scripture Truth" have had exactly the same experience. In things that pertain to this life, it has meant for some the acme of joy because of some happy event. For others, it has been perhaps the darkest year they have experienced because of some overwhelming sorrow. We suppose no one has asked, "Why should I have such joy?" unless they have felt so unworthy of the Lord's goodness in this way. In their joy they sang, what else could they do? Many, on the other hand, may have felt tempted to ask, "Why should I have such sorrow?" Sing? "No," says someone, "I will never sing again." "Bless the Lord?" "No," the reply, "I cannot do that just now." We want to say to you, dear sorrowing heart, the Lord does not chide you for this, "for HE knoweth our frame; HE remem-

bereth that we are dust" (verse 14). He waits to reveal Himself to you; and so to make known His love; so to assure you of His support; so to remind you of "all His benefits"; that He may yet have the joy of hearing you say, "Bless the Lord, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless His holy Name." We look back over the past year, and years, can we not say?

"Blessed be the Lord who *daily loadeth* us with benefits, even the God of our salvation. Selah" (Psalm 68. 19).

The joys came from His hand and we praised Him. The sorrows came from His hand, and we —? did we? No, we did not do it just then, and Hebrews 12. 11 (please read it just now) explains why. Let us thank God if we were preserved from murmuring. If we did succumb to that, let verse 14 of our Psalm comfort us.

Now, however, in the calm of His presence we look back; we own His hand; behind His hand we trace His heart; and we do say, do we not, "Bless the Lord, O my soul." Thus He gets the glory and we get such a blessing. Let us all recall

the year, and years. Count His mercies? Impossible! We remember the way that He has led us: His goodness; His ways; His love; His faithfulness; His patience with us; and once again we exclaim, "Bless the Lord, O my soul." Instead of stepping out into a new year upon earth, we may step into the glory, for we expect our blessed Lord to come at any moment. If we should see the dawn of 1936, we say,

"Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever" (Psalm 23. 6).

In this confidence we also say

"I will bless the Lord at *all times*: His praise shall *continually* be in my mouth" (Psalm 34. 1).

and, meaning every word of it, we sing from our heart

"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."

Grace Abounding.

If I were addressing a young man, full of aspirations in this world, I should say, I offer you infinitely more than all you seek down here, and at this moment. There is not only a future blessing for you but a present one. Where sin abounded grace did much more abound." There is forgiveness with God, and that is grace indeed, but there it more. As the Lord said to the woman of Sychar, "If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith unto thee, give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of Him, and He would have given thee living water." The man who is saved by grace is infinitely better off than was Adam in innocence. He has the Spirit of God dwelling in him, a well of water springing up unto everlasting life.

DIVINE LOVE.

A. H. Storrie, Brazil.

Bangor, N. Wales, Aug. 1st.

John 3. 16; Ephesians 5. 25-27; Galatians 2. 20.

ONE of the first verses of Scripture that I learnt in the Portuguese language was John 3. 16, and I thought it was very beautifully put. The Portuguese says, "For God loved the world *in such a manner* that He gave His only begotten Son" . . . The love of God is toward the world. He so loved it. It is inclusive; it includes all mankind in its embrace and in its offer of salvation, but at what a cost! It was not in word only. It has declared its greatness by the gift it has given. God's love was not like some of our deeds of charity. We throw a sixpence into a blind man's hat and never feel the loss of it, or think any more about the poor blind man. No. God loved and He gave the greatest of all gifts, His only-begotten Son. The Christian who is in real and full communion with God will have nothing less before him than God Himself has, and that is the whole world. It is not only for the elect. God so loved the world, and that means all mankind. The white men, the black men, the yellow men and all the other kinds of men are the objects of His love. The love of God comes to civilised men with their learning and culture and contempt for the gospel, but it also goes across the seas to the Pigmies and the Patagonians in their darkness and superstition. For God so loved the world.

We hear of "the testimony." What is "the testimony"? The answer to that question is something very big. Surely the testimony is all that con-

cerns our Lord Jesus Christ. Let us not narrow it. The last thing that the apostle John says about the testimony in his first Epistle is this: "We have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world." To that we bear witness; the gospel is for the whole world.

Our second Scripture speaks of something very much smaller than the world. Christ loved the church but the same thought is found here as in John 3. 16. Christ loved the church and gave Himself for it. We have seen that God, in His love toward the world, could not have given more than He did. And it is so in regard to the love of Christ for the church. We are reminded here of the parable of Matthew 13 about the merchantman seeking goodly pearls, and when he had found one pearl of great price, He went and sold all that He had that he might buy that pearl. Well, it is very easy to see, is it not, that the merchantman thought a very great deal about that pearl. Christ loved the church and gave Himself for it. Could He have done more? Would the gift of the archangel, or anything like that have brought the church to Him? Could the silver and the gold that men think so much about have done it? Why, Peter tells us that we were not redeemed with such corruptible things but with the precious blood of Christ.

The love of Christ, then, is towards the church. He gave Himself for it. That is what He did in the

past. What is He doing in the present?— . . . “that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the Word.” That is what He is doing now. And the whole church requires a good deal of sanctifying; and each individual does, and meetings of this kind help towards it. He showed His love in the past by giving Himself for the church, and He shows His love in the present by caring for it and nourishing and cherishing it. We need the washing of water by the Word. And if we neglect the Word we shall certainly hinder the Lord’s present service of love towards us.

Then His love will find its full satisfaction in the future: “That He might present it to Himself a glorious church . . .” As we look at it to-day it may not seem to be very glorious, but in spite of everything that might oppose, in spite of the world, the flesh and the devil, this Word will be fulfilled, and the church all glorious, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, shall be presented to Himself, holy and without blemish.

This Scripture should teach us one thing at least. Just as John 3. 16 teaches us how great was the love of God towards the world, and should fill us with desires for the blessing of men; so this Scripture shows us how great was the love of Christ towards His church and should make that Church very precious to us. What do we think about the church, Christ’s ecclesia, His called out ones? If we love Him we shall love that which is so precious to Him, and we shall endeavour to shew our love in service and above all in intercession. What about the prayer-meeting? The prayer meeting tests us. The word says, “Not forsaking

the assembling of yourselves together . . . and so much the more as ye see the day approaching.” If the prayer meeting should seem to be rather poor and feeble, we should be encouraged by the word. “If two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of My Father which is in heaven.” Christ loved the church and, if we are in true communion with Him, we shall love it too and we shall delight in gathering together in His Name with Himself in the midst according to His faithful promise.

The note to Galatians 2. 20 in the Scofield Bible is helpful. It says: “The Christian life is the outliving of the inliving Christ.” That seems to very well express what is in this verse: “I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me.” Here we come to the same thought again. The Son of God loved and He gave. Not the world, or the assembly, but the unit is in question here—the individual saint who is able to speak of the love of the Son of God. Oh, there is something very sublime, very majestic about this title of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God. We do well to speak of Him with reverence. He is the Son of God, a most magnificent title! And the apostle Paul says: “. . . The Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.” Now, it is very interesting to study, as we go through life, how men have succeeded in that to which they have put their hands. What was the secret of Paul’s tremendous success? For a great success he was—as a missionary, as a

minister of the gospel and as a minister of the assembly. Wherein lay his success? He tells us in this verse. "I am crucified with Christ." What does that mean? It means that he regarded himself as entirely set aside in the sight of God in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ—the truth that we were having yesterday from Numbers 21. Paul was glad to see that he, as a man according to the flesh, had come to a complete end in the death of Christ. And yet he lived; but it was a new life that he had. Christ lived in him. How far is that true of us in a practical way? When we are slighted or injured, what do we show? Patience or peevishness? What does Dr. Scofield say? "The Christian life is the outliving of the inliving Christ." "... Nevertheless . . . I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me." Paul kept very near to the cross. He could have gloried in many things. He was no ordinary man and his experiences were great and varied, but he desired to glory only in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. That cross showed to Paul the utter depravity of the flesh and the worthlessness of this vain world; but it showed him also the love of the Son of God to him personally.

The love of God is towards the world, the love of Christ is towards the church, the love of the Son of God is towards the individual saint. It is in the Gospel that presents our Lord Jesus Christ as the Son of God that we find these words: "Now Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus" (John 11. 5).

A child of God may get a little disheartened at times, thinking that nobody takes much notice of him or has much interest in him. We have our varied experiences and sometimes make great mistakes. Yet each one of us may always find immense comfort in this, the love of the Son of God is towards each one of us individually: "The Son of God who loved me and gave Himself for me." The love of God is towards the world, and if we are in communion with God we shall have the world in all its need in our affection.

The love of Christ is towards His church, and if we are walking with Christ we shall have a very great concern for His church here in this world. And what regard we shall have for the individual saint when we remember that the Son of God loved him and gave Himself for him.

The Spirit's Indwelling.

If you are Christ's the Holy Spirit has taken up His abode in you. He is in you as really as your own heart is in you; even more so, because your heart may stop beating, but you never can lose the Holy Ghost. *He will never leave you:* you are sealed unto the day of redemption; and by virtue of His presence in you, your mortal body will yet be quickened. He will quicken your mortal body by His Spirit that dwelleth in you (Romans 8. 11).

WHAT IS MAN?

H. Wilson, Inkongo.

*Bangor, N. Wales, Aug. 2nd.**Psalm 8; Ephesians 3. 8-10; Revelation 3. 20.*

I WANT to take up the question "What is man?" and to propose a simple answer; not that "Man is the product of evolution," as the school text books teach, but that "Man is God's Masterpiece." Suppose an angel had visited this sphere at the time when Adam was fresh from the Creator's hand and had asked this question "What is man?" He would have seen a being who was upright, far above all the animal creation, having the gift of speech, able to give the animals suitable names, and capable of communion with God, and he might well have exclaimed, "This is the masterpiece." But what do we see now? The masterpiece is spoiled; everything is marred by sin. But suppose an artist has painted a beautiful picture and an enemy comes along and spoils the canvas, and then the artist paints the same subject again and makes a much more beautiful picture than at first, and one that no enemy can spoil. People would say, "This is his masterpiece." God has done something like that.

I want you to imagine that an angel has come from a far-away sphere in our days and wishes to get the question answered, "What is man?" He goes to the man of blood and iron, who might say to him, "The true man is a conqueror, the product and lover of war. He who tramples all his enemies under his feet—he is the man who is going to remain." The angel goes next to the scientific man, who, in answer to his question, replies, "It is not the man of war who is going to abide. Look at the conquerors and

the empires of old; where are they? They are gone. What we want is knowledge, people must be more scientific and then some day war will cease and science will produce a perfect man." The angel next enquires of the religious man, and he is told, "What man wants is religion, we want brotherhood, people must love each other. That is the kind of man who will remain." So we have three different answers, one from the man of power, one from the man of wisdom, one from the man of religion: the Latin, the Greek and the Jew. The angel is puzzled, and he may say, "What do the Scriptures say?" He turns to Job 7 and learns that man's days are swifter than a weaver's shuttle, he is a burden to himself and a sinner before God. Psalm 8 shows him to be puny, a tiny atom in the universe. Psalm 144 that he is like the grass which grows in the morning and in the afternoon is gone. The angel is astonished, and we can imagine him saying, "If that is your final answer there is no hope, all is ruined." But, thank God, that is not the final answer.

We say to the angel, Let God answer the question "What is man?" God does not point to the military man, nor yet to the wise or religious man down here, but to the Lord Jesus Christ crowned with glory and honour at His own right hand. He says THIS IS HE. What a sight the angel would see if he could review the life of the Lord here in this world, not, as in the case of Adam, one giving up God and living for himself, but One walking through

this scene in full dependence on God, doing His will, and overcoming the world every day. Never pleasing Himself, but always doing the will of God. Then the angel would hear of His love to us which led Him to Calvary, and how He broke the power of death in resurrection, and ascended to the right hand of God, and how that He is there now, the centre of all God's purposes for blessing, the answer to the question "What is Man?"

But to complete the picture let us go a little further. In viewing Adam only in the beginning, the angel did not see all. God created Eve and now there were two and yet one. Adam loving his wife, and Eve, his helpmeet, obedient to her husband and responding to His love. That was God's thought and intention: the two were one. "That is man," the figure of what was to come. God would not only point to the Christ, but He would also point to His people who are bound up with Him. He is the Head, and we are joined to Him as Eve was to Adam, and more intimate still, we are members of His body. He loves us and we are here to love and obey Him and there is a bond between us that nothing can break. You may say "The Lord is in heaven and we are on earth, therefore there is a tremendous distance between Him and us. No, there is no distance. What is the distance between my hand and my head? There is no distance. The two are united, they are one, and you know how quickly the brain sends a thought to the finger, and how the finger responds immediately. There is no distance and no time between, and such is our oneness with Christ. He is our Head, and we are here to shew forth His life in subjection to Him.

The angel may consider us now. Indeed the host of them do so, for the word is, "That now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God" (Eph. 3. 10). What do they see? They see that we are greatly blessed in Christ, that we have a peace in Him that abides through the most troublous times and keeps our hearts calm and quiet in adversity: that we have a joy that does not depend on any worldly circumstance, but is unspeakable and full of glory; and that we have unlimited blessings in Christ, for we are blessed with all spiritual blessings in Him.

But if we have blessings in Him we have also responsibilities. Look again at Eph. 3. 10—that the principalities and powers in heavenly places are considering us makes that responsibility very great. This is a searching word to me. If the angels are looking at me, what do they see? You who are looking at me now cannot see my heart, nor do you see many of my ways. There may be things in me which make it impossible for the Spirit of God to fill me, and certain I am that no ray of the wisdom of God can be seen in any of us if the Spirit of God is denied His place in our lives.

I feel sometimes like a quart measure I once saw. It was a standard measure but it never held a quart because a piece of board had been put in the bottom. I look back on my life and feel ashamed as I think of things which are like the board in the measure, that have taken a place the Spirit of God would have filled. What about the books I read? Usually the books sent out to Inkongo are helpful books, and one can thank God for them, but

there are other books, and you can get plenty of them from the libraries, which act like exciting drugs, and the Word of God tells us to be filled, not with wine, wherein is excess, but with the Spirit of God. Unless we judge ourselves and really want to be filled with the Spirit we shall not be filled, and let us see that there is nothing in us like the board in the quart measure, which limits and grieves the Spirit of God.

There is a third thing I would speak of. It is a great honour to be here for God. When we return to Inkongo, my wife will call our boy, open our two cabin trunks in his presence, and say, "Now, Kilabusha, look at everything we have brought, we want you to have charge of everything. He has had charge of our things for many years and has never stolen a thing. Why is this? Not because we threaten him with prison if he steals, but because he considers it an honour to be made responsible. If he is tempted to steal he holds himself back and is trustworthy because he is trusted. God has honoured us by linking us with the Lord Jesus Christ and making us His representatives in the world, and we should consider it a great honour to be here for Him, and seek to be worthy of His trust.

You may ask, "How can we be in the good of these things?"—In that connection I have read Rev. 3. 20. The Lord is standing at the door knocking. We often use this verse in speaking to unconverted people, and I would say that if there is one here to-night who has never opened his or her heart to the Lord Jesus, He is knocking at the door of your heart and wants to come and cleanse it and make it fit for His presence, an abiding place for His Spirit, to

give you the blessings we have been speaking of and rejoicing in, and make you happy. But there is another door at which the Lord is knocking—the door of this world. What a muddle the rulers of this world are making of it, and how patient God is to keep back His hand and let things go on to their full development. You all know what it is to stand by and see someone muddling through what you could do perfectly well. I remember long ago a lady was driving me from the station. After we had gone a little way the horse got out of control and I saw her getting very nervous. At last she shouted to me, "Can you drive?" I said, "Yes," and she handed me the reins, and soon the horse was going at a normal pace. She was relieved but so was I. Suppose she had given me one rein and had kept one, what would have happened? She gave me both, and I was glad to take them. The rulers of this world are making a mess of things and the Lord is standing aside and waiting in patience until they have tried everything. But soon He will take the reins; just at the right time He will bring everything into touch with God, and this world will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of God.

Now what He will do for the world in a future day, He wants to do for us now. He is knocking, and it is good for us to open to Him and let Him come in and take the reins and dominate us. But we must be sincere about it. It is easy to sing, "Under Thy sway, Lord," and to keep a little chamber of our heart to ourselves and our own will. I have done this myself and would like to warn others. Coming across country the other day we came to a very bad hill. Instead of one warn-

ing it had two. And God has given us two warnings against keeping anything back from the full sway of the Lord. Many years ago there was a big meeting and two people sang with the rest the equivalent to our "All to Jesus I surrender," and God struck them dead. They were hypocrites, and pretending to be what they were not. Others have done the same since, and I feel guilty myself, but God put Ananias and Sapphira there at the beginning of the road so that others could see the double warning and take heed. May God help us to surrender ourselves fully to Him, keeping nothing back. That is the way of blessing and joy for us and glory for Him.

There are two promises in Rev. 3. 20, I will sup with him and he with Me. I once gave an address in which I spoke of the Lord coming into our hearts as a Guest, and of our giving Him full place in our hearts and not reserving any chamber from Him. But we can surely speak of Him as the Host. We are only caretakers. When a guest comes to my house there is almost certain to be some part of the house I reserve,

however much I love him. But if I am caretaker of a house, when the owner comes I hand to him every key there is, and say, "The house is yours," and henceforth everything is done at the master's behest. Let us do this to our Lord Jesus Christ. Let Him take possession of everything in the house. He is knocking, let us admit Him, and we shall find satisfaction in Him, for He says, "He shall sup with Me." But He also says, "I will sup with him," and what an honour it is for us to be able to give joy and pleasure to the Lord.

I must close, but there are two short sentences I would leave with you. The first we have heard many times—"Occupied with Christ." Keep that before you as you go through trouble or perplexity or anxiety, for if you are occupied with Him He can keep you in peace and joy amid all the troubles of this world. The other sentence is "Occupied BY Christ." If we yield ourselves wholly to Him and let Him take possession, we shall be "occupied BY Christ," and that will mean blessing for us and glory for Him.

"He hath given us of His Spirit."

What a bond this is between God and us who have believed! I remember hearing a remark that made me think. Said my friend, "I would not give you my spirit if I could. Why? Because you would know too much about me if I did. But God has given to us His Spirit that we might know all about Him." It is so, "the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost that is given unto us." It is by His Spirit that His love is perfected in us, and we abide in Him and He in us. We have the capacity for intelligent communion with God in the indwelling Spirit. God could not have given to us a greater gift. Consider it. Meditate upon it. Pray about it.

THINGS MOST SURELY BELIEVED.

J. T. Mawson

No. 12. The Judge of Quick and Dead.

“THE only-begotten Son which is in the bosom of the Father” became THE SON OF MAN that He might fulfill the whole will of the Triune God. His title of Son of Man is a glorious title. It carries with it universal dominion, as we should expect, seeing He is who He is, and yet the first occurrence of it in the New Testament is in those memorable words of His. “The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests: but *the Son of Man hath not where to lay His head*” (Matt. 8. 20). It was into such poverty that He who will rule all things for God came for God’s glory and the salvation of men. Before taking the dominion and power, He trod the way of service and suffering. He gently rebuked the pride and ambitions of His disciples with the words, “Even as *the Son of Man* came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many” (Matt. 20. 28). Yet He knew what the result of His sojourn on earth would be, for even in the darkest hour of His life, when arraigned for blasphemy before the high priest of His people, and when “they did spit in His face, and buffeted Him; and smote Him with the palms of their hands” He said, “Nevertheless I say unto you, Hereafter shall ye see *the Son of Man* sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven” (Matt. 26. 24).

As *the Son of Man* He was lifted up, even as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness. It was a necessity; without which His kingdom would have been a barren kingdom, with never a man in it to

rejoice in His glory. He was lifted up as the representative of men to bear the judgment that lay upon them that He might be the Redeemer before He takes the throne as Judge. But as surely as He was lifted up upon the cross, so surely will He fill the throne, for, “The Father . . . hath given Him authority to execute judgment also, because He is *the Son of Man*” (John 5. 27).

He has been “ordained of God to be the Judge of quick and dead.” So Peter declared in the first gospel sermon ever preached to Gentile hearers, and I should connect the judgment of the living with His title Son of Man. He will judge the dead also at the end of Time at the great white throne, for “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), but He will do that in His Divine majesty. It is before God that the dead, small and great shall stand (Rev. 20). HE IS GOD.

As Son of Man He will deal with the living when He comes. Then He will wield the SICKLE, the SWORD and the SCEPTRE. He is seen with the sickle in Rev. 14. 14. “And I looked,” says John the Apostle, “and behold a white cloud, and upon the cloud one sat like unto *the Son of Man*, having on His head a golden crown, and in His hand a sharp sickle . . . and He that sat on the cloud thrust in His sickle on the earth, and the earth was reaped.”

He came into the world to sow the good seed of the kingdom, for “He

that soweth the good seed is *the Son of Man*" (Matt. 13. 27). That sowing cost Him more than mortal tongue shall ever tell. He fulfilled the word "He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed." Aye not only were "strong crying and tears" His portion, but blood also. "The seed is the Word of God," the full revelation of what God is, and He had to die to sow that seed; and He who sowed the seed must reap the harvest; and the latter part of that ancient word will also be fulfilled—"Shall doubtless come again rejoicing, bringing His sheaves with Him" (Psalm. 126. 6).

But tares have been sown in the wheat field; this was the work of an enemy, and that enemy was the devil (Matt. 13. 29), and the Son of Man must discriminate between the wheat and the tares; so we read that "He shall send forth His angels and they shall gather out of His kingdom all things that offend, and them that do iniquity." As the wielder of the sickle He will execute a discriminating judgment. To use another forceful figure, that of the rugged Baptist, "His fan is in His hand, and He will thoroughly purge His floor, and gather the wheat into the garner; but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire" (Matt. 3. 12).

That passage probably has Israel specially in view, but this discriminating judgment will be extended to the Gentile nations as Matt. 25. 31 teaches. "When *the Son of Man* shall come in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then shall He sit upon the throne of His glory; and before Him shall be gathered all nations: and He shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats." It is strange that so many theo-

logians should have interpreted that passage as being the great final judgment of the dead, until which none could know whether they would stand on the right hand of the Lord or the left, saved or lost. It is clear enough that it is the judgment of *living nations* at the appearing and glory of the Son of Man, and that it will take place at the beginning of His reign of a thousand years over the earth, while the final judgment of the *dead* will take place when those thousand years are finished (Rev. 20).

The Son of Man will bring in the glory and the blessing; the angels of God shall ascend and descend upon Him (John 1. 51). He will bring down heaven to earth for "He shall come down like rain upon the mown grass" (Ps. 72. 6). But note well the figure. It is upon the *mown* grass that He comes down. The sickle will have done its work first. The sharp sickle in the hand of the golden crowned Son of Man will be thrust into the earth when God's work and the devil's shall be fully ripe.

We are not surprised that as their Master went up to Jerusalem for the last time His disciples followed Him amazed and afraid. Their forebodings must have been greatly increased when He said to them, "Behold we go up to Jerusalem, and *the Son of Man* shall be delivered unto the chief priests and scribes, and they shall condemn Him to death, and shall deliver Him to the Gentiles: and they shall mock Him, and shall scourge Him and shall spit upon Him and shall kill Him" (Mark 10. 33). Could it be the same Son of Man whom John saw in Patmos, shining in his divine Majesty? Yes, it was the same. There is none other who could go

down to such depths and be exalted to such heights; and He is the Ancient of days. Even John's eyes could not look upon such glory as was there revealed in Him, nor could he stand upon his feet before Him. He says, "When I saw Him, I fell at His feet as dead." Nor would he have known Him as his beloved Lord if He had not laid His right hand upon him with a well-remembered tenderness, and in tones of compassion said, "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 (hades) and of death" (Rev. 1. 12-18).

The keys of death and hades in His hand declared that He, the Son of Man, is the undisputed Master of the unseen world, even though His authority is challenged by living men. But He is coming to judge the living for "out of His mouth went a *sharp two-edged sword* with which He would smite the nations" (Revelation 1 and 19).

THE SWORD must precede the sceptre because of what men are. How strange is that popular delusion that the world is to be gradually converted by the gospel, or that the kingdom of God will be evolved by men's own efforts out of the world as it is. Hear what the Scripture says. "Behold He cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see Him, and they also that pierced Him: *and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of Him.*" Even so. Amen. A converted world would welcome Him with acclamation; a godless world will wail with terror at the sight of Him. The sword first and then the sceptre. That sword indicates resistless justice: the vengeance of God upon unrepentant, wicked

men. It will compel every stubborn knee to bend and every rebellious lip to confess that Jesus is Lord to the glory of God the Father. "Gird Thy sword upon Thy thigh, O most mighty, with Thy glory and Thy majesty. And in Thy majesty ride prosperously because of truth and righteousness: and Thy right hand shall teach Thee terrible things" (Ps. 45).

It seems almost an incredible thing that men should assemble together to make war on Him, who is King of kings and Lord of lords, yet they will, and such is the delusion with which the devil will delude them that they will hope to achieve their purpose and keep Him for ever out of this world. So we read, "I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies gathered together to make war on Him that sat upon the horse, and against His army" (Revelation 19). They will stretch forth their hand against God, and strengthen themselves against the Almighty; and in their blind hatred they will run upon Him, "even upon the thick bosses of His buckler" (Job 14). But the battle will be swift and decisive, for the sword of the Son of Man shall prevail, and the blasphemous leaders of that vast host of men shall be seized by divine power and cast alive into the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone, "And the remainder shall be slain with the sword of Him that sat upon the horse, which sword proceeded out of His mouth, and all the fowls of the air were filled with flesh."

THE SCEPTRE of the Son of Man will be an iron sceptre and for it He has been in great conflict. It has been the devil's purpose from the beginning to oppose His wield-

ing it. He must have understood and taken to heart God's words to him in the Garden concerning the woman's Seed. "It shall bruise thy head and thou shalt bruise His heel," and he has spared no force or wile that he hoped would prevent this. He was not ignorant of the times, for the time of the Advent of the woman's Seed had been plainly told in Old Testament Scripture and when that time came, he "stood up before the woman (Israel) which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born. And she brought forth a *man child* who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron" (Rev. 12). Failing in that first onslaught, he changed his tactics, and masked his guns and advanced with a flag of truce and terms of peace. We read, "The devil taketh Him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth Him all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them; and saith unto Him, All these things will I give Thee, if Thou wilt fall down and worship me." But the Lord knew him for the adversary that he was, and answered, "Get thee hence, Satan; for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord, thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve" (Matthew 4).

He refused the short and easy way to the throne and sceptre that Satan offered Him at such a price, and took instead the way of obedience to the will of God, and God's will was the death of the cross. He shewed Himself worthy to rule by complete subjection. "Though He were Son, yet learned He obedience by the things that He suffered." He loved righteousness and hated iniquity, and the sceptre of His kingdom will be for ever a sceptre of righteousness. But He would take that sceptre neither from the devil

nor men, but from the hand of God only. We learn this from Daniel's night visions. Said he, "I saw in the night visions, and behold, one like *the Son of Man*, came with the clouds of the heaven, and came to the Ancient of Days, and they brought Him near before Him. And there was given Him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations and languages should serve Him: His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and His kingdom that which shall not be destroyed" (Dan. 7. 13, 14).

A corresponding scene to that is found in Revelation '5. "And I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne and the four beasts (living creatures) and in the midst of the elders stood a Lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth. And He came and took the book out of the hand of Him that sat upon the throne." In John's vision He receives the sickle and the sword from the hand of God, and in Daniel's vision He receives the sceptre. The LORD had said unto Him, "Ask of Me, and I will give Thee the heathen for Thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for Thy possession. Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; Thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel" (Ps. 2). He would have nothing and take nothing except from the hand of God; in this He is in striking contrast to the first man, Adam, who grasped at something that God in His wisdom had withheld from him, and fell into disaster and death.

God intends that the proclamation of His coming kingdom of righteous-

ness should go out in testimony to the Gentiles. It was announced by Paul to the Athenians on Mars Hill, when He said, "God now commandeth all men every where to repent: because He hath appointed a day, in which He will judge the world in righteousness by that Man whom He hath ordained; whereof He hath given assurance unto all men, in that He hath raised Him from the dead" (Acts 17. 30, 31). He is the King that shall reign in righteousness, and the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever (Isaiah 32).

Marvel not that the sickle and sword and sceptre should be put into the hands of the Son of Man. He only of all men who have appeared on earth could wield them in undiminished righteousness and power. Every other man to whom power and authority had been given had failed; Adam, Noah, Moses, David, Solomon, Nebuchadnezzar all broke down when tested and have had to make way for the Son of Man. He has prevailed and will never fail, for in His absolute dependence upon God He has been upheld, and the word has been fulfilled and will yet be fulfilled. "Let Thy hand be upon the Man of Thy right hand, and upon THE SON OF MAN whom Thou madest strong for Thyself" (Ps. 80. 17). Again I quote His own words. "Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in which all that are in the graves shall hear His voice, and shall come forth; they that have been good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation" (John 5. 28, 29). "Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on

such the second death hath no power." "But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished." Then will come the final judgment, which John describes in awe-inspiring words. "And I saw a great white throne, AND HIM THAT SAT ON IT, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire" (Rev. 20).

He will lay aside the sickle when its work is done; He will lay aside the sword when its work is done, and when as Son of Man He has glorified God in His universal kingdom He will hand back to God the sceptre, for we read, "Then cometh the end, when He shall deliver up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when He shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. *For He must reign, till He hath put all enemies under His feet.* The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. And when all things shall be subdued unto Him, then shall the Son also Himself be subject unto Him that put all things under Him, that God may be all in all" (1 Cor. 15. 24-28).

“CUT DOWN”—“SET ON HIGH.”

F. B. Hole.

(Psalms 90 and 91).

THE heading of Psalm 90, attributing its authorship to Moses, should arrest our attention to begin with. It makes it pretty certain that chronologically it is the first of the psalms, being written some hundreds of years before the rest. Moses, the writer, is spoken of not as the prophet or law-giver but as *the man of God*; and it is a *prayer*, though we find nothing in the nature of a petition throughout the first eleven verses.

Two songs are attributed to Moses. The first was sung by him and the children of Israel at the beginning of his forty years ministry, when they had crossed the Red Sea (Exodus 15. 1-18). It is full from beginning to end with what God is, what He had done, and what He was going to do in fulfilment of His purpose. The second was composed at the end, just before he died. It does not appear ever to have been sung. The instructions were, “Now therefore write ye this song for you, and teach it to the children of Israel: put it in their mouths, that this song may be a witness for Me against the children of Israel” (Deut. 31. 19). The song is written in Deuteronomy 32. 1-43, and Moses came and spake all the words of this song in the ears of the people. They would hardly be likely to sing it, for while in the earlier part it celebrates God’s kindly dealings with them, and in the closing part His ultimate intervention and deliverance, the main burden of it is their folly in forsaking God and turning to idols, and the chastening and retribution that this was sure to bring upon them.

But in addition to the second song Deuteronomy furnishes us, in chapter 33, with “the blessing, wherewith Moses the man of God blessed the children of Israel before his death.” So we have in the Pentateuch the two songs of Moses and the *blessing* of Moses, and in the Psalms the *prayer* of Moses. In both the songs Moses spoke as the prophet-apostle of the law dispensation: in the blessing and the prayer he speaks more simply as the man of God. There is a definitely prophetic element in both the blessing and the prayer, but the more prominent thought is that as the man of God, called to be mediator of the old covenant, he mediates both the blessing from God to man, and the prayer from man to God. It is with the latter of these that we now have to do.

All the petitions that compose the prayer are found in verses 12-17; the earlier verses recite in very graphic fashion the plight in which man is found, which leads to the petitions being offered. Man is seen, stripped of all the false glory with which he surrounds himself, as a poor, fallen, dying creature.

Jehovah, as the Eternal One, is the true dwelling-place of His people in all ages. He pursues His even way from eternity to eternity without the shadow of turning. In contrast to this mortal man is turned to destruction, for as children of Adam we lie under the original sentence, “Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return” (Gen. 3. 19). In verse 3 of our Psalm the word “destruction” is literally “crumbling.” In the New Translation it is rendered, “Thou makest mortal man

to return to dust, and sayest, Return, children of men." Man stands before us a poor, feeble mortal creature; and the point is, that he is this by the express act of God.

Various figures are laid under tribute by the Psalmist; a flood, a sleep, a bundle of withered grass. God's sentence upon man is as irresistible as a flood. Man's uncertain existence here is quickly over, as quickly as seems to pass a night of sleep. He is cut down and He withers as swiftly as a handful of grass. Three score and ten years were the ordinary measure of his days. This, we may observe, was specially applicable to the people amongst whom Moses moved in the wilderness. All those who were numbered from twenty years old and upward came under that word, "Your carcasses shall fall in this wilderness" (Num. 14. 29); so those who were in their prime at thirty, when coming out of Egypt, cannot have lived to be more than seventy, with the exception of Caleb and Joshua. It is remarkable that God should have used a man who lived to one hundred and twenty, and who when he died at that age was still full of vigour, to declare three score and ten to be man's days.

But why is man so frail, so mortal? Because he has fallen under the Divine displeasure. It is not an unreasonable accident that he is in this plight. He was not created thus. It is simply and only that anger and wrath from God lie upon him. An hard saying this, but a true one. It is the only explanation of the sad state in which man is found.

Moses does not stop at this point however: he traces the matter back one further step. Why is man under

the Divine displeasure? Why does wrath lie upon him? He furnishes us with the answer in verse 8. "Thou hast set our iniquities before Thee, our secret sins in the light of Thy countenance." That is it! Sin lies at the root of the mischief; and even if men sin in secret, it avails not. All stands out clear and distinct in the light of God's face.

Such, then, is the pitiful state of mortal men, the children of Adam, as brought to light by the man of God who was also the lawgiver. No wonder that it moved the heart of Moses to a fervent prayer.

Before considering the prayer let us turn aside to note the great contrast between these earlier verses of Psalm 90 and the earlier verses of Psalm 91. The one is a picture of man in extremest weakness and misery. The other gives us a view of man honoured of God, and not to be touched by any adverse power. The one is "cut down" to wither like grass. The other cannot be touched: no evil shall befall him, and ultimately he is to be "set on high."

The extraordinary contrast might perplex us were it not that we notice one thing. In Psalm 90 "man" is generic. The whole race of Adam, the first man, is in view, and consequently all through the pronouns are in the plural. It is *we, us, our, they, them*. In Psalm 91 the word man does not occur, though clearly enough a Man is in view. The personal pronoun is used all through, but invariably in the singular. It is *he, him, thou, thee, thy*. Some particular Man is in the mind of the inspiring Spirit of God. We have no difficulty in identifying Him. He is not the first man,

Adam, nor any of his race; but the Second Man, the Lord from heaven.

And so at once the whole atmosphere is changed. Instead of feebleness and misery and sin and the dust of death, we find ourselves rejoicing in One who abides under the shadow of the Almighty, who is untouched by any snare or pestilence or terror or destruction or evil or plague; One who is the object of angelic ministry. The arrows may fly thick and fast, and a thousand may fall at His side and ten thousand at His right hand, but not one arrow can come nigh Him. He cannot be touched by any adverse force.

We find something analogous to this in the history of David, who is spoken of as the man after God's own heart, when he was still in rejection yet under the Divine protection. Abiathar the priest, having escaped from the massacre of all his father's house, fled to David, who greeted Him with the word, "Abide thou with me, fear not: for he that seeketh my life seeketh thy life: but with me thou shalt be in safeguard" (1 Sam. 22. 23). Astute observers may have characterized Abiathar's move as great folly, as a jumping out of the frying pan into the fire—for after all was not Saul's animosity against the priests only secondary, and all his primary animosity reserved for David? That was indeed the case, and yet at that hour there was no safer spot in all the land of Israel than standing by David's side.

David was at that moment the man of destiny, the elect of God according to His purpose, and nothing could touch him. Saul's archers would bend their bows in vain as

far as he was concerned, and to be with David was to be in safeguard. He had made Jehovah his refuge and habitation, not perfectly of course, still in a very real measure. He was a type and foreshadowing of the Perfect One who was to come.

Our Psalm gives us a lovely picture of that Perfect One. He always dwelt in the secret place of the Most High and under the shadow of the Almighty. He was perfect in His dependence upon God. Hence He could pass through every form of evil and it had no more effect upon Him than the burning fiery furnace had upon the three Hebrews of Nebuchadnezzar's day. Angels had charge concerning Him, and He could tread down all forms of Satanic power, whether represented by lion, adder or dragon.

That this really was so, the Gospels themselves bear witness. Satan himself knew that angels were concerned as to Him, and quoted, or rather misquoted, this very Psalm.

And we are permitted to have glimpses of this ministry of angels to their Lord, both after the temptation in the wilderness and the agony in the Garden. Moreover He touched the leper, but the leprosy could not touch Him. He was led to the brow of Nazareth's hill, but every hand that would have pushed Him over was smitten with impotence. Nothing could prevail against Him or touch Him till His hour was come.

Now even Psalm 91 indicates that an hour, a great hour, was to come in His history; but before we contemplate it let us return to the actual petitions of the prayer of Moses, as recorded in the six closing verses of Psalm 90.

Verse 12 gives us the first request which it is easy to see, exerts a controlling influence on all the rest. We are but the feeble dying children of Adam, and much is gained if we only recognize that fact. For so long as we do not number our days aright, and consequently imagine ourselves to be something other than what we are, we apply our hearts to pleasure or money-making or sport or a hundred and one things of small importance. When we number our days aright and realize the plight we are in, we apply our hearts to wisdom, and the beginning of wisdom is the fear of the Lord. But we have to pray to God to teach us to do this, for we shall not do it of ourselves.

Moses was taught to apply his heart to wisdom in an eminent degree, hence he prayed with divinely given intelligence for exactly that which we need. He uttered a fourfold cry:—

1. "O satisfy us early with Thy mercy"
2. "Let Thy work appear"
3. "And Thy glory"
4. "And let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us."

All four of his requests are centred in God. Man being what he is, there is no hope in him and nothing to be expected from him. God's *mercy*, God's *work*, God's *glory*, God's *beauty* were his desire.

Now see how wonderfully all these things were realized in Christ. Just before His birth the prophet spoke "the tender mercy of our God; whereby the Dayspring from on high hath visited us" (Luke 1. 78). The coming of the Son of God into the world was the supreme expression

of God's mercy. So too the activities of the Son of God in the world, culminating in the Cross, were the supreme expression of God's work. He Himself said, "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work" (John 5. 17). Again His whole life displayed God's glory. The Word having been made flesh and dwelling among us full of grace and truth, the apostles were able to say, "We beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father" (John 1. 14). Moses had desired to see the Divine glory in connection with the giving of the law, and had been refused, for no man could see that glory and live. Nevertheless he prayed that the glory might appear in due season, and it has appeared. When the Word was made flesh it shone forth, but so softened down by grace that human eyes could gaze upon it.

The fourth of these requests is marked by astonishing boldness. David knew that the beauty of the Lord was to be seen in His temple (see Ps. 27. 4); but to behold it is one thing, to ask for it to be upon such as ourselves, so that we should be invested with it, is quite another. It is to be "upon us," and Moses has just been telling us what sinful, mortal creatures we are. Moses, we might ask, how did you muster courage to ask for so amazing a thing as that? How came the conception of a thing even to enter your mind?

There is but one answer to such questions. It was by inspiration of the Spirit of God. So great a design as that was in the mind of God for His saints, and in due time, when His mercy, His work, His glory had appeared, the basis for it was laid and the fact of it

came to light. The gospel to-day introduces us into "the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, wherein He hath made us accepted in the Beloved" (Eph. 1. 5, 6). Acceptance in the Beloved involves this, that we stand before God in all His favour: the beauty of the Beloved is upon us. No greater beauty than that could possibly be ours. Moses' request was a bold one, but not too bold. It has had an abundant answer.

By this time we can certainly see that the main burden of the prayer of Moses was an earnest cry for the advent of the Christ of God. A glorious answer was given at His first advent, and the finishing touches will be given at His second advent. It is not surprising therefore that Psalm 91 should foretell His excellence and sufficiency, and set Him before us as the Second Man in sharpest contrast to the first.

But not only does it set Him before us thus, it also indicates in its three closing verses that the greatest hour of all would come in His story, when very opposite conditions would prevail to those stated in the early part of the psalm. An hour would strike when He *should* be in trouble, when He *would* need an answer to His call, in the shape of deliverance and salvation. How could this be? Have we not just been hearing that angels have charge concerning Him, and that not one of the forces of evil can touch Him? If He is so fully under the shadow of the Almighty that no arrow that flies by day has any terrors for Him, how is it possible that He should *need* salvation, or to be satisfied with long life?

Many a saint of Old Testament times may have been puzzled by the paradox involved in this, and longed to arrive at an incontestable solution. That solution, thank God, is ours. The wonderful Person portrayed in this Psalm, the Second Man so different from all other men, intrinsically holy, with life untainted and altogether unforfeited, will go into death on behalf of the feeble dying men so graphically pictured in Psalm 90. The hour struck, and into death He went of His own free will; otherwise He had never been there, for He said, "I lay down My life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again" (John 10. 17, 18). He, over whom all evil and even death itself had no power, because having no claim upon Him, went into death impelled by His love. He permitted death to have dominion over Him for one brief moment, in order that He might redeem us and recreate us for God's pleasure.

Of old it had been predicted that the Seed of the woman should crush the serpent's head. In verse 13 we accordingly read of Him treading on the adder and trampling under His feet the dragon. But the prediction also stated that in doing this His own heel should be bruised. In verses 14 to 16 we can see something of what this means by simple yet very plain inferences. The time would come when He would need deliverance and to be shown the salvation of God: then evidently He must be in *weakness and adversity*. He would be set on high: then evidently He must have been *brought low*. He is to know what *trouble* is. Again He is to be not only delivered but honoured: that indicates that He

must pass through a time of *dis-honour*. And yet again He is to be satisfied with long life: that infers that He is to come face to face with *death*. Such is the wonderful story.

When He died and came forth in resurrection, the mercy, the work, the glory of God came perfectly into view, and as a result the beauty of the Lord rests upon His saints. In all His acceptance we are ac-

cepted. One thing more remains to be said. We have noticed the opening petition of the prayer of Moses, and also the four-fold cry of verses 14 to 17. The closing words of the Psalm voice a sixth request based upon the other five. It concerns not God's work but our work—"the work of our hands." He desired that in addition to the beauty of the Lord being upon us the work of our hands might be established upon us. What exactly did he mean?

It may be difficult to say just what was in his mind, but we think we catch a glimpse of what it means for us. We know the mercy of God. Our souls rest upon the work of God. We have seen the glory of God. We stand in all the acceptance and beauty of the Beloved before God. Now we have the great privilege of putting our hands to work of such a character that in its blessed results and fruitage it may be established upon us for eternity.

Work of this sort is outside the range of the man of the world. He cannot touch it. He applies his hands to work of many varieties, yet it all decays. His empires, his pyramids, his skyscrapers, his giant businesses, his elaborate scientific

speculations, all of them, and much more beside, will come in their sum total to exactly—*nothing*.

We go further, and affirm that work of this sort lies very much outside the range of the carnally-minded believer. We may well ask ourselves how we stand as to this point. Come now: what activities are really filling our lives? Are we going with the stream of present-day religion? Are we just fulfilling certain duties, attending certain meetings, and then filling up the rest of our time with pleasures of a respectable and innocuous sort? Are we seeking to get as much as we can out of the earth and the world, or are we seeking *first* the things of the kingdom of God?

Moses, the writer of the Psalm, threw up his brilliant work and prospects in Egypt in order to put his hands to the work of God. It will be established upon him, and he must have begun to see it when he stood with the Son of God on the holy Mount. Saul of Tarsus had immense advantages, yet he esteemed them but refuse and chose a path of suffering and death, putting his hands with abundance of spiritual energy to the work of the Lord from the start of his Christian life to the finish. When the day of Christ arrives he is going to have the Thessalonian converts, and a multitude more beside from many a city between Jerusalem and Rome, as his joy and crown in the presence of the Lord Jesus. When his detractors and their works are all forgotten, the work of his hands will be established upon him in glory.

And so too it *MAY* be for us. The early Christians at Corinth were carnal and not very promising on

this line, yet to them Paul said, "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." If we are keen in the work of the Lord, and we do it in the Lord and for the Lord, we shall not work in vain and without results that abide for eternity.

We know, with Solomon, that what God does He does for ever. It is certain therefore that if God establishes upon us the work of our hands it will be for ever. Just think

of it! You and I have at the present moment the opportunity of putting our hands to work, the results of which will never disappear. The work of kings and statesmen, of conquerors and diplomats and builders of big business, is as nothing compared with it.

We are fully blessed in Christ, yet just because of that how foolish should we be were we to fritter away our lives in the pursuit of irrelevant trivialities, instead of grasping firmly and with joy the golden opportunity that is within our reach.

The Crown of the Gospel.

What is the crown of the gospel? The crown of the gospel is that I am acquainted with the Person who has done the work that saved me. A blessed intimacy between Him and Me has been established. "I know My sheep and I am known of Mine," He has said.

"The God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly" (Romans 16).

Soon shall eternal triumph yield
 Repose from off the battle field;
 All power of evil trodden down—
 The waving palm, the glittering crown,
 Then blessed Lord, we'll shout to Thee
 Of full and perfect liberty.

"For your sakes He became poor" (2 Corinthians 8. 9).

Blessed Lord, so rich in goodness, yet so poor through all Thy grace;
 Speed the moment of Thy glory: take us up to see Thy face.
 Then for ever to be with Thee: ever in Thy home abide;
 Ours—Thy joy and satisfaction: Thine,—to claim and have Thy bride.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Propitiation and Substitution.

"I should be grateful if you would tell me what are the Scriptural replies to the following questions submitted to me by a sincere seeker, lately worshipping with Strict Baptists.

1. If Christ died for all why will not all men be saved?
2. If the reply is because of unbelief he replies, is not this unbelief a sin, and if it be acknowledged to be a sin then our Lord either underwent the punishment due to it or He did not.
3. Assuming that He did, then why should that particular sin prove a greater barrier to participating in the benefits of His death than any other sin for which He died?
4. If Christ did not die for that sin then clearly He did not die for all.

Such is the position placed before me, and which my answers do not appear adequate."—CALVINIST.

THAT Christ died for all men is the truth of the gospel, if it were not, the gospel could not be preached to all. But that does not mean that He died *instead* of all, but it does mean that He died that the benefits of His death might be offered to all, and enjoyed by all. The death of Christ is the proof of God's love to *the whole world*, and because of it He can be JUST and the Justifier of him that believeth in Jesus.

There are two sides to the death of Christ: propitiation and substitution, and these are never confounded in Scripture.

PROPITIATION is that side which meets the claims of justice, and sets God free to offer His salvation to all. Because of it God can pardon the sinner's sins and justify him and be justified in doing it. The word as used in Romans 3. 25 really means "a mercy seat" or meeting place. And God has set forth Christ Jesus to be this "through faith in His blood." There God in His holiness can meet the sinner in his guilt. God is there in free grace, but not apart from righteousness, and the sinner may draw near in *faith*. It is when the grace that is in God and faith in the

sinner meet that the sinner is justified and saved, and not before.

Faith is necessary, for without faith it is impossible to please God, but that does not mean that there is some special virtue in faith, that completes and perfects the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. Faith is the simple acceptance of the gospel; the man that believes, says, God is true; faith is the hand that takes hold of the proffered blessing; it appropriates what grace has provided. So that while the righteousness of God, in its effect, is *unto all*, it is only *upon all that believe*.

SUBSTITUTION is that side of the cross that has its special application to the believer. It is the believer that can say, "He was delivered for *our* offences and raised again for *our* justification," and "He was wounded for *our* transgressions," and "He bore *our* sins in His own body on the tree." We do not tell the unconverted, unrepentant sinner these things, for they belong to the believer, unless to shew him what cause the believer has for thanksgiving; but we do tell him that Christ died for all; that He gave Himself a ransom for all, and that God would have all men to believe

it and be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth (1 Timothy 2. 4, 5, 6). The efficacy in the one propitiatory sacrifice that Christ has made is enough to atone for the guilt of the greatest sinner on earth and for all sinners on earth, but it is only the one who draws near by faith that can say indeed and in truth: "The Son of God loved me and gave Himself for me."

It ought not to be difficult to see that a man who despises Christ and His blood, or is indifferent to God's claims and His gospel; or does not believe that God means what He says; or clings to his own righteousness and refuses to own his sinfulness, could not possibly participate in the blessings that flow from the death of Christ. God does not cast His pearls before swine. Unbelief is a great and fatal sin for it prevents men from submitting themselves to God and keeps them away from Him in distrust of His goodness and love, and consequently from

His blessing. "He that believeth not God hath made Him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of His Son" (1 John 5. 10). Could anything be worse than that.

We might add that the questions of our correspondent infer that Christ died not only for all men but for all sins. It is true that propitiation is for sins. "He is the propitiation for our sins" (1 John 1. 2), but that refers to God's family. It goes on to say, "not for ours only, but also for the whole world," "the sins of" should be omitted from that sentence. It is as though a man of wealth placed a sum of money in a bank in his native town, to pay the debts of every debtor in the town who presented his bills or confessed his debts at the bank on a certain day. All who came would discover how adequate the provision was for the discharge of all their debts, but those who neglected or refused to come, would remain debtors as before.

How can the Church be both the Body and the Bride of Christ.

"On page 40 of the book "Waiting for the Coming" the author says, "Between the rapture (of the church) and the appearing of the Lord, the marriage of the Lamb will take place in the glory, and the Lamb's wife, which the church is to be, must be in the glory before the marriage can take place." Now the Apostle Paul writes of, "the church which is His body." The question arises in my mind and I should be glad to be helped to clear thinking upon it. How can the church be both His body and His bride? It is a very real difficulty to me, but perhaps the author of this book can elucidate the difficulty."—ABERDEENSHIRE.

IS not the solution to the difficulty the fact that the church is described by various figures according to that side of the truth that is being presented. We must endeavour to grasp the truth that lies behind the figure and not be stumbled by the figure. For instance the church is the body of Christ

now, yet it is also the house of God and the temple of God. It will be the body of Christ in the day of His glory (Eph. 1. 22, 23), but it also groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord (chap. 2. 21). It will be, we believe, the bride, the Lamb's wife, but also the great city, the holy Jerusalem (Rev. 21. 9, 10).

The relationship in which the church stands to the Lord as His body is a very wonderful one, and could only have been conceived in the mind of God. Just as a man expresses his character and thoughts and very life through his body, so the Lord expresses what He is through the church, which is His body. This comes out very specially now, as unfolded for us in the Colossian Epistle. But in the day of His glory, when He appears as Head over all things, filling God's vast inheritance with His glory, then His church will be necessary to Him; it is spoken of as His fullness, "He is not complete without it. In God's thought and purpose Christ would be incomplete if His body had not its place too. His body, filled with His love, energized with His mind, working out His thoughts, as our bodies work out the thoughts and purposes of our minds" (Grant) (Eph. 1. 22, 23). A body severed from its head is a mutilated corpse, and this the church most surely would be if it were possible to sever it from its Head in glory. It will also be understood that not one member could be the body, nor a group of

members: the body must include every member (see 1 Cor. 12).

But wonderful as this intimate and indivisible unity with Christ is, it is not enough to express all that the church is to Him. He must have it as the object of His everlasting love. Consequently in Eph. 5. 22-33 the marriage tie comes in as a figure. Clearly Adam is in view there and Eve brought to him, bone of his bone and flesh of his flesh. "He that loveth his wife loveth himself. For no man ever yet hated his own flesh, but nourisheth it and cherisheth it, *even as the Lord the church.*" And here the two figures seem to merge the one into the other. "For we are members of His body, of His flesh and His bones." "This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church." It is this passage that proves beyond question that the church is to stand in that near and precious relationship to Christ that can only be typified in the marriage union, and decides for us that it is the Lamb's wife of Revelation 19 and 21.

"Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely."

The fountain in its source
 No drought of summer fears;
 The farther it pursues its course,
 The nobler it appears.

But earthly cisterns yield
 A scanty, short supply;
 The morning sees them amply fill'd
 At ev'ning they are dry.

Yield to the Lord with simple heart,
 All that thou hast, and all thou art;
 Renounce all strength but strength divine,
 And peace shall be for ever thine.