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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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THE BENEDICTION.

J. T. Mawson.

"The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost be with you all" 2 Cor. 13. 14.

ONCE I was at a meeting at which an old Christian, thinking that it had lasted long enough, said the Benediction, supposing that that would close it, but it did not. Up to that point it had been slow and formal, but the Benediction put new life into it, the praying did not really begin until then; that was the true beginning and not the end of the meeting. The threefold blessing was Paul's last word to the Church at Corinth; it was valedictory as well as benedictory; but I am persuaded that it was not the end of what he had said to them. If its full meaning came home to them they would turn back and read again his earnest words to discover what was involved in this threefold birthright of every soul that is born of God. That is the way with the God-inspired Word. As we read we are continually turned back to consider afresh what we have read, for every fresh unfolding of the truth throws new light upon what precedes it.

Could anything be more comprehensive, more encouraging, more calculated to put fresh energy into the soul, and renew our confidence in God, than this benediction? Let us start the New Year with it, let it revive our spirits and put new energy into us, for it is the beginning and not the end of things, and let us rejoice that whatever the vicissitudes of the unknown future, these vital things of our faith abide—grace, love, and communion—the

grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost. Each Person in the ever-blessed Trinity is engaged to sustain our souls by that which is absolutely necessary to the life of them. As we consider this we are filled with confidence and expectancy and thanksgiving.

We begin with the Lord Jesus Christ. This must be so, for in Him is the full revelation of God to us. He came forth from the Godhead, sent by the Father, in the full power of the Holy Ghost, to seek and to save us, and the grace that brought Him forth is to abide with us. We have said that the Scriptures turn us back continually to read again what has gone before; it is so here. As we read "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ" we remember that these words, so full of music to our souls, have occurred before in the Epistle, and we turn back its pages to ch. 8. 9, and read, "*Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty might be rich.*" It was thus that His grace was revealed and we have believed and known it. This is not part of a lifeless creed with us; it is Himself, revealed in grace that baffles description, and is as real and vital to our spiritual life as is the air we breathe to our physical life.

But having revealed His grace to us at such a cost to Himself, He has not retired into His former glory

and left us to manage our own affairs, and fight life's battles as best we may. No, His interest in us abides, and He assures us that as He began with us so will He continue, that His resources are enough to meet every demand that can be made upon us. He is behind the scenes to support us in our need and make our weakness the occasion for the display of His power. His words to Paul were, "*My grace is sufficient for thee*" ch. 12. They are wonderful words, none that ever came from His mouth have yielded greater comfort to His tried and suffering saints. I quote from a letter recently received from one of these. "My fear and anxiety fled in the face of those underlined words, '*MY grace . . . for THEE*,' and He, through you, gave me a glad day." That is it. There is the ocean of grace at one end of the sentence, and the thimble of our need at the other, and the ocean is enough for the thimble; and that not for special days of stress only, but always and for all. "*The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.*"

But where does this grace lead us? Having sought and found us in the lowest depths and at such a cost, it must have some great purpose in view. The end in view is to bring us to God. "Christ suffered, the Just One for us the unjust to bring us to God." Nothing would satisfy the great love wherewith God loved us but full reconciliation to Himself; all distance must be removed, and for this "He hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin" ch. 5. 21. In our Epistle the knowledge of God has a great place. From the face of Jesus Christ it has shone into our hearts, and the Apostle declares it to be a treasure. It most surely is a treasure, the greatest

treasure that we shall ever possess in time or eternity; God Himself can give us no greater.

The exact words shall be quoted. "God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of God in the face of Jesus Christ" ch. 4. The light is what God is, and God is love. The whole purpose of the coming into this world of Jesus Christ was to make this known; for this He dwelt among us full of grace and truth; for this He died for us upon the Cross and for this He rose again from the dead. The love of God lies behind the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ; it is the source of all good. To the love of God we are brought; it is to be our home for ever, but it is to be with us, until we reach our home, and no power above, around or beneath can separate us from it either now or for ever.

His love was not exhausted when He gave His own Son for us, it abides in undiminished strength even to this day. His love which makes Him say, "I will receive you, and will be a Father to you, and ye shall be My sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty" ch. 6. 8. *And the love of God is to be with you all.*

It is by the Holy Ghost that the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ reaches us, and by Him also the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts (Romans 5. 5). He makes all Divine things real to us, for the natural man cannot understand them, but God has revealed them to us by His Spirit (1 Cor. 2). He binds the hearts of the people of God together in pursuit of these spiritual riches that are freely given us of God, so that we have fellowship together about them.

The communion of the Holy Ghost is something to be greatly prized and cherished; it is outside all the parties and divisions in Christendom, for they are carnal works, and can only grieve Him. It would deliver us from all our opinions and prejudices and narrowness of heart, for these have no part in this communion, and it would lead us into the joy of that threefold oneness of which Eph. 4 speaks: "One Spirit, one body, and one hope of your calling." It means that we have communion one with another as He takes of the things of Christ and shews them to us, and guides us into all truth, John 16; but it means also that we have communion with God Himself, for truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ. It is outside all the fellowships of the world, and unlike them, it stretches out into eternity; indeed it concerns eternal things brought to us now in this temporal and changing world. What serenity and stability it imparts to the soul, even when all around is strife, confusion and decay.

How wonderful is the Christian life. *The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ* is more than equal to His needs; *the love of God* is able to fill his heart with satisfaction and joy, and *the communion of the Holy Ghost* secures a holy, happy, companionship and partnership in the things that are the Father's and Christ's, and witnesses to us and gives us also the assurance of that near and blessed relationship in which we stand with God. For, ye

have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself bears witness with our spirits, that we are the children of God.

These are the streams that flow from heaven to renew our spiritual life continually and we must watch lest the enemy of our souls by some means diverts us from them. The blue Nile that waters Egypt and makes it a fruitful land rises in Lake Tsana, amid the mountains of Abyssinia, over five thousand feet above the sea level. The fear is expressed that the Italians might divert the waters from their present course in order to enrich their own territory. They can scarcely have such an impossible purpose in view, but certain we may be that if the devil can make us careless as to these waters from the upper springs of communion with God, he will prevent them from reaching us, and just as Egypt would be a treeless desert without the Nile, a land in which life would be impossible, so our lives will be barren and fruitless, if the devil succeeds in his efforts. We need the warning; the church at Corinth needed it, and we may fear for one another as Paul feared for them. He wrote, "I fear lest by any means, as the Serpent deceived Eve by his craft so your thoughts should be corrupted from simplicity as to Christ." Because of the danger, the Benediction becomes a prayer. "May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Ghost be with you all, Amen."

We admire the dear old woman who said that she could not give a guinea a year to help the work of the Lord, like the rich folk, but she would manage sixpence a week! Her arithmetic was none of the best, but her beneficence was great.

GO! GROW! GLOW!

James Scott.

LET me begin by saying that this is not an exposition, but an exhortation based upon a phrase taken from Heb. 6. 1.

In the original it is one word, which, in our version, is rendered,

LET US GO ON.

We need not spend much time reminding ourselves that life is real. There is no standing still; there is no recalling the past; as regards the future, it is in the hand of God. We know not what a day may bring forth; the present only, with its many privileges and unlimited possibilities, is ours: therefore let us walk wisely, redeeming the time, because the days are evil. Christianity is not a mere creed; it is a life expressed in conduct, and it has been truly said that it is awfully possible to save our soul and lose our life.

There is a deal of truth in the saying that well begun is half done. A good start in the Christian life is surely a thing to be coveted, only, do not let us forget that it is not the start that counts, but the finish. What pain it must have given the Apostle to be compelled to write as he did to the Galatians, "Ye *were* running well; who has stopped you?" (Gal. 5. 7). Yet he can add, "I have confidence in you, *through the Lord*" (ver. 10). *There* is the ground of his confidence and the source of his comfort, not in the feeble and fickle Galatians. Whatever is of God will stand, and nothing else. "He which hath begun a good work in you will perform (complete) it until the day of Jesus Christ" (Phil. 1. 6). How pathetic, too, and soul-moving the lament of Jeremiah over backslid-

ing Israel: "How is the gold become dim! how is the most fine gold changed!" But notice, it is still gold: *we are His for ever*.

Beloved, let us go on, and let us run with endurance the race set before us. We owe it to God who has saved us, and to Christ who has died for us; we owe it to our leaders who have spoken to us the word of God, that they may not be ashamed before Him at His coming; and we owe it to our brethren and companions, that we may not put a stumbling-block in their path. There will be many obstacles to hinder our progress—it is a real obstacle race—but His grace will enable us to surmount them. Our subtlest and most dangerous enemy is "self," but over it, too, we shall gain the victory through His cross. "I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me" (Gal. 2. 20). If we remember this and practice it the enemy will have nothing to work upon, and will be completely foiled. So now, without stopping to mention more particularly the hindrances to progress, let us try to find encouragement and strength in looking at some of the helps which God has so graciously and abundantly provided; and it will be convenient to consider these in relation to three short, simple, mnemonic words: GO; GROW; GLOW.

We take them in their natural order, though it may be remarked that the first has a double application, one relating to life, the other to service. "GO" implies the possession of life; "grow," its progression or development; "glow," its expression in that which makes life worth living, and without which life would become a living death.

No one has ever produced life, and no one has explained it. Science and philosophy are alike baffled and silent before this great mystery. This is true also of the divine life: "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the spirit" (John 3. 8). There are marks, however, by which it may be recognised, but of these we shall only select one, that is prayer. Much might be said about prayer. It is the Christian's vital breath; it is the secret of peace in the heart and power in the life. It marked the great change in Saul of Tarsus when he was converted. The Lord said of him: "Behold, he prayeth." Didn't he pray before? It is doubtful. He was a strict Pharisee and a very religious man; he said his prayers, undoubtedly, but did he really pray? You may remember that the Pharisee stood in the temple and prayed *with himself*, but God listened to the poor despised publican (Luke 18. 9-14). David was a man of prayer. In Psalm 62. 1 he says: "Truly my soul waiteth upon God: from Him cometh my salvation." In ver. 5 he says: "My soul, wait thou only upon God; for my expectation is from Him," and in Psalm 63. 1: "O God, thou art my God; early will I seek thee." When we learn to wait *only* upon God, we shall not fail to seek Him *early*. Look how prayer marked the earthly life of great David's greater Son. As the dependent Man in Luke's Gospel, the Lord is seen at least seven times in prayer. How much we may learn from the experiences of the O.T. saints! How they thirsted after God! and how richly God rewarded them! "As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my

soul after thee, O God" (Psa. 42. 1). "But 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" (Isa. 40. 31). What do we know of this thirst? The gospel word is "come;" the Christian word is "go;" and the secret of going is in Psalm 71. 16: "I will go *in the strength of the Lord God.*"

Life implies growth; growth is the development of life, and about this the Scriptures have much to say. Peter's last words are: "But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen" (2 Pet. 3. 18). In his first Epistle he tells us how *only* this end can be attained. He says: "Wherefore, laying aside (once for all) all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings. As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby (up to salvation)" (chap. 2. 1, 2). Notice the conditions: (1) put away, and (2) desire. We are reminded of the building of the wall of Jerusalem by Nehemiah. "And Judah said, The strength of the bearers of burdens is decayed, and there is much rubbish, so that we are not able to build the wall" (Neh. 4. 10). We cannot build on rubbish, nor can strength be got from husks, and this is the food of the far country—Sunday games, trashy novels, exciting plays and pictures, and no God. Truly sin devours the strength. "But, beloved, we are persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation" (Heb. 6. 9); nevertheless, let us be watchful.

D. L. Moody once divided the eleventh verse of Psalm 119 as follows:

A Great Possession—Thy word
 A Great Place—have I hid in my
 heart,
 A Great Purpose—that I might not
 sin against Thee.

In the parable of the Sower the seed fell (1) by the wayside, (2) upon a rock, and (3) among thorns, but there was no fruit. The word must (1) get in, (2) it must get down, and (3) it must get room; then only out of an honest and good heart will fruit be brought forth. Take time to read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest. "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly" (Col. 3. 16). Of the blessed man it is written, "But his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in His law doth he meditate day and night" (Psa. 1. 2). As the babe greedily seeks the breast, so are we to desire earnestly the sincere milk of the word. Feeding on this we shall go from strength to strength, "till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ" (Eph. 4. 13). Let us go on, then, to perfection (or, full growth).

Now the third element of this truly wonderful and progressive life—Glow, not Gush. The two are essentially different. Gush may be natural or assumed; glow is neither. The secret of glow is love, and only love. Life without love is empty and worthless, sounding brass and tinkling cymbal. Love is the inward, hidden source; glow is the outward manifestation. The Christian is exhorted to be "fervent in spirit," which means that he must be at the boiling-point, throbbing with heat, not the heat of passion, but the heat of divine love. Weymouth renders it freely, "Be thoroughly warm-

hearted." "And all things," says Chrysostom, "will be easy . . . while thou art made to glow from both sides." Our Lord is the great Mediator of love. He says: "As the Father hath loved Me, so have I loved you" (John 15. 9); and again, "This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you" (ver. 12). "God is love, and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him" (1 John 4. 16).

One thing more. We remarked that the word "go" has a twofold application. On the one hand it suggests the ordinary life and walk of the believer, on the other it is distinctly related to service. On this we do not enlarge except to say, Do not be cumbered about much serving, but be ready when the Lord speaks. You will remember that Mary chose the good part, sitting at the feet of Jesus and hearing His word, and no saint ever rendered more precious service to their Lord, and none, so far as we read, ever received warmer praise. "And Jesus said, Let her alone; why trouble ye her? she hath wrought a good work on Me . . . She hath done what she could" (Mark 14. 6, 8). "Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams" (1 Sam. 15. 22). We cannot grow except we go; we cannot glow except we grow, and we dare not go except we glow. "Wherefore, leaving the word of the beginning of the Christ, let us go on (to what belongs) to full growth." The people referred to in verses 4 to 8 were not Christians, but mere professors who had fallen away. The true rendering of verse 6 is not "if they shall fall away," but "and have fallen away."

In conclusion it might be worth while to notice a word in verse 11

which is rendered "full assurance." It occurs four times in the N.T., but only three of these concern us for the moment. In Heb. 10. 22 we read of "the full assurance of faith," in 6. 11 of "the full assurance of hope," and in Col. 2. 2 of "the full assurance of understanding." This seems to be the divine order. Faith comes first, leading the way, and opening up to our wondering gaze vast regions of blessing unknown to, and undreamt of by, the natural man. Resting by faith upon the finished work of Christ, that one great sacrifice by which He has put away sin and brought the knowledge and joy of pardon and acceptance by a holy and righteous God, the believing soul is made free of the holy courts, and passes through the portals unchallenged, in the full assurance of faith. "Enter into his courts with praise: be thankful unto Him, and bless His name. For the Lord is good; His mercy is everlasting; and his truth endureth to all generations" (Psa. 100. 4, 5). What the Psalmist sees afar off is our present and unalienable possession.

Next comes hope, and hope maketh not ashamed. At His first coming Christ put away sin and settled everything for those who believe on Him; and now "unto them that look for Him shall He appear the second time without sin unto salvation" (Heb. 9. 28). He has pledged His word, and He will make it good: "If I go and prepare a place for you, I WILL COME AGAIN" (John 14.

3). That is our hope—Christ Himself. The night is far spent, the day fast running out, the coming of the Lord draweth nigh. "And we desire that every one of you do shew the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end."

But oh! the hope of being
For ever with the Lord,
The joyful hope of seeing
That face for us so marred!
It fills our heart with comfort,
It fills our lips with praise,
So that amidst our sorrow
A joyful song we raise.

Finally comes understanding. Let me quote from a friend of long ago now with Christ. "The only way to secure true happiness as Christians, is not to make self-devised efforts after soul-health, religious progress, or Christian philanthropy, out of our own minds and wills, but to keep ourselves in the love and light of God, and, by the clarifying power and nourishing grace of the Holy Ghost, endeavour to see more clearly into God's mystery as enfolded in the Christ, and unfolded by the Holy Ghost in the Word. The full assurance of understanding has reference to this clear sight of the truth in its fulness and far-reaching comprehensiveness! Beloved, let us go on!

"Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy, To the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. AMEN."

"Prayer makes the preacher a heart-preacher. Prayer puts the preacher's heart into the preacher's sermon. Prayer puts the preacher's sermon into the preacher's heart."

FLEE! FOLLOW! FIGHT! FEED!

W. Bramwell Dick

1 Timothy 6. 11, 12. Acts 20. 28.

IT is very touching to observe the intense desire of the Apostle for the spiritual prosperity of all the saints of God, and how he sought to encourage those to whom gift had been given for service among them. The latter fact is particularly noticeable in his Epistle to Timothy. His child in the faith; presumably a young man; weak in body; and perhaps timorous; this devoted servant of the Lord sought in every way to encourage him, and laboured that he might be divinely equipped for the Lord's service.

The Apostle had the melancholy experience of seeing that which he had been used to establish, already threatening to break down. He knew that after his departure things would wax worse and worse; that Timothy's path would not be an easy one, and therefore he indicated what the difficulties would be, while showing how they might be faced and overcome. To this young man belongs the unique distinction of being the only one mentioned in the New Testament as a "Man of God," that is, one who stands for God in face of seemingly insurmountable difficulties. We wish to appeal specially to all christian young men who may read these lines.

Let the consuming ambition of your life be to be men of God. To such there comes in the first place a warning call—"FLEE." In the previous verses of 1 Timothy 6 we see some of these things that we have to flee. (1) Pride, (v. 4); (2) Controversy (verse 4), causing (a) envy; (b) strife; (c) railings; (d) evil surmisings; (e) quarrellings; (f) dis-

content; (g) love of money. What a catalogue! Any one of this list is capable of unfitting us for the service of the Lord. On the last the Apostle lays special emphasis, and shows how love of money has been responsible for the ignominious end of many who started out giving great promise of being useful and valiant in the service with which none other can compare. The love of money is certainly no less a snare now than it was then. Desiring to be rich, the things of the Lord become of secondary importance; the service of the Lord a matter of convenience; and while the riches may be gained, everything is lost that is of value for God and for eternity. We need therefore to heed this clarion call "*FLEE.*"

Thus will we be able to "*FOLLOW* after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness" (v. 11). Observe the order. Our dealings not only with our fellow believers, but with our fellow men should be characterised by strict righteousness. Employer and employee; wholesale merchant and retail purchaser; shopkeeper and customer; in every department and in every detail this divine principle should mark all who belong to Christ. This will be the evidence of true "Godliness," and thereby our walk will be an unanswerable testimony for our absent and rejected Lord. There will be a call for the exercise of "faith." The path will be difficult, the spirit of the world will call forth upon us opposition; we may find circumstances testing; there may be the temptation to give up, but faith, simple, unquestioning and unwav-

ering faith in God will carry us through. All will be of little avail however, without "LOVE." That mighty dynamic without which all else would be unavailing.

This means that as we "flee" the things that are not pleasing to the Lord, and "follow" after those things in which He delights, He will endow us with the faith that will carry us through. Thus in close touch with Him, His love will dominate us. The love that "beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things." In this way will we learn and practise the virtue of "patience," and what can that not accomplish? With this is closely associated "meekness." Over all this we write that great name — CHRIST. Love, patience, meekness, were preeminently manifest in Him, and He loved righteousness.

All this is equipment for the fight, hence the call "*fight the good fight of faith*" (v. 12). Fighting suggests opposition, and indicates, on the one hand, the necessity for defence of the truth, and, on the other hand, the call to carry the truth right into the territory of the enemy. *Fight! FIGHT!! FIGHT!!!* Alas! how much valuable time has been wasted; how the heart of the Lord has been grieved; and how believers have been parted by fighting each other. The summons is to "fight the good fight of faith." If it is attacked from without: fight; if it is assailed from within: fight. If believers leave the path of separation to which they believe the Lord has called them, others should not be side-tracked, but go steadily forward. If all they that be in Asia turned away from Paul he pursued a straight course and was not seduced from the truth. If the truth was attacked, he dealt with the attack-

ers in unmeasured terms. Loyalty to Christ, and devotedness to the truth marked him, so that at the end of his journey he could say, "I have fought the good fight" (2 Timothy 4. 7 (New Trans.)). But there is yet another word, may the Lord help us to heed it, and that is, "FEED." Among the last words of the Lord to His disciples, before He ascended to Heaven, were these, "FEED MY LAMBS;" "FEED MY SHEEP" (John 21. 15, 16, 17). The closing words of Peter's first Epistle are: "FEED THE FLOCK OF GOD" (1 Peter 5. 2). In his valedictory address to the elders at Ephesus, Paul said: "FEED THE CHURCH OF GOD" (Acts 20. 28). Here is *the* clarion call to us to-day. Do not sacrifice a vestige of the truth, seek to maintain it at all costs, even if forsaken as Paul was. At the same time, having our own souls fed, let us seek to feed others. The Lord's commission was specially for Peter. The exhortations of Peter and Paul were addressed particularly to the elders. In this day, we venture to suggest, that every true believer can engage in this happy service. A devoted sister, a godly brother, themselves feeding upon the heavenly food, yea, on Christ Himself, can in private intercourse share these heavenly dainties with those who know and love the same precious Lord.

Through the mercy of God we are in the opening month of a New Year. It may be our last year upon earth, "for yet a little while, and He that shall come, will come, and will not tarry" (Hebrews 10. 37). With His coming, our day of privilege will be over for ever. May the Lord graciously encourage us all, young and old alike, to

FLEE! FOLLOW! FIGHT!
FEED!

THE HOLY TRINITY.

A. J. Pollock.

THE Holy Trinity—Three in One, and One in Three—is in its essence a mystery beyond human comprehension, even when the comprehension is that of the renewed mind of the believer. In the very nature of things this must be so. How can the creature comprehend the Creator; the finite, the Infinite; the relative, the Absolute.

Whatever understanding he may have must come by revelation, and revelation for us is found alone in the Word of God.

In a matter of this nature we must be careful not to attempt to reason from the human to the Divine; from man and his ways to God.

Nor can we trust our natural powers of mind in grasping divine thoughts for "the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned" (1 Corinthians 2. 14).

It is as the Holy Spirit lays bare to us the real meaning of His mind that we are safe. It is no wonder that many higher-critics, men of great intelligence and vast scholarship make grave mistakes that a humble Christian taught by the Spirit of God is saved from.

Further we must ever remember that man's language is inadequate to fully express Divine ideas. Man's language is bounded by time and sense, and has deteriorated through sin. In studying the Scriptures we find the Spirit of God often takes up man's words, stamps them with a larger, fuller meaning, and instead of deteriorating, as under the influence of man's sin, they are lifted to a high and sure place under the Divine influence.

Again, there are many words we use, and I believe rightly, that are not actually found in the Holy Scriptures, yet they express the truth conveyed in the Holy Scriptures.

Our title at the head of this paper is one such. Yet there is abundance of teaching in the Holy Scriptures that God reveals Himself as Father, Son and Holy Spirit, not three Gods, but a Triune God, though Scripture teaches that the Father is God, the Son is God, the Holy Spirit is God, yet one God indivisible.

Then we often speak of Three *Persons* in the Godhead and the expression *Divine Persons* is very commonly used. These expressions are not found in Scripture yet the truths they represent are. And yet a word of caution is necessary here.

In human language when we speak of a person, we think of separate entity, separate existence, separate will, different characteristics, thoughts and plans peculiar to each person, not shared with any others. Carry that human thought into the subject before us, and the truth of the Trinity is entirely perverted and lost. Instead of the Trinity—Father, Son and Spirit, ONE God—we should have three Gods, an absolute impossibility, for there can only be one God, unique and incomprehensible.

Realizing how far above our comprehension these things are, some would counsel that we should leave the subject alone. But that would be to slight Scripture. If God has revealed Himself, as is seen in the Scriptures, surely He desires that revelation to be received and prized above aught else. Our highest blessing springs from the revelation God has been pleased to make of Himself. The more we understand of these

things, the more is the very foundation of Christianity laid in our souls, the formative power of such truth leading to the true worship of God as nothing else can do. To neglect this is to put a slight upon Scripture, nay upon God Himself, and doom ourselves to a perpetual immaturity in Divine things.

* * * *

Of course in an article in a monthly magazine it is only possible to put forward a few thoughts. At best we can only touch the fringe of such a vast subject.

God in His absoluteness, in His essential Being is unknown. That great verse—1 Timothy 6. 16—says, God “only hath immortality [i.e. *inherently*] dwelling in the light that no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see.” In the very nature of things this must be so, and less than this could not satisfy the searchings of the renewed mind.

Seeing this verse is true, and always will be true, we may ask. How then does God reveal Himself? For God surely reveals Himself for the satisfaction of His own heart. Zophar, the Naamathite, asked some striking questions of Job, and he may well ask them afresh of us. “Canst thou by searching find out God? Canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection? It is as high as heaven what canst thou do? Deeper than hell, what canst thou know?”

How then does God reveal Himself? The answer is as Father, Son and Holy Spirit—ONE God?

This is hidden in the very first verse of the Bible. “In the beginning God [the word *God*, is not in the singular, not in the dual, but in the plural, which at the least must mean three, and in the light of

Scripture it is undoubtedly three in this case] created [the verb is singular, thus emphasising that God is One] the heaven and the earth” (Genesis 1. 1).

Does the Scripture throw light on this? It does. We read in 1 Corinthians viii. 6, “To us there is but one God, the *Father*, of whom are all things, and we by Him.”

But the verse does not stop there. It goes on to say, “And one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by Him.” So speaks Heb. 1. 2, “God . . . hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son . . . by whom also He made the world.” So says Colossians 1. 13-16. We have been “translated into the Kingdom of His dear Son . . . by Him were all things created that are in heaven and in earth, visible and invisible.”

Does the Word of God attribute creation to the Holy Spirit? We read, “By His Spirit He garnished [furnished] the heavens” (Job xxvi. 13). Look up at the heavens on a dark night. Millions of stars stud the heaven in prodigal and unexplored profusion, our little insignificant planet among them. The Father created them. The Son created them. The Holy Spirit created them.

Take another instance of how the action of One of the Persons of the Trinity can be predicated of the Other Two. There is a most remarkable, perhaps the most remarkable, unveiling of the truth of the Holy Trinity found in the Old Testament, “Come ye near unto Me, hear ye this; I have not spoken in secret from the beginning; from the time that it was, there AM I [the assertion of Deity], and now the Lord God and His Spirit have sent Me” (Isaiah 48. 16). Here we have

three Divine Persons—"the Lord God," "His Spirit," "Me."

Is there any light in the New Testament as to Who "the Lord God" is in the New Testament? We read there, "*The Father* sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world" (1 John 4. 14). The hour for the declaration of the Father's Name had not arrived in Old Testament times. That was contingent on the revelation of His Person by His only begotten Son. "The only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him" (John 1. 18). But here we get it as near as it could be in the Old Testament times. So Scripture asserts that the Father sent the Son. Our passage (Isaiah 48. 16) says He was sent by the Holy Spirit. The Lord Himself predicated His coming as of His own initiative. "I came forth from the Father" (John 17. 28). So we get the *Father* sending the Son; the *Spirit* sending the Son; the Son coming.

Take one more instance, this time from the New Testament. John 14. 26 tells us that the Holy Spirit is sent by the Father in the Name of the Son; chapter 15. 26 tells us the Lord Jesus sends the Holy Spirit from the Father; chapter 16. 13 says, "When the Spirit is come," i.e. the Spirit comes of His own initiative. So we have the Father sending the Spirit; the Son sending the Spirit; the *Spirit* coming. These statements could not be true save as the Father, Son and Holy Spirit are ONE *God*.

Gathering up our thoughts from these and other Scriptures such is the unity of the Godhead that there cannot be one thought in the Father's mind that is not altogether shared and approved by the Son and the Spirit—not one intention or purpose in the mind of One of the Persons

in the Godhead but what is fully shared and endorsed by the other Two Persons in the Godhead, for God is One.

There is nothing like it in the whole range of nature. Perhaps the best example may be that of a well-mated husband and wife. They have much in common, but, however closely they may approximate to each other, and, however much long companionship has led them to a greater nearness and correspondence to each other, yet are there two wills, and one has thoughts the other is not privy to.

But when we look closely into this analogy we find it is no analogy at all, but serves to show that the relations of Divine Persons is absolutely unique and stands by itself.

This community of thought and oneness of action are clearly seen in our Lord's own words, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, The Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He seeth the Father do; for what things soever He doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise" (John 5. 19). This is a remarkable verse, as indeed its whole context is. It states that what the Son does, is also done by the Father. This puts a wonderful light upon all the words and actions of our Lord as done down here upon this earth. And if we reflect on this, it must be so in the very nature of the Godhead.

The same line of thought is seen in relation to the Spirit, a Divine Person, who never became incarnate, and therefore there can be no question, but that which is predicated of the Spirit in the verse we are about to quote must be in the nature of the Godhead. We read, "Howbeit when He, the Spirit of truth is come, He will guide you into all truth, for He shall not speak

of Himself [the Greek clearly gives the sense that the Spirit will not speak of His own initiative]; but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak: and He will show you things to come." Here the Spirit is on common ground with our Lord in John 5. 19.

The Son does nothing of His own initiative; the Spirit does nothing of His own initiative. The Son does

what He sees the Father do. The Spirit speaks the word the Father and the Son give Him to speak.

This is a line of thought that is very profitable to follow up. The space at our disposal only allows of a thought or two on this wonderful, exalted theme. May the Lord lead us into a deeper knowledge of these things and a truer answer to them in our lives.

NOTE FOR PREACHERS.

"He ordained twelve, that they should be WITH HIM, and that He might send them forth to preach" Mark 3. 14.

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

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

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

The Power of God.

In Ephesians 1. the power of God is towards us. "That ye may know . . . what is the exceeding greatness of His power to us-ward who believe" (verse 19). In Ephesians 3. the power of God is in us, "Strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man" (verse 16). In Ephesians 6. the power of God is through us. "Be strong in the Lord and the power of His might" (verse 10). Consider the working of this power in this order.

GRACE, GUIDANCE AND GOVERNMENT. F. B. Hole.

(Psalm 32 ; with Psalms 25, 33, 34, 35).

WE do not read very much about grace in the Old Testament. The word itself occurs about forty times in it, but of these fully half are concerned with "finding grace" in the sight of one's fellows and have nothing to do with God. In a few passages we do get the idea of God bestowing grace, as, for instance, in the words, "The Lord will give grace and glory" (Psa. 84. 11). These however are but few, and they are supplemented by a certain number of others in which God is declared to be, or declares Himself to be, gracious. We may say therefore that in the Old Testament the grace of God is a recognised fact, but by no means a prominent fact.

In the New Testament it is a prominent fact, particularly in the epistles; and we discover why it had so small a place in the earlier part of the record. We read that, "the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared," (Titus 2. 11), and that in connection with the first advent of Christ. In keeping with this we read also, "grace and truth came by Jesus Christ" (John 1. 17). The earlier age was the age of law. Grace always existed in God, but not until Christ appeared did it come fully and decisively to light.

In reading Old Testament Scripture, again and again do we get glimpses of the grace of God, even where grace is not named. A striking example of this is found in Psalm 32. 1—7, a passage which sets forth God's grace in forgiveness and deliverance, administered to the one who honestly confesses his guilt and need. David had a very deep experience of this, owing to the greatness of his sin, and the depth

of his conviction once his sin was brought home to him, and that experience he shares with us. It is of course, the experience which each of us has to pass through on our way to the blessedness of which the psalm speaks.

There is, however, this great difference between David and ourselves: he could not enjoy as we can the "no more conscience of sins" of which Hebrews 10 speaks. David lived under the law which only had "a shadow of good things to come." He only had sacrifices which could "never . . . make the comers thereunto perfect." He might know, and did know, the blessedness of having this or that great sin forgiven, but he could not know that once-for-all purging which the gospel brings. Not until Christ appeared and was "once offered to bear the sins of many" could the worshippers be "once purged," and so have "no more conscience of sins." We therefore can read into Psalm 32 a fulness of meaning which could not have been in David's mind when he wrote it.

The general outline sketched in these seven verses applies to every converted soul without exception, though there is abundant variation when we come to consider small surface details. We all begin with *guilt*. We may have to speak, as the psalm does, of transgression, of sin, and of iniquity; and each of these words has its own special significance; yet they all come under this general heading.

Next comes *guile*. This means deceit, hypocrisy, lack of straightforwardness and honesty. It always follows guilt, always has done

so from the beginning, as Genesis 3 bears witness. Directly our first parents incurred guilt they sought to hide from God, and also to put the blame upon somebody else. Every soul of man does just the same. It is a deeply rooted instinct of our fallen race.

It is also a very miserable business. Guile only leads to *groaning*—for that is what the word “roaring” in verse 3 really means. In David’s case the groaning came pretty quickly, for God laid His heavy hand of discipline upon him both by day and by night, and he was withered beneath it. He expresses this very graphically by saying, “My moisture is turned into the drought of summer.” It is a bad sign when guilt and guile are not followed by groaning for that means insensibility on the part of the sinner, and perhaps that God is deferring His dealings until the coming day of retribution. Happy it is when the groaning quickly follows.

The groaning must continue until *confession* takes place. Sin must be acknowledged. The iniquity that had been hidden away in most careful concealment must be dragged into the light of God’s presence. Transgressions must be confessed not to man merely, or firstly, but “unto the Lord.” This, you see, is the exact opposite of guile. It is the complete reversal of the former attitude, the abandonment of all deceit and hypocrisy. It is straightforwardness and honesty in the sight of God.

Confession leads directly and immediately to the reception and enjoyment of grace. As David puts it, “Thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin.” As surely as he uncovered his sin, so surely did he enter into the blessedness of the man “whose sin is covered.” Confession

on his side led to *covering* of his sin on God’s side. He was put right with God.

And there is more than this. For, directly he was right with God the whole aspect of things was changed. Instead of being the Object of his fear, God became the Object of his *confidence*. He knew how to find God, and how to pray to Him. He discovered that God was his hiding place, where he would find refuge and protection when threatened by the storms and floods and troubles of this life: for though his sin had been dealt with the troubles remained. He anticipated by many centuries that saying which is attributed to Augustine to the effect that, “The best way to flee *from* God is to flee *to* God.”

We have noted six things in these verses, three that are concerned with guilt, and three that are concerned with the grace that puts it away. The climax is reached in the seventh thing that we observe: he was “*compassed about with songs of deliverance.*” Delivered from the guilt of his sin, and even from the oppressive power of storms of trouble, he was a joyful man indeed. Such was the grace of God.

Now we come to the question of guidance, which to many people is a very perplexing one. Verses 8 and 9 sum it up in a very simple way. They do not by any means say all there is to be said on the subject, but they do give us the two essentials—the definite promise of guidance from God, and a word of warning as to the understanding heart which is needed on our side.

Once we are in right relations with God—our sins forgiven, God Himself our hiding place, songs of deliverance encompassing us—*God is going to guide us.* There is no “if” about the matter, you observe.

The statement is definite and without qualification, "I will instruct thee and teach thee . . . I will counsel thee, mine eye shall be upon thee" (margin). In the next psalm also we read of the eye of the Lord being upon those that fear Him, but that is for their deliverance. Here it is for their guidance. So as far as God's care and kindly action are concerned, we may take His guidance for granted. We may safely count upon it.

But, on our side, we can by no means take for granted that we possess the spiritual understanding that enables us to profit by the guidance that is given. It is quite possible for us to be just like a horse or a mule. Another rendering of the verse is, "whose trappings must be bit and bridle, for restraint, or they will not come unto thee." The bit and bridle must be always irksome and sometimes painful. The horse is often pulled up with an unpleasant jerk, but that is because it has no understanding of its master's thoughts. Now we may be just like that. The bit and bridle of unpleasant yet compelling circumstances may often pull us up with a jerk, or suddenly direct us into an unexpected road. We may be thankful when God does deal with us after such fashion, though the indirect guidance thus given is by no means of the highest kind.

The thought of God is that we should have understanding to appreciate His instruction, His teaching and counsel, which reach us first and foremost in His Word. It goes without saying that we must diligently study His Word, but we also need the right state of heart and mind to enable us to profit by our study. Now this right state is not described in the psalm before us, but it is in Psalm 25, where we

read such things as that, "The meek will He guide in judgment: and the meek will He teach His way." Again we read, "All the paths of the Lord are mercy and truth unto such as keep His covenant and His testimonies." And again, "The secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him; and He will show them His covenant."

These verses emphasize three things: meekness, obedience and the fear of the Lord. *Meekness* is only found with any of us in proportion as our own restless self-will has been subdued and silenced. *Obedience* signifies the practical acceptance and carrying out of the will of God. *The fear of the Lord* means that subduing consciousness of His presence, that attitude of deference and subjection to Him, which tends to meekness and produces obedience. Here then are the features of a moral and spiritual sort, which, if possessed, enable us to profit by the guidance which is given.

Thus the conclusion that we arrive at is that there is no problem about guidance save that which is connected with our own spiritual state. Considered objectively, that is as a matter of light and direction coming to us from God, and consequently from outside ourselves, there is no difficulty for God engages Himself to give it. It is when we consider it subjectively, when it is a question of our having the understanding and spiritual sensibilities which enable us to discern and respond to the direction given, that difficulties appear.

Psalm 32 contains the promise of instruction and teaching, yet it does not specify in any precise way how it is to reach us. Psalm 25 it is, which speaks of the keeping of "His testimonies" as the way by

which the paths of the Lord become mercy and truth to us; and the form in which we have His testimonies available for us is in the Holy Scriptures. The Word of God is the prime fountain-head of all light and direction for us. There we find laid down the broad principles of action which are to govern us. There are smaller details of an individual sort of course, and we cannot expect to find reference to these in Scripture. Nevertheless we may seek and find guidance amidst many perplexing circumstances if we maintain the fear of the Lord, if we wait upon Him prayerfully in the spirit of meekness, and if we are obedient to that which we know of His revealed Word.

We do not say that we shall always be guided in such a way that we are quite sure, and conscious of it at the time. When the Word of God plainly directs us, and we obey it, we may indeed be sure. In the smaller details of life, when it is a question of where we shall go and what we shall do, we may yet be most happily guided if our state be right, if in meekness and obedience we seek not our own pleasure but the pleasure of God. He has pledged Himself to guide us, and He will do so. The only thing that will hinder is the assertion of our own will or pleasure. If we go forward in simplicity and self-judgment, making our decisions with a desire for His glory, we shall again and again have reason to look back with thankfulness, discovering that indeed His hand has led us.

Before we reach the end of Psalm 32 we find mention of a third great theme—the government of God. Grace is expounded pretty fully, for seven verses are occupied with it. Guidance only occupies two verses, but as we have noted Psalm 25 goes

into the matter with greater fulness. One verse only is occupied with the government of God, but Psalms 33, 34 and 35 are all concerned with this important matter. We are not allowed to forget that God is the moral Governor of the universe and that He has so ordained things that men have to reap what they sow even in this life. This always has been true, and is true to-day. Varying dispensations do not affect its working. It applies to the men of the world, and it very specially applies to the saints of God. It often seems as if the man of the world escapes the working of God's government in this life. But that is because he is travelling on to final judgment and the crash is coming then. Psalm 73 states the problem created by this fact, and gives us its solution. Now the saint is not coming into judgment. The criminal question (as we may call it), raised by his sins, has been eternally settled; but the governmental question remains, and it assumes very special importance. We not infrequently see a saint coming under God's disciplinary hand as the result of some sin, when an unbeliever, who did just the same, escapes.

Speaking generally and characteristically however, it is the wicked who practise evil and reap many sorrows as a result, and it is the godly man who trusts in the Lord, and who as a consequence is compassed about with mercy. This is what is stated in verse 10. It is the normal thing. Still we are living in an order of things in which the abnormal frequently prevails, and therefore in the working out of the government of God we find many complications. Hence the need of the matter being thrashed out much more fully in the three succeeding psalms.

Psalm 33 celebrates the righteousness of God expressed in all His acts—"The Word of the Lord is right; and all His works are done in truth. He loveth righteousness and judgment." The Psalmist then proceeds to speak of how right and firm are all His works in creation: while on the other hand the counsel of the heathen and the devices of the people are all brought to nothing. But if from the place of His habitation on high He looks down on the sons of men and chastens them thus, it is also true that "the eye of the Lord is upon them that fear Him, ... to deliver." His holy government acts in both directions; not only *against* the ungodly but also *for* His people.

Psalm 34 expands this theme, that God's government acts in favour of the godly. Verses 12 to 16 of this Psalm are quoted in 1 Peter 3. 10 to 12, as establishing the fact that, if the Christian renders blessing in return for the evil and railing which he may receive from the world, he will inherit a blessing for himself. If he sows blessing he will reap blessing. So it is ordained in the government of God.

Again in verse 15 of this Psalm do we get the fact stated that, "The eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous." This time it is not for *guidance* as in Psalm 32. Nor is it for *deliverance*, as in Psalm 33. It is in *government*, in order that He may listen to their cry, and overrule affairs on their behalf. But it is "the righteous," be it noted, for whom He acts in this way.

This is important, for it raises the whole question as to what is the spiritual state in which we are found, what is the character that marks us? The character that should mark us is very fully displayed in the course of the Psalm.

Reading steadily through it we shall find not only that God will act in His government on behalf of His people, but that the people for whom He so acts are described as,

"This poor man"

"Them that fear Him"

"The man that trusteth in Him"

"His saints"

"They that seek the Lord"

"The righteous"

"Them that are of a broken heart"

"His servants."

This is a goodly list! Yet the qualities named are not those which the world admires, but the very reverse. They are those which God approves, and, on behalf of a people characterized by them, He pledges Himself to interfere.

There is no pledge that He will interfere immediately. But interfere He will, later if not sooner. The danger of course is that instead of being poor in spirit, and walking in the fear of God, and consequently seeking His face with a broken heart, trusting in Him and going forward as His servants, we begin to take the law into our own hands and fight for ourselves. Then He leaves us to our own devices, and to reap the fruit of our own ways. Then frequently we bring ourselves under a working of His government which more properly applies to the world.

Psalm 34 records the fact that "The face of the Lord is against them that do evil," but we have to pass on to Psalm 35 to find this side of things dwelt upon in detail. That Psalm works out in considerable length how God will ultimately bring the ungodly and the persecutors to shame and to judgment. The poor and needy who are servants of the Lord shall be delivered and brought into prosperity in the

day when God shall bring to confusion and destruction their foes, who shall be as chaff before the wind, and tread a dark and slippery way to destruction. Such will be God's governmental dealings with them in this life. There is of course the dark pit of hell before them in the life to come, but that is not the theme of the psalm.

For us the conclusion of the whole matter is this—*that grace introduces us to the life of godliness and devotion and true piety: and that such a life of piety is the secret of a path wherein we are truly guided of God, and where we come under His holy government, acting in our favour and not in correction against us.*

Prayer and Supplication with Thanksgiving.

God loves to hear us pour our woes and needs into His ear, but it should be in the spirit of gratitude. Thanksgiving is the background, the predominant tone of the Christian life.

We are to pray with thanksgiving. This is an essential element, for dissatisfaction with God will clip the wings of prayer.

Remembrance and supplication are the two necessary elements of every Christian prayer.

Thankfulness for past blessing is a necessary condition of acceptance in preferring new petitions.

Confidence.

W.B.D.—E.

He can preserve us—and He will!
 In every dark and trying hour ;
 The love of Calvary guards us still
 In matchless resurrection power.

This shadow dark that hides the sun
 Is but His hand upraised to bless ;
 These thorns that harrass, weary one,
 But turn the footsteps that digress.

The blows of failure, though they grieve,
 Shatter the foe of self-esteem ;
 And trouble's stinging steel will cleave
 The bonds of some too-worldly dream.

Oh, when we see with opened eyes
 The good with which each "ill" is fraught—
 The blessings in misfortune's guise—
 Then we shall thank Him as we ought.

GOD IS LIGHT.

James Green.

"**G**OD is light and in Him is no darkness at all." This was the message which the Son of God came forth from the eternal ages to declare. Not simply to describe God, but to reveal Him in action, in moral beauty. He was God manifest in the flesh. His power in creation had been witnessed by the high principalities which inhabit the heavens, ministers of His that do His pleasure. Swift as the lightning flash they execute His will, and when He formed the earth to be the abode of a race with whom He could hold communion, the morning stars sang together and the sons of God shouted for joy. No thought of the deep design that lay hidden in the Divine Mind had been communicated to them. They knew not that the man formed from the dust was but the figure of Him that was to come; nor that the helpmeet taken from his side betokened an eternal purpose of love that only God could know. The unfolding of this they were to witness when in due time the Son of God, the sent one of the Father was manifested "the image in man's lowly guise, of the invisible to mortal eyes."

No scene of fair delight such as that which awaited the advent of the first man welcomed His coming. His entry was into a world, dominated by Satan, corrupted by the lusts of fallen man, where black, dark ignorance of God reigned supreme, and men loved to have it so, because their deeds were evil. But He had come to destroy the works of the devil by the full revelation of God in every attribute of His nature and character. Not by formal pronouncement but by the loveliest exhibition of grace and truth in human life that created vision had ever,

gazed upon. He was seen of angels and they marvelled; He revealed God to the lowest strata of society, and the publican and the harlot bowed at His feet, touched by His life-giving power.

He had rights as Son of David, these were refused Him and He claimed them not. Ever and anon startled eyes saw His Divine glory flash forth, and human lips exclaimed, "What manner of man is this?" He might have asked, and the mount of transfiguration would have witnessed the uttermost parts of the earth subservient to His regal sway. But the moral excellence of God was to shine forth in Him in far brighter rays. Death and destruction were to acclaim His fame. In the last final act of obedience unto death, even the death of the cross, the prince of this world was cast out, and in the overthrow of him who held the power of death, God stood forth revealed in light into which no darkness entered. Perfect truth, perfect holiness, grace supreme through righteousness, the glorious majesty of the Divine throne bringing forth the best robe for the outcast and defiled.

The supreme act of love evidenced in blood and shame and Calvary, acclaims to the universe the message that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all. Eternity's ages will never contradict that marvellous revelation, never will there be discovered in God ought that has not been declared of His nature and attributes in the passage of the Son of God from the manger to the cross, and thence triumphant to the right hand of the majesty on high. From thence the same glory still shines in His face, waiting to fill the heart that yields to the word of

His revelation with the radiant presence of the Father and the Son. What He was in the yesterday that saw Him on earth, He is to-day in manhood on the throne, and He shall remain unchanged in moral beauty for ever. His ransomed bride, His church shall adore Him, apart from His death and risen power she could

never have been; and whilst redeemed hosts shall celebrate His fame, ten thousand times ten thousand shall exclaim, "This is Jesus!"

"Image of the Infinite Unseen,
Whose being none can know;
Brightness of light no eye hath seen,
God's Love revealed below."

HIS WAY IS BEST.

His way is best;
How long I took in learning,
'Twas only for my highest good He planned,
And all the while His loving heart was yearning
That He might gently take me by the hand,
And end unrest.

His way is best;
I cease from needless scheming,
And leave the ruling of my life with Him;
All will be well though now all wrong "'tis seeming,"
All will be clear that now to me is dim,
And so I rest.

His way is best;
I may not know the reason
Of all the darkness I am passing through,
But this I know that every testing season
He'll make a blessing if to Him I'm true,
So I am blest.

Jesus Ever a Man.

IT is very important to remember that Jesus is always man. If He were not God, His humanity would have no value; but, being God, the fact that He interests Himself in us as a Man, as men whom He is not ashamed to call His brethren, is infinitely precious.

He can feel with us, take part in all our circumstances, trials, difficulties, and troubles. He loves us as the Father loved Him, a man, and Son on the earth. His love has divine perfection, but He feels as a man, as a man on the earth, tempted in like manner as we are, apart from sin.

He is ever a man; He thinks of us as One who has passed through all these things with divine love and human sympathy. Not only does He know everything as God, but He has had the experience of a man. Precious truth, unfathomable grace!

MUTH-LABBen.

T. Oliver.

To the chief musician upon Muth-Labben, A Psalm of David (The superscription of Psalm 9).

MUTH-labben is one of the terms occurring in the inspired superscriptions of the Psalms which are obscure in meaning. Scholars have not been able to agree as to a satisfactory rendering of the word. But the best linguistic evidence is in favour of the translation: "The death of the (or his) Son." The Septuagint gives it as: "Concerning the secret (things) of the Son."

Primarily the words of the ninth Psalm would be doubtless evoked by the Psalmist's exercises relative to the death of his self-willed and ambitious son, Absalom. But in their prophetic bearing they will also be expressive of the exercises of the remnant of Israel placed in adverse circumstances in the land of Palestine during the last days. In the beautiful outburst: "I will sing praise to Thy name, O Thou Most High" (verse 2), the Psalmist was anticipatively using the double title peculiarly attaching to God in the accomplishment of the promises in the Millennium. The blessing from God to man and from man to God will be exercised mediatorially in Christ who alone is able and worthy to bear the double glory of regal power and priestly grace.

However at the same time this Psalm is a choice treasure for the enjoyment of the saints of this dispensation, who are found in earthly circumstances, notwithstanding their heavenly calling. There can be no dubiety in our minds, as to the identity of the reference. "Consider my trouble which I suffer of those who hate me, Thou that liftest me up from the gates of death;" (verse 13).

The Christian recognises the harmony of the passage with the first translation of Muth-labben, while contemplating the subject with all holy reverence. He perceives in Christ the One who passed through adverse circumstances ever shewing His rich sympathy with His people in affliction, irrespective of dispensation.

But we may draw very helpful conclusions from the Septuagint translation as well. How intimately connected are the ideas of "the secret" and "the death" of the Lord Jesus! There was no admission to the "mystery" hid in God through ages past, until that death opened wide the gates that His love might flow forth carrying the secret of His counsel to those who are redeemed with the precious blood of Christ.

As a consequence of admission to "the secret of the Son," the honour and authority of His name acquire a peculiar significance: "They that know Thy name will put their trust in Thee" (Psalm 9. 10). Another link in the chain of confidence is forged: "The Lord will also be a refuge for the oppressed, a refuge in times of trouble (verse 9). Then the fruit of that confidence becomes manifest in singing praises to the Lord who dwells in Zion. Even as that is the activity in the inner shrine so in the outside place, we are found declaring His doings among the people (verse 10). The essence of this is in the propagation of the gospel. As the wonders of His own works in Christ Jesus spring up before our spiritual vision, our hearts are bowed in adoration and ultimately our lips are filled with His praise.

THE PEOPLE STANDING BY.

J. T. Mawson.

IN many ways and words in the Holy Scriptures God has made known His great compassion for the ignorant, unenlightened multitudes. They seem to be ever before His mind. But in no way, so it seems to me, is this more in evidence than in three arresting passages.

Think of that great occasion at the grave of Lazarus, when the Lord was about to demonstrate His power over death. Lifting up His eyes to heaven, He said, "Father, I thank Thee that Thou hast heard Me, and I know 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 a great crisis in His life. He stood face to face with that hour, the like of which there had never been before or since. His soul was troubled and He turned to His Father, and by His words indicated that one purpose alone controlled Him. The Father answered Him immediately. It was a great moment when the Son on earth spoke to His Father in heaven, and His Father heard and answered Him in the presence of the multitude. The voice that spoke was heard by them and they said, It thundered; others said, an angel spoke to Him. He answered, "This voice came not because of Me, but for your sakes."

The third passage is 1 Corinthians 14. 23-25. By the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, the Apostle is instructing the Christians how to behave and what to do when they come together. And in these in-

structions He has His eye upon the "*unlearned and unbelievers*" that may come in, and He urges that they should seek to speak the Word of God plainly and in the Spirit's power. The result 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." It is the most arresting statement in this chapter.

Here then the Son speaks to the Father, and the Father speaks to the Son, and the Holy Spirit to the saints, and through them with the enlightenment and blessing of those that stand by in view. Father, Son and Holy Ghost, all interested in the bystander. This, should surely set such in a new light before us, and help us to view them from a different angle. If the Triune God cares for them, we surely cannot be indifferent to their welfare. It is a necessity of our christian lives that we should look up, but we are not well developed in our spiritual lives if we do not look out, and become interested in those that stand by.

But above all how wonderfully these three passages of Scripture, which I earnestly commend to your consideration, reveal the lovingkindness of God, and His care for men. Surely as we consider this our souls will be moved and the desire for the enlightenment and blessing of men will spring up with great vigour within us.

MANNER OF LIFE.

"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.

"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.

THE MIRACLES OF THE LORD.

J. T. Mawson.

A MIRACLE is an act of super-human power. The miracles of the Lord Jesus were such, and were the attestation of His person and mission. They were His Father's works, as His arresting and challenging words to the Jews declared, "If I do not the works of My Father, believe Me not. But if I do, though ye believe not Me, believe the works; that ye may know and believe, that the Father is in Me, and I in Him" John 10. 37, 38. The Holy Ghost speaking through Simon Peter on the day of Pentecost, described these works as "miracles, wonders and signs which God did by Him." They were works of power that amazed the people and were signs to them that God had come down to them in mercy.

Modernism refuses to accept the miraculous. It holds that there are "laws of nature" that are unvarying and irrevocable, that they cannot be overruled or suspended, and that what appeared to be miracles in former days were simply the operations of certain of these laws which were unknown at the time. They would instance the fact that the King was able to speak to the whole Empire on Christmas Day and was heard 12,000 miles away as clearly as in the room in which he spoke. One hundred years ago such an idea would have been laughed at as the conception of a madman. Yes, but the works of the Lord were not on such a plane as that; they were wrought in another realm; they were addressed to the needs and miseries of men, which were the result of sin. He raised the dead to life: He fed hungry multitudes: He healed the severed ear of an enemy, and by word and touch delivered those who

were oppressed by longstanding and incurable maladies. He who did these things was the One who had created all things, and amongst the all things were the laws of nature that bind the universe together for its good. They are His laws and most surely subservient to Him. In them is declared the wisdom of the Creator, and when they have been discovered and made use of, they ought to have had the effect of turning men into worshippers of the One who created them, and making them ashamed of themselves that they had not discovered them before. Instead of which, men are puffed up with pride as though they had made them themselves.

Whatever laws there may be in the physical universe, one thing is certain, the law of man's relation to his Creator and God was disturbed by his disobedience in Eden. Then there entered into his being and his relations with God what had not been there before. "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. "The law of sin and death" (Rom. 8), began then to exercise its inexorable power in the lives of men; they were affected by it spiritually, morally and physically. Tears, death, sorrow, crying and pain (Rev. 21. 4) were the result of this invasion of man's life by sin. These things affect him in this life, and after it the judgment. It was to this state of things that the Lord addressed Himself when He came into the world. What had the laws of nature to do with this? The object of His coming was to deliver men from all oppression, to restore the broken relationship with God and to

bring them back into full suitability to God, as the Scriptures declare, "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them" 2 Corinthians 5. 19.

It is against this intervention of God for the blessing of men that modernism concentrates its subtle forces. It must explain away the miracles. I give an instance of this. In a paper entitled "The Spirit of God and the Healing of Disease" appearing, regretably enough, in an evangelical magazine, we are treated to the following. "It is recorded by St. Luke in ch. 13. A woman came to the synagogue suffering from infirmity or weakness. The complaint was of long standing—eighteen years. Jesus described her as a daughter of Abraham whom Satan had bound. With our present knowledge we should say, 'In the grip of a false idea, making weakness instead of health God's will for her.' The cure was not easy even for Jesus. When He saw her He called her and said, 'Woman thou art loosed from thine infirmity.' But she was not cured. Then Jesus evidently came down from the platform into the body of the synagogue where the woman was, and laid His hand upon her. In this way His vision of perfect health inspired her. His mighty faith overcame her timidity and she was healed."

Passing over the obvious distortion of the Divinely-given record, which says nothing about the cure not being easy, or the woman not being cured at the word of the Lord, or His having to step down from the platform to accomplish it—to that which is worse, we must conclude, if we accept this author's view, that we, *with our present*

knowledge, know more than the Lord did; and that what He accomplished in the healing of the woman, He did as a clever psychologist or Christian Scientist, and not as the Sovereign Lord, "the Son of God, manifested that He might destroy the works of the devil" 1 John 3. 8. It is all of one piece with the general attack upon the glory of the person of our Lord, His infallibility and omniscience, and upon the character of His mission to men. It is more and worse, for if the Lord wrought His miracles by suggestion and by using powers that are available to any who care to exercise them, He must have known this, and consequently He was a deceiver when He said "the works that I do witness of Me" John 10. 25. "The Father that dwelleth in Me, He doeth the works . . . believe Me for the very works' sake" John 14. 10, 11.

All the Lord's miracles were works of mercy, with the one exception of the cursing of the fig tree, and some great significance lay behind that act. It was with fig leaves that Adam and Eve endeavoured to clothe their nakedness after their disobedience and fall in Eden, and the Jews' religion had degenerated into the effort to secure by ritual and works of the law a covering for their moral and spiritual nakedness, while remaining alienated from God and disobedient to Him. The whole system was condemned by God, as are all the efforts of men to cover their sin and obtain righteousness by works. We, who believe the Scriptures, know that the only covering for sin and the souls of sinners is atonement by blood. The word translated atonement in the Scriptures means, a covering. The fig tree that was cursed had yielded no fruit for the

Lord and its leaves could not cover the sinners' nakedness. I suggest that the cursing of the fig tree was a symbolical act, teaching us these great and fundamental facts. The time and circumstances in which it was done seem to confirm this.

The beginning of His miracles was in Cana of Galilee, and by it He manifested His glory and His disciples believed on Him. It was a remarkable miracle, this turning the water into wine at the marriage feast. He had ordained the marriage tie in the beginning, and though it had become sadly marred by sin He hallowed it by His presence. They were not great or rich, this couple who called Jesus to their marriage; indeed the fact that they had no wine would indicate that they were very poor, but Jesus was the Friend of the poor, as He is to this day, and He manifested His glory by caring for them in their need and raising the joy of their marriage day to a level they could not have known if He had not been there. "He provided a fit accompaniment, provided it of the best, and in such large measure as has alarmed and amazed the timid moralist. The quality and the greatness of the gift were worthy of God; and we see the generosity all the more clearly when we remember that this bountiful Creator had a little while before refused to create bread to relieve Himself of hunger" *Nicholl*.

The glory that began to shine at Cana shed a greater brightness at the close of those eventful years, when His foes pressed about Him to arrest Him.

Malchus, the servant of the high priest would hold a commission from his master to go with Judas

into the garden and lead the multitude that went out to capture the Lord. How astonished Peter must have been when he saw Judas step out of the crowd and put the traitor kiss upon his Lord. He did not know how to deal with Judas, but he had no hesitation as to how to treat Malchus, when he, vaunting his temporary authority, laid hands upon the Lord, and in the name of the high priest directed the band to make Him prisoner. At such audacity Peter's indignation flamed hotly, and drawing his sword he aimed one mighty blow at the dastard, meaning to lay him dead at his feet, cleft through the skull.

It was new work for the fisherman, he had not been trained to wield a sword, and his misdirected energy only resulted in the loss of an ear to Malchus, and the exposure of his own impetuous folly, and shall we add, his true love for his Master. But there was yet another result. The Lord had said "I must work the works of Him that sent Me, while it is day: the night cometh when no man can work. As long as I am in the world I am the light of the world." The gloom of night was gathering thickly upon the world, but He was still its light, and there was one more work of mercy that He must do before the devil and men had their way, a work not to be wrought upon a friend but upon a foe, who had come against Him with murder in his heart. Hence, with a word of gentle rebuke to Peter He stretched forth His hand and touched the severed ear and healed it.

"Wist ye not that I must be about My Father's business" are the first words that are recorded as having come from His mouth in the Gos-

pel of Luke, in which Gospel alone is the *healing* of the ear recorded. That business was blessing and not judgment; it was healing and not a sword. The audacity of Malchus and the impetuosity of Peter only served as an opportunity for the continued goodness that was in Him, and having done that work He submitted Himself to His foes and they bound with cords His hands that had only been stretched forth to bless.

The works of the Lord were such as no other man did. John 15. 24. How wonderful they were! Consider the feelings of the leper, when the Lord, moved with compassion, stretched forth His hand, laid it upon him, saying, "I will, be thou clean." Consider the feelings of Jairus and his wife when the Lord took their dead daughter by the hand and said, "Maid, arise," and shewed not His power only, but His consideration for the child when He commanded them to give her meat. Think of His care for the people who were faint by the way, when He provided them with such a meal as they had never had before and that out of five loaves and two small fishes. Stand by and behold Him when He said to the widowed woman, bereaved of her only son, "Weep not," and then turning to the dead son said "Young man, I

say unto thee, arise." He might have claimed the life and service of that young man and added, "Follow Me," but He did not, He delivered him to his mother. What heart could have remained unmoved that saw His cheeks wet with tears as Mary of Bethany bowed down in her sorrow at His feet, or remained unthrilled with a hitherto unfelt triumph when He cried with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come forth"? It is not easy to say whether the compassion of His heart or the power of His word would command the greatest admiration on that great occasion.

These miracles all declared what the feelings of God were towards His creatures in their misery, and though they were wrought in vain as far as the nation in which they were done was concerned, they abide for us in the record of them in the Holy Scriptures. We may read of them and meditate upon them and bow down with Thomas before the face of Jesus and confess Him as our Lord and our God. We may rejoice in that great salvation, which first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard Him; God also bearing them witness, both by signs and wonders and divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to His own will" Hebrews 2.

"I give thee charge . . . before Jesus Christ, who before Pontius Pilate witnessed a good confession" 1 Tim. 6. 13.

It is the challenging courage of Him who faced Pontius Pilate that gives us courage to set up our banners in His Name alone, and to declare anew our full and sole allegiance to "His Word, the statute Book of His Kingdom, the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments."

THE TONGUE INSTRUCTED.

J.T.W.

Guard well thy lips, none, none may know
 What evil from the tongue may flow,
 What guilt, what grief may be incurr'd
 By *one* incautious, hasty word.

Be "slow to speak," look well within,
 To check what there may lead to sin,
 And pray unceasingly for aid,
 Lest unawares thou be betrayed.

"Condemn not, judge not", not to men
 Is given his brother's faults to scan,
 One task is thine, and one alone
 To search out, and subdue thine own.

"Indulge no murmurings," oh, restrain
 Those lips so ready to complain.
 And if they can be numbered, count
 Of one day's mercies the amount.

"Set God before thee" every word
 Thy lips pronounce by *Him* is heard;
 Oh! could'st thou realize *this thought*
 What care, what caution would be taught.

"The time is short" this day may be,
 The very last assigned to thee;
 So speak, that should'st thou ne'er speak more
 Thou shalt not this day's words deplore.

 By Him and for Him.

"All things have been created by Him and for Him" (Col. 1. 16). BY HIM. The force which has summoned the worlds out of nothingness into being, is His; He wields it; He is the one Producer and Sustainer of all created existence. FOR HIM. He is not merely an inferior workman, as Arianism afterwards pretended, creating for the glory of a higher master, for a God superior to Himself. He is the end of created things as well as their immediate source; and in living for Him every creature finds at once the explanation and the law of its being. For "He is before all things, and by Him all things consist."
 (Liddon.)

"LET US GO ON TO PERFECTION"

David Ross.

Heb. 5. 13: 11. 40: 12. 1-2.

LET us go on. That word has been translated in three ways and I believe the original text will bear all three translations. 1. Let us go on. 2. Let us press on. 3. Let us be borne on. Some have simply stopped in the heavenly race. The exhortation is to such, Let us go on. Some are very conscious of the difficulties and the obstacles and the opposition in the way. To such discouraged ones the message is, Let us press on. Then there are those who are not only conscious of the opposition and the many enemies that confront them but are very conscious of their own weakness, and when they think of having to go on or to press on they are ready to faint. The message to them is, Let us be borne on. It is good to see how this epistle, which is full of exhortations to progress, is also full of encouragement. It tells us of all the mighty and never failing resources that are in our great and glorious High Priest.

What is it that we are to go on to? Perfection. The Apostle was forced to tell these Hebrew Christians that when they ought to have been teachers they were needing to be taught. When they ought to be getting strong meat they were only fit to take milk, and he says, Strong meat belongeth to them that are *perfect*. And it is on that word "perfect" that I want to dwell. It is a characteristic word of this epistle. Fourteen times over this word "perfection" or kindred words occur in it. Once you get the word, Make you perfect. That is a different word altogether. I shall speak

about that later. The word perfect comes from a word which means the end, and it means that now, in the Christian revelation, the end has been reached as in contrast to the Old Testament revelation with which these Hebrews were by birth and religious training connected. Four of these words are taken up with the failure of the old to attain to perfection and some other four or five are taken up to show how we have absolute perfection in our Lord Jesus Christ. In Him we have reached the end God had in view. The rest show how we are sustained by Him in going on to God's perfection.

First of all, let us look at the word as it refers to our Lord Jesus Christ. And may I safeguard what I say by remarking that this word perfection does not mean attaining to sinlessness. Need I say that if it did it could never be used of our blessed Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, for as to His person He was wholly apart from sin. The first use of the word is in the second chapter. "For it became Him for Whom are all things and by Whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the Captain of their salvation perfect through suffering." In ch. 1 of this epistle we have a wonderful unfolding of the different glories of this great Prince Leader. He is God whose throne is for ever and ever. The One by Whom the worlds were made; the Son in whom God speaks fully and finally, having a Name greater than all the angels. That One has taken upon Him flesh and blood. What for? In order that, as a Man He

might qualify, I use that word reverently, that He might be perfected as the Prince Leader of our salvation. And who is He leading and where? He is leading many sons to glory, He is saving them all the way to that great destination. It was necessary for God, it became Him, to make the Captain of our salvation perfect through suffering. Our poor finite minds cannot grasp all that that means, but there it is. God's nature, God's claims demanded that that One Who was to become the Prince Leader of our salvation should become such through the sufferings of the cross.

In the 5th chapter we are told something of what that suffering meant for Him. It may be that those strong cryings and tears have special reference to our blessed Lord's anguish in Gethsemane when He contemplated the cup which He must take from His Father's hand. What anguish was His when He cried, "Oh, My Father, if it be possible let this cup pass from Me. Nevertheless, not My will but Thine be done." "Who in the days of His flesh, when He had offered up prayers and supplications, with strong cryings and tears unto Him that was able to save Him out of death and was heard in that He feared. Though He were a Son, yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered. And being made perfect He has become the Author of eternal salvation unto all them that *obey* Him." Think of it. The Son has through *obedience* and through the things that He suffered, qualified to become the Author, not of a temporary salvation such as these Israelites had known, not of a salvation from the power of our earthly enemies, but of an eternal salvation. I stress obedience to

Him. Perhaps someone says, I thought salvation was given to all who believe. Yes, but faith is demonstrated by the fact of obedience. It is not enough to say we believe. Faith is demonstrated by obedience. And Christ, who was always obedient to God is the Prince Leader of the obedient host. When the apostle Paul carried His message to the Gentiles it was for the obedience of faith.

What is the character of this salvation? The epistle contemplates the believers passing through the desert subjected to all manner of temptations. It tells us of this great High Priest who is able to save to the uttermost. You may take what you like out of that. You may range through time or space if you like. He is able to save to the uttermost. You may say, as the man converted in the London City Mission said, "He saved me from the guttermost." Yes, He is able to save from the guttermost and He is able to save to the uttermost of time and, thank God, He is going to save us to the uppermost of glory. Who is it that is doing that? It is the great High Priest, the One to Whom God said, Thou art My Son, and, Thou art a Priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec. And so we read in the 7th chapter that the law maketh men high priests which have infirmity but the word of the oath maketh the Son who is perfected for ever. In that chapter we get so often that in the Levitical order there was no perfection, that the law could make nothing perfect, and how blessed it is to turn from all that system that was rudimentary, elementary, fragmentary, and that merely foreshadowed, to find all that it prophesied fulfilled in the Man Christ Jesus, Captain of our salvation,

perfected for ever and able to save to the uttermost. Why? Because He never dies. No priest ever fulfilled his ministry in the days of old because apart from the imperfections of his own flesh, he died. But our Priest, He is a perfect Priest, for having died, He lives in the power of a never-ending life for us.

In the latter part of the Epistle we have the life of faith sketched for us. We take inspiration and example from these men and women of faith whose names are in God's roll of honour as we read them in that triumphant song of 11th Heb. By faith, by faith, by faith and yet they were not made perfect. The end was not attained. And then we look off unto Jesus, the Author and Perfector of faith. I want you to think of the Lord Jesus Christ as the One who lived the life of faith, because remember, that though He was God over all blessed for ever, that though He was Son of God eternal, He lived the life of faith. He was ever obedient to His Father's will, and dependent upon Him, how fully Psalm 22 proves that. He was the perfect Man who trod the whole way of faith, and was tested in every phase of it, and He is the Completer of faith, and for our encouragement we are told to look off unto Him, and what do we see? One who has finished the course, reached the prize, now at the right hand of God. And what will that do for us? It will save us from slackness. Let us run. It will save us from discouragement. Let us press on. He who suffered the contradiction of sinners against Himself resisted unto blood. You have not done that yet. Press on, brethren, look off unto Jesus and press on and run on. What to? Perfection. And remember that the One who has trodden

the path, Who has completed the path of faith, and is now in the glory, is the One whose strength and grace will sustain you, if you seek to go on, to press on. It is in His strength that you will find you are borne on, because He ever lives to make intercession for you. Moses was the interceder for Israel, and when his hands were uplifted they went on, they pressed on, and through that mighty unseen influence which the prayers of Moses brought down they were borne on to victory. So shall it be with you, you shall be more than conquerors in the power of the Prince Leader, the Perfector of faith.

The Old Testament economy failed. It never could bring in perfection because it was only a shadow of good things to come, but we have got the good things in Christ. No priest of the old order was perfect. Our Priest is the Son of God and perfected as such for ever. When the worshippers came forward with their offerings it says they never were perfected. These sacrifices of bulls and goats, unmoral, could never perfect immoral men and women, so that they could have title to come into the holy presence of a holy God. But now Jesus Christ has by one offering perfected for ever those that are sanctified.

His one efficacious sacrifice has done what those ancient sacrifices could never do. They never took away sin, but perfected through that one sacrifice that He offered, we are sanctified, and as worshippers, are privileged to draw near, not only to the throne of grace, but to draw near to God in the holiest of all. That is the present end, to which the blood of bulls and goats could never bring those who brought them.

Now we can look forward to that day when the spirits of just men shall be made perfect, and then we shall have reached perfection, maturity. What are we to do now? Let us go on, press on, let us be borne on to that great goal. Entering into the understanding of the full and final and perfect revelation of God's will as it is given to us in His Son. And then as to our moral perfection, you have got another word. What does it say? Now the God of peace that brought again our Lord Jesus from the dead, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect. Here it is the mighty sovereign power of God that is going to perfect us in every good work to do His will, and I notice the same word is used three times in the epistle. It is the word by which He framed the worlds. It is the same word that is used, a body hast Thou

prepared for Me. Think of that. The mighty power of God that brought the creation into being, the mighty power of God that prepared that holy body in which Christ perfected the will of God, that same mighty power is working in you and me unto every good work, to do His will. He made the universe for the manifestation of His will, He made that body for our Lord Jesus for the accomplishment of His will, He is making you and me in every good work to do His will. The heavens shall yet be for His pleasure. That One who dwelt in that body was never anything but for His pleasure, "My beloved Son in Whom I am well pleased," and He is working in you and me to do His will, that which is well pleasing in His sight. Let us go on, brethren, let us press on, brethren, let us be borne on, brethren, borne on to the perfection of God.

The Excellency of Christ Jesus My Lord.

For Christ's sake, Paul did suffer loss, yea the loss of all things, the sum total of his old life's values. His own family probably regarded him as a disgrace to Judaism. His Pharisaic confreres considered him a deserter from the cause. The Jews in general treated him as a renegade and turncoat. He had paid a price for Christ's sake. But it was worth the price. He has no regrets. "I do count all that was gain to me but refuse," as dust beneath my feet, not as diadems for my head. These "pearls" Paul deliberately flings to the dogs, if not to the swine, as trash. He was not a madman in reckless disregard of all values. It is the greatest bargain of His life. He does it "that I may gain Christ." He lost the Jewish world to gain Christ the Lord of all. A.T.R.

"The same Lord of all is rich towards all that call upon Him" (Rom. 10. 12).

MAN IN CONTRAST WITH GOD.

F. B. Hole.

(Psalm 36)

THE Scriptures are full of contrasts which convey to us very effective teaching. By contrasting this with that the true character of each is made manifest, and we grasp it for our profit. Psalm 36 is a notable example, for in it God and man are set One against the other. The nature of both is made plain. That we should know God is the most important thing of all. Next to that it is important that we should know man.

The first four verses of the psalm describe man. Verses 5 to 9 set God before us. Verse 10 prays for the continued manifestation of all that God is. Verses 11 and 12 pray for the removal of that which man is. We have only to understand what man is and what God is to heartily endorse the prayers of the Psalmist. It is remarkable that in this psalm, man comes first. It begins with what he is, and ends with his removal. In our consideration of the Psalm however, we venture to begin with God and what He is.

Very much is said of this in verses 5 to 9, far more than we can enlarge upon: we think however, that what is celebrated can be summarized under three heads.

1. *The FAITHFULNESS of God.* "Thy faithfulness reacheth unto the clouds," he says, as if to express the fact that it is lifted high above man's reach and all the corruption which he imparts to all that he touches. His faithfulness does not stand alone in these verses, it is coupled with His mercy, righteousness, judgments and lovingkindness. Nor does it stand alone in His character and nature;

it is of necessity connected with all that He is. Standing, as we do, in the light of New Testament revelation, we can say that "God is light," and that "God is love." Because He is light we have to speak of righteousness and judgments. Because He is love we can celebrate His mercy and lovingkindness. And both light and love support and maintain His faithfulness.

The faithfulness of God! What a glorious fact this is, and how little have we grasped it. He must ever be faithful to all that He is, and to all that He has said. He cannot deny Himself, nor can He deny the one who stakes everything upon Him and the truth of His Word. Therefore it is that "the children of men put their trust under the shadow of Thy wings," as the psalm says. If our souls really hold to the faithfulness of God that is what we must inevitably do. We see that He is wholly true, and therefore He is to be wholly trusted.

In these later times perhaps no one has more stressed the faithfulness of God, and lived in the power of it, than the late Hudson Taylor, who may be termed the apostle of the Chinese. It seems to have been his distinguishing feature. He was accustomed to quote the words, "Have faith in God," as meaning, "Hold God's faithfulness." He had some solid ground for this, inasmuch as a very competent scholar assures us that the Greek word for *faith*, together with the Hebrew and the Latin words, as also the English, "hover between two meanings; trustfulness, the frame of mind which relies upon another; and trustworthiness, the

frame of mind which can be relied upon. Not only are the two connected together grammatically, as active and passive senses of the same word, or logically, as subject and object of the same act; but there is a close moral affinity between them. Fidelity, constancy, firmness, confidence, reliance, trust, belief—these are the links which connect the two extremes, the passive with the active meaning of **faith**." The faithfulness of God, gloriously buttressed by His mercy, His righteousness, His judgment, His loving-kindness, does indeed reach to the clouds, and we may safely count upon Him.

We venture to quote a few of Hudson Taylor's remarks. He wrote, "Hold God's faithfulness. Abraham held God's faith, and offered up Isaac, accounting that God was able to raise him up. Moses held God's faith, and led the millions of Israel into the waste howling wilderness. Joshua knew Israel well, and was ignorant neither of the fortifications of the Canaanites, nor of their martial prowess; but he held God's faithfulness, and led Israel across Jordan. The Apostles held God's faith, and were not daunted by the hatred of the Jews, nor by the hostility of the heathen . . . Satan too has his creed 'Doubt God's faithfulness. Hath God said? Are you not mistaken as to His commands? He could not really mean so. You take an extreme view—give too literal a meaning to the words.' Ah! how constantly, and alas, how successfully, are such arguments used to prevent whole-hearted trust in God, whole-hearted consecration to God. All God's giants have been weak men, who did great things for God because they reckoned on God being with them. See the cases of David, of Jonathan and his armour-bearer, of Asa, Jehoshaphat, and many others. Oh! beloved friends, if there

is a living God, faithful and true, let us hold His faithfulness."

God is faithful to all that He has revealed Himself to be, to all that He has spoken. If we have His word for it, we can rely upon it. How deeply important then it is that we should be very familiar with His Word—our hearts and minds thoroughly saturated with it.

2. *The FATNESS of God's house.* God's house is the place where He dwells; and fatness signifies fulness of supply. There must of course be an infinite supply of all that is good in the dwelling-place of God, and thence flows what the Psalmist speaks of as, "the river of Thy pleasures." The word for pleasures is really Eden, only it is in the plural—"The river of Thy Edens." The Eden of Genesis 2. 8 had a river, but outside it parted and became four heads. It was a case of one Eden with a plurality of rivers. The psalm speaks of a plurality of Edens with one river.

A river brings with it fertility and refreshment, and where rivers exist all is well. Where they do not exist all is desert. They express in the world around us the bounty of the Creator. In the Scriptures they represent the outflow of the goodness that is in God, whether we consider the river of Eden, or the river that will flow forth from under the threshold of the House in the millennial Jerusalem, as predicted in Ezekiel 47. or the river that is to flow out of "the throne of God and of the Lamb," from the heavenly Jerusalem, as we find in Revelation 22.

Here, then, we have God's house with its infinite supply, and the outflowing river which takes its rise in His many Edens; and the wonder-

ful thing is that all is available for those that put their trust under the shadow of His wings. He is not, as Satan insinuated in Genesis 3. a God who withholds from His creatures that which is for their good and blessing, who desires to repress them. On the contrary He desires to fill them full out of His own fulness, so that they shall be "abundantly satisfied." But this abundant satisfaction must of necessity be restricted to those that put their trust in Him. Those who do not trust Him would not desire it.

We may put this into New Testament language by quoting from the Epistle to the Ephesians. We, who "have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace," may become so acquainted with "the unsearchable riches of Christ" that "strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man . . . Christ may dwell in your [our] hearts by faith." Thus we may be "filled with all the fulness of God." This indeed is abundantly satisfying. All the Divine pleasure is centred in Christ. Every Eden is connected with Him, and from Him the river flows.

3. *The FOUNTAIN of life.* This fountain is with God and nowhere else, whether we think of life in its lower manifestations in connection with the natural world around us, or in its higher manifestations in the world of spirit. That was quite plain to the Psalmist in his day. It should be more abundantly clear to us now that Christ has been revealed. Just think of what we have more especially in the writings of the apostle John.

We open his Gospel, and after reading of the Lord Jesus as the

Word, who was in the beginning with God, and who was God, we reach this great statement, "In Him was life." How right then was the Psalmist when addressing God he said, "With Thee is the fountain of life." He, in whom was life, was in the beginning with God.

How truly inspired was the Psalmist when he used the word, *fountain*, in this connection. Life surely lies inherently and equally in each Person of the Godhead, yet He who is the Word is particularly and specially the Fountain of it to others. This becomes more clear when we turn to the first epistle of John. There He stands before us, not simply as the Word in whom was life, but rather as "the Word of life": that is as the One in whom life has been perfectly and exactly expressed. "In Him was life," tells us that the life *existed* in Him. "The Word of life," assures us that the life is *expressed* in Him.

Moreover the life expressed, of which the Epistle speaks, is life of the highest character. The apostle John proceeds to say, "The life was manifested." Life, as we know it, in the realms of creation may take many forms, but only one life can be spoken of as THE life; and that is, "the eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us." The Fountain of life truly was with God, but since the Psalmist's day all has come forth into manifestation in the Son incarnate.

One thing more is needed if we are really to know the full blessedness of this manifestation: we must become possessed of the life which has been manifested. This, thank God, has been brought to pass for those of us who believe on the name

of the Son of God, as the last chapter of the epistle declares. "This is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He that hath the Son hath life." Not only therefore do we derive life from the Word as the creatures of His hand—for, "all things were made by Him; and without Him was not anything made that was made"—but we also have eternal life (which is THE life) in having Him.

It may be that some glimpse of these good things to come was granted to the Psalmist, and that this led him to add, "In Thy light shall we see light." The God who dwelt in the thick darkness in connection with the giving of the law has now come forth into the light, giving a full and clear revelation of Himself in Christ. "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him."

There is the very closest connection between life and light. We not only find them brought together in the ninth verse of our Psalm but they stand connected in the passages we have already referred to in the Gospel and Epistle of John. The statement that "In Him was life," is immediately followed by the complementary words, "and the life was the light of men." So too the statement that, "the life was manifested," is closely followed by "the message . . . that God is light," and also by the fact that, "He [God] is in the light."

The words then were highly prophetic: "In Thy light shall we see light." David spoke as a prophet gazing on into the future. As for ourselves, we have seen it, thank

God! THE life has become THE light. Both life and light as abstract conceptions are beyond us. We cannot attempt to define them. But their display in Christ is wholly for us, and we rejoice in it. As we contemplate the life lived out by Him, God Himself becomes luminous before us. The life has *illuminated* us. And even more, the life has become *ours*, so that in the light of the Fountain of life we shall walk to all eternity.

And now we turn to consider the character of poor man. What a contrast! He is designated, "the wicked" in this Psalm, and also spoken of in the plural as, "the workers of iniquity." It may be that the Holy Spirit had before His mind that sinister personage who is called, "that wicked," in 2 Thessalonians 2. 8, and that therefore he used the singular in verses 1 and 11, while He passed on to the plural in verse 12, inasmuch as both the Antichrist and all his followers will be engulfed in ruin. Verse 3 speaks of his words, and verse 4 of his way, and all are but deceit and mischief. Verse 11 shows that his hand is against God's people because He is against God.

Yet, after all, "that wicked," the "man of sin," is just man at the height of his powers in open defiance of God. So we may take this Psalm as giving us man in contrast with God; and we can again summarize what is stated under a few heads; in this case, four.

1. *No FEAR of God.* The fear of God is commonly referred to in Scripture, and the word mostly used is one having the force of *reverence*. Here, however, a less common word is used signifying, *dread*. Sinful

men universally have no proper reverence for God, though they may secretly dread Him. The man we have before us here however has no dread of God. That of course will very precisely be true of Antichrist, who sets himself up as an object of veneration above all that is called God, and even God Himself. It is increasingly true too of the men of our day. They have such large ideas of themselves and of their own powers that thoughts of God—if they believe in His existence—put no fear upon their spirits. They feel that they can safely disregard Him.

2. *He FLATTERETH himself in his own eyes.* Men dearly love a mutual admiration society. Flattery is the commonest thing imaginable in the world, and many a man has been lured on to his overthrow by the fulsome flattery of his fellows. The individual before us, you notice, flatters himself—he does not wait for others to do it for him—and it is in his own eyes rather than in the eyes of his fellows. This, we again remark, will doubtless have a special application to Antichrist, since he will be a terrible tyrant. He will be out to magnify himself, hence self-flattery will be imperative. He will blow his own trumpet first and foremost, leaving others to blow trumpets of flattery in his honour, if they wish to keep in his favour.

Flattery is absolutely impossible when God is in question. All praise and worship offered to Him falls short of that of which He is worthy. We cannot rate Him higher than He is. On the other hand it is almost impossible to avoid flattery when we begin to praise men. We see one or two features, on the surface of their characters or their doings, which appeal to us; but many

other features, deep below the surface, which would not appeal but appal, we do not see. Hence our praise of man has in it inevitably an element of flattery even when we have not the slightest desire to flatter. As saints let us beware of the praise of men. By indulging in it we damage each other, though it is very sweet to the flesh.

The average man of the world loves it, and loves it openly. Having no fear of God, he naturally flatters himself. If God shone forth upon him, like Job he would abhor himself.

3. *The FOOT of pride.* Verse 11 refers to this. It is the next step downwards after flattery. The sequence is quite plain. First God is dismissed from his thoughts because he fears Him not. Then he entertains high and mighty ideas as to himself, and he lets others know it. He flatters himself he is this and that. As the direct consequence of this pride fills his heart and he is quite ready to direct “the foot of pride” against those who do entertain the fear of God. He cannot lift the foot of pride against God since He is far beyond his reach; but he will lift it against the saints of God, who are within his reach. The saints however need not cringe in abject fear. There is a limit to his pride and his power.

4. *There are the workers of iniquity FALLEN.* At the end there comes the inevitable crash. Poor little man may look imposing enough for a time, and the godly may cry out, “Let not the hand of the wicked remove me.” It is the wicked who is removed, not the godly. He is to be destroyed by the outshining of the coming of the

Lord. He and his helpers are to fall, and once cast down they will not be able to rise.

We may apply all this to man in a more general way. It is really the story of the first man and his race. One of the great sayings of our Lord is, "Whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted." The first part of the saying gives us the history of the first man in epitome: the second part has been supremely exemplified in the wonderful story of the holy and blessed One that uttered those words. Who would trust the one? And who would not trust the Other?

The contrast then is complete. GOD: characterized by faithfulness, by fatness, by the fountain of life. Man: characterized by shutting out the fear of God, by flattery, by the foot of pride, and by a terrible fall at the end.

Well did Isaiah say early in his prophecy, "Cease ye from man, whose breath is in his nostrils: for wherein is he to be accounted of?" (2. 22.) And well does our Psalm say of God, "Therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of Thy wings."

How happy for us if that is what we are doing in the fullest sense of the words.

THE SON OF GOD.

THE Son of God was never made the Son. He is never even called the child (teknon) of God. To us, to be called children of God is more intimate than to be styled His sons; but it would derogate from the Lord. Jesus is never called a child in the sense of which I am now speaking. He has His own relationship to the Father eternally. To us it is more to be born of the very nature of God, than to be sons adopted into the family of God. There might be an adopted son without the nature. One might be altogether a stranger to him who adopts. But in Jesus, the Son of God, there was this character of Son in His own title and being from everlasting. Need I say that it is altogether above human comprehension? Yet nothing is more certain than that God so speaks to our faith. Were there an interval of one instant between the Father and the Son; did the Father exist in any respect before the Son as such, all the truth of God as revealed in the Bible

perishes. He to whom I look up, by and in whom alone I can know God and the Father, is God Himself.

Let the notion of time come into the conception given of Godhead and of the persons—Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, and all would be falsehood and confusion. The Son would be a creature—not self-subsisting, not therefore truly God. For if God, He is as such not less truly God than the Father; for there can be no difference as to Godhead. As the Father is everlasting so is the Son. The relationship in the Godhead has nothing to do with the question of time; and the great mistake that has been wrought by all human philosophy is from introducing notions of time where time can have no place whatever. . . . But the Son being before the Father as His supreme object of love and delight from all eternity, to bring us as sons before Him was as much a part of His counsels as to make us partakers of divine nature."

A CLOUD OF WITNESSES.

T. Oliver.

WHEREFORE seeing we are also compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses" (Heb. 12. 1, 2).

This expression is frequently held to mean that the Christian pathway is viewed as a Marathon race and that the cloud refers to our departed friends, like a dense mass of spectators in a grand-stand viewing our progress. It is held that their presence, admitting of our running under their eye, subject to their verdict, and their being absorbed in the interest of our efforts should prove a wonderful stimulus to our running successfully.

The above statement may be the expression of a beautiful sentiment to many people, but Scripture does not entitle us to conclude that the saints of Christ are conversant with our life here, and that they are fascinated by the interest of it. It is quite true that the Christian pathway is a very real Marathon race, in which we have need of patience and perseverance, and we need all the encouragement possible to press on, but in adducing such encouragement we must not do violence to the body of Scriptural evidence.

There are two ways in which the Greek word *μαρτυρες* (martyres) may be taken (1) as spectators or eye-witnesses (2) as those who bear testimony by words and actions. The context will usually show the specific meaning of a Scripture passage, and obviously in this case it is the latter interpretation which is valid, as there is no real interruption of the argument by the arbitrary chapter division of the subject. The beginning of chapter 12 is a corollary of chapter 11. The witnesses are necessarily composed of the long list of those whose brilliant acts of

faith had been recapitulated in chapter 11. Their example was the strongest witness or testimony that faith was no new principle peculiar to the Christian era. But it had always been the principle of life for the people of God in every dispensation. So seven hundred years previously Habakkuk enunciated the matter tersely in his prophecy in the statement "The just shall live by his faith." It is quite true that Habakkuk's view of the matter was very limited, but God was behind the statement. An old servant of the Lord used to say "There is no one behind God!" So however limited might be the view of the prophet, the statement itself was perfect.

In consequence of such encouragement then "Let us lay aside every weight." We must distinguish between "weight" and "sin." A matter which may be quite proper in our ordinary life may be well calculated to prove a hindrance to our making efficient progress in the Christian pathway. Just as a successful runner must divest himself of clothing and undue weight of body, the Christian may have to discard social status, cultural associations, life of ease, esteem of friends, wealth, etc., that he may be able to run to the glory of God.

"And the sin which doth so easily beset us." That has no reference to the specific defect, commonly spoken of as a "besetting sin." The expression "which doth so easily beset" is the translation of one unique Greek word *επιπεριστάτος* (euperistatos) which does not occur anywhere else and it means "well surrounded" or "standing round about", i.e. like bystanders hindering progress in running, e.g., if in a town we wish to get to a railway

station in order to catch a train, with little time on hand, and we have the option, we shall not run down the main street in preference to a by-lane, because the bystanders in the former will hinder our progress. So the reference is to the negative quality of sin as a hindrance rather than as to its positive effect. Thus sin is viewed as an entanglement rather as an antagonist.

“Let us run with patience the race that is set before us.” That is the character sustained by the one who runs. The process may mean a good deal of affliction, and is thus akin to faith, which is the present dynamic agency operating so that hope is developed. The Apostle wished for the Roman Christians that the God of hope might fill them with all joy and peace in believing (faith in its dynamic aspect) that they might overflow in hope through the power of the Holy Ghost (Rom. 15. 13).

But the Christian does not run merely under the stimulus of the achievements of the Old Testament worthies, he is encouraged by the present view looking unto Jesus the Author and Finisher of faith. Literally it is “looking away” from the present circumstances to contem-

plate Jesus. In the 1611 version of the New Testament, the translator spoiled the sense of the passage by inserting a word thus “of our faith.” The word “our” is not in the original, the sentence cannot therefore mean that as Author He originated faith in us and as Finisher sustains it and brings it to a perfect issue, true as that may be. But He was the only one who began a pathway of faith and perfectly exemplified the principle finishing the whole Marathon race without defect or halt. Each of the Old Testament worthies cited did his little bit of straight running amidst much which might be tortuous in his life. But in Heb. 11, God concentrates only on what will form links in the chain of faith.

“Who for the joy that was set before Him endured the Cross despising the shame and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.” The idea of Author and Finisher is expanded in this passage. What controlled Him in His path on earth and the patient endurance of the Cross was the reward, i.e., the joy which is now His at the right hand of God. He sees of the travail of His soul and derives infinite satisfaction therefrom.

Discerning Love.

Paul prayed for the Philippians that their love might abound more and more in all judgment and knowledge. His prayers for the Christians are very suggestive. They are never perfunctory, but always pertinent to the situation. This prayer has the very breath of heaven. Paul prayed for the overflow of the love of these saints for one another. There is no danger of an excess. There is still room, “yet more and more.” Paul pleads with his fondness for piling up adjectives. Some coldly critical people dislike exuberance in Christian affection, but Paul sets no limit to the development and expression of it except “in knowledge and all discernment,” a very important qualification. It is a flood of love that Paul prays for and yet a flood within the bounds of good sense and discretion. *Robertson.*

THE NAMES OF GOD IN THE OLD TESTAMENT.

A. J. Pollock.

THE most wonderful name that can pass human lips is—GOD. In that one word we express the Source of everything in nature and grace. No wonder it is said that when pious Jews of old copied the Scriptures they cleaned their pens and prayed for clean hearts whilst they wrote that wonderful and awful Name.

We are told most emphatically that God “only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see: to Whom be honour and power everlasting, Amen.” Here, we are told is *One*, that cannot be approached unto nor seen by mortal man. God in His essential Being, lies beyond man’s knowledge by his own power. Well might Zophar cry out, “Canst thou by searching find out God?”

Yet, whilst this is true, and never can be altered, God has taken pains to reveal Himself. The whole reason for creation is that it might be a platform for revelation. For God made man capable of the knowledge of Himself. But man fell, sin brought in distance, and communion with God was lost. Man fell into blindness and darkness.

When, however, our Lord was here upon earth He revealed God. Since His return to heaven we find that revelation recorded for us in the Scriptures, and in the Holy Spirit sent forth lies the power for spiritual discernment of what the Scriptures present. Even in the Old Testament a measure of light comes out in anticipation of the coming of our Lord.

To the Scriptures therefore we go, and may the Spirit of God teach us.

The name of God occurs in the very first verse of the Bible. That being so it is fitting that we should consider that particular name first.

“In the beginning God *Elohim**, [plural] created [singular] the heaven [dual] and the earth” (Genesis 1. 1).

Why should the name of God be in the plural, not in the singular, referring to one; not in the dual, referring to two; but in the plural, referring to three at the least?

India has 33,000,000 gods and vile creatures of the mind, emanations of the bottomless pit, deceits of Satan. But the Bible reveals to us the only true God as one God, supreme and unique. How then is the name of God in the plural? In the light of the New Testament which teaches that there are Father, Son and Holy Spirit yet one God, we see enshrined in the first verse of the Bible the truth of the Trinity—

**Elohim* was a word meaning mighty ones, judges, rulers, in ordinary use in the Hebrew language, which the Spirit of God adopted and gave a special significance, even a designation of God. There is no doubt as to this meaning. Genesis 1. 1 alone is decisive, for who could be the transcendent creator but the Supreme Being? In its ordinary use *elohim* is translated once as angels (Psalm 8. 5); goddess twice (1 Kings 11. 5, 33); gods (not referring to the Supreme Being) two hundred and forty times. Genesis 3. 5; Exodus 12. 12; Zephaniah 2. 11 will give examples chosen at random. One striking instance, Psalm 82. 8, “God [*Elohim*] . . judgeth among the gods [*elohim*]. *Elohim* is rendered judges four times (Exodus 21. 6; 22. 8, 9).

three Persons, but one God. We Christians do not believe in three Gods. There cannot be other than *one* God, one supreme, eternal Being from Whom everything flows—everything material and spiritual for the blessing and enjoyment of man.

That this is true is evidenced by the fact that the verb “created” in Genesis 1. 1, following the word, God [*Elohim, plural*] is in the singular. Does this not teach that though there are three Persons in the Godhead, there is but *one* God—the Father, Son and Holy Spirit are *one*?

The singular of *Elohim* is *El*—the mighty One. So *Elohim* means the mighty Ones, yet there is but one mighty One. The three persons are One. Blessed be God.

Now is it not remarkable that in the Old Testament Scriptures *Elohim* occurs in connection with the Supreme Being over 2,200 times; whilst *El* (singular) and *Elah* (singular) occur a little over 300 times—remarkable as we remember how fiercely monotheistic the Jews were and are, as witness how they accused the Lord Jesus of blasphemy because He said He was the Son of God, and thus they said was making Himself equal with God. They sought His death on that score. “The Jews answered . . . We have a law, and by our law He ought to die, because He made Himself the Son of God” (John 19. 7)

It is very evident we cannot comment on all the two thousand two hundred places in which the name of God is in the plural. We would, however, like to draw attention to two passages. Deuteronomy 6. 4

says, “Hear, O Israel: the LORD our God is one LORD.” In the original the names of God read as follows:—Jehovah (*singular*) our God (*Elohim, plural*) is one Jehovah (*singular*). Here in this solemn affirmation of the Oneness of the Godhead is the careful preservation of the truth of the Trinity.

The other passage is the clearest in the Old Testament. Isaiah 49. 16 says, “Come ye near unto Me, hear ye this [*revelation*]: I have not spoken in secret from the beginning; from the time that it was, there AM I [*the assertion of Deity in the clearest way*] and now the Lord God, and His Spirit, hath sent ME.” Who could send Deity according to this verse but Deity? Who could be sent, and yet not be inferior, but Deity? In time the Holy Spirit was sent, and the Holy Spirit is God, and cannot be inferior. Did our Lord’s taking upon Himself manhood make Him inferior? A thousand times NO. Nay, His stoop was His glory. The lower He went the greater His glory in that connection.

How often the Lord referred to Himself as the Sent One, in agreement with Isaiah 49. 16. We quote three or four Scriptures to prove this. “As the living Father hath sent ME” (John 6. 57). “I am from Him; and He hath sent Me” (John 7. 29). “Neither came I of Myself, but He [God] sent ME” (John 8. 42). “This is life eternal that they might know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent” (John 17. 3). “The world may believe that Thou hast sent ME” (John 17, 21 and 23).

So now in Genesis 1, verse 2, is mentioned the Spirit of God, whilst

in Isaiah 48. 16, we get the Sent One, who is clearly the eternal Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. Might we not say of the Lord God in that verse we get the Father as sending forth the Son on His glorious mission to earth.

But we must proceed in our enquiry. In Genesis 2 we get eleven times two names of God—"The LORD God—coupled together, that is Jehovah Elohim. How interesting this is! The Father is Jehovah. The Son is Jehovah. The Holy Spirit is Jehovah. And yet there is only one Jehovah as we have already seen in Deuteronomy 4. 4.

What then is the meaning of Jehovah? It means, *HE who IS*. The extension of this is found in the Scriptures, "Which is and which was, and which is to come" (Revelation 1. 4, 8; 4. 8; 16. 5). *God is*—Jehovah. Past, present and future are terms we mortals must use. But in the past God is, in the present God is, in the future God is—that is there never was a time, in the past, nor in the present, nor in the future, when God will not be. *God IS*.

It appears from Exodus 6. 3 that God did not reveal Himself as Jehovah till the time of Moses. In verse 6 Moses is instructed to tell the children of Israel, "I am the LORD [Jehovah]," and that in covenant blessing. Of course Jehovah was Jehovah before He was revealed as such. And it would appear that Jacob got a faint gleam of the coming revelation in Genesis 28. So Jehovah on the Divine side is the God that *is*—the ever existent One; on our side as the One, who enters into covenant blessing, with men. What a sure and certain foundation!

Of course it is well known that the Higher Critics aver that there must have been two different authors of Genesis 1 and 2, because in Genesis 1 the title of God is Elohim; in Genesis 2 Jehovah Elohim. How sensible men could make such a mistake we cannot understand. For instance we might pick up a life of Napoleon the great, and read in one chapter the name Napoleon and in the next chapter his two names Napoleon Buonaparte. What would sensible men think if we asserted that this proved there were two different writers of the book? We can only call the statement made by the Higher Critics foolishness and worse—*foolishness* as we have seen; *worse*, for it shows the evil bias of their minds, that they *wish* to undermine the authority of the Bible, and reduce it to the level of an ordinary book.

We should like to ask these higher critics to explain how an uninspired writer could write the first verse of the Bible—*God* in the plural; *created* in the singular—*heaven* in the dual, referring to the heaven in which the clouds float, the atmospheric heaven, and the vast spaces in which the stars in their myriads move. Who told Moses these things?

We have spoken of the two great names for God. We now append a few names used to designate God in the Old Testament, without much comment, but taken all together they fill out our knowledge of God.

El (singular)—the Mighty One, occurs over two hundred times. Emmanuel is compounded of *El*—the Mighty One with us.

Elah (singular)—God, an Object of worship occurs ninety times, and

only in Ezra and Daniel. In Jeremiah 10. 11 the word refers to heathen gods, and in one or two other cases.

Eloah (singular)—God, an Object of Worship, occurs in Job forty-one times, elsewhere eleven times and 'god' five times as referring to heathen gods, in all fifty-seven times. It marks the One True God in contrast to fake gods.

Jah—God, the ever-existent One, the God of covenant Blessing—a contraction of Jehovah occurs forty-three times, nearly every time between Psalm 78. 11 and 150. 6.

Adon (singular)—Lord, Sir, Master, occurs two hundred and fifteen times, usually in the ordinary sense as applied to Abraham, Moses, etc., only about thirty times does the word designate God.

Adonai (plural)—Lord as Owner occurs well over three hundred times, and practically in every case the word is the designation of God.

Shaddai—Almighty in containing resources, occurs forty-eight times principally in the book of Job, and is invariably translated *the Almighty*.

Mashiach—the Anointed, occurs thirty-seven times, twice being translated Messiah. Christ in the New Testament is the equivalent of Messiah in the Old Testament. This is a wonderful name given to the Son in the Godhead, who came to earth to do God's will.

Other names could be given but the foregoing gives us a wonderful

idea of God as revealed in the Old Testament Scriptures and times. God is Almighty, the One to whom we owe allegiance and submission in a far more wonderful way than a wife to her husband or a servant to his master. He is the one sole Object of Worship, whether presented to us as God in His essential glory, or as Messiah, the Anointed, God manifest in flesh. He is the One, who never changes, the eternal I AM, and that unchangeable One has put Himself in covenant blessing with men.

May we have greater thoughts of Him, His power and might and majesty; His grace and compassion and tenderness; His faithfulness in blessing and sovereign favour.

Of course men waited for the advent of the Lord Jesus Christ, the One who created in Genesis 1. 1, the One, who took counsel. "Let US make man in Our image, after our likeness," the One, whose life on earth was the light of men, the One who died that wonderful death on the cross, Who rose triumphant from the grave, Conqueror over death and hell, who ascended to God's right hand in glory, and who shed forth the Holy Spirit, forming the link between ourselves and Himself and the Father. When all this had taken place how wonderful a flood of light illuminated the Old Testament page. What was hinted at in the Old Testament is fully revealed in the New Testament to our blessing and joy.

We must never weaken the sense of individual responsibility to the Lord. Rules and regulations can never take the place of this.

SORROWFUL YET REJOICING.

Inglis Fleming.

Habakkuk 3. 17-19.

HABAKKUK'S outburst of praise recorded in this Scripture is one of the greatest expressions of faith found in the whole of the Word of God.

In his prophecy he had considered the lamentable condition of the people of God. He saw that judgment was coming upon them for their sin. The Chaldeans—the rod of God's wrath, were soon to sweep down upon their cities with unsparing severity, and in overwhelming victory. Their invasion of the land at that time pointing on to the onslaught of the foe in a still future day.

As he views it all he cries "Art not Thou from everlasting, O Jehovah my God, mine Holy One?" (1. 12). And then soliloquising says, "I will stand on my watch and hear what He will say to me" (2. 1).

Jehovah answers him with words of comfort and encouragement, "The vision though it tarry, wait for it: because it will surely come, and will not tarry . . . the just shall live by his faith." The spirit of which is found for us Christians in the epistle to the Hebrews.

"For yet a little while, and He that shall come will come and will not tarry. Now the just shall live by faith" (Heb. 10. 37, 38).

There is always an appointed time for God's intervention among men. And He is unhurried.

"He never is before His time,
And never is behind."

There is a schedule which He will observe. Everything has its due time with Him. This was truly kept in the case of Israel going forth

from Egypt (Exod. 12. 41). It has been observed in the coming of Christ (Gal. 4. 4); in the preaching of the gospel (1 Tim. 2. 6); in the revelation of the truth of the church (Rom. 16. 25, 26). And in His times the appearing in glory of the Lord Jesus will be accomplished (1 Tim. 6. 15).

It is this appearing which is prophesied of in Habakkuk. The vision will have its fulfilment. He the coming One will come and will not tarry.

Meanwhile faith is called for. The wicked may continue for a while, but his soul is not upright within him and the wrath of God will be visited upon him. Meanwhile the apparent prosperity of evil leads to the earnest cry of the godly, "How long?" And then the exhortation to patience is given. It has ever been that "through faith and patience" the promises have been inherited, and these are looked for and necessary for the saints of God today. Wickedness abounds and increases, the apostacy advances with giant strides, godliness seems at a discount and Laodicean lukewarmness is evidenced in the professing church. The coming of Christ nears, but faith is called into exercise that the godly one may overcome and endure until His manifestation. "Overturn, overturn, overturn" it must be until He come. His is the right and God will give it to Him at the appointed season (Ezek. 21. 26). The passage "The just shall live by faith" is quoted three times in the New Testament. In Romans 4 the one counted righteous is so reckoned on the ground of faith (1. 17). There "just" is to

be emphasised. In Galatians *faith* is in prominence in contrast with law-works (3. 11). In Hebrews the word "live" is to be stressed. There it is the practical life of the believer which is in view (10. 36).

This faith is shewn in the triumphant utterance of the prophet as he breaks out in the expression of his confidence in the faithfulness of God.

"Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat: the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls: yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation.

"The Lord God is my strength, and He will make my feet like hinds' feet and He will make me to walk upon mine high places."

His words recall for us Christians, the apostle Paul's summing up of the first part of the epistle to the Romans, "Being justified," as to the past, having peace with and access into the favour of God, in the present, and rejoicing "in hope of the glory of God," as to the future. In view of all this the believer can boast even in the midst of tribulation. He knows it will work for his good, for the love of God has been shown in its fulness in the death of Christ. Thus

he cries "We joy (or boast or glory) in God." God *Himself* is now his delight.

The most distressing and depressing conditions were manifest throughout his land. No fruit on the trees, no harvest in the fields, no flocks in the folds, no cattle in the stalls, told the sad story of famine for the nation. But amid universal failure God Himself is faith's resource, and the prophet cries "Yet will I rejoice in the Lord and joy in the God of my salvation."

God! salvation! joy! God IS and He is for His own. He abides the same. He fails not. He delights in the confidence of faith—the confession of trust in Himself.

But there is more. He who is our salvation is our strength. He can make our feet like hinds' feet and give us ability to reach and enjoy the high places of blessing.

So Romans 6 and 7 tell of power to rise over all the dominion of sin while the eighth chapter lifts us in thought into the "high places" of the counsels of God, showing our relationship as children and sons, our heirship of God and joint heirship with Christ.

Well may we join the chief musician with our praises as in the midst of the church He sings praise to God His Father and our God and Father too by grace.

"My Father" is among the first words on the fresh lips of the twelve year old Child, as it is the last on the parched lips of the Crucified.

"Slavery to Christ alone is the true and only freedom of the human soul."

THE FELLOWSHIP OF GOD'S SON.

PERHAPS there is no subject about which so much is heard to-day as that of fellowship. It is a day in which the air is filled with ideas of amalgamation and combination in things political, commercial and religious. Men are seeking for some formula by means of which without giving up their own thoughts and party predilections, they can combine for the furtherance of some desirable end. In all this there is a confession of weakness, and the conscious lack of a vital principle of unity for which is substituted an outward bond. This however leaves the combination formed, in the same state of disintegration as before, rendering it liable to disruption by alteration of circumstance or some strong difference of opinion which may arise. Such is the world, and it can do no better. At the root of the trouble lies the disturbing fact of sin, which having brought about wrong relations with God, the consequence follows that men can never work in continuous harmony together.

The one controlling, unifying object which is found only in God having been lost, lust and self-will have taken its place, wars and fightings being the result. Alas, to this same principle of self-will can be traced the strife and contentions which have and do sully the fair testimony of those who profess to owe their all to the cross of Christ. To learn the practical lesson of the cross is however far more searching, for after all the flesh even in the believer can only follow the ways of the world to which it belongs. It can only produce the works of the flesh, hatred, variance, strife, schools of opinion, and such like.

To remedy the sectarian state which results from this, recourse is often made to an outward amalgamation and is therefore flesh in another form. The cross is the only Divine remedy where flesh and all its ways, the world and all its elements have come under the sharp and painful judgment of God. It is this that must be practically maintained if the reality of the fellowship of God's Son is to be known in power.

Of what account can the world be, and to what profit can be its ways, when viewed in the light of God's intervention in grace? For God sent His only begotten Son into the world, in order that in Him might be manifest to men, the supreme blessedness of a life lived wholly for God. He was the very embodiment of that which would have brought peace on earth and glory in the highest, and the world knew Him not. Not only so but the princes of this world exhibited their supreme folly by crucifying the Lord of glory. In their blindness they cast away their one hope and manifested their hatred of God and of His Christ.

We would be encouraged in Him who is building His assembly on His Father's revelation of Himself as the Christ, the Son of the living God. He will not fail, and the schemes and counsels of hades' gates cannot prevail. God's Son is the Rock on which we rest. The Son of the Father's love is the glorious Head to whom we are united. The Son is the One in whom we have life eternal. The gospel has called us into the fellowship of God's Son, Jesus Christ our Lord; and we look and long for His soon return.

THE TESTIMONY OF JOHN THE BAPTIST TO THE LORD JESUS.

J. T. Mawson.

THERE was a man sent from God whose name was John. The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light. He was a burning and shining light, but he was not *the Light*. The moon which shines in the night bears its witness to its lord, the sun. It has no light in itself, but as it catches the light of the sun it sheds it upon the earth. So it was with John, his soul was enlightened by the glory of the One who was coming after him, and of Him he spoke. His was a great mission. He came from God: that was *the source* of his mission. He spoke of Christ: that was *the object* of his mission. His disciples who heard him speak followed Jesus: that was *the result* of his mission. Thus it is recorded of him in this first chapter of John's Gospel, and right happy might any servant of God be to have such a record.

Matthew and Luke tell us what he said about the people. He was filled with the Holy Ghost and had a keen and sure discernment of those that came to him. Some of these were real men, a repentant remnant, the excellent of the earth who felt the burden of their sins and confessed them. But there were others, the Pharisees and the Sadducees, proud religionists, who had no sense of anything but their own importance, and these came under his scathing denunciations. He feared God and had no fear of any man, and cried against them. "O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?" But in John's Gospel nothing is recorded of this sort. His

whole testimony there is about the Light of men, and this is beautiful and fitting, for John's Gospel is the Gospel of the Only-begotten with the Father, who dwelt amongst men full of grace and truth. It is John's testimony as to Jesus in this Gospel that we are to consider.

From the beginning of his mission he had spoken of Him, but when the time arrived and the Lord was about to enter on His public ministry in the world we read "John bare witness of Him and cried, saying, This is He of whom I spake, He that cometh after me is preferred before me, for He was before me." There would have been neither sense nor reason in John's testimony if Jesus had not been more than man, for John entered the world before He did. But John began his existence at his birth, the goings forth of the One of whom he spoke were from Eternity, and John being full of the Holy Ghost knew that the lowly Nazarene was his Lord. He was before John, before Abraham, before the beginning, the great I AM.

It is interesting to see that this witness to the glory of the Lord did not begin with John, it dwelt in his parents. His mother was the first of the family to give voice to it. When Mary visited her in the hill country before the birth of John, "it came to pass when she heard the salutation of Mary, the babe leaped in her womb: and being filled with the Holy Ghost, she spake out with a loud voice and said, Blessed art thou among women! and blessed be the fruit of thy womb . . . and

whence is this to me, that *the mother of my Lord* should come unto me?" And Zacharias, the father of John, spake also at the circumcision of his son, and said, "And thou, child, shalt be called the prophet of the Highest, for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare His ways" (Luke 2). And yet he did not derive his mission from his parents: he was sent from God, and equipped for all he had to do by the filling of the Holy Ghost.

The preaching of John caused a great stir in the land, insomuch that the priests and Levites came from Jerusalem to enquire as to who he was. But he was a faithful witness and would not be diverted from his mission by the patronage and curiosity of these great and influential men. He had come to speak of Christ, to prepare the people for their Lord and he refused to talk of himself. Notice his negative answers to their enquiries. "I am not," said he, and again, "I am not." Blessed and faithful servant was he who could so keep himself out of his discourse, that his Lord might be everything in it.

But these religionists from Jerusalem could not understand this self-effacement, it was so different from every principle and motive in their scheme of things, and with evident impatience they make a further demand of him. Who art thou? that we may give an answer to them that sent us. We want you to talk about yourself. What sayest thou of thyself? Being thus urged, he answered, "*I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, MAKE STRAIGHT THE WAY OF THE LORD, as said the prophet Esaias.*"

What a startling declaration was that! How it ought to have thrilled

those Jews who heard it, for John was quoting from Isaiah 40., and in that chapter the glory of Jehovah is unfolded for the comfort of His people Israel. It is a wonderful chapter. In it the tenderness of the Lord is disclosed. He is the good Shepherd of His sheep, and He declares that He would "gather the lambs with His arms and carry His lambs in His bosom." And His greatness is told out, for "He hath measured the waters in the hollow of His hand, and meted out the heavens with a span." Let us consider Him well. His hand is stretched forth in power in creation, but His lambs are the objects of His love, and His bosom was to be their safe resting place. It is Jehovah who is speaking in this chapter. But John announces that he was the forerunner of the Lord, the Voice that foretold His coming, as said the prophet.

With what eagerness these priestly delegates from the Pharisees in Jerusalem ought to have returned to those who sent them, for what a message was given them to carry! The man about whom they had enquired was none other than the forerunner of the Lord. His Master's footsteps were already sounding behind him, the day had come of which so many of their prophets had spoken; Jehovah, their God, their Deliverer, their Shepherd, was on the threshold! What would they do? Alas, the announcement moved them not at all. They were a generation without faith. They could not even see behind John's message, and they continued to ask him concerning himself. They were ritualists, greatly concerned about the outward form of baptism, and the authority for its performance, but they had neither ears nor hearts for

the word of God which John voiced in their midst.

How John must have marvelled at their stupidity! His astonishment seems to break out in his answer to them. *"I baptize you with water: BUT THERE STANDETH ONE AMONG YOU, WHOM YE KNOW NOT. He it is, who coming after me is preferred before me, whose shoe's latchet I am not worthy to unloose."*

Did they look about them to see who He could be who was even then amongst them who was so much greater than John, of whom they were enquiring? Probably not, but we rejoice in John's witness to our Lord and Saviour. How wonderful it is to read of Him in this same Gospel washing the feet of His disciples. Yes, the One whose shoe's latchet John, than whom none greater was born of women, was not worthy to unloose, girded Himself with a towel and washed the feet of His disciples. But John's witness to the living Messiah among them was unavailing. *The next day* opens with another testimony.

John had borne witness to the pre-existence of the Lord (verse 15); and to the fact that He was Jehovah, ready to fulfil all His words to Israel according to Isaiah 40 (verse 23). But this witness was in vain as far as the nation was concerned, and a new testimony is introduced, more marvellous, if that were possible, than any that had gone before. *"The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, BEHOLD THE LAMB OF GOD WHICH TAKETH AWAY THE SIN OF THE WORLD."* The outlook is no longer Israel, it is world-wide.

We shall do well to mark the fact that in this Gospel in which God is revealed in the fulness of His love, the Lamb of God appears in the beginning of it. The first public witness that John gives to the Lord as he sees Him coming to him is that He is the Lamb of God. It surely teaches us that if God was to be known in blessing to men, and if the world was to be put in right relations with Him, the Lamb for a Sacrifice was a necessity; this lies at the basis of everything. And here now was that sacrifice, the Lamb of God's own providing; He is the taker-away of the sin of the world. It is not *sins* that are in question here—though every sinner may find in the sacrifice of the Lamb of God his sins removed for ever—but it is *sin*, the terrible principle of opposition to the will of God that has brought in all the confusion and ruin, and from which all sins break forth. This is to be taken away completely and for ever, and in its place everlasting righteousness is to be established and the universe filled with the love and the glory of God.

The One who will do this thing is the Subject here. How great He must be! If a man claimed to be able to take away the sin of a town, or the sin of a street in that town, or the sin of one house in that street, or even the sin of one person in that house, we should say, He is mad, it cannot be done. But here is One who is to take away the sin of the world. We cannot have any doubt as to who He must be: He is the Word, the Creator, the only-begotten Son; He alone could be the Lamb of God.

It is only in this Gospel in which the glory of the Son of God is so fully revealed that John the Bap-

tist's testimony to Him as the Lamb of God is given. This is noteworthy, and from it we should learn at least that in considering the sacrifice that He made upon the cross we must not lose sight of who He was that made it. It was the greatness of the Person that gave efficacy and perfection to His work. He is the Passover Lamb. The Passover is prominent in this Gospel. It was at the Passover that He cleansed the Temple (chap. 2. 13). It was when the Passover was nigh that He fed the multitude (chap. 6. 4). At the third Passover in the Gospel the people sought for Him in the Temple (chap. 11. 55). And at the preparation for the fourth Passover the last solemn scenes which had their culmination in the cross were enacted. And it is in this Gospel only that the words are quoted from the Scriptures, "Not a bone of Him shall be broken." We find that this instruction was given in regard to the Passover lamb in Exod. 12. 46 and Num. 9. 12.

We remember that in Exod. 12, the Israelites had to take a lamb on the tenth day of the month and slay it on the fourteenth day. For four days it lived with them in the house that was to be sheltered from the judgment by its blood. It was before their very eyes during that period. They might consider it and talk of it and say, "This is the lamb that is to suffer for us." It is in this way that the Lamb of God is before us in this Gospel. The work of the Baptist was to call attention to Him, and we behold Him from the tenth day to the fourteenth, dwelling among us. We can trace His footsteps from one passover to another until the fourth is reached, and we can say, "This is the true Passover Lamb." We behold Him

as He walks, without spot or blemish. He could in this Gospel challenge His enemies, "Which of you convinceth Me of sin?" (chap. 8. 46), and even the heartless pagan judge had to own three times over that he could find no fault in Him (chap. 18. 38; 19. 4, 6). As we behold Him we shall surely be moved to follow Him until we reach the place of sacrifice, and there wonder and worship in the presence of the love that led Him to die for such as we are.

He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, and shame to the uttermost was heaped upon Him; but we do not begin with that, but with the dignity, the glory of His Person, He is the LAMB OF GOD. God's Lamb provided by God and for God, and coming forth from Him. And here John breaks out for the third time: "THIS IS HE *of whom I said, After me cometh a Man which is preferred before me,*" but why should He be preferred before or take precedence of John? "for *He was before me.*" At each step in his testimony he maintains the truth as to the One of whom he speaks. He was before John, the Word in the beginning, the Son in the bosom of the Father, and yet "a man." None other than He could be the Lamb of God.

John had had no previous acquaintance with the Lord, and though he was according to nature His cousin, yet this did not help him to recognize Him when He appeared. He knew Him not, except by divine revelation. It was God who sent him to baptize, who told John how he would know Him: "*Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on Him, the same is He that baptizeth*

with the Holy Ghost." And John bare record as to this. He saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode on Him. The dove is an emblem of purity and peace. The Spirit could rest upon the Lord as a man upon earth with peace and complacency, because He was altogether pure and spotless. Thus was He distinguished from all other men, and though as truly a man as any other, yet how different from all others! The Man without sin! The second Man! the Lord from heaven! and He who through the eternal Spirit that had come upon Him, would offer Himself without spot to God (Heb. 9. 14).

And He is the One who baptizeth with the Holy Ghost. In the three synoptic Gospels John contrasts himself with the Lord in this respect. He says, "I baptize you with water," I can bring you down into the place of death, the only right place for you because of your sinful state, "but He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost." He alone can bring you into life, and impart the Holy Spirit to be the power of the life that He gives. This He has done from the right hand of God in heaven, and thus has the faith of Christ been established on the earth in divine and heavenly power. But the cross had to precede this. First He is the Lamb of God on the cross to meet all our liabilities and for our redemption, and then raised up from the dead and exalted to the right hand of God, He baptizeth with the Holy Ghost. He brings those who have redemption through His blood into vital relationship with Himself and His Father by the gift of the Holy Ghost. But this is a divine prerogative, hence John exclaims, "And

I saw and bare record that THIS IS THE SON OF GOD."

JOHN STOOD. His testimony to Christ could continue no longer; a burning and shining light he had been, but he must pass out of sight in the presence of the Light of the World. He had faithfully led his disciples to this point, to Christ, and this was the winding up of his ministry. Jesus had come and John stood as JESUS WALKED. The God-appointed Leader of the flock of God had come, and John, faithful servant that he was, retires. But before doing so, he looks upon Jesus as He walked, and his whole soul becomes absorbed with Him. What could he say other than what he did say, "BEHOLD THE LAMB OF GOD!"? Was this word intended for the ears of his disciples, or was it simply the outburst of adoration from a heart wholly absorbed? I think it was both, and thus he introduced his followers to their Lord, and they left John and followed Jesus. Happy John!

The two disciples followed Jesus without being told to, and it seemed the most natural thing for them to do. We see in them the way the constraining love of Christ works, the true motive in the Christian's life. There was no stern law laying on them a heavy obligation, they followed Jesus because they could not help it. They had, indeed, come under a law, but it was the law of attraction; the Lord had taken possession of their hearts, and where the heart is, there the feet will be if by any means they can be.

It is instructive that these disciples followed Jesus immediately after the mention of the Holy Ghost. Let

us keep the great things of this section of the chapter in their order before us. (1) The great sacrifice (verse 29); here is *the foundation of Christianity*. (2) The gift of the Holy Ghost (verse 33); here is *the power in Christianity*. (3) Two disciples follow Jesus (verse 35); here is *the centre of Christianity*, Christ the great object and attraction. Later, when Andrew sought for Simon and brought him to Jesus, we have (4) *the activities of Christianity* (ver. 41). They have Christ as their end. The Holy Ghost has but one object and that is to make Christ glorious in our eyes, and to enable us to follow Him. This, I believe, is what the sequence of things here would teach us. Sincere souls are often troubled as to whether they are walking in the Spirit or not; here is a simple test: when the heart is set on Christ and the feet

are following Him, we are walking in the Spirit.

Once more John speaks in this Gospel. He calls those that heard him to bear witness that he had said I am not the Christ, but that I am sent before Him. And to Christ belonged the bride, for He is the Bridegroom. Whatever sufferings might intervene, John's faith for the moment glimpsed the glory that would follow, when his Lord would see of the travail of His soul and be satisfied. And when that day came he would be the friend of the Bridegroom and his joy would be full. He beheld the rising of the Sun of righteousness and rejoiced to pass out of sight that Christ might be all and in all. His mission closes with the words, "He must increase, I must decrease." words that shall be bound upon his brow as a crown of glory in the day of glory.

The Christian's Portion.

The true Christian is not gloomy and dull, he is the only person on earth who has a right to be happy, for the past is all settled for him by the blood of Jesus, and his future is all secured; he knows that heaven is his home, for the word of the living God leaves him in no doubt as to that, and though he no longer joins in the laughter of fools, which is as the crackling of thorns under the pot, yet his heart is filled with true merriment; he can make melody in his heart unto the Lord who has saved him.

*"The heart that trusts for ever sings,
And feels as light as it had wings,
A well of peace within it springs
Come good or ill."*

Happy Homes.

The happiest homes are those where the husbands and fathers rule their children and their houses well (1 Timothy 3. 12). The word "rule" means to stand in front of. It does not mean harsh and tyrannical repression, but to take the lead in good works, to say heartily and happily, This is the way.

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?

A TOWER.

Luke 14. 28-30.

F. W. G.

A "tower" is something that is conspicuous and eminent as a building: and needs, on that account, a special solidity. It may be for defence; it may be for looking at what is around it. Our Christian discipleship should have all these characteristics.

It will be conspicuous, in a world like this, first as far as it is Christian. The world is not something of an inferior sort, but the total opposite of Christianity. The Christian is a light in the world, a light which shines in darkness, and cannot blend with it.

It will be eminent: little need to say that, with the Lord's conditions before our eyes. Even the world recognises the moral height of devotedness and self sacrifice; though it will make large reserve when it is estimating this in the case of a Christian.

Then as to defence, the character

of the disciple fully maintained shields him from how much temptation which the waverer invites and succumbs to; while the suffering to which he is exposed as such, causes the "spirit of glory and of God" to rest upon him (1 Peter 4. 14), power that is equal to every demand upon it.

Finally, the disciple it is who as such, acquires the ability to see, the single eye being in fact that of the disciple to whom Christ is the touchstone of everything.

But this is a tower that costs much to build, from the point of view from which it is seen by one outside it. It will cost him all that the world holds precious; how much will he gain he is not yet in the place to see. He who attempts it lightly will surely find it beyond his power to accomplish; and he who does not undertake it in strength far greater than his own.

THE WONDER OF GENESIS I.

A. J. Pollock.

WE, Christians, take the Bible too much as a matter of course. We ought to cultivate the faculty of wonder, and would surely do so if we thought a little more deeply.

Take Genesis chap. 1. its story of creation and reconstruction, and compare it with the ancient writings bearing on the same subject. The heathen accounts are puerile and childish, a mixture of fact and fancy, very little fact and nearly all fancy, and they carry no weight.

Genesis 1. is dignified, and as *true* science comes to light little by little, found to be in exact agreement with its findings.

Think of Moses with his stylo engraving with infinite patience on tablets of clay, the books which bear his name. Somewhere on the sun-scorched deserts of Sinai he must have performed his task.

Was Moses inspired, or was he not? There can be no question as to the answer. The communications of Genesis 1. are so remarkable that they are clearly beyond the knowledge of any mortal man. They must have been communicated by God alone. Only the Creator could communicate the facts there laid out. Of course when creation took place there could be no witness to give evidence. God in His transcendental supremacy brought out of nothing all the wonderful creation we see around us.

The late Professor Huxley, who was an agnostic, and no friend of the Bible, said that five things were necessary in connection with cre-

ation:—(1) Time, (2) Space, (3) Matter, (4) Force, (5) Motion.

The Bible furnishes us with all five.

- (1) Time—*"In the beginning."*
- (2) Space—*Expanse.*
- (3) Matter—*Earth.*
- (4) Force—*God.*
- (5) Motion—*"The Spirit of God moved."*

We have nothing approaching this in the ancient writings of the world. How was it that Moses made no mistake? He was inspired. God held the stylo that Moses wielded.

Genesis I. refutes Unitarianism.

Unitarianism fifty years ago was confined to Unitarian Chapels. Christians would pass these buildings with a shudder. Unitarians believe in one God and refuse to believe in Father, Son and Holy Spirit—One God. They affirm that the Lord Jesus was only a Man—a good Man, who is our Example, but not our Saviour. They affirm that He died a martyr's death, but deny that it was sacrificial. They deny the very foundations of the Christian Faith. To-day Unitarian belief has permeated nearly all sections of Christendom. Therefore the testimony against these beliefs, or rather disbeliefs, needs to be explicit and insistent.

We may ask why did Moses put the name of God, in Genesis 1, and throughout the chapter, in the plural? We may not all know that there are three numbers in the Hebrew language, singular, dual and plural. Plural must be at least

three. In the light of the whole of Scripture is not the Trinity enshrined in Genesis 1, in the Word of God—Father, Son and Holy Spirit, yet one God. Is this not remarkable? How came it that Moses put the word God in the plural? He was clearly inspired.

And further, the verb following the word God is in the singular, thus showing that even if the word God is in the plural, yet there is only one God. We, Christians, believe in one God, not three Gods. We believe in God—Father, Son and Spirit—one God, the triune God. Triune meaning a trinity in unity.

So we see how Unitarianism is refuted in the very first verse of the Bible, for there can be no other meaning than that of the Trinity put into this verse, and the thought is gradually unfolded in the Scriptures.

Genesis I. refutes Pantheism.

The writer has lately been in India and heard it argued for the eternity of matter, that matter is simply an extension of God, that God is in each flaming bush, in mankind, in animals, in trees, in streams, in fact in everything. Pantheism is the doctrine that God and the universe are identical.

But clearly Genesis 1. refutes Pantheism. We read, "In the beginning God created." If God created He existed *before* He created. The carpenter must exist before he can make a table. God is transcendental, that is, He exists before and outside the universe, which is the result of Divine mental conception, so that "through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen

were not made of things which do appear" (Hebrews xi. 3). The writer of Hebrews xi. 3 is in accord with the writer of Genesis 1. 1.

Pantheism in its essence denies the fall. Romans 8. 20 tells us, "the creature was made subject to vanity" (verse 20) and that "the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together till now" (verse 22). Now if God and the creation are identical how could these words be penned describing the results of the fall of man? Impossible!

Nay further because men do not see that God's "eternal power and Godhead" (Romans 1. 20) are manifested in creation they turn to worshipping an image made like to corruptible man, to birds, fourfooted beasts and creeping things. And this surely leads to vile affections, the abuse of what is of God. Is this not seen in lands where pantheism reigns? Have we not seen with our eyes the degradation of heathenism. The ibis (a bird), a bull (a four-footed creature) the image of Buddha, of Ram, or some other images made like to corruptible man are seen on every hand in heathen lands, and is there not gross immorality practised, not as condemned by their religion, but enforced by it? How true to life is Romans 1.

Genesis I. refutes Evolution.

Time is refuting the unproved theory of Evolution and forcing scientific assertions into correspondence with Genesis I. When travelling to India recently a series of talks on different religions was organized on the upper deck in the evenings. When Christianity was presented by a missionary I was specially invited to attend. This missionary talked

only of love and the Sermon on the Mount, and said not a word about sin in its real character, the cross, the atoning sacrifice, but followed to some extent the modernistic trend that has degraded Christianity to a Unitarian level of following Christ as an example and refusing Him as Saviour. We took occasion to bring forward those vital truths of Christianity that centre round Christ as God and Man who atoned for sin on the cross.

Among other things this missionary spoke of evolution complacently as if it were an assumed fact proved beyond contradiction. I told the motley audience made up of Europeans and Indians, professed Christians, Hindus, Sikhs, Mohommedans and Parsees, that scientists in the very first rank frankly admitted that evolution was a theory that had not been remotely proved, that evolution, as we understand the term, is a theory, a figment of fancy, something they would dearly like to prove, for if proved it would deny the fall and make the atonement unnecessary.

Now in Genesis 1. you can count seven times where the expression, "after his kind," occurs (verses 11, 12, 21, 24, 25), and twice, "after their kind" (verses 21 and 25); that is nine times in all. Now that puts an impossible gulf between the species. For evolution to be true that gulf must be removed. But that gulf remains and has never been bridged yet, and never will. Never in nature or in fossil remains is there the slightest indication of one species rising to a higher species, and that is absolutely necessary if evolution is to be true. But nine times over Moses gives the lie to evolution in Genesis 1.

Paul supports Genesis 1. when he wrote, "All flesh is not the same flesh; but there is one kind of flesh of men, another of beasts, another of fishes and another of birds" (1 Corinthians xv. 39). There is no transition from the lower order to the higher any more than there can be transition from the inorganic to the organic.

There is a striking table of the proportion of brain to spinal cord:—

In fish—2 to 1
 „ reptile— $2\frac{1}{2}$ to 1
 „ bird—3 to 1
 „ mammal—4 to 1
 „ man—33 to 1

Note the easy gradation from fish to reptile, from reptile to bird, from bird to mammal, including the ape. But please note the extraordinary jump, the unmistakable saltation, from mammal to man. The jump from 4 to 1 to 33 to 1 is more than eight times multiplied increase, as if God would emphasise the great gulf fixed between man with his brain power, conscience, intuitive knowledge of God, moral qualities, which stand in sharp contrast to the lower creation. Genesis 1. refutes evolution.

We may well ask, How is it that Moses was able to write in advance a chapter that refutes so ably these operations of the human mind, these terrible deceits of Satan, that are damning the souls of multitudes? We can only say he was inspired, and if God held the stylo in His power that Moses wielded, we know every word in that chapter is unassailable truth.

THE WORD OF GOD SHALL STAND FOR EVER (Isaiah 40 8).

CASTING ALL YOUR CARE UPON HIM.

Who shall complete for you that sentence, and how shall it end? Would it be right to say, "for He is omnipotent?" An angel might complete it like that, for they know His unlimited power, but will that relieve your burdened heart? No, you are oppressed with the immensity of the word and its meaning, but nothing more. Then shall we say, "for He is glorious, and fills the heavens?" No, that will not do; it is true, and may even be poetical, but it brings no comfort to your bruised spirit. How did the man who was inspired by the Spirit of God to write it, complete the sentence? He said, "*for He careth for you.*" Ah, that is the right answer, that is the only and all-sufficient encouragement to draw near to Him when sighs have taken the place of song. "*He careth,*" that means there are compassions in His heart, "*for you,*" that means that you are an object of His solicitude. We do not question His power and His glory; we know that He is omnipresent as well as omnipotent, but when cares burden our hearts it is His tenderness of heart that attracts us and gives us confidence to cast all our care upon Him.

FAITH.

Faith is sight, it is the eye of the soul that admits the light that comes from God.

Faith rejoices in what it sees. When I enjoy a landscape on a summer-morning I am not thinking of my sight, but what I see, though I am thankful for the power to see. So when I behold the glory of God in Christ Jesus, I am not thinking of my faith but of God, yet I am thankful that He has given me faith.

Faith is the hand that grasps and holds tightly and confidently what God offers.

Faith sees God to be greater than difficulties. It counts upon God to come in and meet the situation. It holds with greater confidence to Him when everything else fails.

Faith looks outside things visible. Eve broke down because she looked at things only with the natural eye. Moses endured resisting all temptation because he saw Him that is invisible.

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

HOW TO MEET TRIBULATION.

F. B. Hole.

(Psalm 37)

IF Psalm 36 gives us the wicked in contrast with God's character, Psalm 37 sets before us evildoers contrasted with the godly. The contrast is twofold: first, as regards the present life, when the evildoers are the great majority and in the ascendent; second, in the coming age, when evildoers shall be removed in judgment and the godly shall enter into the liberty of glory. In the present age the godly are often oppressed and always in more or less tribulation, so that they need instruction from God as to the way in which they should go through it, and the spirit in which they should meet it.

If the psalm be read in its prophetic significance, it doubtless furnishes instruction to saints upon whom the great tribulation will burst in fury, though one great element of that tribulation is not made prominent. We have to go to the New Testament, and particularly to the book of Revelation, to discover that the great tribulation will not only be a time when there will be a climax of human wrath, and when the devil will be confined to earth, "having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time." but that, most serious of all, it will be the time of the outpouring of the vials of Divine wrath upon the earth. The wrath of God is to be poured out upon nations in this world, and particularly on the Jew who primarily has been guilty of the murder of the beloved Son.

It is important that we should understand that the great tribulation of prophecy is marked by this tremendous feature, for it settles at once

the vexed question as to whether the church is to go through it. We have the most explicit assurance that, "God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Thess. v. 9). The great tribulation being the outpouring of the wrath of God, we are not appointed to it, but shall obtain the salvation involved in the coming of the Lord for His saints, as described in 1 Thessalonians 4.

Tribulation is the certain and common lot of the saints of God in the present age, though the great tribulation they shall never see. We may therefore read Psalm 37 with much profit, and discover that it has very close application to ourselves. The strict interpretation belongs to the godly remnant of Israel and the coming age, when they shall be delivered and "inherit the earth," when they shall "inherit the land and dwell therein for ever." An application, however, may happily be made to such as ourselves, only with alterations and adaptations necessitated by the change of dispensation. We do not look to inherit the earth or the land, but to be translated to our heavenly portion by the coming of the Lord. They will be delivered and so shall we; only in differing manners and with a different portion in view.

Now let us take note of the instruction which the psalm gives; and as it starts with a word of counsel as to what we should *not* do, let us take the negative instructions first.

First of all we are not to "fret" ourselves because of evildoers. This "fretting" is a complaint which is

dreadfully common, and Christians are by no means exempt from it—indeed by reason of the fact that they have a keener sense of what is evil and a keener appreciation of righteousness, they may be more prone to it than any. We have only to look forth upon the world around us and numberless evils and injustices meet our gaze, and it is very natural for us to take particular note of those which have some bearing, even of a remote kind, upon ourselves. Then we proceed to draw very disturbing comparisons. We seem to be in so many awkward situations, and the evildoers seem to have so easy a time! Nothing is easier than to envy them—and fret.

Alas, it is this envy that lies at the bottom of the fretting. We are under trial, and the worker of iniquity seems to be having such an easy time. We cannot bear it! We are like a child in a nursery, who pouts and frets because the other child has an apple a size larger than the one given to it—and the possessor of the big apple was the naughty child of the nursery! Oh, what mischief can envy work in the heart of a saint! And what misery too, it can produce, and what sin!

And moreover, it is all so futile! The workers of iniquity are not going to continue for ever, as verse 2 shows. Subsequent verses make this abundantly clear. "Evildoers shall be cut off" (ver. 8). Again, "Yet a little while and the wicked shall not be" (ver. 10); but the judgment which shall terminate his career is the act of God and not an act of ours. It is well indeed that it is an act of God, for we are far too small, and partial in our thoughts, and self-centred, to be entrusted with it. Our anger and our

wrath against sin cannot be marked by the elevation and holiness which characterize God.

Hence we get a second instruction—still of a negative order—in verse 8. Our anger and wrath would be useless even in the day of judgment. Well, let us cease from the one and forsake the other to-day. This was appropriate instruction in the Psalmist's day; it is far more so in our own, inasmuch as ours is the day of grace and of salvation. We cannot cease from *seeing* the sorrowful doings of the workers of iniquity; to do so would only be a shutting of one's eyes to facts, and a walking in a fool's paradise. We should not cease from *feeling* the wrongs and oppressions and strifes; that would be to crush all the divine sensibilities and sympathies which are within us, as being born of God. But we should cease from *fretting*, from cultivating anger or wrath concerning them; for that will only land us into what is wrong ourselves.

"Fret not thyself in any wise to do evil," are the very next words. That is just it. When anger and wrath take possession of our spirits—even though they be provoked by sin—we become fretful in our views and judgments, and ultimately are entrapped into something sinful ourselves. And what a tragedy that is! Sinning ourselves, because angry against something sinful!

And yet we have done it ourselves, as well as seen it in others. Again and again the tragedy happens amongst the people of God, in the gatherings of saints. Things are weak; mistakes are made; errors in thought or practice creep in. Then a brother rises up; he is better instructed and more far-seeing than

most, possibly more spiritual than any there. He will stand for truth, and put things right. But he does not cease from anger and forsake wrath, and so he cannot have patience and wait for the Lord with full confidence in Him. In result he does not succeed in putting others right. He only puts himself wrong.

Hence lower down in the Psalm again, we find a third instruction of a negative kind. "Depart from evil" (ver. 27). This carries the matter a step beyond verse 8, for we are to keep clear of evil of every kind. In the presence of very much evil we are to be marked by the absence of evil. We can all see the great importance of this. Without it any testimony we may render is nullified. The Psalmist adds, "and do good"; and in these words he carries us from the negative to the positive. The negative—at which we have been looking—is of great importance, yet it is not sufficient of itself. Positive good must be brought in, for God's ways in the moral realm abhor a vacuum, just as they do in the realm of created things.

Now let us turn back to the earlier verses of the Psalm in order that we may take note of the instructions of a positive kind. And first of all to verse 3, where also we are bidden to do good, but here it is mentioned in connection with the root out of which it springs.

"Trust in the Lord, and do good," is the word. The fretful spirit is like a root out of which springs a good deal of evil. Confidence in God is a root out of which nothing but good springs. It sets the heart at rest: it calms the spirit: it delivers from fretfulness. The evil-doers may be terribly irritating and

vexatious; even provocative to the last degree: but after all the Lord is on high and He has not relaxed His grip on things. He is infinitely good, and wholly to be trusted. Confidence in Him will so set our hearts at rest that freed from our fretting we may go calmly onward occupying ourselves with good.

It is good then, to trust in the Lord, and to trust Him wholly, for as the poetess has said,

"They who trust Him wholly,
Find Him wholly true."

Still we must never forget that His trustworthiness does not in the least depend upon the worthiness, or otherwise, of our trust. "If we believe not [are unfaithful] yet He abideth faithful: He cannot deny Himself" (2 Tim. 2. 13). It is therefore most happily true that they who are weak in faith, and consequently do *not* trust Him wholly, yet *find Him wholly true*. This is a fact calculated, above all things, to reinforce and increase our trust in the Lord.

The latter part of verse 3 supports what we have been saying. We do not expect to "dwell in the land," for heaven is our home; but the succeeding words apply to us, "verily thou shalt be fed,"—fed "in truth or stableness," as the margin of a reference Bible puts it. Another version renders it, "and feed on faithfulness." If we do sincerely trust in the Lord then verily we shall feed on faithfulness—God's faithfulness. We shall so experience His faithfulness that it becomes our very food and drink.

A second instruction of a positive sort occurs in verse 4. "Delight thyself also in the Lord." The Psalmist discerned nothing in his surroundings that awakened delight;

indeed the very opposite, the evil-doers pressed in on every side with their persecuting and irritating ways. In the presence of all this it is good to trust instead of fretting, but it is also good to find an unfailing spring of gladness wholly outside the world which the evil-doers dominate. This spring of joy is found in the Lord. The Psalmist here is anticipating that which more than once Paul said to the Philippians—"Rejoice in the Lord."

If we delight ourselves in the Lord we are sure to enjoy the happy consequence which the Psalmist indicates. The change of dispensation has made no change in this. We shall find that the desires of our heart are given to us. If any ask why this should be, the answer is simple: because delighting ourselves in the Lord we delight in His holy will. His thoughts become our thoughts, His desires become our desires. When our thoughts and desires are altogether astray from His then naturally our desires are not fulfilled. When our desires are partly in keeping with His, then our desires are only partly fulfilled. When our desires wholly coincide with His, then, and then only, are all our desires fulfilled. It is good to find pleasure in the saints, and joy in the work of the Lord; but if we delight ourselves in these instead of in the Lord, we are in for some big disappointments.

The Lord is not only worthy of our trust, but of our delight also. He is trustworthy indeed, but He is also the embodiment of all that is lovely, of all that appeals to the renewed heart as a source of joy.

A third instruction is in verse 5. "Commit thy way unto the Lord," or, as the margin has it, "Roll thy

way upon the Lord." How often are we in such perplexing and trying circumstances that our way seems hedged up and impossible: sometimes we may be misjudged, oppressed and even persecuted. What can we do? We can roll the responsibility of our way upon the Lord, and rely on Him. There is immense relief in this. The load is taken off our feeble shoulders, and placed upon His shoulders of strength.

This committing of our way unto the Lord supposes of course that we are in the midst of tribulation and testing from the adversaries. Let us remember that it is not the first item of instruction, nor the second, but the third. It takes for granted that we are trusting in the Lord, and finding our delight in Him. Then, and only then, shall we be prepared to roll our way upon Him, and know that as a happy consequence, "He will bring it to pass."

Bring what to pass? we may ask. Bring to pass His own designs of blessing in connection with our trials; and in particular bring to pass that of which verse 6 speaks. It is His holy pleasure to bring forth a full vindication of His saints, when His disciplinary work within us has reached full fruition. Oppression and defamation are very hard to bear, and doubly so when they proceed from those who are friends. When Job was defamed by his friends he felt it most keenly, but for a long time he fought for his own character instead of committing his way to the Lord. When at last he did this, it did not take long for God to bring forth His righteousness as the light and His judgment as the noonday. Directly he condemned himself and justified God, his righteousness became clear

and God Himself bore witness that at last he had spoken the thing that was right. Then as a consequence his judgment was as the noonday, for he was vindicated before men and blessed of God.

True godliness, or piety, puts the soul into the presence of God. It promotes God-consciousness, and so we see the hand of God at work in the circumstances of life, where the man of the world only sees confusion, or perhaps "luck." The instruction, "Roll thy way upon the Lord," is a hard saying where piety is at a low ebb. Where it is a full-flowing tide it is easy and a delightful relief.

A fourth instruction follows in verse 7. "Rest in the Lord," or, as the margin says, "Be silent to the Lord, and wait patiently for Him." This follows in obvious sequence. Having rolled our way upon the Lord, so that the responsibility and weight of it are now His, we rest in Him and wait for Him to act. The wicked may still appear to flourish and bring his wicked devices to pass, but that no longer frets us. God is wholly competent to deal with all that, in His own time and way. We wait patiently for Him and rest the meanwhile. We are relieved of the whole business; it is His, not ours.

The Hebrew idiom, "Be silent to the Lord," is very expressive. The

inference seems to be that we have so really committed our way to Him, and are so fully prepared to wait patiently for His intervention, that we have nothing more to say. When faith is low we become like querulous children, fretful because others seem to be more favoured than ourselves, and constantly interrupting our parents with questions and complaints. We are happy indeed when faith is vigorous, and as far as questionings and complaints are concerned we are silent to the Lord.

Verse 34 adds one further thing. We are not only to wait patiently for the Lord, but also to "wait on the Lord, and keep His way." Waiting *for* Him means exercising trustful patience until He intervenes. Waiting *on* Him means the maintaining of that holy intercourse and communion with Him that ensures obedience to His will, while we wait for His intervention.

This is the happy end to which all the instruction leads. The tribulation and oppression and difficulty that surround us may still persist for a little while—"yet a little while, and the wicked shall not be" (ver. 10)—nevertheless we may be relieved of our natural fretfulness, and so be set free to find our joy in the Lord, to maintain communion with Him, and consequently to "keep His way," and do His will in glad obedience.

"I have learned in whatsoever state I am therewith to be content" (Phil. 4).

Paul had learned the blessed secret of being able to carry a high head with a hungry stomach, an upright look with an empty pocket, a happy heart without prospect of human help, joy in God when men were faithless. He had learned that God was true to His word, the faithful God, hence he was able to speak of Him as "My God." And Paul's God is ours.

TWO BRIDGE CONSTRUCTION PRINCIPLES.

T. Oliver.

IN the old dispensation, God stated the terms on which He could be with Israel and on which they could be His people. These terms were embodied in the Law or the First Covenant. In that, the opportunity was given to man to prove what he could do with God's help. The Covenant resulted in man proving unfaithful at the very first test. It depended on man's obedience, which was the condition of the blessing.

"If ye will obey My voice and keep my covenant" (Ex. 19. 5).

"If ye hearken to these judgments and keep and do them the Lord thy God shall keep unto thee the covenant" (Deut. 7. 12).

"He declared unto you His Covenant which He commanded you to perform" (Deut. 4. 13).

"Obey My voice and I will be your God" (Jer. 7. 23).

The first Covenant was given to convince man of his powerlessness to meet God's requirements and of his sin. The Covenant promised life but could not give it. Since disobedience forfeited the privileges of the Covenant, the obviating of that contingency must be the main provision of a New Covenant. Obedience must be secured and in the New Covenant that provision has been made, in a way transcending all human device. God Himself undertakes to secure man's side as well as His own.

"God is faithful." "He will not suffer His faithfulness to fail." "With Him there is no variableness nor shadow of turning." Scripture abounds with such references.

The central thought of the New Covenant is that man's heart is put right. So that in the world to come Israel will be unchangeably faithful too! God will put His fear or reverence in their hearts, so that they will not depart from Him. This is the exceeding glory of the New Covenant.

These differences are well illustrated by two different principles of bridge construction.

(1) A bridge is constructed across a ravine supported by a pier at each side. That the bridge may be good and useful depends not only upon the bridge being good but that both the piers may be equally good also. This arrangement is like that of the First Covenant, in which there was nothing wrong with the Covenant or bridge on God's side, but man's side or pier was hopelessly bad and the Covenant or bridge between God and man failed to achieve its purpose.

(2) The second principle of bridge construction is that of the cantilever, in which a bridge is thrown across a chasm and supported entirely from one side. It entails a far stronger structure of support. That is exactly the principle of the New Covenant. In the First Covenant, God was revealed on the principle of "demand." In the New Covenant, He is revealed on the principle of "giving". In the First Covenant there were two parties, God and man. In the New Covenant God has taken all responsibility. "God is one" (Gal. 3. 20).

The New Covenant primarily is made with the house of Israel. As

Gentiles we have no part therein. Then the question may be asked as to what is the application to us. We read, "God who has also made us able (or sufficient) ministers of the New Covenant, not of the letter, but of the spirit", (2 Cor. 3. 6) i.e. not exactly of the doctrine of the New Covenant, but of its experimental application to the soul. The letter is what is set forth in the Old Testament, notably in Jer.31, 31-34. The spirit of what was in God's mind and the principles on which He will deal with Israel when they will be restored under the New Covenant He applies to the Christians now.

All the blessings that Israel will have in the future are to be known now by Christians in a spiritual way. Hence we get all the blessings of the New Covenant in the spirit, although not in the letter. The Lord is the Spirit of the New Covenant. He is the One who died and rose again and now fills the highest place in glory, administering the blessings of the New Covenant. The spirit of the New Covenant is well summarised in one word "Love". The New Covenant is quite unlike the First Covenant which has been rendered "Old" by the introduction of the former. The Old Covenant was well described in the phrase "Thou shalt". The New Covenant is described in the phrase "I will." Everything is secured from God's side.

The Old Covenant resulted in days of failure in responsibility, in murmurings, in rejection of the prophets and finally in the murder of the Holy and Just One. That summary retribution should have fallen on the murderers would be a logical conclusion. But the wonder of it all is that God revealed Himself accord-

ing to the riches of His grace and glory.

The terms of the New Covenant are stated in three parts, viz. (1) I will put My Law in their inward parts and write it on their hearts (that implies "new birth") (2) They shall no more teach every man his neighbour . . . but they shall all know Me. (3) I will forgive their iniquities and I will remember their sins no more. Therefore the Law written in the heart, the knowledge of God (who is love) and forgiveness of sins are the blessings of the New Covenant.

The first term will be literally fulfilled in Israel in "the crowning day of glory." We see from 2 Cor. 3, that a higher blessing is true of the Christian now! Christ (not the Law) is being written in the heart with an eternal pen in an indelible fluid (the Spirit of the living God). So that the principle of the New Covenant applies.

The second term, the knowledge of God, is realised through love. Since love is the way to know God. "Everyone that loveth is born of God and knoweth God" (1. John 4. 7). "God is Love." Love is His nature. He is revealed in the Son, who came to earth to make Him known. Every thought of God in the mind of the natural man is wrong. Darkness and ignorance of this all-essential matter reign supreme. Then there is the blinding of men's minds by the god of this world lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ should shine into them. But God hath shined in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ and this treasure is in earthen (or frail, friable) vessels,

that the excellency of the power may be of God and not of us. (Cor. 2. 4).

The third term, forgiveness of sins, is the initial blessing of the Christian. The question of the sins of the believer has been settled once for all at the cross and God will never raise the question of our sins again. This is in distinct contrast to the Day of Atonement, when God raised the question of sins every year (Lev. 16. 34).

The Lord, the Spirit of the New Covenant, is the perfect expression of the love of God, which was perfectly set forth in His death. Hence we see the value He must have attached to it in speaking of it in connection with "the cup" in instituting the Lord's Supper. In that, He gave His own the cup of the New Covenant ratified in "His blood." Thus we are continually reminded of the love of God, and the reflex action to this is that we pour out our praise and worship to Him, who has so delighted to bless us.

SOME GREAT NECESSITIES.

LOVE makes drudgery divine; the question is not what *must* I do, but what *may* I do. Yet there are some "musts" in Scripture that we must not overlook. "Lo, I come to do Thy will, O God," were the words of the Lord Jesus on coming into the world and that coming was a willing one, "yet the Son of Man *must* be lifted up," (John 3. 14). It was a necessity. It could by no means be avoided. "If it be possible," was the prayer of the Lord in the garden, but it was not possible. How willingly the Lord did all the works of His Father, what perfect love inspired them. This comes out in His words to His disciples. "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." Yet there was a "must" behind all those works. "I *must* work the works of Him that sent Me" (John 9. 4).

would shrink from conduct that would cast a slur upon the Name of his Lord; yet even so he has no option in the matter, whatever his feelings may be. "A bishop *must* be blameless" (1 Timothy 3. 2).

No servant of the Lord in communion with his Master will be cantankerous and quarrelsome; he must not be whether he wishes to or not, for the servant of the Lord *must not* strive" (2 Tim. 2. 24). And though the love of Christ is the constraining motive in all true service, Paul said, "woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel: for necessity is laid upon me" (1 Cor. 9. 16.) And we cannot forget the Lord's words, The Good Shepherd giveth His life for the sheep...and other sheep I have ... them also I *must* bring, and there shall be one flock and one Shepherd.

It is well to remember that while love is the motive of all service and all living for Christ, we *must* serve Him and we *must* live for Him, for we are not our own but are His bond-slaves bought with a price.

A faithful bishop, one who loves the Lord and so loves His interests on earth and cares for them,

LIFE AND ITS SUPPORT.

James Green.

ONLY in the Creator is life self-existent. Whatever form life may take in the creation derived from the author of life it is necessarily dependent for maintenance and continuance upon the means of supply designed by the Creator and which He fully provides. The intelligent recipients of His bounty are supposed to give thanks for this goodness and thus acknowledge their conscious dependence on God for the support of their existence. Further there must be activity on the part of the creature to individually partake of that which is provided for all. For this reason not only the source of supply but the eating of that which is given has so large a place in Scripture, from the food in the garden of Eden, to the fruit of the tree of life in the last chapter of the Revelation.

In the Triune God life is self-existent. The Father hath life in Himself, of the Son it is said, "In Him was life," and all things became, exist, because He gave being to them, and again the Spirit is the active energy by which all things are maintained. Thus in the formation of man, the Divine Wisdom said, "Let us make man." So man was made by the creative act of the Son of God, and by the inbreathing of the spirit, man became a living soul. Upon this he is dependent for his continuance on earth by the Divine will, for in the hand of God is the breath of every living thing. He taketh away their breath, they die and return to their dust. Man's breath is in his nostrils, at the very door of his existence, ready to step forth at the Divine will. It has been well said, that it is only this thin veil of breath that separates man

from the eternal realities of the unseen realm. For indeed man has something more than an existence defined by the physical, his spiritual being connects him with eternity and in this he must continue by the Divine fiat, either in a condition of spiritual life or spiritual death.

Without attempting a definition of life, we are conscious of it in various forms and conditions. It exists in beings celestial, terrestrial, and infernal. It may be either spiritual, physical or moral, but in all cases it is dependent upon supply, which supply must be appropriated and assimilated or death in these conditions will ensue. Food is supplied for all, suitable for all forms and conditions, and in the process of eating the provision is received. Even heavenly beings depend upon supply of which they partake, for we read of 'angels' food.'

We understand all this well enough in the sphere of the physical, but, alas, that men should so persistently ignore the spiritual necessities of their being, and remain in a state of spiritual and moral death. Sadder still perhaps is it that those who have tasted of the grace of God and have been quickened by His regenerative power should so neglect the new life given that the consequence is spiritual starvation. Such a state is not because there is lack of provision, for the fatness of God's house is lying close at hand that can abundantly satisfy the longing soul and fill the hungry with good things. Men of the Adam race, though essentially spirit in their being, are so sensual that their thoughts and aims are bounded by material things. They are 'of the

earth, and its narrow limits is the sphere of things to which they devote their thoughts and aims. Striving and labouring they sacrifice time and health to obtain the meat which perisheth, or if opportunity affords in the pursuit of pleasure, and oblivious of the fact that in neglecting the meat which endures unto everlasting life, they are guilty of spiritual suicide, killing thought, killing time, slaying their moral being in materialism or in selfish indulgence.

There were such in the days of the prophet Isaiah, riotous eaters of flesh, men that followed strong drink, the tabret and pipe, the harp and viol in their feasts, but regarding not the work of the Lord, neither considering the operation of His hands (Isa. 5. 12). That was the world of the prophet's vision, how true of the world to-day! But he has something more to say, and very serious rebuke too concerning the drunkards of Ephraim whose beauty was as a fading flower (ch. 28. 1). Ephraim whom Jehovah had taught to go taking them by the arms in tender solicitude, Hosea 11. 3. "Ephraim, my dear son, a pleasant child" (Jer. 31. 20. Yes Ephraim sunk so low that it is difficult to distinguish him from those who know not God. Is such rebuke only for a bygone day? or has it a voice for the heirs of a kingdom incorruptible? Surely it has when such are found scrabbling amongst the dust and scraps of a world that knows not God, putting material gains and objects first, and neglecting the food which nourishes the spiritual life. How often is the excuse ready "I have my living to get," "I must consider my health," forgetful of the fact that this is to put life on a grade that is little

above animal existence. Business, yes, but is it being run for the pleasure and will of God? Do those who enter the home discover that it is the abode of a man of God? The children, what is the purpose of education for them? Will the inheritance of a good man be left to them, by which they will become witnesses for God and His word? But why this digression from the subject of life and its support? Because the reason that materialism is so largely prevalent amongst God's children can be traced to a question of food. The appetite has become jaded and dulled by seeking satisfaction in the world's intellectual culture, art, science, ambition or suchlike.

It was this question of the true support of life which was pressing upon our Lord's mind, in the discourse recorded in John 6, after the occasion on which He fed five thousand famished people by His creative power. This act had made Him exceedingly popular with the multitude. They would travel far in search of One that could provide for their material needs. This was the kind of King they would gladly have crowned. So low were their thoughts, their hearts so hard with the constant tread of temporal circumstances, that they considered not that the miracle attested the presence of the Creator, and they simply thought of their hunger's craving. "Ye seek Me, not because ye saw the miracle, but because ye did eat of the loaves and were filled." How often do our desires Godward betray that our minds are set on the relief which we seek in earthly circumstance, rather than the deeper experience of Himself which our hearts may have in the trial.

In John 5 the Son speaks of the Divine power that quickens, He gives life to whom He will, but in ch. 6 it is the counterpart on our side of appropriation, of eating of that bread which endures to life eternal, which eliminates death and causes a man to live in all that is truly life, for ever. "Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life." "I am the bread of life." "As the living Father hath sent Me and I live by the Father; so he that eateth Me even he shall live by Me." No more easily understood figure could be afforded to the spiritual mind than that of eating, for it involves the personal action apart from which there can be no sustainment. It is that which cannot be done for another, and to which there must be continual recurrence if health and growth are to result. "He that eateth Me even he shall live by Me."

Our Lord lived, He tells us, by the Father, the Father was the explanation of the object and purpose of His life. Nothing in His life was said or done without reference to the Father. In motive, power, and accomplishment, all was carried through because He was in the Father and the Father in Him. Cast upon God from the womb, the purpose of His life was revealed by His words "Wist ye not that I must be about My Father's business?" until the supreme moment came and His dying lips uttered the last words "Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit." All the way, smooth or rough, there was personal, unbroken contact between the Father and the Son. All the Father's resources were His, He lived in the Father's love, abode in the deep affections of the Father's heart. When

the hour for which He had come into the world was drawn nigh, "Father glorify Thy name." In the hour when His works and words were scornfully refused, "Father I thank Thee that Thou hast hidden these things from the wise and prudent and hast revealed them unto babes." When He stood by the grave of Lazarus to perform the miracle which would attest His glory as Son of God, "Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard Me." When about to cross the Kedron to sustain the agony of Gethsemane, He found in communion with the will of the Father perfect calm and repose. When from this lofty and serene standpoint He surveyed the pathway trodden, and looked into the future glory, He made one request for Himself, "Glorify thy Son," but it was in order that "Thy Son may glorify Thee."

He lived by the Father in the Father's realm of unseen realities, in the midst of men who were pursuing the shadows of temporal vanities. After the same fashion He would have His own to appropriate Himself, to identify themselves with Him in His death, resurrection and glory; setting their minds on the place in the Father's world where He is. So shall be found the support, the urge, the radiance, the fulness, may we say the exuberance of life in Him. Maintained by personal contact and intercourse, and the working out by the inflow and outflow of His own life, all that is involved in "No longer live I, but Christ liveth in me." The food we partake of becomes by assimilation part of ourselves and we take character from that on which we feed. So it is with him in whom Christ received by personal faith

abides. He lives by reason of Christ; Christ it is who is the explanation of his life amongst men who are blind to that which he sees. This is to possess, to enjoy, to live that which is truly life, a life which abides for ever, and over which hangs no shadow of death.

THE MANNA.

Three figures are provided in Scripture in relation to the eating of that which is Divinely bestowed. The manna, the old corn of the land, and the shewbread. Each of these is characteristic of the way in which Christ becomes food for us. The manna was provision for the wilderness, a daily necessity for the circumstances of the way. It was typical of the true bread from heaven, Christ once humbled here. He entered into all that we may be called to pass through, so that whatever the sorrow or trial, He may provide us with the same succour that He received from heaven, giving to us the resource in God by which He was sustained, and as our food strengthening us to walk as He walked. It was small, round, white, in taste like honey, a lovely simile of the grace we partake of as we daily sit at His feet. In His presence we are restful and calmed, and instead of the corners that irritate we discover the roundness that does not chafe and fret. Then as we listen to the words none other could utter, how sweet are they to our taste, yea, sweeter than honey and the honeycomb; the fresh oil of His Spirit blending all circumstances into the consciousness of one great good.

THE OLD CORN OF THE LAND

When Israel arrived in the land of promise a new form of susten-

ance awaited them, the old corn of the land. This speaks of a heavenly Christ who has passed by the way of the cross, out of wilderness circumstances, and stands victorious over the power of death and the grave. To appropriate Him thus is to share the power of His triumph and resurrection, and to enter the joy of a justified, victorious life in identification with Christ risen, a life to which sin and death can have nothing to say. Eating of the old corn, we leave in mind the things and concerns of earth, for the joys and purposes of heaven. We know a Christ, who came from above, who died and rose again and is ascended up where He was before. Risen with Him we feed on heavenly things as our present portion. Such sustainment enables us to overcome the world, and transfers our minds to the things above, until Christ who is our life shall appear, and our identification with Him be manifest to all.

THE SHEWBREAD.

Lastly, the shewbread was the food of the priests. It represents Christ as He ever will be: centre of the Father's love and counsel; Head of His body the Church, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all; and which shall fill a universe of bliss with the joy of God. The shewbread belonged to the holiness of the Presence. Upon it the face of God shone continually. Such food is the support of worship, filling him who partakes with the holy themes of the preciousness of the Son to the Father, and of the Father's purposes for the Son of His love. Eating as priests of God of the shewbread we enter into the desires that are expressed in the prayers of the Ephesian epistle, to be rooted and

grounded in love, and to see the saints before the Father in the fragrance and acceptance in which Christ the Beloved abides. It is to feed upon the bread of God, unto

whom the glory shall be to the eternal ages, in which the redeemed of God shall for ever feed on life's blest tree.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Sacrifices in the Millennium.

"I am told that in the Millennium the sacrifices, as of old, will be restarted: yet Hebrews 10 tells us that God had no pleasure in them. Is there any Scripture to support this and if so, what will be the import of these sacrifices?"—ESSEX.

EZEKIEL 43, 45, 46 clearly shew that the offerings will be resumed in the Millennium. They will not be shadows of the one great sacrifice of Christ that was to come, as were those of old, but will be commemorative in character: they will keep that great and all-sufficient sacrifice in mind, as the Lord's Supper keeps it in mind for us.

It may seem strange to us that burnt offerings and sin offerings should be resumed, but the relationship in which Israel and the nations will stand with God will be different from the one in which we stand. We worship God *in spirit* and in truth; we have boldness to enter the holiest by the blood of Jesus; the Holy Spirit has been given to us as the Spirit of sonship, and as such He dwells in us; and being in Christ all distance has been removed between our souls and God: through Christ *we have access* by one Spirit to the Father.

The *basis of Israel's* relationship with God will be the same as ours, for in all dispensations the atoning sacrifice of Christ is the one and only ground upon which men can be at peace with and reconciled to God, but they will not be "in Christ" and "in the Spirit" as we are, though the Spirit will be poured upon them; they will be a people in flesh and blood conditions, blest, not with all spiritual blessings in the heavenlies in Christ, but with earthly blessings and prosperity. They will not have freeness of access to the Father as we have, nor boldness to enter the holiest. The most holy place will be restored in the temple, and the gate to it will be closed except on the sabbath day and the day of the new moon. On these days the prince of the house of David will be permitted to stand at the threshold and worship there when the priests shall have prepared his offerings. It is all in keeping with an earthly order of worship and the sacrifices will have their place in this.

"And He saw that there was no man, and wondered that there was no intercessor."

"And the Lord saw it, and it displeased Him" (Isaiah 59).

“THE WORD BECAME FLESH.”

J. T. Mawson.

IN THE BEGINNING WAS THE WORD.” In this opening statement of the Gospel of John our thoughts are carried back to Eternity, and by the infinite grace of our God there is revealed to us who and what was there. Before Time began, or ever the first creatorial word was uttered the Word was there. But He was not alone, “THE WORD WAS WITH GOD.” The “with” of that statement not only reveals to us the distinct personality of the Word, but implies companionship and oneness of thought and life. The Word was in absolute accord with God. There was no breach in the harmony of that timeless eternity; between God and the Word there was perfect, ineffable communion. “The face of the eternal Word, if we may dare so to express ourselves, was ever directed to the face of the eternal Father” (Liddon); or to use those divinely inspired words in Proverbs 8 “Then was I by Him, as one brought up with Him, and I was daily His delight, rejoicing always before Him,” or to come to the more intimate and fuller revelation which is in this same chapter, we learn that this same Person, as the only-begotten Son, is in the bosom of the Father. No creature mind can fathom the depth and blessedness and intimacy of that eternal *withness*, but we know of no human language that could express it better.

This could only be because the Word was Divine in His nature and Being — “THE WORD WAS GOD.” The Fellow of the Lord of Hosts (Zechariah 13. 7) must of a necessity be God, eternally co-equal with the One who delighted in Him and in Whose bosom He dwelt.

Then as though to give a special emphasis to His distinct personality, so that we may be in no doubt as to it the Spirit of God adds, “*The same was in the beginning with God.*” There was no period of time when that *withness* began, it was eternal in its character and blessedness. Here then are three things to ponder as to the glory of the Word. His eternal existence, His distinct personality, His substantial Godhead. “The language of the Gospel is plain as possible, and like the sword of Paradise, turns every way, in opposition to the thoughts and reasonings of men, to defend the Divinity [Deity] and the personality of the Son of God” (*Darby*).

The Word is a divine title, and it belongs to Him whom we know as JESUS, our Saviour. This makes us eager to know what it means. It means that whenever and howsoever and to whomsoever God has spoken and revealed Himself, He has done it by Him who is the Word. It means more than that—all that has been spoken by Him was in Him before it was revealed. The prophet Micah declared that His goings forth were from eternity. What those goings forth were we do not know, but we cannot suppose that God was inactive in those measureless ages, but whatever those activities were, they found their expression in the Word. But now in Time His goings forth have been brought within man’s range: first in creation, and then in the revelation of the heart of God and the redemption of men.

“*All things were made by Him, for without Him was not anything made that was made.*” The Word

is the Creator and in creation He expressed the power and divinity of God. And this is acknowledged by all men who are not wilfully blind, or alienated from the life of God.

He was the originator, the designer, the maker of the universe and every creature in it. It is by faith that we understand this (Heb. 11) and we have no need to waste our time and weary our brains, as does the evolutionist, in the vain search for some cause within nature of its multifarious life; the Cause was outside of it and transcendent to it. We are carried to the source and cause of it all in these words. We begin with the Word: He has made all things and He upholds all things that He has made, and we know that He will eventually make all things serve His glory, and so justify the making of them, then shall everything that hath breath praise Him.

“And the Word became flesh.” What great statements there are in this chapter; they break upon us with an abruptness that would surprise and startle us if we had not become so familiar with them. Let us put two of them together. “In the beginning was the Word . . . and the Word became flesh.” The first sentence carries us back into Eternity, the second brings Him who was eternal into Time. First we learn Who and What the Word was, then what He became, and this opens up a new chapter in God’s ways with men, that must issue in eternal blessing for them and glory to Him. It was the Word Himself, the Creator that became flesh. He did not take the nature of angels, it was the sons of men whom He loved and sought: frail, mortal, sinful men; and He was made in their

likeness that He might dwell among them, not to condemn them or make them afraid, but that He might win them and save them.

Here is the mystery of Godliness, which is very great; it transcends all human conception, and because of this we are only safe as we abide by the words of Scripture in considering it. Master Ridley, who was burned at the stake in the days of the infamous Mary said, “In these matters I am so fearful that I dare not speak further, yea, almost none otherwise than the text doth, as it were, lead me by the hand.” He was a wise man. Many a fierce battle has been fought over the truth of Christ’s person in the history of the church, to the damage of the saints of God and the glee of their foes. Gibbon, the historian, says of the early fathers, “The principle of discord was alive in their bosom, and they were more solicitous to explore the nature, than to practise the laws, of their Founder.” We must shun such folly as that as we would shun the devil himself. Creeds have been formulated in the hope of defining the truth and fixing the faith of men as to it, and these have become in turn the subject of conflict, insomuch that the text which will lead us by the hand, according to Ridley’s quaint words, if we are subject and willing, has been obscured or forgotten. We turn to it afresh, here are Holy Ghost-inspired words, “The Word became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth.” This is wholly of God. No man could have conceived such a thing as this. If the distance that separated us from God was to be removed, the best that we could have thought of was that we should struggle through impenetrable darkness and against incalculable diffi-

culties out of the depth of our fall up to His throne—an eternal impossibility of course, but the awakened soul would say, His justice, His majesty, the glory of His Name demands it, and because we are “without strength” to accomplish the impossible task, we are hopeless. But here we have the revelation of God that confounds us, that fills us with wonder, and changes all our false yet natural thoughts of Him. “The Word became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth.” It was the only way in which He could reach us, only by becoming one of us could He communicate the thoughts that filled the heart of God towards us, and make known to us that love which is greater than all our sin.

It has been said that He might have come as the Judge in righteous wrath, and the law which was given by Moses, seems to confirm this saying: for if when the law came to men, Sinai was swathed in darkness and tempest, and from its flaming summit the lightnings flashed and the thunders pealed, so that Moses himself trembled with fear at the sight of it, we might well conclude that the coming of the Lord whose law it was would mean the complete destruction of men, but in this we should be utterly wrong. If He had come as the Judge, His creatorial work would have been in vain, His eternal counsels would have failed, His thoughts would have perished, He would have lost the creature of His choice for ever, and Satan would have triumphed. No, He could not at the first coming, come as the Judge. The Scriptures bore witness to the great truth that if God came down to men He must come as their Saviour, and further, if they were to

be saved, God must come and do it. The incarnation of the Word was the fulfilment of the Scriptures.

“He dwelt among us.” He was not censorious and coldly distant from men, He ate and drank even with sinners with a freedom that angered the Pharisees; and so meek and lowly was He, so without self-assertion or insistence on His rights, that they despised Him. He was nothing more to them than a man, a Nazarene, a carpenter. How infinite was His condescension! From the eternal throne He came to tread the filthy streets of those Palestinian cities, and to move among men more vile than their streets, and to be with them “full of grace and truth.” Whenever He spoke, in everything that He did, from whatever point He was approached, there was grace and truth. Grace, stooping down to the deepest depths of man’s need to meet it, and truth—exposing the lie, making all who received it free, and setting men in right relations with God for ever.

Grace belongs to the New Testament, it came into the world when Jesus came, He was full of it and its fulness was brought to men in Him. It is God’s favour to men, and it is infinite and unlimited. God could not have shown His favour to men in a more complete and perfect way than by the coming of His only-begotten Son into the world; this was the best and the greatest that He could do. No other than the Word could speak fully and finally for God, no other than the Son could tell the love that filled the Father’s heart; He came to do this, and that love in its wonderful activities on the behalf of men is the grace of which our verse speaks. It brought Jesus down to men where

they were and as they were, and looked for no merit in them, only need; they needed Him, that was enough. That grace was the fulness of the Godhead working untiringly for the blessing of men.

How altogether suitable to the needs of men was Jesus as He dwelt among them. In other Gospels we see that He was equal to all their sicknesses and distresses, and it is beautiful to contemplate Him always accessible, always placing Himself at their disposal; but in John's Gospel there is something more and deeper. It is John's work to show us how He dealt, not so much with the burdens that were on men, but with the ignorance that was in them.

His mercy and power could heal every disease and deliver all who were oppressed from the devil's power, and lift every burden that was *on* them; but the grace that was in Him could meet and remove the darkness and crookedness that was *in* them.

"And of His fulness have all we received, and GRACE UPON GRACE." The needs of men, our needs, are greater than any human language can describe, but this fulness is greater than our needs, and it pours itself out now for us, as it did upon those disciples, in wave upon wave, just as the sea rolls in upon the shore, until every cave and crevice is filled. It goes beyond all our needs, and will, until we are filled into all the fulness of God.

And He was full of truth also; He was the truth. The law was true, but it was not the truth. It did not reveal what God is, nor did it fully expose what man was, nor

the world nor Satan; it served its purpose, and has been superseded by grace and truth which came in Jesus Christ and abide in Him. He was the test of everything. What God is, and what man is, has all been shown by His coming, and that coming has not made demands upon men that they cannot meet, but has brought the unsought, unmerited, and inexhaustible favour of God to them to put and keep them right with God for ever.

But in the very midst of this declaration of His grace, there comes an interruption. The apostle breaks in with the words, "And we beheld His glory, the glory of the only-begotten with the Father." It would seem as though the Holy Spirit would allow no interval to elapse between the statement of the fact of the incarnation of the Word and the declaration of the unchanged and unchangeable glory of His Person. This testimony surely means that in becoming man He did not surrender what He was before. His circumstances were changed and His condition: He who was in the form of God had taken His place among men, in their likeness, and in a servant's form. He had become Man in the full sense of that word as God would define it, but He was still the Word, and more, He was the Only-begotten with the Father. This glory that the disciples contemplated, revealed the relationship with the Father that could not change, it ever must be as it was in those timeless ages before the worlds were made. In His humiliation, even down to the deepest depth of it, He was still "the Only-begotten with the Father."

It was not an earthly glory but a heavenly that these disciples saw; it was not a human glory such as Sol-

omon possessed, for it had never rested upon a man before, it was a divine glory, and the Man upon whom it rested was a unique and heavenly Man. The distinction that rested upon Jesus was that He was the all-sufficient Object of the supreme delight and love of the Father, and that He lived and found fulness of joy in what the Father was, for He was the Son. He was enough for the Father and the Father was enough for Him. This had always been so, for He said to the Father, "Thou lovedst Me before the foundation of the world" (chap. 17. 24), but John is talking about what they saw, that that was in eternity had come into time and was lived on earth before their eyes. No angel could claim this divine and heavenly distinction, it belonged to One alone, even the Only-begotten with the Father, and He a Man dwelling among them.

But to go back to a previous statement in our chapter, The Word was the Light. The statement should read, "The true Light was that which, coming into the world, lightens [or is light to] every man." The Light is the Word, but now He is not creating, but shining for the blessing of His creation. He came into it for that purpose. Yet, though He was in the world, and that not for judgment but for blessing, men neither perceived it nor desired to. *"He was in the world, and the world was made by Him, and the world knew Him not. He came to His own, and His own received Him not."* How dense must the moral and spiritual darkness be in which the devil holds the world! How complete must be the alienation from the life of God in which men are by nature! Such a statement as this reveals it all to us.

The world did not know its Creator when He came into it. The elements owned Him, for the winds and the waves obeyed His command, and the fish of the sea knew His voice. It was man, made in the image and likeness of God, that did not recognize Him and did not obey Him. And, worse still, His own, that favoured nation to whom God had spoken in the law and by the prophets, who boasted that they were God's people, they received Him not when He came to them. They loved the darkness and not the light, because their deeds were evil. The Creator was a rejected stranger in His own world, and not rejected only, but hated.

There could be no other light but the true Light, and if the true Light shone in vain, if men loved the darkness and spurned this Light, there was none other to come, and what then? Must the whole race of men sink under the darkness in which they lived in this life into the outer darkness of the lake of fire? Well, if God's patience had been exhausted by the wickedness of men, Yes; but because it was not, No. A new energy was put forth, an energy mightier than the darkness and death that held men in thrall. Not only did the Light come into the world, the Son to reveal the Father, but the Holy Spirit took up His work in connection with that coming, that the eyes of men might be opened to see and appreciate the Light. So we read, *"But as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe in His Name: which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God."* This could only be because the **"THE WORD BECAME FLESH"**

What inconceivable energy there must have been in that word, "Let there be light." The darkness of ages fled before it, but we see a greater, a more remarkable energy put forth here. It is active now, not to bring about a world or worlds in which the power of God is displayed, but **A FAMILY** in which His love can find its joy. His purpose was to have children, only such could satisfy His heart: those who should be morally like Him, able to appreciate His love and respond to it. The universe would have been nothing to Him apart from this. It was created for the Son of God and for them who were to be His companions, His brethren. Before He put forth His power to give it being His delights were with them, the

sons of men (Proverbs 8). And here we find them: out of a scene of darkness and death they come, not by man's power, not because they were of high birth, not because they had learned wisdom in the school of men, but because **THEY WERE BORN OF GOD.**

The Word became flesh with this end in view. He became Man that He might redeem men from their sins and the power of Satan, and this could not be done apart from His death. He became Man that He might die for men, that He might suffer for them, the Just for the unjust to bring them to God. "Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world." The Word who became flesh is He.

FOR THOSE WHO SERVE.

TALKING to men for God is a great thing, but talking to God for men is greater still. He will never talk well and with real success to men for God who has not learned well how to talk to God for men. More than this, prayerless words in the pulpit and out of it are deadening words.

I judge that my prayer is more than the devil himself; if it were otherwise, Luther would have fared differently long before this. Yet men will not see and acknowledge the great wonders or miracles that God works in my behalf. If I should neglect prayer but a single day, I should lose a great deal of the fire of faith.—*Martin Luther.*

The principal cause of my leanness and unfruitfulness is owing to an unaccountable backwardness to

pray. I can write or read or converse or hear with a ready heart; but prayer is more spiritual than any of these, and the more spiritual any duty is the more my carnal heart is apt to start from it. Prayer and patience and faith are never disappointed. When I find my heart in frame and liberty for prayer everything else is comparatively easy.—*Richard Newton.*

Speak for Eternity. Above all things cultivate your own spirit. A word spoken by you when your conscience is clear and you are full of God's Spirit is worth ten thousand words spoken in unbelief and sin. Remember that God, and not man, must have the glory. If the veil of the seen machinery were lifted off, how much we would find is done in answer to the prayers of God's children.—*R. M. McCheyne.*

IS IT RIGHT?

R. McCallum.

Haggai 1. 1-15: 2. 1-9.

THERE are three post-exile prophets, Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi. Haggai should be read in conjunction with Ezra, which gives us the historical situation. Zechariah goes with Nehemiah. Haggai sets forth the condition of the people in relation to religious things, in relation to the house of God. Zechariah treats more of their attitude to things civil, the building of the city and the walls, while Malachi sets forth in very terse language the low moral condition of the people. They had returned from seventy years of captivity in Babylon. They had laid again the foundations of God's house with song and rejoicing and with tears and sorrow. You will remember that opposition and discouragement came to them from the Samaritans, and the good work that had been begun was left undone. For fourteen or fifteen years this spirit of apathy to the house of God had taken hold of the people. It was not merely that in the meantime they had gone on to build their own houses, they had completed that work, they had looked after their own personal comfort, and then settled down. Their own houses were roofed and they were dwelling in them at their ease while God's house stood unfinished. If you had gone to them and said, Don't you realise there is a work for you to do? they would have said, We most assuredly do. The house of God deserves to be built, we have the intention of building it, but this is not the time. I have no doubt, with pious words upon their lips, they could have justified themselves in saying, This is not the time. It may have been founded on misun-

derstanding of the Scripture, a misconception of some prophetic portion that should have been a stimulus, an incentive to go on in the work of God, that piece of Scripture misunderstood, distorted, had proved a soporific, a sedative instead of a stimulus.

Now God comes down to them and makes an appeal which is really an appeal to the mind. Is it the time for you to be dwelling in ceiled houses while My house stands as it is? I want to challenge us all as to this. *Is it right* that we should be putting our personal interests before the interests of God and His Christ? That is what they were doing in Israel. Looking after their own interests first, God's interests, perhaps, second. They were putting second things first. I include myself as I speak to you, there is a very real danger in these slack days of every one of us putting second things first and putting first things second. I appeal to your intelligence and your conscience as God would appeal to it, and I ask, Is it right? In the light of all the glory of Christ and the work of Christ, in the light of the redemption price paid for us by Christ, ought we to neglect His interest and think of our own first? We are the purchase of His blood, redeemed by the blood of the Lamb, and we know right well His glory, His honour, His business ought to have the paramount place of our hearts.

Thus He called Israel to consider, and in an appeal which is an appeal to their hearts, although, mark you, the very fact that it is wrong ought to have settled things once and for all, but the gracious God appeals

to their hearts, and He says, *Is it profitable* to put your own interests before the interests of God? Have you been prosperous? Have you been blest? Have you been sincerely happy? And in the light of experience they had to answer. It has not been so. They had sown much and looked for much and gathered little. They had eaten and not been satisfied; taken drink and remained thirsty. They had gathered and put their gains into bags with holes; things had gone wrong and they had gone wrong intentionally, because God will never let one who is His child be successful in the highest sense if he is putting his own interests before those of Christ.

I appeal to those who are young, who are Christ's, the purchase of His blood, Is it right you should put your own interests first? It is not. Is it profitable? You will find in the retrospective, if you put second things first, blasting and mildew and emptiness will be your portion at the end of life. But if you put Christ and His interests first you will have joy and prosperity in its true sense. You remember how it was said of Joseph he trusted in God and God was with him and he was a prosperous man. So will you be if God comes first. There are things which have a claim on your attention, without doubt, the things of everyday life, your duty to those with whom you live in responsibility, they have a claim upon you but put them in the right and proper place. Well, if it is not right, not profitable, what next? Now comes an appeal to the will in the command of God. And what does God say? He says, Go up to the mountains. It is a command to energy and devotion, the consecration of time and strength to the things of

God. And we cannot do much for God unless we are willing to consecrate our time to His service and interests. Go up to the mountains and bring wood. Consecrate your energies, your powers, your manhood to the interests of God and His Christ. And build the house.

We are not called upon to build a material house but we may be engaged in the work of God in connection with the building of a spiritual house. This is our privilege and responsibility. God deserves our time and energies and what ability He has given us, and there are many young men who have ability given them by God—all their ability comes from Him—who have not perhaps as yet considered the work that God would have them do and have not consecrated their gift and ability to the interests of God and to the interests of Christ.

Go up, work, build, and you will find that one of the greatest preservatives against backsliding and the evil things of the world is true engrossment with the things of Christ. God says, I will be with you. I will be glorified, saith the Lord.

There will be discouragements, they will come from without and often from within. When that temple was being rebuilt I have no doubt some of the old men well over seventy years of age, who could recollect the former glory of that house, would stand back and say, You are getting on with a good work, the house of God is being built, but, if you could only have seen the former glory of this house! This is a poor work you are doing. It is discouraging for young men who are devoting themselves to the interests of Christ to find others harking back to the past, reminding

them things are as nothing now in comparison with former days. Let us refuse to be discouraged. God is still with us and is glorified if, with purpose of heart, we are seeking the extension of His interests. Do not let us be discouraged, for God says to us, as He said to Israel, Be strong, which does not mean be physically strong, but tenacious. It is quite true the day in which we live is a day of ruin, things are broken up, the pristine glory of Apostolic days has gone. But in the purpose of God and Christ there can be no break up. Our Lord and Master said, "On this rock will I build My church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." When we see that which has been committed to man corrupted and ruined by his wilfulness and sometimes by his desire to do that which is right, but doing it in the wrong way, are we to sit down in discouragement and say, It is not worth while? No, we will not do that. We will encourage ourselves in God. God says, Go on. Be strong, be tenacious, firm in purpose.

And if there has entered into your heart the desire to serve for the glory of God in the interests of Christ, to help His people, and build up His house, do not go back on it. Be tenacious in purpose and go on. Stand fast, be strong and work. Personally I thank God for any little service I have engaged in. I find that it makes one take a stand, things become easier for one when one engages in the service of God. Then He says, *Fear ye not*. Why should we fear when we have His promise that He will be with us?

There is no doubt this second temple was not as great as the first.

The Urim and Thummim were not there, the Ark and the tables of stone and the shewbread were missing. It was not so rich in material things. But God did not see the change over from one temple to another. He saw the continuity of His house. In spite of all that had taken place, in spite of the failure in Israel, He saw the continuity of His house and looking on, He said while the best had departed, perhaps, as we would look at it, The latter glory of this house is going to be greater than the former. God has His purpose and plan in view. The house of God is to be the centre of blessing for the whole earth and peace is going to be given to a ruined, weary and worn out world through Christ from Jerusalem.

He came in the first place to make peace by the blood of His cross. He is coming again to give peace to this ruined world. But I want you to fix your thoughts upon God's present work. He has His purposes about His church. He is to have glory in it by Christ Jesus throughout eternal ages. It may be marked by failure, the wilfulness of men may have wrecked it outwardly, but in spite of everything there is going to be manifested in it in the ages to come, the wonderful glory of God, and God is calling upon us to have our part in His work. Let us heed these words of God to His ancient people. They were written for our own admonition. It is our business to put the interests of God and His Christ in the first place. If we do, everything else will come right. But if we put our own things first, everything is bound to go wrong. Go on, work, build, be strong, continue to work and fear not, for God says, I will be with you.

“ALL THINGS ARE OF GOD.”

Inglis Fleming.

THE Lord thy God in the midst of thee is mighty. He will save, He will rejoice over thee with joy; He will rest in His love. He will joy over thee with singing” (Zeph. 3. 17).

So speaks the Lord concerning Zion, the city of the great king. In a future day it shall be a centre of blessing—blessed, and made a blessing to others.

But we may make an application to ourselves in these happy Christian times and delight ourselves as we do so. “The Lord our God,” to us is “our Father” and we are His children. Well may we cherish the thought of

HIS STRENGTH.

He is mighty indeed. *All* mighty. None can stay His hand or say, What doest Thou? And His omnipotence is for us.

“He everywhere hath sway,
And all things serve His might;
His every act pure blessing is,
His path unsullied light.”

His infinite love uses His infinite power in infinite wisdom towards us all and He cares for us in every detail of our goings.

“He nothing does nor suffers to be done” which we shall not approve when we see “the end of the Lord” in all that He brings or suffers to come upon us.

Thus we rejoice in

HIS SALVATION

through all our circumstances. He was enough as to our sins. He is enough as to our circumstances and sorrows as we journey on. Passing

through the valley of Baca (tears) He *can* make it and *does* make it a well of refreshment and encouragement, while the rain, His heavenly ministry, covers the wilderness with blessings in abundance.

So He brings us on “from strength to strength,” saving us “to the uttermost” that is, to the very last step of our homeward way.

And soon these bodies of weakness and humiliation will be changed. Power and honour will be ours as in spiritual bodies, incorruptibility will be our portion eternally.

Thus will His salvation be completed and He will find

HIS SATISFACTION

in the accomplishment of the good pleasure of His will concerning us. “He will rejoice over us with joy He will rest in His love.”

For this He marked us out—for sonship to Himself—that we might be before Him in His home on high.

Comely with the comeliness He has put upon us, He will rejoice in the perfection of His own work while His holy eye rests with complacency upon us.

Now He is active in His love, working for us and working in us that which is well-pleasing in His sight by Jesus Christ. He knows what is best for us for our spiritual advancement and acts for our profit and that we “may be partakers of His holiness”—that is, more and more conformed to His thought for us.

But in that day when the Father's house is reached and we are filling its courts with our praises He will rest in His love, for the activities of His love will no longer be called for as they are now. Then love's object will be fully gained and He will give expression to it in

HIS SINGING

as He joys over us.

How marvellous that we should contribute to His joy and gladness.

We who once were enemies in our minds by wicked works and alienated from the life of God. But *all* is of Himself, "We are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God has before ordained that we should walk in them." And may it not be that the good works may embrace our worship in His presence as we joy before Him and rest in the sense of His love eternally and break forth into singing also ?

TRUE USEFULNESS.

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

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

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

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

FRIENDS OF GOD.

T. Oliver.

FRIEND of God" is a title applied to Abraham as set forth in the Scriptures, viz., "Art thou not our God who gavest this land to the seed of Abraham Thy friend for ever?" (2 Chron. 20. 7).

"But thou Israel, art the seed of Abraham, My friend" (Isa. 41. 8).

"Abraham believed God and it was imputed to him for righteousness and he was called the friend of God" (James 2. 23).

It was on the trial of his obedience in the offering up of his son that the Apostle adduces the evidence that Abraham was the friend of God as a consequence. The title was conferred upon him, not only because God frequently appeared to him and talked with him, but because He made a covenant of perpetual friendship with him and his seed (Gen. 12). He renewed that covenant confirming it by an oath (Gen. 22). As a consequence of His friendship God could not conceal secrets from him. "Shall I hide from Abraham the thing that I do?" (Gen. 18. 17) sets forth His attitude relative to the destruction of Sodom and the safety of Lot.

When we come to the New Testament times we find that the intimate relation of "friend" acquires an additional interest in the Lord's words to His own on the eve of His betrayal and crucifixion.

(1) "Greater love hath no man than this that a man lay down his life for his friends."

(2) "Ye are My friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you."

(3) "Henceforth I call you not servants, for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth, but I have called you friends, for all things that I have heard of My Father I have made known unto you" (John 15. 13-15).

The beautiful sense of the first passage has been marred to a great extent by the line in Stennet's hymn "Thou for thine enemies wast slain" adduced in that connection. In the hymn we think of ourselves as His enemies, which is very different from the context of the verse paraphrased.

The second passage goes on to say "Ye are My friends". We are the friends for whom the Lord laid down His life. The third passage states that He calls us friends, because He has made a perfect declaration to us of all that He has heard from His Father. If we apprehend that distinction in its living power we shall be set free from ourselves and considerations of our fitness, to think of Himself. As a consequence we shall be filled with praise, as we think of His superabounding love.

As the eyes of our heart are enlightened with His glory and beauty we lose all thoughts of ourselves and are worshippers in reality. We shall not be more loved in the glorious day to come than we are now! We shall not be one atom more in acceptance than now, because "as He is so are we in this world." We are accepted in the Beloved!

But the passage has an aspect of responsibility as well as that of privilege. "Ye are My friends if ye

do whatsoever I command you.” We shall only be giving a suitable advertisement to the fact that we are His friends, if we are obedient to our Lord’s commands. Hence it is of prime importance that we should know the Lord’s will or mind. When that is made known, it is of equal urgency that we do not merely bow to His will in a negative way, but that we give effect to it in a positive way with delighted hearts.

From the 14th chapter of John’s gospel we see that love is an integral factor involved in keeping the Lord’s words or commandments. As His word will be treasured or cherished so we shall be found maintaining the truth effectively. No mere correct statement in a formula or creed will do. The truth can only be held by Christians in the power of the Holy Spirit.

This World and That.

“And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes: and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.” These are things that fill this world, but God will fill that. These things are all the product of sin, but then the Lamb of God shall have taken away the sin of the world, and these former things shall have passed away with it. Where sin is they must be, but where God is all in all they cannot be.

How wonderful is God’s way. It is through these things that we suffer, that we learn what God is in His mercy and sustaining grace as we never learn Him in days of ease and prosperity. It is tribulation that worketh patience and fills us with a wonderful hope, for God’s love is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost that is given unto us, but what will it be when all these sore things have passed away for ever, and we know God in the eternal blessedness of His own nature apart from them all! It will not be our need then, but His glory, and prayer shall then have given place to everlasting wonder and praise.

God Pleading.

There can be nothing worse, darker, arguing a nature more averse or indifferent to what is good, than that God should plead, and that men should steel their hearts and deafen their ears against His voice. The crown of man’s sin, because it is the disclosure of the secrets of the deepest heart, as loving darkness rather than light, is turning away from God’s voice that woos them to Himself.

Men will find excuses for not listening to God’s voice in the gospel, but let all who profess it and preach it beware lest they make their inconsistencies the excuse.

THE ENDURING NAME.

F. B. Hole.

(Psalms 40, 41, 72).

THE Psalms are divided into five books, each of them ending with a doxology. Psalm 41 is the last of the first Book: Psalm 72 the last of the second Book. There is a very striking connection, and yet a contrast, between these two Psalms.

Psalm 41 is also closely connected with Psalm 40. Both are psalms of David, yet in the former there is a great deal more of that which goes right beyond anything that he could say of himself to that which is distinctly prophetic of Christ—things that could *only* be said of Him. In Psalm 41, on the other hand, we find the experience of David, though here and there, as we can now see, the language is so framed by the Spirit of God as to be applicable to Christ. This is the case of verses 5, 9, 12. It is particularly clear and definite in verse 9. David was doubtless thinking of Ahithophel, but the Spirit, who inspired him, was thinking of Judas Iscariot; for the Lord applied it to him in John 13. 18.

David was a man surrounded by enemies who spoke evil against him and wished him nothing but evil, desiring that his name should perish (verse 5). He had given them some cause for this, as is shown by his confession to the Lord, put on record at the end of verse 4. Yet all his adversaries were as nothing to those who united against Jesus and hated Him "without a cause" (Psa. 69. 4). Very early in His ministry the religious leaders of Israel plotted His death, being "filled with madness" against Him. Matthew 12, Mark 2, and Luke 6 tell us about

this. Later, as John 11 shows us, the High Priest avowed their determination in the most cynical fashion, although the Holy Spirit seized upon his utterance and gave it a prophetic significance which he never intended. Their determination was that His very Name should be blotted out from under heaven.

The early chapters of the Acts bear witness to the bitter way in which the leaders tried to suppress the Name of Jesus. They could not object to the healing of the lame man, but they objected most strenuously to the virtue and power of that beneficent work being attributed to the Name. In chapter 4 we see how boldly Peter confronted them with the might and glory of that Name. They retaliated by threatening them, and later by flogging them, if only thereby they might quench the testimony to the Name that they abhorred. They spoke of Him only as "this Man," or "that Deceiver;" and in this they have been followed by the mass of the Jews to this day, who only speak of Him as "the accursed One," and spit at the mention of His Name by others. When indeed will His Name perish?

His Name has not perished, and verse 9 heightens the wonder of it. Men there have been, not a few, who have become leaders of a cause which for a time has seemed to prosper. Then a blight has fallen upon it and their followers have dwindled, until even their closest friend has become an opponent. But that is a sure sign of their utter downfall and that their name will fade into oblivion. Thus it has

been with many, but thus it has NOT been with Christ. Judas Iscariot sold Him for the price of a slave, and all His disciples forsook Him and fled, but His Name has not perished and never will. Now why is this?

The answer is found in the previous Psalm. It is because He was the One who came forth from God, as decreed in the book of the Divine counsels, to perfectly accomplish the will of God. In order to carry out that will He had to go through sorrows beyond all human computation or understanding. He had to say "innumerable evils have compassed Me about" (ver. 12). The evils that would have crushed and obliterated all others never extinguished His Name. But that was because He had come forth to be the great Sacrifice of all the ages, when every kind of Jewish sacrifice had been manifested as being without any intrinsic worth, and valuable only as types of His supreme Sacrifice to be accomplished once for all. Hebrews 10 is the inspired commentary upon this matter.

We may point out that in our Psalm there are three "innumerable" things. The *innumerable* evils thronged around Him and reached their climax when He took upon Himself vicariously our iniquities. "Mine iniquities . . . are more than the hairs of Mine head"—that is only another way of saying they are *innumerable*. There is only one sense in which such words as these can be accepted as coming from the sinless, holy lips of our Lord, and that is the sense of substitution—the fact that, "The Lord hath laid on Him the iniquities of us all." As we sometimes sing,

"Our sins, our guilt in love Divine,
Confessed and borne by Thee;
The gall, the curse, the wrath were
Thine,
To set Thy ransomed free."

It was our innumerable iniquities that brought the innumerable evils upon His sacred head.

But, most wonderful to say, there was another factor in the case; one which we usually arrive at last though it is the first mentioned in this Psalm. Verse 5 speaks of it—the many and wonderful thoughts and works of God, which are "more than can be numbered" that is they are *innumerable* also. He died sacrificially not only to blot out our sins, but also to bring into expression and accomplishment the glorious thoughts and purposes of God. The works which He has done are indeed many, but His thoughts are more, for a whole multitude of them are not yet wrought out in works. They will be however, wrought out and brought into display unto His eternal glory, in the ages that are yet to come.

The thoughts of God were by no means fully declared in David's day, yet he was quite conscious that they were so many as to be innumerable, and so great as to elude all definition or comprehension by us. We have a far fuller unfolding of His thoughts in the New Testament: it was given to Paul to "fulfil [complete] the Word of God" (Col. 1. 25); that is, to complete the whole circle of revealed truth. Much more then have we to confess as to God's thoughts, "they cannot be reckoned up in order unto Thee." If we attempt to formulate and tabulate them, after the fashion in which we are accustomed to treat all human thoughts, human learning, human

systems, we shall in result only manifest our own foolishness.

It is well to remember this, for there has always been a great desire with many to reduce the truth of God to a philosophic system, everything duly ticketed and pigeon-holed according to the most approved schemes of human logic and wisdom. Every such attempt is bound to result in error, because starting with the supreme error of assuming that what is infinite in its bearing can be confined within human boundaries. This can no more be done than the rolling seas can be compressed into the largest of human measures. One of the great poets saw this when he wrote (we quote from memory),

“Our little systems have their day,
They have their day, and cease to be:
They are but broken lights of Thee,
And Thou, O Lord, art more than they.”

What he stated of the Lord Himself is true also of the innumerable thoughts which have proceeded from Him. We may apprehend them, though it is beyond us to fully comprehend them.

Those thoughts have been conveyed to us in the Holy Scriptures; and, bearing in mind what has just been said, it is not difficult to see how absolutely imperative it was that “All Scripture” should be “given by inspiration of God” (2 Tim. 3. 16). The holy men of old wrote, “not in the words which man’s wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth” (1 Cor. 2. 13), and consequently there was a fulness about their very words which was divine. We are conscious of that fulness as we read our Bibles, in spite of the fact that ours are only a translation from the original. All theological systems, all

creeds are human; Scripture has come from God. We do well to pin our faith to it, and not to them.

The thoughts of God to which the Psalmist particularly alluded were those which are “to us-ward.” It is a glorious fact that the thoughts of God are *towards* His saints. This always has been so, but it was never so plainly manifest as when the word was fulfilled, “Lo, I come . . . I delight to do Thy will, O My God.” Then it could be said, “I have not concealed Thy lovingkindness and Thy truth from the great congregation” (ver. 10): words which are an inspired forecast of the fact that, “Grace and truth came by Jesus Christ” (John 1. 17). Now that the full truth has come to light we may rejoice not only in the fact that God’s thoughts are toward us in blessing, but that we are bound up with their glorious accomplishment, since “all the promises of God in Him are yea, and in Him Amen, unto the glory of God *by us*” (2 Cor. 1. 20).

Psalm 40 was fulfilled in the first advent of Christ. It was then that He came to be the Sacrifice of eternal worth, and so lay the basis for the accomplishment of the good pleasure of God, whether towards us or towards the whole redeemed creation. It was then that He went down into the “horrible pit,” and the “miry clay,” and the “innumerable evils,” and came face to face with the adversaries, of which the closing verses of the Psalm speak, and who are again alluded to in Psalm 41. Then it was that His own familiar friend lifted up his heel against Him, so that His foes might put Him to death and congratulate themselves that His Name must now perish for evermore.

As we reach the end of Psalm 41 we are assured that His Name will not perish. In verses 11 and 12 we find words which are most happily applicable to Him. He could say to God, "Thou favourest Me," or, "Thou delightest in Me," hence the enemy could not triumph over Him. Not only did He delight in Him, but He upheld Him in His integrity, and has set Him before His face for ever. In these words we see an inspired forecast of those lovely words in John 13—"Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in Him. If God be glorified in Him, God shall also glorify Him in Himself, and shall straightway glorify Him." He was upheld of God even in death, and has now been lifted to the Father's throne, set before His face in glory, long before the glory of the kingdom is manifested.

Our faith to-day as Christians reaches to the Lord Jesus thus hidden in the heavens. We see Him though He is unseen to mortal eye. "Whom having not seen ye love," says the Apostle Peter: but the writer of Hebrews says, "We see Jesus, . . . crowned with glory and honour." Even the Psalmist broke into a doxology when he had reached this point in the spirit of prophecy. He uttered blessing to the Lord God of Israel from eternity to eternity; and then he added "Amen and Amen"—So be it, and again so be it. Well, SO IT IS, thank God! Christ is crowned with glory before the face of God; and as for ourselves, we may well be rejoicing with "joy unspeakable, and full of glory."

This, however, is not the end of the matter as it concerns His Name. How could it be, when it is still dishonoured on earth though so

highly honoured in heaven? His Name was to perish on earth, according to the desire of His foes. On earth then it is to be vindicated and magnified.

Psalm 72, which closes the second book, predicts the glory of His coming kingdom. David commenced to write his desires for Solomon in poetic form: the Holy Spirit caught him up in the current of His thoughts concerning the One of whom Solomon was but a feeble type. The KING of this psalm is One to whom the kings of Tarshish and the isles, the kings of Sheba and Seba shall render tribute. He is so great that "all kings shall fall down before Him: all nations shall serve Him." He is most evidently *the King of kings*. No one is that but Jesus.

When the once rejected Jesus takes the throne there will at last be seen in the earth an administration marked by absolute perfection. In the first place there will be the establishment of *righteousness*—the first four verses are full of this. When Jesus died, condemned alike by both Jew and Gentile, judgment was divorced from righteousness in the most outrageous way. When He returns in His glory and establishes His kingdom in power, the moment will have come of which it is said, "But judgment shall return unto righteousness: and all the upright in heart shall follow it" (Psa. 94. 15). As it is said here, "He shall judge Thy people with righteousness."

This of course will involve the *deliverance* and vindication of the oppressed and afflicted. Verses 2 and 4, and also 12-14, state this. It is true that all through the ages it is the poor and needy who have been

downtrodden in the scramble of life, but "the poor and needy" contemplated here are without a doubt the godly folk who will be persecuted by the antichristian powers of the last days. The coming Roman leader shall "wear out the saints of the Most High" (Dan. 7. 25), whereas the King of kings will bring in deliverance.

The deliverance will be followed by *blessing*. "Men shall be blessed in Him" (ver. 17). Blessing of an earthly sort is contemplated in the Psalm. Verse 16 speaks of "an handful of corn . . . upon the tops of the mountains,"—a picturesque way of expressing great fertility, for at present the mountain tops are cold and bare. Verse 6 also is very graphic. The scythe of judgment will have mown the earth, and the great ones and their glory will be but withered grass, as long ago the Scripture had said. He will come down upon the earth after judgment has been executed, like gentle showers upon the thirsty ground, and hence the righteous shall flourish in His days. In that day there will indeed be "the smell of a field which the Lord hath blessed," (Gen. 27. 27), and the blessing wherewith Isaac blessed his supplanter son, who became Israel, will find a glorious fulfilment.

As the result of the blessing "abundance of *peace*" will at last be reached. Peace is much desired among the nations yet how often it eludes them. If they enjoy it at all it is in very scanty measure. Abundance of peace there has never yet been; but there will be in the glad day of the kingdom. When righteousness reigns, when the needy are delivered, when blessing fills the earth, then an abundant peace will be the happy consequence.

And all these most excellent things will be traced up to what?—or rather we should have said, to whom? "Men shall be blessed in HIM," we read in verse 17. He was once considered to be the accursed One, for they thought Him to be stricken and smitten of God. Now they see Him to have been the great Sacrifice, as detailed in Psalm 40, and therefore the Source from whom all their blessing flows. Their glorious King is the Fountain-head of all their blessing.

This discovery must of necessity provoke their praise in return. They will bless His Name. And not only they, for the blessing will roll out world-wide to all the nations. Consequently "all nations shall call Him blessed." When we to-day address Him, or speak of Him, as "our blessed Lord," we are but anticipating that which will be universal presently.

"His Name shall endure for ever." Here we find God's answer to man's evil question. When shall His Name perish? It shall never perish, but endure for ever.

Psalm 40 ends with the humbled Christ lifted up and set before God's face for ever. Psalm 72 ends with a glorified Christ publicly established as King of kings, filling the earth with righteousness, blessing and peace. In both cases a doxology is provoked, but the second is rather fuller in its character. God can now be blessed as the One who alone does wondrous things. Men may appear to be doing wonderful things to-day with all their inventions, but they are not. Their inventions will yet, in all probability, fall disastrously upon their own heads. When the King of kings

takes His throne in glory, nothing will appear wonderful but what God has done in and by Him. In that day the whole earth will be filled with His glory, and the name of Jehovah will be everlastingly blessed.

Once more we have the repeated Amen. So be it, and again, so be it. That this may all be fulfilled in its season is surely the fervent desire of all our hearts.

Temptation.

IF you would be superior to every temptation see that your heart is engrossed with Christ; a divided heart is a continual cause of inconsistency, an unsatisfied heart will carry you into many questionable places and things.

Don't be alarmed if you find that Satan is endeavouring to ensnare you or to buffet you. He is sure to do one or the other if you are bent upon following Christ. It is when

Until that day is reached we are left in the place of expectation and dependence and prayer, waiting for the first movement connected with the ushering in of that day; namely, the coming of the Lord Jesus for all His saints.

When David saw, by the spirit of prophecy, the coming glory of Christ, his prayers were ended; nothing remained for which to pray. It is indeed a satisfying prospect. What will the realization of it be?

you are settling down in the world that he will let you alone, then you may be thoroughly alarmed.

Don't let the fact that you have failed discourage you; of course you are disappointed, and that because you were expecting to do good in your own strength; but the Lord knew all about you beforehand, and He is the same, full of grace; turn afresh to Him, trust in Him, and distrust yourself.

Spiritual Progress.

IF you would mature spiritually, you must learn, and learning is very real work, it will cost you something. I do not believe that anyone matures brilliantly who does not learn sufferingly. Easily got, easily gone, was never so corroborated as in divine things. Let us not shirk suffering if we would graduate in God's school.

What wonderful disclosures of Himself the Lord would give us if we were ready for them, but for these we need the contrite spirit and subjection to His word; these we acquire in the school of God.

We make good progress when we discover that Christ is so necessary to us that we cannot live without Him. Then we learn quickly that we are united to Him. There is a bond of affection between Him and me that nothing can sever, either in time or eternity. What restfulness of heart that gives. When this is known not as a doctrine but as a living reality, Himself and His things become the supreme things, the heart is fully engaged to know them, that is the way of true progress. Thus we grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS:

“The Times” and “the Fulness of the Gentiles.”

“Kindly give some help on the terms, ‘the times of the Gentiles,’ Luke 21. 24, and ‘the fulness of the Gentiles,’ Romans 11. 25.”—NORTHUMBERLAND.

THE *times of the Gentiles* commenced when God gave universal authority to Nebuchadnezzar (Dan. 2), and will end when the Lord, as King of kings, will come again and overthrow the power of the revived Roman Empire and establish His own kingdom on the earth (Rev. 17. 14, and 19. 11-21). The image of Daniel’s dream describes this period. There are in it the four great world-wide empires, Babylonian, Medo-Persian, Grecian and Roman. All these powers have in turn trodden down Jerusalem, and the last will, in its revived form set out to do it again and meet with complete des-

truction in the attempt.

The “fulness of the Gentiles” is what God is taking out from amongst them in this present period of grace. Acts 15. 14 speaks of God visiting “the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for His Name.” Those taken out are of course formed into His church. Then God will return to Israel and the promises of the Old Testament Scriptures will be fulfilled, and “all Israel shall be saved.” Romans 11. 26, 27 tell us how. “The gifts and calling of God are without repentance.”

“Mercy in that Day.”

“‘The Lord grant unto him (Onesiphorus) that he may find mercy of the Lord in that day’ (2 Tim. 1. 18). If, as we presume, Onesiphorus was a saved man—his sin covered—in what sense would he need mercy of the Lord in that day—presumably the judgment seat of Christ?”—SWANSEA.

THIS is the one passage in the New Testament upon which the Popish doctrine of prayers for the dead is built, and as this practice is spreading to Protestant Churches, we should endeavour to understand it. It is generally assumed that Onesiphorus was dead at the time; but we do not see why. Ellicot in his commentary says that some well worthy to be heard, before any controversy as to the meaning of the passage arose, were of the contrary opinion. He cites Theodoret and Chrysostom. But whether he was dead or alive, the passage gives no support to prayers for the dead.

We suggest, *first*, Paul was so affected by the loving, unselfish and

courageous care of his friend that he here expresses the wish that he might find his recompense from the Lord in that day, for he himself could not repay him for all his friendship had meant to him in his suffering and isolation in prison. If his words can be called a prayer, they were the committal of this matter to the Lord, and in no sense prayer for the soul of one departed; they were the desire expressed that deeds done in the body might receive an answer at the judgment-seat and appearing of the Lord.

Second, “That day” will be the review and winding up of the responsible life of the saints and servants of the Lord. In this life of responsibility they have needed

mercy continually, and have received it too, or not one would have continued faithful. In the reviewing of their lives mercy will not be wanting. When we meet our Lord at His judgment-seat we shall find Him to be the same as we have known Him in the days of our sojourn here. On our part, when we have done all, we can only confess that we are unprofitable servants. On His part He will rejoice to reward all that He can approve, and the mercy that rewards will be the same mercy that removes for ever

from our record what He could not approve. How great will be His *beneficence* toward us in that day.

Third. Mercy does not always suppose sin. "His mercy is over all His works." It is His kindness and beneficence, His pity for that which is weak and dependent. We shall be dependent upon Him for ever, for the creature must ever be dependent upon his God, and since this is so will it not be His mercy that will maintain us in His presence for ever?

"Receive ye one another."

"There is a question of importance that I, and perhaps many more would like to see answered in "Scripture Truth". It is as to the force of "receive" in Romans 15. 7. Some do not allow that it has anything to do with the Lord's Table, as Romans is not concerned with the order of the Assembly. If it means receiving into Christian fellowship is not the Lord's Supper included?"—WALSALL.

WE do not think any Scripture describes what our spirit and conduct towards our fellow-believers in Christ should be more beautifully and decisively than this one. Verse 5 expresses the desire and prayer of the Apostle that the God of patience and consolation would grant the saints, whether Jew or Gentile, strong or weak, to be "like-minded one toward another *according to Christ Jesus.*" What a standard that is!

The actual cause of the exhortation was that in the assembly at Rome there were those who were weak in the faith and those who were strong, some who had legal consciences and others who were in the liberty of grace, but these differences were to be the opportunity of shewing what was superior to all that—namely, divine love, which seeks only the good of its object. We are not to please ourselves, even Christ, who alone had a right to do

that, did not do it. We are not to choose as our associates only those who fit in with our ideas, or are up to our standard; that is the very root of sectarianism. The question is, who has Christ received to the glory of God? Such we must also receive. Everyone will admit that to reject and treat with disdain those whom Christ has chosen and loves, would not only damage them, but grieve His heart who has received them. He has received us. Such grace ought to deliver us for ever from that censorious spirit which is so inconsistent with grace, and open our hearts to welcome and receive one another. This grace should be a rebuke to any who with a false superiority look down upon others who, they think, are inferior to them in spiritual attainment.

It is true that the passage does not say anything about "receiving into Christian fellowship" or "to the Lord's Table." Do we get such

phraseology anywhere in Scripture? It is Christ's receiving that brings anyone into Christian fellowship. Those already there through grace, simply recognise what He has done. But to exclude all thought of the assembly from Romans would be a great mistake and loss. The Epistle was written to the "beloved of God" in Rome. They were surely His assembly there. And how could we "with one mind and one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ" (verse 6), apart from the assembly? We know of nothing more calculated to produce this glorifying God with one mind

and one mouth, than the Lord's Supper. The fulness of His love is brought home to the soul by it and there is also expressed in the partaking of it, that holy unity into which Christ has received us.

There are, of course, definite responsibilities that go along with the privileges of this circle in which love is to prevail, and these cannot be ignored without trouble and loss. The Scriptures also make plain who those are who have to be refused even though they profess the name of Christ. 2 John 10; 1 Corinthians 5. 11, are such Scriptures.

National Blessing.

"Would you be good enough to answer the following questions in Scripture Truth?"

"In Matthew 25. 31-46 are the sheep and the goats nations or individuals?"

"Does God deal with nations as nations after the church has been caught up to heaven, in view of their treatment of the Lord's brethren, as in the Old Testament, Egypt, Edom, Moab, etc., were judged as the basis of their treatment of Israel?"—S.E. 15.

THE sheep and goats before the throne of the glory of the Son of Man are nations. The Scriptures definitely say so. In this present church period, God is gathering *out of the nations* a people for His Name (Acts 15. 14). These make up His Church in which national distinctions have no place, and they are saved for heaven, where there are no nations. This work which is going on now is entirely individual, but that to which the questions refer, which will take place between the Lord's coming for His church and His return to take up the kingdom, will be just as definitely national. There are three classes in this prophetic utterance—the sheep, the goats and "My brethren." These whom the Lord calls His brethren will be an elect remnant of the Jews who will preach this gospel of the Kingdom in all the world *for a wit-*

ness unto all nations (chap. 24. 14). They will take up the commission given to the disciples in chapter 28. 19. "Go ye therefore, and *teach all nations*, baptising them in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." That commission has not yet been taken up, though the one in Mark has, and those of Luke and John are being fulfilled now. Nations will be baptised in that day, in contrast to individuals in this day, and the nations that are saved will be saved for the millennial Kingdom on the earth, when the Lord will be "King of nations" (Rev. 15. 3, N. Trans.).

"When the Most High divided *to the nations* their inheritance, when He separated the sons of Adam, He set the bounds of the people according to the number of the children of Israel." (Deuteronomy 32. 8).

That word will have its fulfilment during the Millennium when Israel will be the centre of the whole earth, and the head and not the tail of *all nations* (Deut. 28. 13). Those that are left of the nations after the Lord's judgments have swept the earth will be compelled to recognise Jerusalem and go up there to worship the King, the Lord of Hosts, or they will be punished as *nations* (Zechariah 14. 17-19).

In Old Testament times God dealt with one chosen nation, now He is dealing with individuals and taking them out of all nations to form His church, but in this future

day His work will be *national*, but all these dispensational dealings of God with men shew forth different phases of His grace. It may be contended that there will be a work in each individual forming the nations; that may be so, but that is not the aspect of the work. God can bring a nation to repentance as well as an individual, as He did in the case of Nineveh when Jonah preached to them, and as He will do with Israel, for "all Israel shall be saved" (Romans 11. 26). Then the Gentiles shall come to their light and kings to the brightness of their rising (Isaiah 60).

"Surely, I come quickly." Rev. 22.

"A little while," then shall be heard
His welcome shout, His quickening word—
Then shall I see Him face to face
Where shines the glory of His grace.
Until these eyes my Saviour see
His path down here my path must be,
Outside the camp I follow on—
Because it leads to where He's gone."

"Ask . . . where is the good way, and walk in it." Jer. 6. 16.

Jesus, to follow Thee the journey's length,
Learn of Thy love, and lean upon Thy strength,
Bearing in humble walk the light from Thee,
Treating the flesh as nailed upon the tree,
Living in faith, and hope, and love sincere . . .
This, through Thy grace, our present pathway here.

"Thus shall we ever be with the Lord." 1 Thess. 4. 17.

Ever to be with Thee, to see Thy face,
Hear Thy dear voice, the scars of Calvary trace,
Rest in those peaceful pastures, safe and free,
Knowing as known, in glory garbed as Thee,
This our reward, in endless day above.

THE LOVE OF THE FATHER.

“Love not the world, neither the things of the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in Him.” 1 John 2. 15.

THIS Scripture speaks of ‘the love of the Father.’ We have the two sides, ‘the things of the world’ on the one hand, and on the other hand ‘the love of the Father.’ There is a father and son, and they may be estranged by a very wide breach. Whatever the son or the father does they are still father and son: nothing can alter that relationship, but when you speak of ‘the love of the Father’ does it not suggest the enjoyment of the relationship, something of the intimacy of the love of the Father? and it is that, and that alone, I am persuaded, which is going to be our safeguard from the world and its delusions.

I believe that if the love of the Father has laid hold upon our hearts we shall be brought into His Presence to realize something of the Father’s thoughts concerning His Son, and it is only there we shall learn the Son’s thoughts concerning the Father, and it is that which will amid trials, make our hearts overflow with joy. Think of the Lord Himself in Matthew’s Gospel (chap. 11), where He speaks of those cities wherein He had performed most of His miracles—What was the result? We do not want you, they said, and dismissed Him from their presence. One would have thought, humanly speaking, that was the very time when the blessed Lord would have been cast down and disappointed; but what does He say? He withdraws into the Father’s presence, and we read, *“At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth,*

because Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent and hast revealed them unto babes.” He was willingly subject to His Father’s will. He rested His Head upon the Father’s bosom and said, “Even so, Father, so it seemed good in Thy sight.” It was that which gave Him peace and joy.

He then speaks of Himself in verse 27: “All things are delivered unto Me of My Father and no man knoweth the Son but the Father, neither knoweth any man the Father save the Son,” and if the verse had stopped there we could have understood it, but He adds, “And he to whomsoever the Son will reveal Him.”

The Father’s heart has been revealed to the full, but we must take in that revelation. How can we do that? “He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father,” said the Lord, and “I am the way” and “Come unto Me.” That is how you are going to learn more of the Father’s love. “Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn of Me.” A Christian yoked up with the world is a sight that might well make angels weep. We need to examine our hearts to see whether there is not with us, in some measure, the unequal yoke. How the unequal yoke chafes! If you are a child of God and you have links on with the world, in your heart there is the chafing and the heart-ache. “Take My yoke upon you . . . for My yoke is easy and My burden is light.”

AT THE FEET OF THE LORD JESUS. J. T. Mawson.

TO be at the feet of the Lord Jesus is to be in the most blessed spot in God's universe. It is there that every problem is solved, and every question answered: whether of sin, service, sorrow or self. There is no place like it for the guilt-laden sinner, no place like it for the perplexed or happy saint.

The Lord Jesus is greater than our sins.

The first great truth that dawns upon the soul as we come into this place of blessing is that He is greater than our sins. It was this that the sinner of the city discovered in Luke 7. He had said: "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." It is more than likely that this tired woman had heard these words and, attracted by them, had followed Him to Simon's house. Should she enter it? What right had she to do that? The frowns of the Pharisee and his guests would have driven her from the door if the One whom her soul sought had not reclined just within it, in the lowest seat at the feast. Her need of Him was greater than her fear of them, and two forces were at work which were greater than their hostility; these combined to bring her to His feet. His love drew her, her need drove her, and pressed by the drawing of His love and the driving of her need, she took the one step across the threshold that brought her to the spot where her weary, burdened heart could find relief and rest.

At His feet she wept out her repentance for a sinful life, and mingled tears of gratitude to Him with those penitential tears for the welcome He gave her. Simon

would not have permitted her to touch him, his guests would have spurned her, but the lowly Jesus, mighty Prince of Life, was not like them, He was the friend of sinners. She discovered that He had a heart of infinite tenderness, that could feel even for her, and that when He opened His mouth He spoke as no other man ever did or could speak: He spoke of forgiveness, of salvation, or peace, and surely of all things on earth or in heaven none could meet the longings of her weary soul like these.

Her sins were not too great or too many for His forgiveness; where her sin had abounded His grace did much more abound. His words lifted the burden from her conscience and heart; in Him she found her salvation and her peace. She heard Him say, "Her sins, which are many, are forgiven." And who can describe the blessedness of the One who has heard and believed such words as these? David could describe it; and so can I; and so can all who have come conscience-stricken, sin-laden, honest at last to the feet of this great Saviour. They know the relief from the burden, the peace after the storm, the deep, holy calm that fills the heart as the sense of forgiveness steals over the soul. Only at His feet can this be known. It all comes in and through Him, "in whom we have redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins" (Eph. 1).

The Lord Jesus is greater than our service.

I do not say that the beloved Mary of Bethany was the woman of the city—some have done so and made out a good case for their view

—I merely point out that she dearly loved the spot where that woman's burden rolled away, and that every time we read of her she is at the feet of Jesus. The first of these instances is in Luke 10. 38-42.

We often admire Mary for taking the place of the disciple instead of the servant on this occasion, but may we not waste admiration upon her that ought to be bestowed upon the Lord? He it was who drew her into that place of subjection and blessing; she did but respond to His drawing, as the needle responds to the magnet. Happy woman! He at whose feet Mary sat at rest and without fear was none other than Him before whom the angels veiled their faces, and cried, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of hosts, but she knew Him in the revelation of His grace, as the One who had come into the world not to be ministered unto, but to minister and to give His life a ransom for many. She had discovered that His heart found a peculiar and unspeakable joy in filling up the vacancies in human hearts with the knowledge of His Father and Himself; it was His meat and His drink. She realised that it pleased Him more to have her there listening to His word, than any service she could have rendered to Him would have done. And she knew that she could only serve Him intelligently and well as she sat as a learner at His feet.

He values our service and will most surely reward it, but He loves our company more, and we may neglect Him while we serve. He has more to say *to* us and do *in* us, than to say *through* us and do *by* us. He should be more to us than all we can do for Him, and we shew that we know this as we sit at His feet

and hear His word. There and then He can sanctify and cleanse us by the washing of water by His Word, and can nourish and cherish us and fashion us according to His own good pleasure.

The Lord Jesus is greater than our sorrows.

The sisters at Bethany were bewildered and broken by a sore bereavement. They had hoped that their Friend, who loved them so dearly, would have hastened to their help and healed their brother of his sickness when they appealed to Him, but He had not done so. It seemed as though He had failed them in this great crisis of their lives, for He had spoken no word and their brother had died and now lay within a sealed sepulchre, and they sat at home without hope. It was then that He came to them. Martha went out to meet Him and stood upon her feet and talked, but when He called for Mary and she came to the place where He waited for her, she fell at *His feet* and wept. Behold her prostrate at His feet. Listen as she pours out her grief before Him. See her as she looks up through her tears into His face. What wonder must have filled her soul as she beheld tears upon His cheeks! How beautiful He must have seemed to her that day! What a revelation of His heart were those tears! How His sympathy must have swallowed up her sorrow! What intimacy with Him did her sorrow yield her! Would she ever forget it? Then He walked by her side to the resurrection of her brother, and in His company, with Himself so near, her heart must have said, All is well. Sorrowing saints of God, Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, to-day and for ever!

Presently His voice of power broke through the power of death and set the captive free, and the multitude beheld and wondered; but Mary had learnt something more wonderful than the power that amazed them. His sympathy had poured its comfort into her soul; she had learnt that He was greater than her sorrow. Never would she have known how much He loved her, or how tender His heart was, or how all-sustaining was His presence, had it not been for her great sorrow.

The Lord Jesus is greater than self.

The last we read of Mary is in John 12, and it is fitting that her life's record should close there. The pound of "spikenard very costly" would have distinguished her among her acquaintances. It was the sort of thing those eastern women reserved for the greatest day in their lives. She had not even poured it on her brother at his death, much as she loved him, but she poured it out upon the feet of Jesus, well knowing that He was going to death and burial. The world had nothing to give to Him but a cross of shame and a grave with malefactors, and she only among all His disciples realised this, and she said by her action, He is worthy of the best that I can give Him, all I have that would distinguish me shall go into His grave. The Lord interpreted that action as no man could have done, and said,

Let her alone: against the day of My burying hath she kept this," and, "Verily I say unto you, Where-soever this gospel shall be preached in the whole world, there shall also this, that this woman hath done be told for a memorial of her." What she had done shewed what the knowledge of His love could do. It had made a woman forget the beautifying of herself, and all that would distinguish her, it had made her risk the criticism and scorn of her friends who did not understand. To her henceforward Mary was nothing and Christ was everything. Mary wanted no place for Mary in a world that did not want her Lord.

It was to this point that Paul was brought when he said, "God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified to me, and I unto the world" (Galatians 6. 14). And to this point the Holy Ghost would lead us all. Soon every ransomed saint of God will bow before Him in His glory above, and cast their crowns at those feet that were once pierced in death for us, and worship and adore Him there for He is worthy. We shall cast our best at His feet in the day of His glory, Mary cast her best, and herself also, at His feet in the days of His rejection and sorrow. If He will be worthy *then* to fill our hearts and vision without a rival, He is worthy *now*, for "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, to-day and for ever.

Leave God to order all thy ways,
 And hope in Him, whate'er betide;
 Thou'lt find Him in the evil days,
 Thine all-sufficient strength and guide.
 Who trusts in God's unchanging love,
 Builds on the rock that naught can move!

HUR, THE INTERCESSOR.

H.G.

A call to Prayer, from one isolated Christian to others.

THERE are many, like myself, whose home conditions, or perhaps personal infirmity or suffering make it impossible for them to gather with their brethren and sisters in the Lord for spiritual fellowship and for the ministry of God's Word, and have no encouragement in their homes to walk with the Lord. In such circumstances life is in danger of becoming drab and depressing with no soul progress. If only we were free we could be busy in the Lord's interest, but as the days go by things all seem to conspire to increase these shut up conditions. There is a reason for it in God's ways with us. He understands us and has put us in the best place for us, and the knowledge and acceptance of this is the first necessity, for only by this can we be preserved from murmuring.

I have been helped by considering what we read of Hur in Exodus 17. We do not know much about him. Jewish tradition says that he was the husband of Miriam, but the Bible says nothing of this. The meaning of his name is helpful, for often in the Old Testament the name indicates the character of the person. His name means *white*, and also *free*, and some authorities say *cavern*. All three help. It was when Amalek attacked Israel, that we read, "And Moses said unto Joshua, choose us out men, and go and fight with Amalek, to-morrow I will stand on the top of the hill with the rod of God in my hand. So Joshua did as Moses said to him, and fought with Amalek, and Moses and *Hur* went up to the top

of the hill." Hur had not been chosen to join the fighting forces, and we who are bound to our homes have not been called to the forefront of the Lord's battles, but Hur's ascent of the hill with Moses and Aaron had the fighting in view and he had his part in the victory, and we may have a very real part in the conflict that others are waging in the Lord's name, even though we seem shut up as in a cavern.

We are not told that Hur was commanded to go up the hill with Moses and Aaron, but his company was valued by them, and what a useful and essential service he performed when he got there. Israel only prevailed as the hands of Moses were uplifted in intercession. The upward intercession, brought down the power and victory. But the battle was long and Moses could not sustain the intercession alone, nor would Aaron have been sufficient to aid him, Hur was necessary, and with Aaron on one side and Hur on the other, "Moses' hands were steady until the going down of the sun."

Hur had his part in the intercession, and here the meaning of his name will help us. He had been redeemed out of the bondage of Egypt by the blood of the Lamb and the power of God, so that we may apply the meanings of his name here. He was *free*, delivered from his former bondage, and we may say also that he was *white*, made white by the blood of the Lamb. These figures we transfer to ourselves. We are redeemed by

the blood of the Lamb and are *free* even though shut in.

"Stone walls do not a prison make,
Nor iron bars a cage."

We are *free* to take our part in intercession on behalf of those who are serving God and in conflict with the great foe. But we could not approach God at all if we had not been washed from our sins and made *white* in the blood of the Lamb. It is this that gives us fitness and boldness to speak to God in prayer.

Let us ascend the hill of prayer, and wait upon the Lord. His Spirit will assuredly bring to our waiting hearts the remembrance of toiling brothers and sisters, face to face with great difficulties, perhaps in a foreign field. We can by intercession claim and secure help for them. Blessings like birds come home to roost, and as we intercede on their behalf, our own souls will be enlarged and refreshed with grace and love. Never mind if we are unnoticed and unknown, and see no results. Hur "went up." Let us do the same, content to be in the line of God's will.

You are perhaps thinking, I have prayed so long for my family and friends, and the answers seem long in coming, that their names become but a dull recital, and my prayers are lifeless and cold. In our shut up circumstances we all know something of this, but let us "go up" afresh, and with renewed purpose of heart "lift up the hands that hang down" (Hebrews 12. 12). Remember the Lord Jesus said "Every one that asketh receiveth." "O cast not away therefore your confidence which hath great recompense" Heb-

rews 10. 35. It was when Moses let down his hands that Amalek prevailed, and when we allow our circumstances to have power over us we get out of touch with our great high Priest who ever liveth to make intercession for us.

We read of Hur again in chap. 24, and there he was a man to be relied on. "Moses said to the elders, Tarry ye here for us, until we come again to you, and behold Aaron and Hur are with you, if any man hath any matters to do let him come unto them." Come unto them! There is encouragement in that. If we are intercessors on the hill top, the time will surely come when we shall be able to comfort them that are in trouble with the comfort wherewith we are comforted of God" (2 Cor. 1).

I gather from 1 Chron. 2. 18, 20). that this same Hur was the grandfather of Bezaleel. He would not know while he was holding up an arm of Moses that the Lord was taking particular account of his family and putting His wisdom into the heart of one of them to make the wonderful furniture for the Tabernacle. Be not discouraged feeble saints; we shall reap if we faint not. Pray fervently, pray unceasingly, and maybe we, too, shall become the spiritual parents through our prayers and watchings for souls some who shall do great things for God.

May God keep us from repinings and discontent, subject to His holy will, that we may not grieve His Holy Spirit, but have His peace which passeth all understanding, keeping our hearts and minds through Christ Jesus, "until He come."

THE FAME OF JESUS.

James McBroome

(Matthew 8 and 9).

THE fame of Jesus as mentioned in Matthew 14. 1 is an enchanting theme. It comes out in a very precious way in this first Gospel. The great fact which appears everywhere in the New Testament comes out at His birth, namely that He is God and Man in one glorious Person. "Thou shalt call His name JESUS;" and again; "They shall call His Name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us."

The two lines of truth as to His Deity and Manhood had run in the prophetic word right through the Old Testament. He had been spoken of as the woman's Seed (Gen. 3), the seed of Abraham (Gen. 22), the Lion of the tribe of Judah (Gen. 49), and the Prophet greater than Moses (Deut. 18. 15), all of which found their fulfilment in this holy birth. But when we come to the prophets Isaiah and Micah we get not only the Man, but God and Man prophetically announced in one glorious Person. "For 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, the Prince of Peace" (Isa. 9. 6). "But thou Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah yet out of thee shall He come forth unto Me that is to be ruler in Israel; Whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting" (Micah 5. 2).

Here in Matthew the Child born is to be called JESUS but the same one is Emmanuel, God with us. In chap. 2 He is taken down to Egypt

for in the dispensational ways of God He must take up in Himself the history of His people from Egypt right through till the time of the glory. (See Psalm 18, and compare Hosea 11. 1 with Matthew 2. 16). In chap. 3 John the Forerunner proclaims Him King, and the Father acclaims Him Son. The Divine and human is thus kept in view. In chap. 4 this is immediately challenged by the Tempter and we are led to the scene of the temptation where His glory shines out in the complete baffling of Satan. This is one of the grandest scenes in the whole history of time. Having defeated the strong man He goes forth to spoil his goods. This gives the beginning of His public ministry which was in such power that soon the whole country, all Syria, was astir by His fame. "And there followed Him great multitudes of people from Galilee, and from Decapolis, and from Jerusalem, and from Judea, and from beyond Jordan."

This gave occasion for Him to bring out the situation as it existed at that moment. The sermon which followed in chaps, 5-7 is a very real advance on what had been before, although in the very nature of things it could not rise to what came out after His rejection. It lays bare the heart in its inmost secret motives: it calls upon His followers to be a transcript of the King in moral character, through being in association with Himself, but the Church as such is not found in it; that awaited the work of redemption and the ascension of the Lord to heaven. Note the way Godhead and Manhood. the two great features already

spoken of, come out in this mountain discourse. While the moral instruction flows out in beautiful progression shewing the conduct due to God from His creature there are statements here and there which would be blasphemy on the lips of a creature. What created being, for example, could say in reference to Holy Scripture: "Ye have heard that it hath been said . . . But I say." (Chap. 5. 21, 22; 27. 28; 31. 34). Not that there was any contradiction between the law and His sayings; the first spoke of the outward acts, the second of the innermost thoughts and passions behind the acts.

In chaps. 8 and 9 we see the power of the kingdom displayed in the Person of the King. These two chapters hang together and we may take chap. 10 with them. If He is refused in the working of all His grace and power, we see in chap. 10 the gracious forbearance that will not be turned aside from His mission of mercy, but will send forth His servants fully equipped to carry on that work.

How then was He received? He had adapted Himself to His people as and where they were. If they were poor He became poor; if they were despised He also was despised of men. Was the house of David in poverty and obscurity? He had no place to lay His head; were they groaning under the Roman yoke? He associated Himself with them in that also, claiming no rights for Himself, but bearing their burdens and sorrows, like the weeping Jeremiah, and finally going under the judgment of God on their behalf. But in spite of all this the state of the people was such that the very grace in which He came was used

against Him and the door closed in His face. Think of the sorrow of it. God had come down in measureless grace to heal them and bless them and reconcile them to Himself, and they not only refused Him but actually charged Him with doing the works of the devil. The miracles which were for their deliverance they attributed to Satanic agency, so blinded were they. By so doing they blasphemed the Holy Ghost and committed the sin which never hath forgiveness, and shewed themselves to be children of the devil, sunk down to the lowest depths of moral degradation. So much for the leaders.

But He went on, undeterred by their malice, dispensing abroad the bounty of God, and none needed to despair. Those that felt their need clung to Him and they were healed and blest for time and eternity. He had Himself been tested (chapter 4) and now had become the test for all, and there was no neutral ground; either they were for Him or against Him. Richest blessing there was in Him for all, but only the wise saw it and believed. Wisdom's children owned their need and confessed Him, and came into all the favour of God, while the proud who professed to see and judge were left to their blindness (John 9. 39).

The Lord's glory is made to shine out as it were incidently in the midst of His work in these chapters. He is confessed Lord many times, He speaks of Himself twice as the Son of Man, the blind men own Him Son of David. The Gentile Centurion rises perhaps highest of all in the words: "Lord I am not worthy that Thou shouldest come under my roof." No quarter is given to demons or to the devil; His

power is seen at work in grace on behalf of men and for the destruction of the Satanic kingdom.

While fitting into the exact position and condition of the people, there was in His ways, words and works a pledge of the full triumph of His grace. Defeat for Him was impossible whatever the appearance. Underneath all He did in the midst of these blinded people there was the pledge of the fulfilment of the whole prophetic scheme of blessing in the most complete accord with the testimony of God in all His ways past, present and future. The very order in which these works are recorded is so planned as to give a typical foreshadowing of the ultimate blessing of the people who in their representatives were at that time leading onward to the cross. Based upon His death which would be their culminating crime, would come out the fulfilment of all the promises in covenant blessing and the complete triumph of God.

The twelve miracles of these chapters seem to cover the whole ground of conflict, namely; disease, death, demoniac possession, and the power of the devil. There was one leprous man, two palsied men, two diseased women, two demoniacs, two blind men, one dumb demoniac, one little girl in death, and the work of calming the storm. Is there any wonder that His fame went throughout all Syria and that they followed Him from Galilee, Decapolis, Jerusalem, Judea and beyond Jordan. God had come within the sphere of nature to work; and men could take cognisance and avail themselves of His mercy.

But what of the WORKER? God is active; Father, Son and Spirit in

love and goodness (See Matt. 12. 28 and John 14. 10). There is Omnipotence, Omniscience and Omnipresence, but beyond all else there is LOVE. This is the moral nature of God and this it is that calls into action all the other great and glorious features of His Being. This it is that has brought God so near to man—a lowly Man, Jesus the Saviour who saves His people from their sins.

It should be clear to the thoughtful reader that chapter 8 divides in two at verse 17, and also that the three miracles of verse 1-15, give a sample of those cases which are summarised in verse 16. In this verse we get a summary of His mighty works and the Spirit takes up Isaiah 53. 4 to shew how His blessed heart was pressed by the very things which His power removed. We little know what He felt as He moved amongst His creatures, every one of whom was under the power of death, and with diseases of every kind doing their dreadful work.

The scope of His work is seen in relation to the various circles of society namely, country, town and home in the first part, while in the later part (verses 18-34), there is the exercise of His power in the material realm with moral ends in view. As to the first part, leprosy is a figure of the corruption that must be isolated; it was a bodily affliction that tells of that cancerous evil that affects man in his moral nature which nothing but the blood of Jesus can remove and apart from which must find its isolation in the lake of fire for ever. What an awful thing it must be for a man to die in his sins and be separated from God for ever. No man can cleanse his

own pollution. "For though thou wash thee with nitre and take thee much soap, yet thine iniquity is marked before Me, saith the Lord." "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" Only one, He can do it, who said to the leper, "I will, be thou clean."

With the palsied man it is helplessness. This again must be taken as applying to the moral condition in which men are found. "When we were yet without strength Christ died for the ungodly" (Rom. 5. 6). "No man can come to Me, except the Father which hath sent Me draw him" (John 6. 44). Then there was fever in the home. It was in the house of Peter, the foremost of His disciples. This calls for peculiar consideration. The home is the circle of family affections and in these affections there is that which God can still take account of in spite of all the wreck that sin has wrought in men. The Lord in mercy puts the physical complication right with a touch and she rose and served Him. Fever in its moral signification speaks of that restless excitement which so often incapacitates both for communion and service. Are we to learn something from the fact that this state so often marked Peter, this much loved servant of Christ? Be that as it may, we know the Lord loves to see His people both in person and in their homes free from excitement, and marked by that peace and sobriety which flows from communion with Himself. That Peter came to be marked thus may be seen from what he wrote later to the saints "Finally be ye all of one mind, having compas-

sion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous (I Peter 3. 8).

The presentation of our Lord in the rest of this chapter (Matt. 8), fills us with wonder by the majesty and grandeur of it. The simple historic record presents our Lord Jesus Christ in a three-fold view which captivates the heart and produces richest praise. First it may be pointed out that the whole passage presents to our view Messiah, the King, who is Emmanuel speaking and acting in His place, God and Man, a Divine-human Person. Then in the beauty of a Man asleep in the ship and later the mighty Creator who commands the winds and waves.

The incapacity of human nature as seen in Peter's house is illustrated in the first and second proposal to follow Him. The scribe had to learn that He is not a popular wonder-worker but a homeless Stranger, and the other disciple had to learn that this Stranger without a place to lay His head in the land must take precedence of every human claim. There were those who owned His claims and they followed Him in the ship. Cost what it might they would be with Him. They found themselves in His company outside the nation, tossed upon the waves in a storm which threatened to engulf them. Whatever the appearance no storm could harm them in His company. "When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee" (Isa. 43. 2). He is at their command, for needy ones were never turned aside by Him, and never shall be.

To continue.

BETHANY.

T. Oliver.

BETHANY means the "House of Palms," hence is indicative of a place of rest, e.g. an oasis in the desert. There is scriptural evidence that the Lord was wont to resort to Bethany when He was in the neighbourhood of Jerusalem. It would not be difficult to arrive at the correct conclusion as to the reason of His doing so. There were loyal hearts there who appreciated His company, and prized His love, in contrast to the treachery of Judas, the hatred of the Pharisees, the cruelty of the soldiers and the cold hard fickleness of the people.

It was at Bethany that these loyal friends made the Lord a supper, at which the three essential features of the Christian life were portrayed in the business of the three members of the family named in the twelfth chapter of John's Gospel.

1. Lazarus, who had been raised from the dead had the privilege of sitting at the table with the Lord, indicated "fellowship."

2. Martha served, hence she exhibited the feature of "service."

3. Mary, in anointing the feet of her Lord with the treasured ointment, indicated "worship."

These features, fellowship, worship and service are indissolubly associated. No one can rightly effect one of these, who ignores or is remiss in the observation of the others.

When all the disciples were looking forward with eagerness to the immediate display of the coming kingdom, Mary, alone, was in the Lord's mind as to the future. Her faith had apprehended the end of His pathway was necessarily that He

should die and therefore she grasped the opportunity. The other women essayed to perform that service, after His death and burial, but were too late. He had risen! (Mary was not at the sepulchre). She had bestowed on Him in His life-time the choicest treasured possession which she had. There was nothing too good to give to her Lord!

Since the Lord has gone on high, the significance of Bethany has continued. In the midst of the world that hated and crucified Him, He finds positive delight in the response of His own to His love. There are hearts loyal to their absent Lord. They are found maintaining occupancy till He come!

The Lord went up from Bethany, He led the disciples out as far as to Bethany and having lifted up His hands He blessed them, as the true antitype of the priest in Old Testament times, with His hands filled with the favour of God, He bestows it in an unstinted manner.

It came to pass while He blessed them (or while He was blessing them), He was parted from them and was carried up into heaven. The real sense of the expression is that His blessing was an unfinished act! Although His position is changed since He has gone on high, He is still in the process of blessing His people.

The sequel was that they worshipped Him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy and were continually in the Temple praising and ascribing blessing to God. (Luke 24. 50-53). So the Gospel which begins with great joy has a similar termination! That feature is characteristic

of the whole era for the Christian. So that the Apostle Paul terminating his earthly pathway in a Roman prison could quite rightly exhort his Philippian readers to rejoice in the Lord!

The Lord went up from Bethany and it is to Bethany He will return. Bethany is still formed of loyal and expectant hearts, who join in cheerful resonance to the invitation of the

Spirit and the Bride saying "Come" to an absent Lord and Bridegroom. Meanwhile we have the peerless privilege of occupying in His interests in the brief interval till He come. The outburst from these hearts must necessarily be:—

"Even so, come Lord Jesus!"

His answer is:—"Yes! I come quickly!"

The Incense of Prayer.

"Let my prayer be set before Thee as incense."—Psalm 141.

The incense lay dead, unfragrant, and with no capacity for soaring, till it was kindled; and unless there is a flame in my heart there will be no rising up of holy aspirations from my heart to God. Cold prayers have no power to soar. Whence was the incense kindled? From coals brought from the altar of Burnt Offering in the outer court. Here is the secret; let the heart be kindled with a coal from the altar, with the thought of what the Saviour suffered when He offered Himself to God for us. The heart is kept warm by the continual realization of His great love, "the Son of God, loved me and gave Himself for me." It is this that will make our prayers ascend as incense and nothing else will, for only when that love fills us will we pray unselfishly and for His glory.

The Lord is Gracious.

"The kindness and love of God our Saviour toward men has appeared"—Titus 3.

Blessing is not now a question of what men are, but what God is. What men are is clearly stated in the Word: "There is none that doeth good, no not one" (Rom. 3), and that surely closes man's side of the question, he can put in no claim for God's favour; then everything depends upon what God is. And here it is that the gospel brings its wonderful message to us. God is gracious. In Christ He offers an eternal forgiveness and declares that in Him all that believe are justified. We would not have God altered one bit; His holiness and righteousness give an eternal stability to His blessing, and He looks for no change in the sinner before He blesses Him, except that change which makes him own that his only hope is in God. But He does not ask that the sinner should be other than he is. He wants him to come just as he is, and then he will learn that God is just what He is. Grace meets the guilty, the Saviour greets the sinner, and where sin abounded grace does much more abound.

HE THAT ASCENDED, DESCENDED FIRST. F. B. Hole.

(Psalms 68 and 69).

PSALM 68 strikes a very triumphant note, for in it God is seen as scattering His foes and blessing His people. It seems to be the climax of a short series. Psalm 64 anticipates that God will intervene for the deliverance of His people. Psalm 65 speaks of the blessing that will visit the earth when God has stilled the tumult of the nations. Psalm 66 expresses the joy of the godly when brought through fire and water they can praise His Name in His house. Psalm 67 shows that when God blesses and causes His face to shine upon Israel His saving health will be known among all the nations. Psalm 68 crowns the story by recapitulating the whole theme with greater fullness, and showing that all hinges upon the One who has ascended on high.

Psalm 69 commences another short series of three, in which not triumph but a cry for deliverance is predominant. It begins with the cry of One who entered into troubles far more deeply than any other. The truly marvellous thing is that the One who cries out of the deepest troubles is to be identified with the One who has gone up on high. Therefore it is that Psalm 72 closes the second book with a description of His millennial glory.

If human order and arrangement had prevailed in the grouping of the Psalms, it would pretty certainly have reversed the order of the two series. We should have arranged things in historic order, first His trouble and suffering, second His triumph and ascension, third His millennial glory. But doubtless we

should have been wrong. The order here agrees with that observed in Ephesians 4. 9, 10, where, having quoted the eighteenth verse of Psalm 68, the comment is made "Now that He ascended, what is it but that He also descended first into the lower parts of the earth." The descent was first historically, but it is only mentioned parenthetically because His triumphant ascension is the main point before the mind of the Spirit. So it is in these Psalms, and 69-71 may be viewed as a parenthesis between 68 and 72.

He "descended first." So let us first consider Psalm 69, in which He is seen as sinking in "deep mire," and "deep waters" (ver. 2), and as going down into "the waterflood," "the deep," and "the pit" (ver. 15). Ephesians 4. 9 speaks of Him as descending "into the lower parts of the earth," an expression that occasions some little difficulty. If, however, we connect it in our minds with the Psalm before us the difficulty largely disappears. Indeed it may be that the Apostle Paul, when he wrote the words, had this Psalm in his mind, just as he had Psalm 68 in his mind and quoted from it in the previous verse.

The sufferings contemplated in our Psalm are not those that are connected with His soul being made an offering for sin. His atoning sufferings were *from* God, as we see in Psalm 22. Here the sufferings are endured *for* God. It is plainly stated in verse 7, "For Thy sake I have borne reproach." All through this is the dominant note. We see by the spirit of prophecy the holy, dependent Man altogether identi-

fied with God's interests, and by reason thereof going down into death.

The language of this Psalm cannot be applied to the Lord Jesus without any reserve, as is possible when we consider Psalm 22. Verse 5 is a case in point. The utterance of that verse would come most appropriately from the lips of the most devoted saint that has ever lived, but in no sense did it come from His lips. In Psalm 22 the sufferings He endured at the hands of men when on the cross are predicted, yet all are subsidiary to the supreme sufferings which were His as forsaken of God. Then it was that atonement was made, and hence He stands absolutely alone. No other enters into the question, even in the remotest way. In Psalm 69 He is not absolutely alone, for many a saint has known what it is to suffer from evil men, because identified with God's Name and cause. He is immeasurably pre-eminent in this, but there are others. This accounts for expressions in the Psalm which apply to the others, but which do not apply to Him.

A large part of the Psalm however, does apply to Him. The Lord Jesus quoted the opening words of verse 4 as applying to Himself in John 15. 25. We are told in John 2. 17 that His disciples remembered the opening words of verse 9, and saw that they referred to Him. Paul remembered the latter part of that verse, and saw that it referred to Him, as shown by Romans 15. 3. So also Peter saw a reference to Judas Iscariot in the 25th verse, as we are told in Acts 1. 20.

In addition to these we are furnished with many remarkable allusions to what He suffered. Hatred,

reproach, shame, dishonour are all mentioned, and they reached Him from all quarters. "They that sit in the gate speak against Me;" and it was the elders and judges who sat there—the most reputable of the people. But equally, "I was the song of the drunkards;" and they were the most disreputable of the people.

Then again, when reproach had broken His heart He had to say, "I am full of heaviness: and I looked for some to take pity, but there was none; and for comforters, but found none." This was fulfilled in His disciples, for it was in Gethsemane that He was "sorrowful and very heavy," and even Peter, James and John utterly failed Him.

Verse 21 was fulfilled on the cross in the most literal way by the Roman soldiers who crucified Him.

So in this wonderful Psalm we get the whole range of suffering that came upon Him at the hands of men: whether from the leaders of the people, or from the very scum of society, or from the Gentiles; whether from true disciples who really loved Him, or from false disciples who betrayed Him. He felt it all with an intensity that is altogether beyond our conception, and He was cast upon God in it all.

"Then I restored that which I took not away" (verse 4). These words found their fulfilment in Him. The first man Adam robbed God of His glory. He forsook obedience to God and dependence upon Him, and became eaten up with self-interest and self-seeking. The second Man the Lord Jesus Christ was marked by absolute obedience and dependence; He was eaten up with zeal for God's house, and was so wholly identified with the interests

and glory of God that, if any desired to fling reproaches upon God, the reproach naturally fell upon *His* head. Thus having taken man's true place, He restored to God as Man the place that was truly His as God. He glorified God where the first man had dishonoured Him.

But it was just this whole-hearted identification with God, and zeal for His house, that brought upon the Lord Jesus the full weight of man's hatred and persecution—a persecution which did not stop short of death. Adversaries surrounded Him on all sides; reproach, shame and dishonour were rolled in upon Him from all quarters. He did indeed *descend*. He had to say, "I sink." But this descending was *first*; that infers that there is something to be accounted *second*. There is a glorious *sequel*.

Psalm 68 very specially contemplates the great intervention on God's part which will overthrow every adversary and deliver His people, and thus inaugurate the age of millennial glory. Again and again men perpetually ask, Can there be a God? If so, why does He not rise up and do something? They do not realize what the fulfilment of their desire will entail. The day will come however when a Divine intervention will take place. God will arise and His enemies will be scattered. HIS enemies, be it noted; not yours or mine or Britain's or Ethiopia's or even Israel's. His enemies will be like smoke driven before the fire.

That intervention will mean the deliverance of all those that fear His Name. Many of them will be in a captivity that has been brought upon them by reason of their

nation's sins. Isaiah asks the question, "Shall the prey be taken from the mighty, or the lawful captive delivered?" (49. 24), and in the next verse he answers it, saying, "Thus saith the Lord, Even the captives of the mighty shall be taken away, and the prey of the terrible shall be delivered." Our Psalm shows that not only will the Almighty "scatter kings" (ver. 14), but He will lead captive every power that had enslaved His people. He will possess Himself of them by taking captive those who held them in captivity.

But, as we have seen, the Apostle Paul discovered that these words, while referring to the millennial triumph, had an application to the triumph won by the Lord Jesus at His first advent by way of death, resurrection and ascension into the glory. Many details in the Psalm can only refer to what will be accomplished at His second advent, but verse 18 has special reference to the first, and we may make a similar application of verse 1.

"Let God arise, let His enemies be scattered!" These are great words. Had there been fulness of intelligence and faith in the hearts of the disciples, they might have been on their lips as they awaited that glorious first day of the week when Jesus rose from the dead. They had neither the faith nor the intelligence at that moment, but doubtless as the myriads of holy angels looked down upon the grave of Joseph of Arimathea that is what they desired to say, and that is what they saw accomplished. Of a truth He was crucified in weakness, but He came forth from the tomb by the power of God—a power that was inherent in Himself.

It must have been a great sight when, in the little ship on the lake of Galilee in the midst of the storm, the apparently weary Man "arose, and rebuked the winds and the sea; and there was a great calm." It was a far greater sight when the apparently defeated Man arose from the dead, not only rebuking but scattering His spiritual foes, when, "having spoiled principalities and powers, He made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it" (Col. 2. 15). The thing was done openly or publicly. The triumph was over opposing evil spiritual powers, and it was public in the sight of all the holy spiritual powers.

When the triumph was effected men were wholly unconscious of it. The best of the disciples were still in fear and trembling. No human shouts of exultation greeted the arising of God and the scattering of His foes, but who shall say what transpired in the angelic realm? If the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy when the foundations were laid in creation, what songs and what shouting must have greeted the arising of the Son of God from death and the grave? There must have been a shout that reverberated to the farthest of the shining stars of God, though dull human ears perceived it not.

We believe that we do not trespass in thus applying verse 1 to the resurrection of Christ. We are sure that we do not in applying verse 18 to His ascension, for the inspired Apostle makes just that application, as we have seen. His application sheds a flood of light on the Old Testament scripture.

Verse 17 speaks of "the chariots of God." These are connected with

angelic ministrations and power, as we see in the translation of Elijah. When he ascended on high he was fetched by the chariots of God. "The chariots of God are twenty thousand," yet none of them appeared when Jesus went up. The One who then ascended was God no less than Man. He was not fetched: He went up and in, as the Master of that holy place.

Moreover His ascension was in the nature of a triumph. A cloud received Him out of the sight of the disciples: the scene that transpired on the other side of that cloud was too bright for mortal eyes to gaze upon. The verse that we have already quoted from Colossians 2 has as much application to His ascension as to His resurrection. The powers of darkness, which had been holding man in captivity, were themselves dragged as helpless captives in His procession; and already there were found upon earth men, who though once the helpless captives of Satan, were now gladly captivated by Him. The handful of captivated men that He left behind Him have now increased through the centuries to a multitude that no man can number. We—readers and writer—are amongst them, conscious of the cords of His love.

"Drawn by such cords we'll onward move,
Till round the throne we meet,
And, captives in the chains of love,
Embrace our Saviour's feet."

When this verse is quoted in Ephesians 4 the point particularly before the mind of the Spirit is the gifts that were given to Him as Man on behalf of men. "Thou hast received gifts in Man" (New Trans.). The gifts were indeed received for men, but the language indicates more than this. They were received in Man; that is, by Him in His as-

cended and glorified Manhood, so that He, as the supreme and representative MAN, might bestow them upon men. He will indeed shed great gifts upon the men who, born again and redeemed, enter the coming age of glory. The point made in Ephesians 4 is the way in which He has given the gifts amongst His redeemed to-day.

The saints of to-day, who compose the church, are "a kind of first-fruits of His creatures." We have in anticipation blessings which will be bestowed in a more public way in the coming age. On the day of Pentecost Peter stated of Christ that, "being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, He hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear" (Acts 2. 33); so here we have a statement which runs parallel to that of Paul.

Peter speaks of the gift of the Spirit Himself. Paul speaks of the gifts that accompany and flow from the gift of the Spirit. But in both cases the gifts reach men in the same way. As the ascended and victorious Man the Lord Jesus received of the Father the promised Holy Ghost, and then shed Him forth upon His saints below. As the ascended and victorious Man He received the gifts, which He proceeded to give unto men. By the gift of the Spirit Himself the saints were constituted His members, and His body was formed. By the gifts bestowed—apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers—the saints are to be perfected and the body edified.

These gifts are all in evidence to-day. The apostles are available for us, inasmuch as we still have

the inspired writings which came from their pens. We also have inspired writings which have reached us through men, who although not apostles, were prophets. Prophets, in the full sense of the term, were inspired men: yet, though inspiration has ceased, we still find that there are given to the church men of prophetic gift, who can unfold the mind of God. Evangelists, pastors and teachers are also to be found to-day.

The point in the Psalm is that the bestowal of these gifts is the fruit and manifestation of the triumph of the Lord Jesus. He descended first into death and all that was involved in it. He arose from the dead to the confusion and scattering of every adverse power. He ascended into the heavens having made captive the evil principalities and powers that formerly held us captive. Then, to crown everything, He received as Man the gifts which He bestowed upon men.

These gifts are even for "the rebellious," as the Psalm says: that is, for those who once were rebellious, but now have been happily subjugated through grace, are captives in the chains of His love. By-and-by, when judgment has run its course in the earth, there will be a great out-pouring of the Spirit and of the gifts of the Spirit upon once rebellious men. At last the earth—Israel and the nations—will be in sincere subjection to the will of God, and it will be seen that Christ is "the Head over all things" (Eph. 1. 22). In that glad day the gifts will flow to men from the glorified Man who is Head over all.

But the same verse in Ephesians declares Him to be "Head . . . to

the church, which is His body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all." The church exists to-day, and her Head is the One who—though "over all, God blessed for ever"—is over all things, the ascended and glorified Man. Hence the church has not to wait to receive gifts. They are hers to-day, and have been hers since she came into being. They have reached her from her exalted Head; and every one of them exists for the maintenance of His interests and the doing of His work in the world, which is the scene of the

adversary's power. Every one of them is a witness to the triumph of our Head.

And every one of them has this in view—"that the Lord God might dwell." In the coming age He will dwell in Zion, as His rest for ever. In this age He dwells in the church, as we are told in the last verse of Ephesians 2. What mighty results flow from the triumph of our Head!

Sing His blest triumphant rising;
Sing Him on the Father's throne;
Sing—till heaven and earth surprising,
Reigns the Nazarene alone.

The Lord's Coming.

There is a great difference between a person believing in what is called the doctrine of the second advent, and a loving soul in the joy of communion looking and longing for the Lord Himself to come. The doctrine in the head will not have much influence on the heart and life if the Person of the Lord is not supreme in the heart. It is the Spirit and the Bride that say, Come, to Him, and that word surely comes from the heart. It is movement of the heart towards the heavenly Bridegroom that we must cherish, and surely the Holy Spirit will give us these movements if we grieve Him not.

"My Lord delayeth His coming" is the language of the heart that is seeking gratification in the world. "Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly" is the language of a heart that is filled with love to Christ. It is in proportion as we are in communion with Him, and enjoy His presence *spiritually*, that we shall long to see Him actually. This is a true test of the soul's condition.

God's Heart.

The work of Christ was not needed to turn the heart of God to the sinner, as some have taught, but to turn the sinner's heart to God. God's heart was ever towards the sinner. All Scripture reveals this. It was not Adam that sought God after he had sinned in the garden, it was God who sought him, saying, Adam, where art thou? The cross of Calvary is the measure of God's love and His desire for the blessing of men. There He commends His love to them, by that cross He beseeches them to be reconciled to Him, and not until the prodigal returns with repentance and is pardoned and kissed and accepted in the Beloved can the desires of God's heart be satisfied.

"A PURE HEART."

2 Timothy 2. 22.

(Contributed)

IT is clearly important to know who are referred to in this expression, for it is with such we are to associate in the pursuit of righteousness, faith, love, and peace, calling on the Name of the Lord.

Similar phraseology occurs in other parts of the Word. This should help us. In Matt. 5. 8 we read, "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God." Seeing God is connected with this state of heart. The believer looks forward to being presented "with exultation blameless before His [God's] glory" (Jude 24, N.T.). Then His servants shall serve Him, and they shall see His face (Rev. 22. 4).

But we read also of "being enlightened in the eyes of your heart" (Eph. 1. 18, N.T.). This has to do with our spiritual intelligence. That enlightenment begins with deliverance from the "blinding of the thoughts" by the god of this world so that we receive "the radiancy of the glad tidings of the glory of the Christ, who is the image of God"—the blessed One in whom we now come to see God, for He is the image of the invisible God, the effulgence of His glory and the expression of His substance. "No one has seen God at any time; the only begotten Son who is in the bosom of the Father, *He* hath declared Him." Thus we come to see and know God revealed to us in Christ, "on Whom though not now looking [as far as the sight of our bodily eye is concerned] but believing [for the eyes of our heart behold Him] ye exult with joy unspeakable and filled with the glory." For now we may look on the glory of the Lord with unveiled face.

So then by faith in Christ our eyes are opened, the eyes of our

hardened heart with their darkened understanding, and we are turned from darkness to light and from the power of Satan unto God, receiving the remission of sins and inheritance (Acts 26. 18). We, once darkness, are now light in the Lord. Thus we who in our hardened and darkened state of heart were estranged from the life of God, now have His love shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who is given unto us. It is true of all believers, as of Cornelius and his company, that "the heart-knowledge God bore them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost as to us also, and put no difference between us and them, *having purified their hearts by faith.*"

Thus, then, we become "pure in heart" and are assured of seeing God. We may now enjoy spiritual visibility, and shall have it by actual sight in bodies of glory in the day of eternity.

It is helpful to note the use in some other passages of the word rendered "pure" in the phrase we are considering. It occurs in John 13. 10, 11: "He that is washed all over needs not to wash save his feet, but is wholly *clean*; and ye are *clean*, but not all. For He knew him that delivered Him up: on account of this He said, Ye are not all *clean.*" The work of new birth, the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, with the consequent change of moral state and spiritual attitude toward God makes us clean—*pure*. Again, "Ye are already *clean* by reason of the word which I have spoken to you" (John 15. 3)—that word they had received, believing in Him as the sent One of God. Thus we are "washed as to our body [body here referring to the whole man and his

habit of life] with *pure water*”—symbol as we know that is of the Word of God. So Peter says, “Having purified your souls by obedience to the truth to unfeigned brotherly love, love one another out of a pure heart fervently”—that is a heart governed by the truth which purifies, by contrast to its former state, a result from what immediately follows—“being born again not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the living and abiding word of God.”

Those having a pure heart are born again, purified souls, who now have God as their object, they joy in Him through our Lord Jesus Christ, instead of self and evil things. They, purified in heart, have unfeigned love for all their brethren, for being born of God they love those begotten of Him. Precious divinely formed bond of fellowship with one another, all being cleansed from every sin by the blood of Jesus Christ, God’s Son. Thus the Father has made us fit for sharing the portion of the saints in light. The flesh and sin are still in us, but we are not under their dominion. Though failure and even sin mar our course in life through our lack of watchfulness, the real underlying current is toward God and His will, not lawlessness, wickedness. The habit of life is righteousness, not sin which is lawlessness.

The gospel, then, believed in the heart makes “pure in heart,” and characteristically leads to activity “out of a pure heart.” Such are our fellow-members, members of Christ and of one another, called in one body, whether Jews or Gentiles, for which we should be ever thankful.

How will those who are of pure heart be manifest *in these days*? By withdrawal from iniquity—the

responsibility of every one who names the name of the Lord. What iniquity really means it is not hard to determine from the Epistle itself. Compare chap. 2. 14-18 and 3. 1-9. “From these turn away.” Such are vessels to dishonour in the great house of Christendom in which not only “our only Master and Lord Jesus Christ” is working, but also another, even the wicked one. The synagogue, throne, and depths of Satan have come into evidence within that house, and he has vessels to use. The meat and drink served in them advance unto greater impiety and spread like gangrene. The true Master has His vessels which are to honourable use—vessels to honour—such as a Timothy, a Mark, a Luke, a Onesiphorus.

Now our association in Christian fellowship, if we are obedient to the Word will be with such. Refusing party names, party practices, and party circles, we are to pursue together *righteousness* in separation from iniquity, ever seeking to help by word and deed to promote love and good works in holiness with a spirit of true humility and self-judgment, disowning and avoiding the works of the flesh, ready to own and encourage all that is of the Spirit. This as also pursuing *faith*, the exercise of confidence and dependence on the Lord upon whose name we call; as also pursuing the constant exercise of *love* in service to all in the spirit of Phil. 2 and 2 Cor. 13; and as pursuing *peace*, avoiding what promotes strife, “let us pursue the things which tend to peace and things whereby one shall build up another,” and “let all things be done to edification.” How truly these things sound the death knell of selfishness, pretension, and place-seeking.

“EVEN AS THY SOUL PROSPERETH.” A. J. Pollock.

THERE are five references to Gaius in the Scriptures. Whether they refer to one and the same Gaius is a question.

(1) Gaius, a man of Macedonia, a companion in travel with the Apostle Paul at Ephesus on the occasion of the riot, caused by the silversmiths, who made shrines for the goddess Diana, and who feared that their craft was endangered (see Acts 19. 29).

(2) Gaius of Derbe, a companion in travel with the Apostle Paul when he journeyed into Asia (see Acts 20. 4), after leaving Ephesus. It looks as if these two Gaiuses were one and the same, seeing they were both companions in travel with Paul and that the visit to Asia followed soon after that to Ephesus.

(3) Gaius who was baptized by the Apostle Paul at Corinth (1 Cor. 1. 14). Corinth was in Macedonia, and we are told in Acts 19. 29 that Gaius was of Macedonia, so the strong probability is that these are one and the same Gaius. When baptized he was at the beginning of his Christian career. He evidently was a well-known brother.

(4) Gaius, who was the Apostle Paul's host and of the whole church sent his salutations to the brethren

(5) Gaius to whom the Apostle John addressed his third Epistle. The Apostle praised him for his consistent walk as a Christian and for his kindness and hospitality which he showed to the brethren and to strangers.

* * *

Two great lessons we learn from this Gaius, especially as it looks as if the Gaius in Romans 16 were the

same as in John 3.* In both cases the exercise of hospitality marked him.

Hospitality has a large place in the Scriptures. “Given to hospitality,” (Romans 12. 13) should be the disposition of all Christians. “Given to hospitality” (1 Timothy 3. 2), “A lover of hospitality” (Titus 1. 8)—were the characteristics of a bishop or overseer in the house of God. The Apostle Peter has a striking exhortation, “Use hospitality one to another without grudging” (1 Peter 4. 9). Why “without grudging”? It may be the Apostle, as a married man, recognized that hospitality costs money, and entails labour and self-sacrifice. Extra food must be bought, sleeping accommodation provided, and extra plates, knives, forks and spoons have to be washed up. So “without grudging” is a very happy exhortation. Then we have the exhortation in Hebrews 13. 2, “Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for some have entertained angels unawares.” It is all on the lines that it is more blessed to give than to receive. There must be the giving as well as the getting in spiritual life, if we are to be true and healthy Christians. To get and not to give makes a miser, whether in the natural world or the spiritual. To give and not to get makes the prodigal and the bankrupt. “Freely ye have received, freely give” (Matthew 10. 8).

Hospitality then marked the Gaius of Romans and the Gaius of 3 John. Thirty years elapsed—A.D. 60 to 90—between the writing of the two Epistles, so if these are

*We are inclined to think that the five references to Gaius point to one and the same individual.

one and the same Gaius it means steady continuance in well doing. If this were so, what a happy lesson it teaches us. His was no sudden spurt on these lines. Comparatively a young man, his love to the Lord showed itself in care for the saints, and again in old age we see the same lovely trait marking him. Of course the Gaius of 3 John was familiar with the words of the King, "INASMUCH as ye have done it unto the least of these My brethren, ye have done it UNTO ME" (Matt. 25. 40 and 45).

We would appeal to young Christian married couples to begin on these lines, to carry out these exhortations of Scripture. It is sweet to see the young thus caring for the interests of the Lord.

We know towns where hospitality is not available, or at any rate, difficult to arrange, and the assemblies of God's people suffer through lack of ministry. On the other hand we know towns where brethren vie with each other in showing hospitality, and this happy service is seen in ministry being abundant and helpful among the saints. If a servant of the Lord receives hospitality, and his ministry builds up and edifies the saints, one and all are indebted to the home where gracious hospitality is dispensed.

Moreover we have the encouragement of knowing that God Himself appreciates what is done in His name. "God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have showed toward His name, in that ye have ministered to the saints and do minister. And we desire that EVERY ONE OF YOU do shew the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end" (Hebrews 6. 10, 11). Gaius in A.D.

90 was showing forth this diligence to the end.

All through the Old Testament we have instances of prompt and ready hospitality. We read of Sarah kneading cakes on the hearth, whilst her husband Abraham went to fetch the calf, tender and good, and the setting of butter and milk before his unexpected visitors, one being the Lord Himself, and many other instances.

There is an interesting story told of that eminent servant of God—J. N. Darby. He arrived at the railway station, and was met by a number of brethren. One, a rich brother with his carriage and pair, came forward to claim the distinguished servant as his guest. Mr. Darby was very quick in grasping a situation. He hastily enquired, "Who *generally* receives the Lord's servants?" They pointed to a humble brother, with no carriage and horses. "Then," said Mr. Darby, "I stay with him," thus showing his appreciation of that which was *general* in his attitude towards hospitality. The rich brother went home alone. If he had cared for humble saints no doubt he would have had the honour of receiving Mr. Darby. Did he know the meaning of "INASMUCH"?

We learn a second lesson from Gaius in 3 John. The Apostle wished for Gaius that he might prosper and be in health, even as his soul prospered (verse 2). We venture to think this wish is unique. We have never seen it in any other connection in our wide experience.

There are three things:—

- (1) *Soul prosperity.*
- (2) *Business prosperity*
- (3) *Bodily prosperity.*

The first marked Gaius. He walked in the truth. He faithfully exercised charity and hospitality to the church, to the brethren and to strangers. This was so much so that the Apostle wished him business prosperity and bodily health. *This meant he could be trusted with success.* The secret would be that the Apostle had confidence that he would use these mercies in the Lord's service.

Alas! we have known often quite the reverse. We have known brothers prosper in business, and one could wish their souls prospered in proportion to their earthly circumstances. Alas! how often it may be just the other way—as circumstances improve spiritual life fades. Riches are a great test. It is a very serious matter, for the pull of the

world is strong. How sad was the Apostle Paul's lament, "Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world" (2 Timothy 4. 10). Again one has known spiritual saints in feeble bodies, and with returning health a fading in spiritual life.

How was it that Gaius could have this unique wish desired for him? *We believe it was because there was AN OUTLET.* He used his means and gave his labour in the Lord's work. The Lord's interests were first with him. The more he prospered in business and in health the more in means and strength he could place himself at the disposal of his Lord, and we believe he did.

These things are on the page of Holy Writ for our learning. May they have a practical and powerful lesson for us all.

Jehovah the Lord.

THE title Jehovah occurs about seven thousand times, but in the A.V. it is generally rendered "The Lord" and only occasionally "Jehovah," as Ex. 6. 3; Psalm 83. 18; Isa. 12. 2; 26. 4. It is also found in combination with another word, as Jehovah-jireh, Gen. 22. 14; Jehovah-nissi, Ex. 17. 15; Jehovah-shalom, Jud. 6. 24, in all seven times. It is rendered "LORD" six thousand eight hundred times; "GOD" eight hundred times.

It first occurs in connection with Elohim in Gen. 2. 4, "The LORD GOD (Jehovah Elohim) made." It first is used alone in Gen. 4. 1, 3.

The signification is,—**HE THAT ALWAYS WAS, THAT ALWAYS IS, AND THAT EVER IS TO COME.** We have it thus translated and interpreted in Rev. 1. 4,

"From Him which is (present participle, the Ever-existing One) and which was" (imperfect tense, expressing continuance in the past), "and which is to come" (present participle, the coming One, ever to come).

It is a combination in marvellous perfection of the three periods of existence in one word—the future, the present, and the past.

First, YEHI, "He will be," long tense; second, HOVE, "being," participle; third, HAHYAH, "He was," short tense used in the past.

Taking the three first letters of YEHI, YEH, the two middle letters of HOVE, OV, and the two last letters of HAHYAH, AH, we have YEHOVAH, or JEHOVAH, in full YEH-OV-AH.—(Newberry).

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

The Ethiopian Wife of Moses.

"And Miriam and Aaron spake against Moses because of the Ethiopian woman whom he had married" Numbers 12. Does this refer to Zipporah or to a later and second wife?
--SWANSEA.

CONSIDERABLE doubt exists as to this matter, but it seems to us that Zipporah was the Ethiopian or Cushite woman who aroused the jealousy of Miriam. The only difficulty in this conclusion is that she was the daughter of a Midianite priest, while the woman of Numbers 12 is called an Ethiopian. But Habukkuk connects the two, "I saw the tents of Cushan in affliction, and the curtains of the land of Midian tremble" ch. 37. It is probable that the Ethiopians had overflowed to the Midianite side of the Red Sea.

Miriam and Aaron must have seen Zipporah for the first time when Jethro, her father brought her and her sons to Moses in the wilderness (Ex. 18), for it is probable that after the scene in Exodus 4. 24, 25 she returned to her father's house. Jealousy flamed up at once in the heart of Miriam, and the fact that Moses invited Hobab, her brother, to be a leader for the nation (Num. 10), made it easy for Aaron to join with Miriam.

In this bitter resentment of the presence of the Gentile woman in the camp, Miriam was typical of Israel and the determined opposition of that nation against any favour being shewn to the Gentiles. We see how this hatred shewed itself at Nazareth when the Lord Jesus

spoke of blessing reaching out to Gentiles (Luke 4. 28, 29), and again in Acts 22. 21 23, when Paul spoke of his being sent to the Gentiles. The high place of favour that Miriam had hitherto filled would pass to Zipporah, and it thoroughly tested her and brought out the evil that was in her heart and brought down God's wrath upon her, and we see what answers to this in the case of Israel. "Forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles, that they might be saved, to fill up their sins alway: for the wrath is come upon them to the uttermost" (1 Thess. 2. 16).

According to Romans 11 the Gentiles now have the place of favour that was once Israel's, and out from among them God is taking a people for His name, who shall share the glory of the Lord when He shall rule over Israel. Moses was a figure of the Lord in this respect.

Miriam was shut out of the camp for seven days, a leper and an outcast, and the camp made no movement during that period, so the people of Israel cannot move on in the ways of God, until healed and cleansed from their sin, and their opposition to God's ways with the Gentiles, and a new heart is given to them as a result of the intervention and intercession of the Lord on their behalf.

No Prophecy of Private Interpretation.

"With reference to 2 Peter 1. 20-21. Dr. Weymouth in his "Modern Speech" version renders these verses as follows: "But above all, remember that no prophecy in Scripture, will be found to have come from the prophet's own prompting, for never did any prophecy come by human will, but men sent by God, spake as they were impelled by the Holy

Spirit." Mr. Darby's translation of this passage, on the other hand, with his footnote, appears to me to convey a different idea to that suggested by Dr. Weymouth. Mr. Darby speaks of the **scope of prophecy**. What are we to understand by the expression in the A.V., **private interpretation**? Your kind help will be appreciated."—UPMINSTER.

IT seems to us that Weymouth's rendering of this passage fails to give its full meaning. The words "No prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation," as given in the Authorised Version, do not refer to *how* the prophecies came, but shew that each individual prophecy has its place in the whole scope of prophecy. This is a most important principle in the interpretation of prophecy, and Weymouth's rendering entirely omits it. How the prophecies came is clearly told in verse 21. "The prophecy came not of all time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost."

It is true that no prophecy of Scripture came by "the prophet's own promptings," but the Spirit who knows all things from the beginning to their consummation, moved each prophet in turn to utter that which was to be part of a complete whole, and so no prophecy must be interpreted as though it stood alone. J. N. Darby says, "I doubt not that the prophecies were often occasioned by present circumstances, and comfort given to the saints at the time by them: but to say that they did not look on to the future blessing of Israel, and the final setting aside of the power of

evil, and of the coming in of the great promised Deliverer, is to fail to recognize the most obvious fact in all prophecy. It does not solve itself in the circumstances that occasion it, but enters into the great plan of God" Coll. Writings, Vol. 9, page 398.

F. W. Grant translates the sentence, "No prophecy of Scripture is of its own interpretation," and adds "Its own" is the literal force of the word here, which in our common version gives "private," and which Rome has perverted, by making it mean that Scripture is not to be interpreted by the individual for himself, but he must have the consent of the Church before he can know certainly what it speaks "Its own interpretation" does not and cannot refer to any private judgment of any one, but simply to an interpretation isolated from all that the same Word has given elsewhere and which would necessarily run the risk of being perverted from its proper use, as a sentence more or less broken, or a page of a book detached from all the rest of it. It is of prophecy that the Apostle is speaking . . . which has for its Author in all its parts the Spirit of God alone" *Numerical Bible*.

When the sky is black and lowering, when thy path in life is drear
Upward lift thy steadfast glances, 'mid the maze of sorrow here.
From the beaming Fount of gladness shall descend a radiance bright,
And the grave shall be a garden, and the hours of darkness, light.
For the Lord will hear and answer when in faith His people pray.
Whatso'er He hath appointed shall but work their good away,
E'en thy very hairs are numbered, God commands when one shall fall;
And the Lord is with His people, helping each and blessing all.

THREE GREAT SIGHTS.

J. T. Mawson.

"And he that saw it bear record." John 19. 30-35.

"And he saw and believed." John 20. 1-9.

"When they saw the Lord." John 20. 19-22.

THE disciple whom Jesus loved saw his Lord dead upon a cross; he looked within His empty tomb, and, along with his brethren, he beheld the living Lord in their midst. A great sacrifice, a mighty triumph and a changeless love! Since the world began no sights to compare with these had ever been seen by the eyes of men. What emotions must have swept John's soul in those great hours: sorrow, despair, amazement, triumph! The sorrow and despair passed, but the amazement and the triumph remained.

The First Sight—A great Sacrifice.

It was God's great mercy to men that He had an eyewitness there who could record what he saw. We are sure that John never did nor could forget those sights. They would be an indelible and ever-present memory with him throughout the eighty years that he lived after them, often spoken of but recorded at last for our good. But it was not a tenacious human memory only that bore the record, the Holy Ghost also had His part in it. (John 14. 26) "He that saw it bare record, and his record is true: and he knoweth that he saith true, *that ye might believe.*" What was it that he saw? The suffering and death of His Lord. He stood by the cross when all his brethren had fled, he stood there with the mother of Jesus and some other women and saw the head of his Lord bow down in death. He saw the soldier rend His side with a spear, the last stab of the world's hatred,

and he beheld blood and water flow forth from the gaping wound. He must have seen many crucifixions before this one, for it was a daily occurrence in the land under the rule of the ruthless Roman, but he had seen none like this, and of this only does he bear a record.

He bears record, inspired by the Holy Ghost to do it, because of who He was who died there, and because of the eternal and infinite results of His death. He opens his Gospel by declaring the eternal power and Godhead glory of his Lord, who became flesh and dwelt among men. Jesus is the Creator and life-giver, and He came into the world that He had made but which had gone from Him, not to condemn it, but that it might be saved through Him. His death was the only way; about this there could be no question, and of His death an infallible witness had to be borne to all generations of men that they might believe.

But why did He die? I know why other men die. The Scriptures tell us why men die in the plainest possible language. "By one man sin entered the world, and death by sin; and death passed upon all men for that all have sinned" (Romans 5. 12). But here the holy, sinless Son of God hung dead upon a cross. Why? There could be no question but that He really died. It was no swoon that John saw, as some of the religious rationalists declare. The soldier's spear thrust settled that. How could a natural body be still alive out of which the life-blood had

been drained? Though we know that He was dead already before that last act in the terrible drama of man's sin. He had given up His life; but why?

In this same Gospel we read "God so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten Son," but we cannot rightly separate those words from what goes before them. "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so *must* the Son of man be lifted up." "Must" is a hard word. There is no word in any language that presents with greater force what is inexorable. He *must* be lifted up. If eternal life was to reach a ruined race, carried far from God and under the judgment and power of death by their sins, a Son of man *must* be lifted up in their stead, as their substitute and representative. Divine and eternal justice demanded this; nothing less could avail. But this Son of Man must be unlike every other man. He must be entirely free from the taint and offence of sin that brought in the ruin, and upon Him death must have no claim. Where shall He be found? He was found in God's bosom. "God so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten Son." The Son of man is the Son of God.

This is love indeed. How shall we describe it? What words shall we employ to tell out its greatness? We call it great love, wonderful love, love surpassing all other loves; we pile adjective upon adjective, but we feel that all are feeble and inadequate. All words that we can command, or their equivalents in the days when Paul wrote his Epistles must have been considered by him when he desired to describe this love and the gift that it gave,

for the two are one; but he discarded them all and declared that the Gift was "*the unspeakable Gift.*" We shall have a new language when we reach heaven, our home; we shall be able to speak in heavenly superlatives there, but shall we even then find words that shall fully describe this great gift of God's love? I doubt it. It will be for ever the unspeakable gift, unspeakable love.

We stand in thought with John, and with his eyes we see it all. We gaze upon the dead Christ upon the centre cross, who was made sin for us—the proof and pledge and measure of God's love to men, His love to us. And there we learn the necessity for it, for without shedding of blood is no remission, but the blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, cleanseth from all sin. The judgment could not spare Him when He was lifted up as our substitute. His life was poured out as the infinitely efficacious sacrifice, and it has met the demands of justice against us, and because of it God has given to all who believe eternal life. For "this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son."

But John saw water as well as blood flow forth from the side of his Lord, and though he did not understand it at the time, he learnt its meaning afterwards by the teaching of the Holy Spirit. He saw the evil of the human heart clearly exposed in the bitter hatred with which they hated Christ. And let the reader say, as he beholds through John's eyes, as the writer says, "There go I, but for the grace of God." There is no difference, not only because all have sinned, but because the nature that does the sins is alike in every man.

But the evil of man's heart brought out the good that was in God's, and by His Son given, not only were our sins borne in His own body on the tree, but He died for us, not because of what we had done only, but because of what we were. We can face it all now; not only the sins, transgressions and iniquities, but the evil spring of all within us, and we can take up Paul's language and say, "I am crucified with Christ." There was the blood to expiate our sins, but there was water also, marking the judicial end before God of the man who had sinned the sins. "There are three that bear witness on earth, the Spirit, and the water and the blood: and these three agree in one" (1 John 5. 8). They witness to the glorious fact that God Himself has taken up our case, and whether it be sins or sin, the fruit or the root, He has dealt with it according to His own wisdom, that nothing might stand in the way of our full enjoyment of the revelation He has made of Himself, and nothing stand in the way of His delight in us. John bore his true record, that we might believe. Have we believed? To all that believe God has given eternal life.

The Second Sight—A mighty Triumph.

We pass to the resurrection chapter for the second great sight. John is there again as an eye-witness. He and Peter had run together to see the sepulchre because of a report that the Magdalene had brought to them, and going into it they beheld the linen clothes lying and the napkin that was about His head, not lying with the linen clothes, but wrapped together in a place by itself. John saw this and has recorded what he saw; and his record gives

the lie to the report that was circulated amongst the Jews that His disciples had come by night and stolen His body. If they had done that, or if anyone else had done it, would they not have taken the clothes with the body?

Peter and John had run to the sepulchre with no other hope than to find His body there, for they did not yet know the Scripture, that He *must* rise again from the dead." They ought to have known, for He had plainly told them all about it before He died, but they had no faith as to it and only sight could convince them. They may have thought that tears had so dimmed the eyes of Mary that she could not rightly see in the gloom of that early morning, or at the worst, that His enemies had robbed the tomb; but the clothes lying as they were and no body in them convinced the amazed disciple, and "he saw and believed." He saw an empty tomb; the great sacrifice had been followed by a great triumph, the power of death was broken; the Lord was Conqueror.

It were as well that we should all ask if we have reached this point in faith, for there are many who sing with true sincerity "Simply to Thy cross I cling" who have not reached it. They do not know in their souls what triumph may be theirs by the the knowledge of the Lord's resurrection. We all need to consider well the words of Paul in his defense of the resurrection. "If Christ be not raised your faith is vain, ye are yet in your sins." A most serious consideration. His resurrection was as necessary as His death if we were to be saved, and without the resurrection the Gospel is incomplete.

I have met Christians who have had a great fear of death, but if they do only see the empty tomb as John saw it, or accept his testimony as to it, they will be able to challenge death and the grave, and cry, "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" Thanks be unto God, who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." The power of death has been broken and the Lord has triumphed not for Himself alone, but for all who believe. We thank God for the empty tomb, and John's record of how he saw it.

"It takes the terror from the grave,
From death the victory."

The Third Sight—A living Lord.

But where was the One who had lain in that empty tomb? First of all, He made Himself known to Mary as she stood disconsolate and hopeless in the garden, and He made her His messenger, to carry a most wonderful message to His disciples. "Go unto My brethren," said He, "and say unto them, I ascend to My Father and your Father, to My God and your God." I would have you to notice of whom He was thinking. We should have thought that the first thing that He would have done on that day of His triumph would have been to go to the Temple and convince the apostate leaders of that nation that He was indeed the Christ, and convict Pilate of his crime against all justice; but He did not do that. He had no thought of self-vindication, His thoughts were on His feeble, fickle, faithless disciples, who had scuttered for safety, like frightened rabbits to their holes, at the first sign of danger. Oh, how He loved those men, and those women! He had

spent a busy day here and there re-awakening their faith in Him, and had sent a message to them, telling them that He would meet them in Galilee, and that appointment was kept later on as we know, but such was His love for them that He could not wait for that appointment. The news of His resurrection had brought them together in the evening of that same day, He knew where they were and He could not refrain from going to them.

He might have claimed His crown and kingdom, and the vindication of His Name of all the foul aspersions that had been cast upon it, but He did not. Those fishermen disciples were more to Him than crowns and kingdoms; they were His brethren, the Father's love-gift to Him, for them He had died that He might never lose them, and if they were glad when they saw Him, how infinitely greater was His joy.

"Then were the disciples glad when they saw the Lord." They saw their living Lord, unchanged in His love for them. They heard Him say, "Peace unto you," for no words of upbraiding were upon His lips. He shewed them His hands and His side, and by those wounds they knew Him, and He breathed them into a new life and relationship with Himself, that neither death nor hell could dissolve. And as He loved them so He loves everyone of His own; the centuries have not changed Him, we who have believed through grace are as precious to Him as were His disciples on that resurrection day. He said to Thomas just one week later, "Thomas, because thou hast seen Me, thou hast believed: *blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.*" That blessedness

rests upon us who have believed John's testimony, and the living Lord may be as real to us as He was to those men who actually saw Him, for faith is greater than sight. Yes, we may know the supreme blessedness of the living Lord in the midst of His own beloved brethren, for where they are there He is.

What a dignity rested upon that company in the upper room that night. Men would have called them a wretched crowd, despicable cowards, and so they were until Jesus stood in their midst, then a dignity was put upon them that no company of angels will ever bear. He identified them with Himself; He shared with them His Father's name and love, and appointed them to be His witnesses in the world.

And there we stand who have believed, and in view of this great place of nearness and relationship with the Lord, what are the prizes that the world can give? Paul counted them as refuse for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus His Lord; and so may we.

We needed a great sacrifice for the salvation of our souls; we needed an empty tomb for the assurance of our faith, and we need a living Lord for the satisfaction of our hearts. We need Him as our Lord, our Centre, our Leader, our Head. I commend these three great sights to your earnest consideration. You will find in them and flowing out of them that which covers all our need until we shall see the Lord in His glory.

The Doctrine and a warning.

“Now the God of patience and consolation grant you to be likeminded one toward another according to Christ Jesus: that ye may with one mind and one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

“Wherefore receive ye one another, as Christ also received us to the glory of God.” Romans 15.

“Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned: and avoid them.” Romans 16.

Alone with the Lord.

SOLITUDE is of the deepest importance, because it is then that the soul renews its acquaintance with Him who only has entrance into our most solitary retreats. When we are thoroughly alone for Himself He delights to be our visitor. A sleepless night may

be a priceless blessing because of this. It is a good thing to habituate oneself to sit before the Lord. It may appear to be wasted time to some, yet it is only as we do this that we are prepared for service to Him, such service at least as will meet with His special approval.

THE ADVOCATE OR THE ACCUSER:

A.P.C.

Whose side do you take ?

THIS is a practical question for Christians in these days. It is not a question of whether we are Christians or not, though it may often test the fact. Happily, simple faith in the Person of the Son of God and His work settles that question. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved" (Acts 16. 31). "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life" (John 3. 36). "We are justified by His blood" (Rom. 5. 9), as well as numberless other passages. But the question is, as professedly saved ones, Do we take sides with the Advocate, or with the accuser of the brethren?

The advocacy of Christ is founded on His righteous person, and His perfect work. (See 1 John 2. 1, 2). His blessed work clears us from all the guilt of our sins, and in His blessed person we have an entire deliverance from our Adam state, He Himself—the dead, risen, and ascended One—being our righteousness before God. It is on this ground that He intercedes, and does the work of an Advocate. If we sin (after our relationship with the Father, as children to Himself according to the good pleasure of His will, has been settled), then the advocacy of Christ applies. "My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we [children] have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and He is the propitiation for our sins" (1 John 2. 1, 2).

The office of the Advocate, then, is not to get righteousness for us, nor to put away our sins, nor to

make us God's children. This is all settled, in virtue of Christ's death and resurrection, by faith in Him. "But 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; for by one offering He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified" (Heb. 10. 12-14). He is Advocate to maintain us as children before the Father without sin, in face of the accuser of the brethren (See Rev. 12. 10). When a child of God sins, communion is interrupted; the relationship remains, but the Father has no fellowship with the sin of His child. The Advocate pleads against Satan who accuses. The Father hears the pleadings of the Advocate, who thereon applies the word to our walk (John 13. 4, 5), brings us to the confession of the sin, upon which the Father is faithful to the righteous Advocate, and just to the Advocate who made propitiation, to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness (1 John 1. 9). Thus communion is restored, and the child of God walks in the joy and light of his Father's countenance. Thus the Advocate is literally the Manager of our affairs in our Father's court, and has reference to His government of His children in this world. It reconciles the fact of a naughty child and of a holy Father.

The Advocate does two things. He pleads with the Father for us; He applies the word to us. The one maintains our cause, if we sin, before the Father, against the accuser;

the other brings up our practical state to our standing, which is always maintained without sin by the righteous Advocate who has made propitiation. The failure in our practical state is from the fact of our having the flesh still in us. Our actual state is that of having two natures in one person. "With the mind I myself serve the law of God, with the flesh the law of sin" (Rom. 7. 25). By faith, and in Spirit, we are no longer in the flesh, yet actually flesh is in us (though by faith we reckon ourselves dead); hence failure when we are careless, and let flesh act. There is no excuse, but the fact is that we do fail through unwatchfulness.

Our standing as children ever remains the same (even though we may have sinned), owing to the righteous Advocate who has made propitiation. "If any man sin, we have an Advocate." But we have failed in our practical state, we are defiled. That our bodies are washed with pure water remains true (Heb. 10. 22); we have had once the washing of regeneration (Tit. 3. 5), we are born again (John 3. 3), we need not then to be put into the bath over again. But we have sinned, we have got our feet defiled in passing through this sin-defiled world. This will not do for the Father's presence. What does the Advocate then? He applies the word to us, washing our feet; the word judges us, leading us to confession and self-judgment. The remembrance of our Advocate who made propitiation brings us back on our knees to our Father who forgives us, and cleanses us from all unrighteousness. Thus the blessed work of the Advocate is, on the one hand, to plead for the children before the Father, if they sin; on the other

hand, to wash their feet with the word, bringing their practical walk and state up to their standing before Him.

Satan, on the other hand, is the accuser of the brethren. He accuses them before God day and night (Rev. 12. 10). He is the author of divisions between the children of God, by accusing them one to the other (Rom. 16. 17-20). He would hire Balaam to curse the people of God, and, failing in that, he would use the same prophet to teach Balak to mix them up with the nations around, and partake of their sinful practices. He would excite Jehovah to try Job, speaking bad things of him before Jehovah's face (Job 1, 2). He would tempt David to sin in numbering the people of Israel (1 Chron. 21. 1), and move Jehovah against Israel to destroy them (2 Sam. 24. 1). He would resist Joshua the high priest, and seek to prevent his filthy rags being taken from him, and his being clothed in new raiment (Zech. 3. 1). This is the accuser's wretched work. Those who follow him are called false accusers, slanderers [literally devils, because doing the devil's work]. He whispers in the ear of a minister's wife (1 Tim. 3. 11) a false story about some brother or sister in Christ. She spreads it about, and so the evil spreads, which perhaps may end in an assembly being broken up. Some aged sister sits leisurely at home (Tit. 2. 3), and, not having much to do, is ready to hear stories perhaps from some worldly person about some child of God. She spreads them about to others who come to see her. It is a slander, a lie, and so the devil does his work; and perhaps some child of God gets a wound, or is hindered in the work of the Lord for years.

I would solemnly ask every child of God who reads this paper, On whose side are you working? When some slander is uttered about a child of God, do you plead for him, go home and pray for him? If you know he has failed, do you go in love and humility, and take the word to him, and wash his feet? (John 13. 14). This is the blessed work of the Advocate—Or do you listen to the story, go and spread it lightly to some one else, without knowing whether it is a fact or not? And if you are hurt by some brother, do you go in a pet to God, or pray in anger at him at prayer-meetings (1 Tim. 2. 8), and so accuse him? This is to do the devil's work.

But how happy it is for us to be associated with the blessed Advocate; on the one hand pleading for our brethren if they sin, and on the other, carrying the word to them, and washing their feet! May the Lord grant His people increasingly this grace, so that the saints may see

their blessed privilege of love to cover sins (Prov. 10. 12), plead for their brethren if they sin, and act in faithfulness to them, in carrying the word to them, washing their feet, so that they might be cleansed from the defilement; these last, overcoming the accuser by the blood of the Lamb, on the one hand, if they sin, and, on the other hand, openly resisting him by the word of their testimony, like the blessed Lord Jesus Himself! He answered the devil, when tempting Him to sin, by "It is written;" and so should we. If we sin, thank God we can always answer Him by the blood of the Lamb, which is the balm for every wound. Thus the blood of the Lamb and the word, the sword of the Spirit, are our instruments against the devil down here; whilst the Advocate maintains our cause before the Father up in heaven. Here in every case we are maintained, and are overcomers, nay, "more than conquerors, through Him that loved us."

Miracles.

You say there are no miracles now. I can tell you of one. I know a man who is lame on both his feet and he is always first at the Lord's Table and the meetings for prayer.

"For Christ also suffered for you, leaving you a model that ye should follow in His steps." 1 Peter 2. 21.

Father, in sorrow's searching hour
 May we remember One who died,
 Jesus Thy Son, so dear to Thee,
 Mocked, and beaten, and crucified;
 Blameless Himself, for our poor souls
 Bearing the sin, the cross, the shame,
 Father, may all our selfish woes
 Vanish in praise of Jesus' name.

“LET US GO.”

Inglis Fleming

WHEN after deep soul-exercise the question of our justification is settled and we are assured of our eternal safety as being before God in Christ, then a practical danger for us as Christians is *STAGNATION*.

Like the two-and-a-half tribes of Israel that did not go over Jordan into Canaan, we may be content with earthly comfort and fail to go on to the good land and the large which flows with the milk and honey of God's good pleasure for His own.

We are called to movement throughout our Christian course. One example of this in Paul the Apostle is seen in Philippians 3. Thirty years after his conversion he is found pressing forward. As a well-trained athlete he is urging on his way. Christ in glory is his goal and he will know no satisfaction until with and like Him there.

Shall we consider some instances of the call for movement. Doing so we may be encouraged to go forward in the things which really matter. With this in view we will refer to some of the invitations in the phrase “*Let us go.*” The first to which we may turn is that of the shepherds who gave an immediate response to the angelic proclamation of the birth of Christ,

“Let us now go even unto Bethlehem,”

they said one to another, “and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known to us” (Luke 2. 15). Faith in the revelation marked them. “And they came with haste.” They saw.

They made known to others. They glorified and praised God. In spirit we may go to Bethlehem and view that manger-cradle with that wondrous Babe. The long promised Seed of the woman had come. The virgin had borne the Son. The Son of God eternal had become flesh. The Word had come to tabernacle in the midst of His ruined creation and among His fallen creatures.

“God was manifest in the flesh, seen of angels.” The mystery of the incarnation is great. Faith adores in the Bethlehem stable.

“More just those acclamations,
Than when the angel band
Chanted earth's deep foundations,
Just laid by God's right hand.”

The next exhortation and encouragement to which we refer is from the lips of our Lord Himself. His “friend” Lazarus had died. During his illness the sisters, Martha and Mary, had sent to the Lord saying, “He whom Thou lovest is sick.” They were assured of His love. But the Lord tarried until death had taken place with the loved one. Was it not that He awaited His Father's word to go and until He had the looked-for direction He would not move? The sickness was “not unto death but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby.” Then in the face of the danger which threatened Him He said, Lazarus is dead, and I am glad for your sakes that I was not there that ye may see and believe—nevertheless **LET US GO** unto him.” He, the Resurrection and the Life would restore Lazarus to life and health. But that journey to Bethany, to the place of His friend's death, was but the pathway to the cross. “His hour” was about to

strike when He should "depart out of this world unto the Father." He, the Corn of wheat would die that we might have life—spiritual life. For this He had come "forth from the Father, and come into the world" (John 16. 28). He would lay down His life in atonement and then take it again, where He could give us to live in everlasting association with Himself.

At this juncture it is that we get the happiest view of Thomas. His devoted love shines out as he cries out to his fellow-disciples,

"Let us also go that we may die with Him."

He might have to learn, and had to do, that devoted affection could not keep him in the hour of trial, but that he would forsake his Master and flee together with the rest. However, the record of his utterance is given that we may learn his readiness to suffer with his Lord. May we not ask ourselves how far we are ready to go to death with Him? In our baptism we die in figure with Him, being baptised to His death. In the Lord's Supper we (each for himself) and in communion with each other identify ourselves with His death in the world "showing forth His death until He come" into His rights. But in our practical life do we show that we have died with Christ to the elements of the world? Or in the eyes of others do we seem to be as much alive in the world as they, being as keen after the things of time and sense as "the men of the world which have their portion in this life"?

Here is the test for each one of us. If the enemy cannot hinder our eternal salvation, he will endeavour to hinder our testimony and to lead us to become keen for the things

of the passing age. A Christian poet has said,

"There has one Object been revealed on
earth
Which might commend the place,
But now 'tis gone,
Jesus is with the Father!"

Thus it is the word comes to us as Christians,

"Let us go forth unto Him

without the camp bearing His reproach for here have we no continuing city but we seek one to come."

This was the cry to Hebrew believers who were still attached to Jerusalem and its temple. In a few years the Romans would destroy both, but as yet they clung to what was visible in connection with the spot "where also our Lord was crucified."

The call was for decision and action. Christ had been cast out from that city—He had been thrust "outside the camp" and in faithfulness to Him they should go forth unto Him. He was rejected—they should share His rejection, bearing His reproach.

The principle of this is true for us to-day. An earthly system of religion with its politics and policies, though it bear a Christian name, is to be left. Ours is a heavenly calling. We "are not of the world" even as Christ is not of the world. We are sent into it as Christ's witnesses while we await His return in glory. The exhortation is heard "set your affections," your mind, "on things above, not on things on the earth." Where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God, is our place and portion. The reason given is that we have died with Christ and that our life is hid with Him in God (Col. 3. 1-3).

Finally "Let us go on to perfection."

Here we have the earnest word of the apostle. There was nothing made perfect by the law, the conscience could never be at rest because the sacrifices offered under the law were of no intrinsic value. They reminded the offerer by their constant repetition that the sins were not atoned for. They ever pointed on to the coming Christ. But He has come. His work is completed. He sits in glory. He has gone into the presence of God. As great priest He is there. He who

was ever perfect in Himself has been through His path of sufferings here perfected for the office of priest. And being made perfect has become the author of eternal salvation to all them that obey Him. In the epistle the thought of "perfection" is connected with Christ in glory. To Him and to all connected with Him there we are to go on. The knowledge of forgiveness of sins and of all that is linked with an earthly calling is to be left like the child leaves the A.B.C once learned and goes forward to fuller studies.

The Word of God.

TRUTH sets everything to rights; it sets God and man in their place or it is not truth. Sin, and righteousness and love—these never came out fully by the law; but "grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." Everything was set morally in perfect light by Him: but men saw it not, because they knew Him not. The Word now is the instrument of revealing truth. The law was perfect because it was of God, but it did not tell what man was, much less what God was—it told what man ought to be. Christ comes in as the light and says, You are all dead, but I can give you life. His coming into the world shewed out everything exactly as it was. As the living Word He came and revealed, to those who could see, God—not at first in redemption, but in testimony. What value to Him was it that Martha cumbered herself about serving, in comparison of a soul listening to His word!

It is the same now to a Christian.

When God's Word comes with nothing else, it has a right to have power over the soul. It makes its way by its own authority and its attractive grace to the heart, and where received it gives life in Christ. There is no living power in a miracle to quicken the soul, but there is living power in the Word. It is by the Word that any soul can get into heaven. We are begotten by the Word. If the Word cannot do it, it will never be done. There are three things constantly pressed in connection with the power of the Word. 1. The words spoken will all come up against them another day (John 12). 2. Though perilous times come (2 Tim. 3), the Word is able to make wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus. 3. When a soul is quickened by the Word, the moral effect is to make it dependent and obedient—"Sanctified to obedience." Such is the character of the new man, that of the old man is independence.

THE FAME OF JESUS.

James McBroom

(Matthew 8 and 9)—*continued.*

NOTHING could more clearly shew the perfection of the manhood of the Lord than the fact that He slept in the stern of the vessel. The sacred mystery of His sinless, holy Manhood cannot be explained by men, but we see it there nevertheless when He slept in that storm that threatened to wreck the ship. He knew what sighing and grief and weariness and fatigue were (Mark 7. 34; John 4. 6), and He had withdrawn for a little repose. Why disturb Him? But they were in danger. Was not their panic at that time something of the state of fever that we have seen in Peter's house?

They come to Him saying, Lord save. And at once He responded to their cry. Here we see Him from the side of His Godhead, the mighty, the almighty ONE in majesty supreme. "They that go down to the sea in ships . . . see the works of the Lord and His wonders in the deep. For He commandeth and raiseth the stormy wind, which lifteth up the waves thereof. They mount up to the heaven, and go down again to the depths: their soul is melted because of trouble. They reel to and fro, like a drunken man, and are at their wit's end. Then they cry unto the Lord in their trouble, and He bringeth them out of all their distresses, He maketh the storm a calm, so that the waves thereof are still" (Ps. 107. 23-29). This three-fold view of the Lord covers the pages of the four Gospels for the blessed One Who is seen there is God become Man, the Word become flesh.

Underneath this first recorded incident on the lake of Galilee there

is a glorious pledge of divine victory at the cross. It was there the waves and billows of God's judgment passed over Him, but it was there He triumphed over all the power of evil. Both Matthew and Luke record what the Lord *did* in the storm but Mark tells us *what He said*. "And having been aroused He rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, Silence, be quiet" (Mark 4. 19). The word means to muzzle, and blessed be His name He has not only silenced the storm on the sea but He has muzzled all the forces of evil. The world is judged, the devil defeated, death annulled, and all the forces of hell laid low." (See the Interlinear translation and Young's Concordance).

What follows is deeply humiliating. Think of swine in Immanuel's land. The humbling thing to a Jew in the parable in Luke was the words "He fain would have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat." But lower still; in the land of God's choice there are two men possessed of as many demons as could enter into two thousand swine. But yet deeper and beyond which it is impossible to get; men will rather have their swine and also the demons than the Saviour of sinners, the Son of God.

Chapter 9.

The rejection seen at the end of chapter 8 is continued by the leaders of the people in chapter 9. But the Lord goes on with His service of love in its bearing both on body and soul. The case of the palsied man was peculiarly trying, but the Lord graciously encourages him. "Son be of good cheer: thy sins be

forgiven." The first thought of the scribes who were sitting by was, this man blasphemeth, but He who used the words knew also their thoughts and while exposing them before all immediately commanded the man to rise up and take up his bed and go into his house. It will be noticed that in this case the Lord demonstrated who He was as shewn in Psalm 103. By dealing with the moral state first, the need of the man's soul before his body, He shewed that He was in full accord with that Psalm. "Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases." These men were right in their conclusion that none could forgive sins but God (see Mark's Gospel), but they were ignorant of the fact that God was there in their midst. Man was wrong both in soul and body and the Lord was there to put both right.

Notice the Lord's use of the title Son of Man. Not now does He speak of Himself as a homeless stranger but of His divine sovereignty. The Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins. Why? Because the Son of Man is God.

Nothing could more clearly shew the glory of His Person than this constant tracing of attributes both human and Divine to one and the same Person. A comparison of its use by Himself in these two chapters makes this clear.

Passing over the call of Levi we reach that miracle which shews the power of the Son of God over death (John 5). There came to Him a Ruler, one who had a certain place in the house of God but was at the same time helplessly at the disposal of another. This other was that cruel foe death under whose power the whole race lay. But the resurrection and the life was there

in the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ. On the way to the death chamber there came behind Him a woman with an issue of blood. We learn from Mark that she had spent her all on the doctors without relief. She touched Him and her trouble was healed. The woman's disease was of twelve years duration and the dead girl was twelve years of age. Putting the two together we see the only possible end in the child to that which was at work in the woman.

"Who touched My clothes?" (Mark 5. 30) said the Lord Jesus. And again in Luke 8. 46. "I perceive that virtue has gone out of Me." It was the effectual power of God to meet the power of death working in her. Faith was there before the touch and well He knew it, but His blessed heart would not let her go without the fuller and richer blessing of peace from God in her soul. The paralytic at the beginning of the chapter was put right first in soul then in body: here it was the body then the soul by the healing virtue of the Son of God. In the woman there had been the touch of faith from her side but in the death chamber it was the touch of power from His side. These two cases bring out very clearly the love and power of the Son of God. First His gracious condescension in following the man, then His tender kindness to the woman; His dealing with the tumult and the minstrels or flute-players in the house bespeak the tenderness of that blessed Man, while the Omnipotence of God shines out to heal the sick, raise the dead and bind up broken hearts.

The two blind men and the case of the dumb demoniac give a fitting termination to the group of the Lord's miracles which the Spirit has

been pleased to put before us here. In all three the avenues of the soul were affected. In the blind men's condition there was a world outside, the beauty of which was hidden from them, with the demoniac there was a terrible world within but no way of telling it out. Faith opened the eyes, which were shut to nature, to the glory of the Messiah, the Son of David, and in the confessing of His power bodily healing followed. They had yet to learn that their Messiah Son of David was in rejection and the time for display not yet come. In their new-found joy they departed and spread His fame in all that country. The dumb demoniac was the lowest down of all, and it is to be remarked that both here and in Luke 11 the putting such a one right brought upon the Lord the charge of doing the works of the devil. How closely this healing of the dumb demoniac stands contrasted with the indwelling of God the Holy Spirit (Luke 11. 13-15) and how awful the state of those committing the sin beyond forgiveness at that moment.

Now a few words on the place this group of miracles holds in relation to the dispensational and prophetic ways of God. The Holy Spirit puts the works of our Lord in the order that would shew Him in relation to the testimony of God for all time. By comparing this Gospel with the others we can see that the miracles recorded are not always placed in consecutive order but are set down in view of the Spirit's purpose in this particular Book. We have already seen that His being taken to Egypt had in view that the history of *Israel* should be taken up in the Lord's Person and carried right forward to the kingdom glory. The temptation

goes further back and shews the history of *the race* in His Person. See the question of food which was raised in the first temptation.

Having set forth the character of His kingdom in chap. 5-7, the power of it is displayed in chap. 8-9. This is so arranged as to give a figurative view of the whole range of testimony from that moment till the kingdom be set up in glory.

First then note how clearly the cleansing of the leper shews the way He put the remnant of His people right when He was here. These were taken up as children of the free-woman while the unbelieving mass were left like the Ishmael generation in bondage. Such are spared to come in again, for Israel is beloved for the fathers' sake. The dealing with Simon's wife's mother furnishes the picture of the future restoration, while the healing of the Centurion's servant shews what has been going on during the long interval since He has gone on high: the work of grace among the Gentiles on the principle of faith, for the man was healed by an absent Saviour. Next follows the boat scene which portrays the cross. Here the storm of evil rose to its height and here the mighty power of the Son of God muzzled all the forces of evil. The saved remnant seen in the Book of Acts may be pictured in the two men delivered from the power of the demons, while the mass of the nation as seen in that Book are left to run down the hill and were lost in the sea of nations. Even then the respectable world is seen in its refusal of Christ, preferring its commerce to the Saviour and it is left grovelling in its own unclean swinish ways till the time for judgment comes.

To continue.

“THE GOD THAT DOEST WONDERS.” F. B. Hole.

(Psalms 73 and 77).

WE have taken our title from the fourteenth verse of Psalm 77, but we believe that it serves equally well as a heading to Psalm 73. Both these Psalms are highly experimental; but the experiences related are of a sort common to the saints of all ages, and therefore very pertinent to ourselves.

Our title shows that God was a present reality to Asaph. He quite recognized that God had wrought great wonders in the past, as the succeeding verses of the Psalm show. Still in saying, “Thou art the God that doest wonders,” he laid the stress upon the present, and that is the great test of faith. It is comparatively easy to believe that God has done great wonders in the past, and that He will do them in the future. To genuine faith God is a *present reality*: He is a God that is doing wonders *to-day*.

Psalm 72 closes the second Book in giving us a glowing picture of the millennial reign of Christ. The great wonder of an earth filled with righteousness and peace will be brought to pass by God in that coming day. When however, we pass on to the next psalm and open the third Book, we are at once conscious of a great change of atmosphere. We leave the warm sunlight of millennial righteousness and glory, and enter the cold gloom of this present evil world, where the foolish, the wicked, the men marked by pride, violence and corruption are in evidence. The prayers of David the son of Jesse were ended as he foresaw the one; the heart-searchings and troubles of Asaph

came to a climax as he looked round upon the other.

The first sixteen verses of Psalm 73 give us a very graphic description of the way in which the wicked frequently are prospered in this life. There is nothing very surprising in the fact that in an ungodly world there should be worldly prosperity for the ungodly: it *is* rather surprising that the godly should so often be upset as they behold it. There was some excuse for Asaph, for he lived in a day when heavenly things were not clearly revealed, and when God did speak of blessing Israel His people in their basket and in their store. We live in a day when heavenly things are clearly revealed, and when we have been plainly told as Christians that “we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God.”

Still we often do exactly what Asaph did. We look around us and beholding the prosperity of the wicked we become envious of them, and in consequence our feet are almost gone, our steps have well-nigh slipped. In this we disobey the instructions of Psalm 37; we fret ourselves because of evildoers, and are envious against the workers of iniquity, and end by fretting ourselves in such wise as “to do evil.” Asaph could find no clue in this world to the elucidation of God’s dealings, neither can we. We shall have to do what Asaph did.

Asaph went into the sanctuary of God, and then he understood. The sanctuary of those days was the place where God granted His presence, and where He made known

His mind for there was to be found the priest with Urim and Thummim. Asaph withdrew himself from the world and its perplexing circumstances that he might get into touch with God. Gazing around he was nearly stumbled for it looked as if God were favouring the ungodly and penalizing the righteous; but in the sanctuary he got a glimpse of things that lie far outside this world, and his perplexities ceased.

There is no earthly sanctuary today. There is no place of special sanctity whither we must resort. Neither in Mount Gerizim nor at Jerusalem do we worship. The Father has been revealed to us in the Son. We have received the indwelling Spirit and the full Word of God. Hence we may each of us retire from the world, and shutting our door, we may realize the presence of God, and receive the blessing and uplift that His presence brings.

Now what did Asaph get when he went into the sanctuary? This question is answered for us in the latter part of the Psalm—verses 17 to the end. Let us attempt to summarize what Asaph tells us.

In the first place *he got the solution of the particular question that was agitating his mind.* He was brought to an understanding of the end of the ungodly, which stretches beyond time into eternity. He saw that God's dealings with men in this life are provisional only, and preliminary to His final action in eternity. This puts an entirely fresh complexion upon the whole matter. An atheist American farmer one year carefully cultivated, sowed and reaped certain of his fields on Sundays and not week-days. When the autumn came he had excellent crops from those fields; and he wrote an

exultant letter to the editor of the local paper, glorying in what he had done, and boasting that "*this October*" his crops were better than those of any of his Sunday-observing neighbours. The editor published his letter, but neatly punctured the inflated spirit which his letter breathed by inserting beneath it a brief editorial comment, to the effect that, "It must be remembered that God does not *always* settle His accounts in October!"

Asaph discovered that God intends to settle His accounts with the ungodly in His own time and way, and that He has unlimited time at His disposal wherein to do it. He is in no hurry, and He will do it in an hour of all hours most inconvenient for them. If we too have been troubled about this particular point, let us also lay hold of the fact that God's ways, whether with the ungodly or with His people, can only be interpreted in the light of eternity.

But Asaph got more than the solution of his difficulty when he went into the sanctuary—*something* entirely different, we suspect, from anything he anticipated. *He got an overwhelming sense of his own foolishness.* As a chief singer and an intelligent man he went in; but, once in, he very soon found himself to be like an unintelligent beast in the presence of God.

We venture to say that no one can ever know the reality of God's presence without making a like painful discovery. Those who most eminently have worn the character of God's saints have most profoundly realized their own nothingness and foolishness. The more we live before men, or even in the presence of our fellow-believers, the

less we realize it. The more we live as in the presence of God the more we realize it.

But Asaph was not left to grovel before God as a beast, for together with this overwhelming sense of his own folly and ignorance *he got a sight of the grace and glory of God.* "Nevertheless," he says, "I am continually with Thee: Thou hast holden me by my right hand." In spite of all that he was, and had learned himself to be, God took him by his right hand, lifted him up, and set him continually in His august company. This was astonishing grace. But grace also set glory before him, and undertook to give him guidance on his way to the glory.

These things were true for Asaph; they are more abundantly true for us. Grace, guidance and glory for a man who discovered himself to be like a beast before God! That is the Old Testament story. And the New Testament story is like unto it, only going beyond it. Titus 2. 11-13, gives us a yet more wonderful story of grace going on to glory, and with guidance granted in between, so that we live soberly, righteously and godly, in this present world.

But all this, great as it is, conducts us to an even greater end, which is very clearly indicated in this Psalm. The end for Asaph was this, that God Himself became infinitely attractive to his heart. Not only did He fill all heaven for Asaph, but He completely eclipsed all objects of desire upon earth. It is this second thing that tests us most. We know so little of heaven, whereas earth we know pretty well. The desirable things of earth cast their spell over us, except we know God in the prac-

tical way that Asaph learned to know Him.

Gaining this heart-knowledge of Him we find Him indeed to be the strength of our hearts and our portion for ever. With God for our strength and portion we are no longer "envious at the foolish," nor troubled because we see "the prosperity of the wicked." It is possible, we believe, to be so rejoicing in God as our portion that we are no longer troubled at the apparent success of evil men, even though we do not know the solution of the problem created by their success. The God who works within us to such an end is a God who works wonders indeed.

The Psalm ends on this note, that it is good to draw near to God. Asaph started to draw near because he wanted an explanation of his difficulties. He ended by drawing near because of the excellence of the knowledge of God Himself.

May a similar experience be ours.

So much for the troubles that spring out of the disordered state of the world. Asaph, however, had other troubles which he relates in Psalm 77. The source of these was not external, but internal. They proceeded not from the world without, but from the flesh within.

We have only to read the first six verses to discover that, when he began this Psalm, Asaph was extraordinarily occupied with himself. He details his miserable experience. He analyzes his miserable feelings. He looks back with longing to the brighter experiences of earlier days. He speaks of, "My trouble . . . my sore . . . my soul . . . my spirit . . . mine eyes . . . my song in the night [which he used to sing] . . . mine own heart." It is all himself. In the

Gospel of Luke we read of a woman who had a spirit of infirmity and as a consequence was "bowed together, and could in no wise lift up herself." In her case the spirit of infirmity affected her *body* and bent her double so that she could look no higher than herself. The spirit of infirmity that had laid hold on Asaph had affected his *mind* in similar fashion. He was bowed in upon himself.

How many of us have had an experience like Asaph? The easy-going, the worldly-minded amongst believers are not troubled in this way. They are not sufficiently keen to be well pleasing to the Lord, not sufficiently earnest, to face things. The careful and conscientious believer is the one to be plunged into these distresses. They are the ones who look within their own hearts, and are filled with grief at what they find.

It is true that in these verses Asaph says, "I remembered God," and that sounds promising. But he immediately adds, "and was troubled." So each thought of God inspired him with fear and not delight. He looked at God through the dark and distorting spectacles of his own miserable state of failure and self-occupation.

Now see where this led him! One might have imagined that it would lead him to a deep and thorough-going distrust of *himself*. But verses 7, 8 and 9 reveal that he was entangled in a loss of all confidence in *God*. He argued in his mind from himself to God, from his feelings to God's feelings; and this of course is the principle of law and not of grace. He felt that if he had basely slid away from God, God would be likely to cast off from him.

And so we get the six terrible questions that fill those three verses. Every one of them casts an aspersion upon God. Having communed with his own heart, and his spirit having made diligent search, he might very well have cast any number of aspersions upon himself. He might well have questioned whether his own goodness was not "clean gone for ever," whether his own promises and powers would not "fail for evermore." He had no logical reason for questioning God, yet that is what he did; and exactly what we are inclined to do, when in a like case.

This of course is the great object of the adversary. At the outset he broke man's confidence in God, instilling doubts into his mind. He loves to do it still. And alas, when we are self-occupied we readily fall into his trap as Asaph did. Let us realize that it really is a trap, for something is gained when we are alive to that fact.

The trouble is that to some minds this chronic and excessive self occupation appears to be a virtue. We at once concede that the main tendency to-day is towards a lack of keenness and conscientiousness, towards a far too easy-going type of religion that is not very deeply concerned about anything. Still that does not make the opposite extreme any more right. To be continually brooding over one's failures and trouble and weakness only breeds further weakness and failure; and moreover, since the tendency to this kind of thing is nearly always coupled with a legal mind, it inevitably generates loss of simple confidence in God. There are some too who, while not indulging in self-occupation of a personal sort, yet are

marked by something akin to it, only in a collective way. Their minds become obsessed with the failure and trouble and weakness that exists in their brethren; and their constant occupation with it only tends to increase the very things they deplore.

A moment happily came in Asaph's history when his eyes were opened to the true state of the case. He puts the matter with great brevity—"And I said, This is my *infirmity*" (ver. 10). He had evidently been viewing it as a virtue; as though there was something pious, and almost holy, in this continual moaning over his own delinquences. But now he became conscious that it was by no means a virtue but an infirmity, a weakness. A great discovery this, for it broke the kind of spell that it had cast upon his mind. It would be a very great thing for us all to make a like discovery, and enter upon a like deliverance.

This discovery in Asaph's case shut the door upon the whole realm of dismal things connected with himself, in which his mind had been dwelling: it opened a door into another realm of things connected with God—things of greatness and power and glory. We have only to read from verse 10 to the end of the Psalm, to see the striking way in which his mind was switched from the one to the other directly he understood the true character of his self-occupation, as not virtue but weakness.

In verses 2 to 6, it was all, "*my*"—my this, that and the other. In verses 10 to 20, it is all, "*Thy*"—"Thy years . . . Thy wonders . . . Thy work . . . Thy doings . . . Thy way . . . Thy strength . . . Thine arm . . . Thine arrows . . . Thy thunder . . .

Thy path . . . Thy footsteps." What deliverance, what blessing, what strength there is in looking at God's things, after the weakness and humiliation of looking at our own.

Formerly he had before him "the years of ancient times," evidently in connection with his own experiences: now he has before him "*the years of the right hand of the Most High.*" We spend our years as a tale that is told, whether in the ancient times or to-day. His years are throughout all generations, since from everlasting to everlasting He is God.

Formerly he was considering the "days of old," and finding no comfort in so doing: now he is remembering "*Thy wonders of old,*" which must have been a very welcome change.

Formerly he had to say, "I am so troubled that I cannot speak;" he looked back to a song in the night that once had been his, but which now was only a dim remembrance. Now, meditating upon all the work of the Lord, he found his tongue once more. He had found something which gave him a worthy theme. "*I will . . . talk,*" he said, "*of Thy doings.*"

Formerly his own misery oppressed him down to the earth, for we might sum up all his utterances in the first part of the Psalm as really saying, "Who is so miserable a man as I am?" The point he reaches in the latter part is just this, "*Who is so great a God as our God?*" What a magnificent change!

"Thou art the God that doest wonders," sums it all up. Asaph also got his eye on the wonders that God did of old, when He redeemed

Israel out of Egypt and led them like a flock through the wilderness and into the promised land. We know this, and have the benefit of that knowledge, just as Asaph; but we also know what wonders He works *to-day*. What wonders does He not accomplish in the hearts and minds of His saints?—lifting them out of themselves, in their littleness and feebleness, into the greatness and strength and love which is found in Himself. It is by faith that His people are enabled to endure, and out of weakness are made strong, for Hebrews 11 tells us this plainly. Still it is God who does it, and faith on our side simply lays hold on His strength. And what wonders will He not accomplish in the days to come!

And one thing more. Let us take note that what God does for *one* of His people He will do for *all*. Some of us may feel sorely oppressed at the low, the divided, the often distracted state of the flock of God. This would particularly be the case on the part of those who may possess the pastor's heart. Well, it is good to feel it, but not to be overpressed with it. Who is so great a

God as our God as regards the shepherd care of His people?

Once He led His people like a flock by the hand of Moses and Aaron—the one the apostle, the other the high priest of that dispensation. Neither apostle nor high priest was perfect, yet He landed them into the promised place. To-day we are called upon to “consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus,” and in Him is found perfection. *He never fails.*

Therefore all fears on our side are groundless. It is meet that we should confess our failure and take the lowest place. It is the only place that becomes us. But at the same time we have all confidence in our great Leader. Our Apostle and High Priest has become “the Captain of our salvation,” and He is leading us as many sons to glory. Every one of us is going to get there! This great wonder is going to be added to the many other wonders He has wrought.

Well may we exclaim once more, “Who is so great a God as our God!”

The Gospel.

Oh matchless grace! Glad tidings sent to man!
 Blessed the ears that hear salvation's plan!
 Never such message fell on creature's ear
 As that which guilty man is called to hear.
 Love, deep, unfathomable, that defies
 All utterance. Eternal life the prize
 Held out to sons of death. What eloquence
 Can set it forth? How boundless! How immense!
 How great its length, its breadth, its depth, its height!
 So full, so strong, so sweet, so infinite,
 So heavenly, faithful, life-creating, true!
 So changeless, endless, fadeless, fresh and new!

THE CHURCH. No. 1.

J. T. Mawson

THE first time the church is mentioned in Scripture is in Matthew 16 where, in response to Peter's confession of the Lord, He answered, "Upon this rock I will build My church." The building began at Pentecost, and has continued ever since, and every one that has believed the gospel of our salvation, has been sealed by the Holy Ghost and added to that indestructible structure, the one church, which is the body of Christ. As the work spread out from Jerusalem to other centres, and churches were established in every city to which the gospel was carried, the bounds of the one church were extended, and of course those who believed could no longer all come together in one place, yet they did not come together in their own localities as being separate or independent churches, but as being one with those who were in Christ before them. The separation was purely geographical, and not of the heart, mind, purpose, or doctrine; the truth that there is *one* body and *one* Spirit and *one* hope of your calling, remained the same.

The church is not made up of a federation of local churches, but each church is a local expression of the one church, hence the churches are not a number of independent bodies but are part of an indivisible whole, and their constitution and character should be moulded and governed by the truth of the whole church. Christ is the one and only Head and Director of the church, which is His body; and the Holy Ghost who dwells in each member of the body and in the church as a whole, is the medium and power by

which His mind is made known to us and carried out, as it is revealed in the Scriptures.

If the churches had always been subject to Christ as the Head of the church, and their Lord in their local responsibility, all would have moved on together and the oneness of the church would have been a visible thing. It is here where the widespread failure has come in. The responsibility to be faithful to Christ as His witnesses, wherever they are, rests with the local churches, as Rev. 2 and 3 shows, and while the spiritual intelligence and circumstances may not be the same in any two churches, and this is not overlooked by the Lord in His scrutiny of them, yet His word to each one is for all, and His commandments (1 Cor. 14. 37) are for all that in every place call upon the Name of Jesus Christ our Lord (ch. 1. 2). To set up other heads, or to formulate rules and regulations and conditions of fellowship and membership not found in these commandments of the Lord, is a challenge to His authority and an ignoring of the presence of the Holy Spirit in the church and a denial of the sufficiency of the Scriptures.

No company of Christians in any place can rightly claim to be the church of God in that place unless it includes all the Christians in it. Yet it is possible for even "two or three" to meet together according to the whole truth as to Christ and His church, and to walk in it. This would involve the exclusion of evil as indicated in the Word and the recognition and reception of all who carry Scriptural qualifications for fellowship.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

The Question of Righteousness and Repentance.

"So far as I see the only condition necessary for God to forgive a man is his repentance, and that God's attitude has always been this. There is no need to postulate that in dying Christ bore the judgment which would have come to me on account of my sins, because this is cancelled simply by my repentance. Apart from His death however, I would never have known God's attitude to me, it is this, too, that shews me up to myself, and how I may approach God of my own free will. I cannot see how anyone should still be punished as a result of his sins after he has truly repented. To repent means to have another mind, so that when I repent I do literally start all over again and may consider that the person who did the deeds is no more"—ENQUIRER.

YOU are right in giving a prominent place to *repentance* in your thoughts, but you must not leave out of them the question of *righteousness*. Repentance and remission of sins are preached now in the gospel, i.e., The way has been opened by which men may turn and return to God, and when they do they meet a pardoning God. But how was that way opened? The same word of the Lord tells us, "Thus it is written, *and thus it behoved Christ to suffer*, and to rise again from the dead the third day: and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name among all nations" (Luke 24. 46, 47). The death and resurrection of the Lord is the righteous basis upon which God can meet and pardon the repentant sinner. All Scripture bears witness to the righteous necessity of Christ's one great sacrifice for sin, and an awakened conscience adds its Amen to the Scriptures.

Apart from the question of God's righteousness which has been revealed in the Gospel, we could have no true sense of the sinfulness of sin and consequently no true standard for our repentance. We might indeed recoil from the shame of our sins, turn from them because of the consequences of them to ourselves, but this would not be repentance towards God; there would be in it no sense of the challenge to His sup-

remacy by our sin, or the evil of choosing our own way instead of His holy will.

There must be righteousness. No government would be possible without some measure of it. With men as they are, laws would be useless if the penalty for the breaking of them could not be imposed. The murderer may truly repent of his crime, but the king's pardon is not given to him because of that. The law in righteousness must take its course, its penalty must be inflicted. But God can pardon the guilty and justify sinners, not because He has abdicated His throne of justice and is indifferent to the demands of righteousness, but because of the blood of Christ Jesus, and the redemption that there is in Him. Indeed, He declares His righteousness in this very thing, for He is just and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus (Romans 3. 26). He does this not *because* men repent and believe, though repentance and faith are the way they come into it; the cause is His own infinite grace—His love in its activity to the guilty and lost; and that this grace might reach them in absolute righteousness, and that all His attributes might be glorified and His nature revealed, He sent His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh to be a sacrifice for sin. What justice demanded love has provided, and now God is glorified and the penitent sinner is righteously saved.

Repentance is a necessity; until it takes place in the soul of a man he is a rebel against God. To repent truly is indeed to have another mind; it is to have God's mind instead of our own, to see ourselves as He sees us. By repentance we are *morally* clear of our sins, but it is only by the

blood of Jesus that we can be *judicially* clear. Hence two things are necessary — "repentance towards God and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ" (Acts 20. 21). It was this that Paul preached both to Jew and Greek, and we must preach Paul's gospel and hold fast to it.

Conditional Immortality.

"I have recently come into contact with people who teach 'conditional immortality.' Could you give me some help on this subject?"—STH. NORWOOD.

THIS teaching declares that only those who have received eternal life through faith in Christ will live for ever. It denies that the souls of all men are deathless, or immortal. One of the chief texts used by the propagators of this doctrine is 1 Timothy 6. 15. "God . . . only hath immortality." But they ought to see the folly of using this statement to support their doctrine, for if it means what they wish it to mean, then angels are not immortal, and may die like the beasts, and the children of God to whom He has given eternal life have not got immortal souls. God only has it in Himself, is surely the plain meaning of it. He is independent of all others, having life in Himself, and no dissolution or change can take place in Him. Men and angels have life and immortality as derived from Him. "In Him we live and move and have our being."

This teaching takes no account of the meaning of the creation of man. "And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became *a living soul*." (Genesis 2. 7). When death intervenes in a man's life, "The dust returns to the earth as it was, and the spirit returns unto God who gave it" (Eccles. 12. 7). And it

ignores such statements as "Fear Him who when He hath killed hath power to cast into hell" (Luke 12. 5), and "The rich man died, and was buried, and in hell lift up his eyes being in torment" (Luke 16), and "It is appointed unto men once to die, *and after this the judgment*" (Hebrews 9. 27), and many others.

The term "mortal" is never applied to the soul in Scripture, but always to the body, see Romans 6. 12, "Your mortal body," ch. 8. 11, "Your mortal body," 1 Cor. 15. 53, 54, "This mortal," 2 Cor. 4. 11, "Our mortal flesh." But as it is abundantly clear in the Scriptures we have quoted, and there are many others, that the soul lives on when separated from the body, we are right in applying the term "immortal" to it. This will not be challenged as regards those who are dead in Christ, but it is equally true of the lost.

Yet "immortality," as presented in Scripture, has a fuller meaning than "never dying." It only occurs three times: in 1 Tim. 6, to which we have already made reference, and in 1 Cor. 15. 53, 54. In this latter passage it evidently describes a deathless condition of blessing into which the saints of God will pass at the resurrection, but refers to the body and not the soul. This should

be clear from the fact that it is coupled with incorruption. The bodies of those that are dead shall be raised in incorruption, and the bodies of the living, their mortal bodies, i.e., bodies liable to death, will put on immortality. And then

shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, "Death shall be swallowed up in victory." This is the first resurrection. Wherever else the word "immortality" occurs in the New Testament it should be translated "incorruption."

Christ and His Throne.

"One has heard the expression, 'Christ a throneless King at God's right hand.' On first hearing this sounds objectionable and is not found in Scripture, but one would ask whether the sense is correct? Christ has not yet ascended His throne and is not said to be on a throne at God's right hand, but merely to be sitting there"—STH. WALES.

THE exaltation of Christ is a fact and a theme that rejoices every believing heart, and one part of our hope is His glorious appearing, but it is *not yet* that He sits in His own throne. "We see *not yet* all things put under Him" (Hebrews 2. 8). This is the time of the "patience of Jesus Christ" (Rev. 1. 9), in which God has said to Him, "Sit on My right hand, until I make Thine enemies Thy footstool" (Ps. 110, Hebrews 1). But He is in a throne. "I am set down with My Father in His throne" (Rev. 3. 21). Men have refused Him a throne on earth, but the Father has gladly welcomed Him to His rights in heaven. He had prayed, "And now, O Father, glorify Thou Me with Thine own Self with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was" (John 17. 5). This the Father has done, and He shares the Father's throne: the place, we would say, of supreme authority from whence grace comes. It is His right to be there because of who He is, but He has won it also by what He has done, He has overcome, and has glorified God on the earth and finished His work. This is a far higher exaltation than the throne He will yet have as King.

is set now in the place of authority, and all men are commanded by God to bow to Him. Those who do bow and confess Him as Lord come unto the Kingdom of God, and the Lord is the Head of it, but it is not a visible kingdom, for its Head is invisible to mortal sight, yet faith sees Him crowned with glory and honour, and the Kingdom of God is real to faith.

But He has not yet come to His own throne. He is not yet known as King. The throne of David is His throne, for He is the Root and the Offspring of David, and as the Son of Man He will sit upon the throne of His glory (Matthew 25. 31). And these thrones will be human thrones and He will appoint the overcomers to sit with Him in them, though His divine title will not be wanting for He is to come forth as King of kings and Lord of lords.

Hence we should say that He does sit in a throne; He is exalted and crowned; He does exercise authority, and is acknowledged as Lord by multitudes, but He is not yet in His own throne. Christians acknowledge Him as Lord, Israel and the nations will own Him as King when He comes in power. We believe that Lord is a higher title because a heavenly one.

He has been made Lord also, He

CHRIST AND HIS CHURCH.

J. T. Mawson.

“Christ never fails, and there cannot be a want in Christ’s church without there being an answer to it in Christ’s heart” (Darby).

WE know that that must be true, but it is both comforting and assuring to have it so clearly told. “Christ loved the church and gave Himself for it.” He could not have done more than that for it, and since He has done so much we are certain that He cannot be indifferent to its needs. It is too precious to Him for that. Not crowns and kingdoms and glories yet to be are His concern now, but the sorrows and wants of His church, and He only can measure these; with it He occupies Himself to-day. It is His chief interest on earth.

Familiar but remarkable figures are used to convey to us what His feelings are towards His church. He gave the first of these Himself in the first mention of it in the New Testament. A merchant man seeking goodly pearls found one of great price and to purchase it he sold all that he had (Matthew 13). He valued it more than all his possessions, because of its purity, its preciousness and its peerless beauty. Such the church is to Christ. We may not see it like that, for it doth not yet appear what it shall be; but He saw it before ever He made it His own, as it will be for ever—His choicest gem without a flaw.

Then when the church came into actual being—its history commenced at Pentecost—the first word as to it and its nearness to Him came again from Himself in the glory. He arrested Saul of Tarsus, who was the devil’s determined agent to destroy it from the earth, with the words, “Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou ME?” His church is more than a

valued and beautiful possession, it is a living thing: it is His body. On this side of the truth we have not a relationship as of two, but an indivisible unity. Christ and His members are one. Jesus of Nazareth, glorified and crowned in heaven, did not say, “Why persecutest thou Mine?” but ME. And the words should arrest us as they arrested Saul; there is surely a fulness in them that is little understood. To persecute one saint of God on earth is to persecute Christ; to despise or neglect one saint of God on earth is to despise and neglect Christ. He is the Head in heaven, they are His body on earth. They are one with Him, united to Him by the Spirit; He has communicated His life to them; to touch them is to touch Him. We shall need to be taught by the Spirit if this great fact is to be real to us, but it is there in the Scriptures for our instruction and meditation and joy.

Paul carried from that introduction to the Lord an indelible impression of the love that Christ bore to His church and of its unspeakable value to Him; and he never forgot that he had persecuted the saints that formed that church. Again and again he speaks of it with sorrow and pain. Hear his cry on one occasion. “I am the least of all the apostles, that am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God.”

“Saints, did I say? With your remembered faces,
Dear men and women, whom I sought
and slew!
Oh, when we mingle in the heavenly places,
How will I weep to Stephen and to you.”

But he obtained mercy because he did it ignorantly in unbelief. The Lord forgave Him and filled him with His own love for those he had wasted and destroyed, so that he could write to them. "Now I rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for His body's sake, which is the church" (Col. 1. 24). He could not lay down his life as the price of their redemption, for he needed to be redeemed himself, and Christ had made the great sacrifice for that once and for all, but he was willing to endure every other sort of suffering for the sake of the church. How close was his communion with his Lord about it! Christ's chief interest on earth had become his, and the nearer we draw to the Lord, the more like Paul we shall be.

But the pearl and the body are not enough as figures, to give the full truth as to what the church is to its Saviour and Head, wonderful as they are, a third figure is called into use, that of the marriage tie. And it is in relation to this that we are told "Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for it" (Eph. 5). Here we have love revealed and reciprocated. He gave Himself, not His life only. Indeed His Church could not have been rescued and redeemed if He had not given His life, but it was *Himself* He gave, He has devoted Himself without measure or reserve in time and for eternity, to the blessing and joy of His church, and that it might be His own without challenge or rival for ever. His love is the source of all His activities. He gave Himself: we look back to the cross for the manifestation of that, there He passed through the deep waters of judgment and down into death, but He has been

raised up from the dead and set at God's right hand in heaven, all things having been put under His feet, yet He does not forget His church, His love is unabated, the waters of death did not quench it, the ages of time have not dimmed it, we rejoice in the declaration of it in the *past*, but it is active in the *present*, for now He sanctifies and washes and nourishes and cherishes it.

He considers His church with a tender solicitude, and uses His word to *cleanse* it from all the inward workings of evil, and to *sanctify* it to Himself from all worldly associations, for it must be suitable to Himself, holy in nature and without blame in conduct. He *nourishes* it by *ministering* Himself and His love to its affections and He *cherishes* it because it is moving through a cold and chilling world. And these present activities are to prepare it for the *future*: for the great marriage day, (Revelation 19), when He will "present it to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing." That will be the supreme joy, the consummation of every hope in our hearts and in His, and having reached that highest, that utmost joy, it will abide in that fulness, maintained in it by divine power for ever and ever. The sun shall go down no more; there shall be no night there; throughout the eternal day the church shall be to Him as a bride adorned for her husband, receiving His love into her heart without measure and responding to it without reserve.

Yet His love has a deep and present joy, the joy of serving its object now, for His love finds its satisfaction in service. Of this, J. N. Darby has written, "He tenderly

cares for the assembly (church) here below, He nourishes and cherishes it. The wants, the weaknesses, the difficulties, the anxieties of the assembly are the opportunities to Christ for the exercise of His love. She is the object of His affections. If the end is heaven, the assembly is not left desolate here. She learns His love where her heart needs it, she will enjoy it fully when the need has passed away for ever."

What a theme this is! Strange that we should be moved so little by it! Our spiritual life would be

greatly enriched if we gave more earnest heed to it. A deeper knowledge of it would produce a truer sanctification from the world, it would deliver us from all selfish sectarianism, from pride of heart and assumption, it would enlarge and purify our hearts in love to all the saints, and it would above all stir up our affections toward our Lord Jesus Christ, our heavenly Bridegroom, and make us cry with a growing earnestness in unison with the Spirit. "Even so, Come, Lord Jesus."

A Thanksgiving.

A.M.C.

Father of all mercies,
 Giver of all good!
 From Thy hand with gladness
 We accept this food.
 In this rich provision
 Thy good care we see,
 And in true thanksgiving
 Lift our hearts to Thee!

Bless this to our bodies,
 May they strengthened be
 For our Saviour's service,
 And to live for Thee.
 And we pray Thee, Father,
 May our souls be fed
 With that food from Heaven—
 Christ, the Living Bread

Walking in the Light.

We can understand the gain of a man abiding in the sunshine. A man steering a ship wants the light of the sun; if he has a compass he wants something to check his compass by. Something may go wrong with the compass. There is no danger of the sun being deflected. The brethren were exhorted to "cleave to the Lord." If we get away from Christ, it will be very much like a man trying to steer his ship without the sun. You do not reach Christ through a company, but the company through Christ. The effect of abiding in Christ is that a man abides in the light of God's mind. "If we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another." Fellowship follows abiding in Christ. (R).

If you abide in Christ, it involves the surrender of your will, because you are guided by Christ, as the mariner adjusts his compass by the sun.

THE KINGDOM OF GOD.

(Contributed).

ALL that is said in those two great anthems of the Messianic and Davidic Kingdoms, Psalms 72 and 89, which are earthly and moral, can be said of the Kingdom of God, which is heavenly and spiritual.

That glorious closing Psalm of the second Book (Psalm 72), penned by a king, dedicated to a king, and designed to set forth the future glorious reign of The King of kings, tells its own story. Notice in particular—

ITS IMMUTABILITY.

The word "shall" is found there no less than *thirty times*. All is certainty where Christ is concerned, whether in the earthly or heavenly aspects of His Kingdom, as we have it in Heb. 12. 28, "A Kingdom which cannot be moved." Observe further, *God's seven-fold faithfulness* in Psalm 89. The Kingdom of God is therefore, whether seen from its earthly or heavenly side, one of *seven-fold perfection*: Immutable — impregnable — indivisible — indestructible — invincible — immovable and eternal.

Add to this the Spirit's seven-fold seal or "shall" of promise to Messiah's passion in Isaiah 53, and the "ifs"—"mays" and "mights" of much modern preaching become as the chaff of the summer threshing floor, to use the Spirit's own figure, so that no place can be found for them (Dan. 2. 34, 44).

The Kingdom of God therefore is,
EVERLASTING in its **DURATION**, Psalm 10. 16 — 145. 13,
UNIVERSAL in its **RULE**, Psalm 103. 19, and

SPIRITUAL in its **NATURE**, Cf. 1 Cor. 15. 50; John 3.

We have all the spiritual import of our Lord's teachings in the other Gospels given in concentrated form in John's shewing how He by preaching the Kingdom of God, brought men under its power, according to the triple revelation of Himself in light, life, and love. The life of chapter 3 is given to meet the "light" of chapter 1, and the love is the source of both. In this paper I would seek prayerfully to indicate a few important features of the Kingdom of God.

ITS CONDITIONS OF ENTRANCE.

Firstly—*The New Birth*. John 3. 3, 5, 7.

Secondly—*Repentance*. Mark 1. 15. Luke 13. 1-5.

Repentance is not a dispensational distinction but a fundamental necessity.

ITS SPIRITUAL POWER.

The Holy Ghost is the power of it, as our Lord Himself said, Matt. 12. 28, "If I cast out devils by the Spirit of God, then the Kingdom of God is come unto you." The King Himself was there exercising the unfettered power of the Holy Spirit. "The Kingdom of God is not in word, but in power" (1 Cor. 4. 20). The Kingdom of God therefore had come in its spiritual form, *delivering, regenerating, and quickening*.

ITS UNITY.

One Kingdom of God with many phases. "One King over all the earth, and His Name one." (Zech.

14. 9. As variously applied the Holy Ghost writes in turn "Kingdom of God"—"of the Heavens"—"Kingdom of Christ"—"Kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ"—"Kingdom of the Son of His love"—"Kingdom of the Lord"—"Kingdom of the Father" etc., etc. One Kingdom, many phases. Each phase of the one Kingdom of God to be understood according to its contextual bearing.

ITS ACTUAL SUBJECTS.

The new-born, all of whom receive Christ, and believe on His Name. John 1. 12, 13.

Publicans and harlots go into it before the scribes and pharisees (Matt. 21. 31).

"As many as were ordained to eternal life" (Acts 13. 48). All given by the Father to Christ (John 6. 37; 17. 2). The chosen from among the "foolish" "weak" "base" "despised" the are-nots (i.e. the nobodies) and the poor (1 Cor. 1. 26-31; James 2).

"Wisdom's children" and *spiritual babes* are in it, everyone of whom have been enlightened by the Father's revelation in contrast to the worldly-wise (Cf. Matt. 11. 25-27 with 1 Cor. 1). Also *them that have ears to hear* (Matt. 11. 15. Then last, but not least, *the spiritually toiling and suffering*, i.e. "All who labour and are heavy laden," who come to Christ.

ITS ENERGY.

"And every man presseth into it" (Luke 16. 16). "The violent take it by force" (Matt. 11. 12). Pressing, violence, agony, are words chosen by our Lord to describe the attitude of the children of the Kingdom. Let us make no mistake about this. Indifference, lethargy, don't

care-ism and fatalism have no place in the Kingdom of God. Men do not glide or slide into it. Quite the contrary, they are *born* into it, and that by *travail*, for "as soon as Zion *travailed* she brought forth children." Travail for the mother, free *Jerusalem*. (Cf. Isaiah 66. 8—Gal. 4. 19, 26). And travail for the *spiritual father*, as Paul, saying, "My little children of whom I travail in birth." *Violence*, pressure and agony for its potential subjects. Illustrations from the Gospels are many and various. Take Bartimaeus, Mark 10. 47. He "began to cry out," then "cried the more a great deal." Spiritual energy in the woman with the issue says, "If I may touch but His clothes, I shall be whole." Holy Ghost energy is the oxygen, the very atmosphere of the Kingdom of God. The repentant thief and the jailor of Philippi are different types of the same in-wrought energy and faith.

Our Lord established a powerful contrast between the spiritually energized and the characteristically indifferent of His age. Pointing to the lounging crowd—the *lazzaróni* of the market square, He seems to say, "Isaiah's piping and Jeremiah's lamenting are all the same to them. Preach how you will they remain cold, they will neither dance to the one, nor lament to the other." Holy Ghost power alone avails.

Such was the Kingdom of God when preached by the King Himself, and such it is now that He is "continuing to do and to teach" through His Spirit sent down. (Cp. John 14. 12—Acts 1. 1). This scripture also refers to forty days during which the Lord, risen from the dead, spoke to His disciples things concerning the Kingdom.

Then came the going in of the High Priest and the coming out of the Spirit in the mighty days of Pentecost, and to the Gentiles at Caesarea. As Christ came out to reveal the Father, so the Holy Spirit has now come out to bear witness to the Son.

PHILIP in Acts 8, "preached the things concerning *the Kingdom of God*, and the name of Jesus Christ." *PAUL* and *BARNABAS* "confirmed the souls of the disciples exhorting them to continue in the faith and that we must through much tribulation enter the *Kingdom of God*." They must enter *experimentally* and *feelingly*, and tribulation alone could effect this (14. 22).

Next in order comes

PAUL'S THREE MONTH'S MISSION AT EPHESUS (19. 8).

He went into the synagogue, and spake boldly for the space of three months, disputing and persuading the things concerning *the Kingdom of God*." Opposition resulted. It always does. That is why God would have it preached, to bring out *what man is* that he may be prepared for *what God has* for those who enter. Those who will not have His rule may not have His redemption. Grace has its place in chapter 20. There we have the same gospel under five aspects.

Repentance and faith in verse 21.

The "*Grace of God*" in 24.

The "*Kingdom of God*" in 25.

The "*Whole counsel of God*" in 27 and

The "*Word of His grace*" in 32.

Did Paul cease to preach the *Kingdom of God* because he had received the ministry from the risen Christ to preach the gospel of His

grace? By no means. Here were five parts of one whole. Grace and lawlessness have nothing in common. Does Christ cease to be Lord and Christ because He becomes my Saviour? Does He cease to be Lord because He is Head of the Church? A thousand times No. Is it conceivable that He who in His marvellous love, and by His most precious blood makes all believers kings and priests to His Father, should Himself cease to be one? Far be the thought. He makes believers a *Kingdom*. Surely a *Kingdom* without a *King* would be a solecism.

So far then from the *Kingdom of God* antagonizing the *grace of God*, it is only there where His grace can be known. Did Paul in his later ministry cease preaching the *Kingdom of God*? The answer to this is to be found in the very last verse of the Acts, where the Holy Spirit declares that "Paul dwelt two years in his own hired house . . . preaching the *Kingdom of God*." It is remarkable that the *grace of God* is not even mentioned in this concluding and conclusive word of the Spirit. Yet "grace reigns through righteousness" is a true description of the *Kingdom* in this present time.

The glorious *Kingdom* is yet to come. We see not yet all things put under Him. We are therefore in the *spiritual Kingdom of God*, and in the *patience* of Jesus Christ. Not *our* patience but *His*, as David when *anointed* but not *crowned*, or as Joash when hidden in the house of God six years by the godly Jehoshabeath, until brought out and crowned amid cries of "God save the King" from the faithful, and swift judgment upon all his enemies (2 Chron. 22 and 23).

But, like John in Rev. 1. 9-11, we have the "Spirit" and the "Word of God" as a living testimony to the absent King. Then in chapter 12, the "Manchild" (Christ and His people) go in and Satan is cast out (for it is when the rapture of the church has taken place that the expulsion of Satan from the heavens will be accomplished). Then, Oh blissful moment! shall be heard a loud voice saying in heaven, "Now is come salvation and strength, and the *Kingdom of our God*" (12. 10).

"Thy Kingdom come" Matt. 6. 33. "Now is come . . . the Kingdom of God." "Salvation and strength." Not in weakness as at His incarnation, but in *strength*. Not to shed His own blood, but that of His enemies (Rev. 14. 11 to end). Yet the same salvation which Jacob awaited, Gen. 49. 18; the same that the nation of Israel were bidden to "stand still and see" in figure in Exod. 14. 13. The same—the very same of whom they cried in 15. 2, "He is become my Salvation." The same of whom the prophet Isaiah writes, when Jehovah says unto him, "Thou shalt be my Salvation unto the end of the earth" 49. 6.

The same whom Simeon saw in apparent weakness, crying, "Mine eyes have seen Thy Salvation." He is come now to take His own Kingdom, when there shall be great voices in heaven, saying, "We give Thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, which art, and which was, and art to come, because Thou hast taken to Thee Thy great power, and hast reigned" Rev. 11. 15-17.

"Now is come Salvation and Strength, and the Kingdom of our God and the power of His Christ." A perfect Salvation, and a perfect rule.

Then, when the glorious thousand years have been ushered in by judgment, and the new heavens and earth follow the great white throne-judgment of the wicked dead, then our blessed Jesus, Emmanuel, Lord and Christ, having brought to a glorious fulfilment His Messianic, Mediatorial and Millennial Kingdoms shall deliver them up to God, according to Rev. 21. 1-5; 22. 1-5, and they shall be merged into the one universal and eternal Kingdom, and God—Father, Son, and Spirit—shall be all in all. Amen.

Keeping His Commandments.

The cleverest man on earth is not enough for himself. We ought to recognise that. If you take into consideration the vicissitudes you have to pass through, you see that no man is enough for himself. You want to be in the light of God. In abiding in Christ there is continual maintenance of this in the soul. In this world a man can only walk in the light of Christ, and this not only as regards the world but as to eternity. We should in this way overcome the world instead of being overcome by it. Christ's commandments are the law of liberty. To a christian, His commandments would be the direction of a life that loves Christ. Christ Himself is the commandment. The appreciation of Christ lies at the root of keeping His commandments. In keeping His commandments you are swayed and controlled by Him.

THE INCARNATION.

James Scott.

"God was manifest in the flesh" (1 Tim. 3. 16).

AMONG the questions of more or less importance which engage men's minds, there is one which dwarfs all others, and which cannot be ignored or lightly brushed aside. It is the question which our Lord Himself put to the unbelieving and intriguing Pharisees who sought to entangle Him in His talk: "What think ye of Christ? Whose Son is He?" (Matt. 22. 42). When the Lord further asked these Pharisees how Christ could be both David's Son and David's Lord they were silent; they either could not or would not return an answer.

Christ was the centre of controversy during His public ministry, and the truth of His Person has divided Christendom from Paul's day to this. It has been said that God is not now raising the "sin" question, but the "Son" question. The sin question was settled at Calvary for all who believe, but it will surely be raised again in the day of judgment with all who reject Christ in this acceptable year of the Lord. Be that as it may, the Son question is of paramount importance, and it behoves us to see that we have the right answer, which can only be found in Holy Scripture. At the same time it is necessary to remember that we can only know in part. In Matt. xi. 27 we read: "No man knoweth the Son, but the Father;" that is, in the essence of His Being. We know Him as Saviour, and in many other relationships, but to know the mystery of His Person belongs to the Father alone.

"The higher mysteries of Thy fame
The creature's grasp transcend;
The Father only Thy blest name
Of Son can comprehend."

So, bearing in mind the limitations imposed, and seeking the guid-

ance and help of the Holy Spirit, let us "turn aside and see this great sight," but let us draw near with humble, reverent hearts, and with unshod feet, for we are assuredly on holy ground.

For convenience we shall deal with the subject under four heads:

- I. The Fact of the Incarnation.
- II. The Meaning of the Incarnation.
- III. The Method of the Incarnation.
- IV. The Purpose of the Incarnation.

I. Christianity is based on facts. This is a statement which cannot be made concerning any other religion, ancient or modern. While these facts, however, are true in themselves, they are mutually interdependent, so that if one could be shaken, the whole system would become unreliable. This is especially true of the Incarnation which is the very foundation of all, and which has been aptly termed "the palladium of the revealed gospel." In dealing first, then, with the fact of the Incarnation it may help us if we approach it from two sides: (1) The Preparation; (2) The Presentation.

(1) As to the preparation for this marvellous event. Do the Scriptures shed any light upon it? Here the material is abundant, and provides food for everlasting wonder and praise. We shall select one example only under the separate heads of—(i). Shadows; (ii). Theophanies; (iii). Types; (iv). Prophecies.

(i). Where there is a shadow there must be a substance. The shadows of the Bible are very pre-

cious to the spiritual mind, for we know that behind them, in every instance, Christ Himself is the Substance. The illustration we shall take is from a well-known passage in the eighth chapter of Proverbs, where, as wisdom personified, we get a distinct foreshadowing of Christ (vers. 22-31). Referring to a period before creation, Wisdom says "The Lord possessed me in the beginning of his way, before his works of old. I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was." And when the earth was being prepared for man's habitation: Wisdom continues: "Then I was by him, as one brought up with him, and I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him; rejoicing in the habitable part of his earth; and my delights were with the sons of men." So when the Word became flesh we get a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good pleasure in men" (Luke 2. 14). It is not merely *good-will toward men*, but *good pleasure in men*. The word is the same as that used in the expression, "in whom I am well pleased."

(ii). Theophany is the word used for those occasions on which God appeared to men in human form. Several are mentioned in the Old Testament, and undoubtedly the Lord who then appeared was none other than the Son of God. For our present purpose we shall refer to the theophany at Mamre recorded in Gen. 18. In verse 1 we are told that the Lord appeared to Abraham as he sat in the tent door in the heat of the day, and the following verses add some interesting details. Then we get the Lord's communications to Abraham concerning the promised heir, and also concerning the cities of the plain and their impending

doom, whereupon Abraham begins to intercede for Sodom, the city wherein dwelt his nephew Lot. It is worth noting that Abraham stopped asking before God stopped giving. The theophany at Mamre is a striking adumbration of the Incarnation of Christ. May we not trace a connection with our Lord's words in John 8. 56? "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day: and he saw it, and was glad."

(iii). Of the types we shall notice that of the ark. The whole tabernacle speaks of Christ and utters His glory, but the ark brings His person pre-eminently before us. In the instructions for the building of the sanctuary it is the first thing to be described: God begins with the ark (Exod. 25). It was made of shittim wood, the imperishable acacia wood of the desert, it was overlaid with pure gold within and without, and it had a crown of gold round about. It contained the tables of the law, and it was covered by the mercy seat which was made of pure gold. What is the meaning of these things? Well, the shittim wood evidently sets forth the perfect humanity of Christ; the pure gold His full deity. The tables within surely tell of the place He gave to His Father's word during His earthly life,—“Thy law is within My heart.” That word governed His life, and “Thus it is written” settled every question.

(iv). As regards the prophecies we shall look at Micah 5. 2. It was on this prophecy the chief priests and scribes relied for the answer to Herod, when he demanded of them where Christ should be born. The leaders knew the letter of the law, but Him they knew not; they could tell where Christ was to be born, but they failed to recognise Him when He made His appearance among

them. This is a striking prophecy: "But thou, Beth-lehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall He come forth unto Me that is to be ruler in Israel; *whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting.*" The latter part is not quoted in the Gospel, but how it reveals the eternal glory of Him who is to be Ruler in Israel! And so, seven centuries before it took place, the fact of the incarnation is stated in language that cannot be misunderstood.

One word more with regard to the preparation for the advent of Christ. The world had been conquered by Rome, and was practically at peace. The Greek language was widely diffused, and a Greek translation of the Hebrew Scriptures had been in use for a century or two. The Gentile world was morally corrupt:

"On that hard pagan world disgust
And secret loathing fell;
Deep weariness and sated lust
Made human life a hell."

Many had sought relief in Judaism, and a knowledge of the Old Testament and its glowing prophecies of the coming Messiah was by no means rare. The world was on tip-toe; Matthew shows us the Gentile Magi, and Luke gives us a lovely picture of the upright in Israel—all awaiting His coming.

(2). With regard to the presentation of the Incarnation, we have the fact simply and clearly stated in those familiar yet sublime words of the fourth Gospel: "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us" (1. 14). This is the beginning of historical Christianity, and the heart is irresistibly attracted by the way in which it is presented; for Christianity is more than a system of doctrine, it is first and foremost

a Person, it is a vital force, Christianity is Christ. God is revealed in His Son, so we read, "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him" (John 1. 18).

Herein lies a great mystery, but to faith it is nevertheless a great fact about which there is nothing nebulous or uncertain. The fact of the Incarnation is this, that God was in Christ, that there was in this world a unique Person, a real Man, and at the same time Very God. And let us never forget that, though He is now in the glory, He is there as Man. Having assumed Manhood at the Incarnation, He never lays it down again. His Godhead is of value to us only because He is a Man.

II. The meaning of the Incarnation. For one thing it meant that the purpose of God was ripening, and that the probation of man was drawing to a close. It was not, however, as it might well have been, an act of judgment on God's part, but the manifestation of His great love toward us (John 3. 16; 1 John 4. 9-10).

God was about to reveal Himself in the Man Christ Jesus. The Daysman for whom Job longed, the one Mediator between God and men, had become an actual fact which was to remain for ever true.

Let us now look at Phil. 2. verses 5-8. The doctrine embedded here has been called the doctrine of the Kenosis, from the word translated "made of no reputation," which simply means "emptied." Some critics have sought to make capital out of this, and without the slightest warrant say that Christ emptied Himself of His deity, and became

a mere man with all man's limitations as to knowledge and so on. They dare to assert that He was but the child of his age, who knew no more than the peasants among whom he was brought up, and a great deal less than the scientists of our day. Away with such blasphemy!

First of all, notice that we have here a remarkable testimony to the eternal existence and intrinsic deity of Christ, a witness all the more striking on account of the apparently casual way in which it is introduced. There was no need for Him to claim equality with God—He *was* God; and the conclusive proof is the statement of the text. Of whom save the Son of God could it be said that "He emptied Himself, taking servant's form, being made in the likeness of men?" It is in striking contrast with the first man who, when in the form of man, unlawfully sought to become as God. That which in Adam was little short of apostasy, was in Christ the perfection of obedience.

But that is not all. The passage teaches us that though Christ in infinite grace condescended to become man, He never ceased to be God. He emptied Himself, it does not say of what, it certainly was not of His deity, though for a time He was willing to hide His glory and take the servant's lowly place of obedience, in order to do the Father's will, and that even to the death of the cross. In Him full Godhead and full Manhood were always present in harmony.

III. The method of the Incarnation. In a word, this is the virgin birth. The story is found in Matt. 1. 18-25, which is the fulfilment of the prophecies that went before.

It was known from Gen. 3. 15 that man's Deliverer was to be the Seed of the woman, born of a woman in some distinctive way, and not in the way of ordinary generation. It was known also that He was to be the Son of Abraham, and in the line of David. Isaiah foretold that He was to be born of a virgin, who must therefore be of royal lineage, and that He was to be, not only the woman's Seed, but Emmanuel—God with us. "Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel" (Isa. 7. 14). All this came to pass as recorded by Matthew, in whose account, as here also, the correct translation is "the virgin," and not merely "a virgin."

As soon as sin entered God had His remedy. Centuries might elapse between promise and fulfilment, but nothing could stay the progress of His purpose; so we read, "When the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman" (Gal. 4. 4).

IV. The Purpose of the Incarnation. This is concisely stated in Heb. 10. 7: "Then, said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me) to do Thy will, O God." These are the very words of the Incarnate Christ, who has come into the world, not to do His own will, but the will of the Father who sent Him. The Lord knew all it meant, yet He came willingly, nay, gladly, as it is written: "I delight to do Thy will, O My God: yea, Thy law is within My heart" (Psa. 40. 8); and again, "For the joy that was set before Him He endured the cross" (Heb. 12. 2).

The Incarnation sets before us a Man—but a Man who was also God—who actually lived in this world

of men, who was tempted in all points like as we are, sin apart ; One who knew no sin, who did no sin, and in whom was no sin ; One who perfectly glorified God and did His will. He was the revelation of God in His own Person, and His cross manifested the infinite love of God's heart.

The Incarnation implies death, for God cannot overlook sin, and the cross alone maintains the glory of God with respect to sin. There could be no union of Christ's holy humanity with our sinful nature; His holy example could bring us no nearer to God ; nor could that life of perfect obedience and spotless holiness atone for a single one of our sins. So we read in Heb. 10 not only of the will of God, but also of the work of Christ, the means of its accomplishment: "By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all" (verse 10). Then in verses 15-17 there is the witness of the Holy Ghost by which we know that the sins have been put away: "And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more." When God

forgives He forgets. Let us say it with all reverence: The atonement has affected the very memory of God. In verse 18 we read: "Now where remission of these is, there is no more offering for sin." This is the secret of settled peace.

The purpose of the Incarnation, then, is first of all the glory of God; that God might be glorified; and in the accomplishment of that, everything else becomes possible. In the Incarnation God has come out to man, and in the risen Saviour Man has gone in to God. Where Christ has gone we have boldness to follow (Heb. 10. 19-22).

Some of the things embraced in the purpose of the Incarnation are the destruction of Satan's power and the deliverance of his captives, the making atonement for sin, and the fitting of our great High Priest for His present service in the sanctuary of succouring and sympathizing with His people in their weakness and suffering down here (Heb. 2. 14-18).

"TO HIM BE GLORY. BOTH NOW AND FOR EVER. AMEN."

Service

All power for real effective service will be found to spring from entire submission to the Lord. It is to them that obey Him that the Holy Spirit is given (Acts 5. 32), and He can only work through obedient vessels.

Living to God inwardly is the only means of living to Him outwardly. All outward activity apart from this tends to make us do without Christ and brings in self. Beware of great activity without communion.

When there are great arrangements for carrying on work, there is not the recognition of the inherent blessing which "tarieth not for the sons of men," I do not tarry for men if I have faith in God, I act upon the strength of that. Let a man act as the Lord leads him. For the Lord is Master, the only Despot. The Spirit of God is not to be fettered by man. All power arises from the direct authoritative energy of the Holy Ghost in the individual.

MERCY AND JUDGMENT.

F. B. Hole.

(Psalms 101 and 102).

I WILL sing of mercy and judgment." These are the words with which David opened the Psalm which stands as No. 101 in our collection; and in the remaining seven verses of it he gives the details of the way in which he proposed to translate these principles into action in connection with the kingdom with which God had entrusted him. Again and again he repeats the words, "I will . . ." as he tells us that which he proposed.

Reading this psalm, long after his kingdom has passed into history, we may feel tempted to observe that it is fairly easy to say, "I will" do this, that and the other, but that his performance did not come up to his promise. But we must remember two things: first, that he was doubtless putting on record the ideal which he had before him, showing that he had caught the thought of God; and second, that the Spirit who inspired the psalm was leading him to write words which should have an absolute and perfect fulfilment in Christ and in His coming kingdom. With these two thoughts before us let us run our eyes over this Psalm.

It is a great point in David's favour that when he began to consider what should mark his kingdom he started with *himself*. When we propose to legislate as to other folk we cannot do better than begin with ourselves. He speaks of a *perfect* way, and of behaving himself *wisely* in it. He speaks of walking with a *perfect* heart, and of setting *no wicked thing* before his eyes. All perfection marked our Lord Jesus

Christ, but in David's case it was just in this matter of getting some wicked thing before his eyes that he so grievously failed, as 2 Samuel 11 shows. Still there is the ideal, and the ideal has been, and ever will be, gloriously fulfilled in the Lord Jesus.

Once get an absolutely perfect King seated on the throne and all the other features, mentioned from the middle of verse 3 and onwards, fall into their place. He *must* hate and repudiate all that turns aside from the Divine standard: He *must* decline to recognise all who are evil. Moreover He *must* act in judgment against the slanderer and against the proud, as also against the deceiver, the liar and all who are workers of wickedness.

On the other hand He will look in mercy upon those who are "the faithful of the land," and accept service from such as walk "in a perfect way." This is the one point in the note of mercy being struck. The word "mercy" does not occur, yet we know that such people as are described in verse 5 only are found as the fruit of the mercy of God, as they themselves would be the first to acknowledge. They would all agree in telling us that they only stand in Divine favour because, "His mercy endureth for ever."

Now is it not remarkable that in a Psalm which starts by saying, "I will sing of mercy and judgment" there should be so much of judgment and so little of mercy? It certainly is; and yet there is a very sufficient reason for it. Man being

what he is, judgment is a stern necessity; whilst as for mercy it can only be extended upon a righteous basis. In Psalm 101 that righteous basis does not appear. Hence judgment almost entirely fills up the picture that is presented.

What is lacking in Psalm 101 is amply supplied, however, in Psalm 102. We have only to read as far as verse 10 in that Psalm to discover that there is some great Personage, who bears the indignation and wrath that the judgment of God entails; and when we reach verse 13 we find that mercy is to flow forth to Zion. The *bearing* of the *judgment* leads to the *extending* of the *mercy*. That is the wonderful story.

Now Psalm 102 is not merely a prophecy concerning the rejection and sorrow and judgment-bearing which marked our blessed Lord, and the mercy which as a consequence should flow to men: it gives us these things truly, but so that the recital of it comes to us as from His own lips, and we get His thoughts and feelings as He passed through it all. The heading of the Psalm is, "A prayer of the Afflicted, when He is overwhelmed, and poureth out His complaint before the Lord."

The Psalm seems to divide into four sections of unequal length. In verse 1 to 15 we hear the voice of the afflicted Messiah, relating His sorrow and anticipating the mercy which is to come. Then, verses 16 to 22, we have in a parenthetical way the inspired comment of the Psalmist. In verse 23, and in the first part of verse 24, we again hear the voice of the Messiah, completing His story by way of contrast with what has just been stated in the parenthesis. Lastly, from the middle

of verse 24 to the end, we get the glorious answer which comes from the lips of Jehovah in reply to His complaint.

Time and space would fail us if we attempted to go into details, but it may be possible for us to take a rapid survey of these things.

As we consider the first section we are almost irresistibly reminded of what is recorded in the New Testament as to Gethsemane. There it was that He lifted up His prayer as One who was in trouble. There His heart was smitten, and there came forth the voice of His groaning: there He watched and was as a sparrow alone upon the housetop. There too it was that He wept. The Gospels do not mention this touching fact, which verse 9 alludes to, and which is stated in Hebrews 5. 7. Without a question it was in Gethsemane that He "offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto Him that was able to save Him from [out of] death, and was heard in that He feared."

It was in Gethsemane that He faced as before God, and in perfect communion with His Father, all that lay before Him; and more particularly the judgment on account of sin which He had to bear. He speaks of it in our Psalm as, "Thine indignation and Thy wrath." Jehovah had lifted Him up as the Messiah but now had cast Him down, that He might be the sin-bearer on the Cross; but before actually entering into all that the Cross entailed, He went through it all in communion with His Father while in the Garden. Indignation and wrath were before Him; but what was involved in them?

We will allow Isaiah 53 to answer this question for us. It meant that He was "wounded," and "bruised," and that "the chastisement of our peace" was upon Him. It meant that the Lord "laid on Him the iniquity of us all," that "it pleased the Lord to bruise Him," and to "put Him to grief," making "His soul an offering for sin." Hence it was that "He was cut off out of the land of the living," and that there came upon Him "the travail of His soul."

In this Psalm the Holy One is pictured as knowing right well all that was involved in the sorrows that lay before Him—that being cut off His days would be "like a shadow that declineth"—and as knowing the glory of Jehovah, who would "endure for ever." He knew too that though men might think that mercy had been forgotten, the moment would arrive when Jehovah would arise and have mercy upon Zion, and from thence His mercy be so dispensed abroad that the very heathen would be brought to fear the Name of Jehovah, and all the kings of the earth would see His glory. Mercy would be certain for men, but only if He went down under the indignation and the wrath.

Now comes the section in which the Psalmist speaks as a prophet, and gives a little summary of the blessed happenings when Jehovah turns to build up Zion in His mercy. This He will do when He shall "appear in His glory." Then "the prayer of the destitute" will be regarded, and "the groaning of the prisoner" will be heard, and those "appointed to death" will be loosed, and men will gather together "to serve the Lord," and sound forth His praise.

The Psalmist is led to recognize that more will be needed than the

extending of mercy to sinful men, for he predicts that "the people which shall be created shall praise the Lord. In Psalm 22. 31, he says, "They shall come, and shall declare His righteousness unto a people that shall be born, that He hath done this." Here it is not the people that shall be *born*, but that shall be *created*. God is going to create a new kind of person to enjoy the blessing of the millennial age and to show forth His praise. Not a physical but a spiritual creation is here in view. A new creation order of things has already come to pass for believers to-day, as the New Testament bears witness. But then, as James tells us, we are "a kind of first-fruits of His creatures;" and this infers that there is to be a big "after-fruits" of similar creatures following, though not all are called to just the same place of blessing before God.

When Jehovah appears in His glory, this is how the glory will manifest its power upon earth. There shall be judgment as we know from other scriptures: the point here is how it will be manifested in mercy.

There follows now the short section of one and a half verses in which again we hear the voice of the Messiah Himself. He resumes the recital of His sorrows, but now as directly contrasted with all the glory and mercy which yet is to be, and in contrast too with the enduring for ever which characterizes Jehovah. His strength is weakened, His days are shortened, He is to be taken away in the midst of His days by the act of God. Jehovah endures, the hour strikes for Zion to be remembered in mercy, the glory shines forth for the deliverance of newly

created men—and the Holy One of God is taken away by death in the midst of His days. Is that the last word as far as He is concerned? How could it be?

There is indeed a colon in the middle of verse 24, but no full-stop. without the further light which the New Testament sheds we should certainly have read all the rest of the Psalm as being *the address of the Messiah to Jehovah*. We should have taken it for granted that it is Jehovah who is to endure for ever, who of old laid the foundations of the earth, and will at last fold up as a vesture and change both the heavens and the earth, being Himself the Same. In the light of the New Testament we find that the rest of the Psalm is *the address of Jehovah to the Messiah*; but that on the other hand we were indeed right in seeing Jehovah in the closing verses, *for the Son is Jehovah equally with the Father*.

Hebrews 1. 8—12, is very explicit on the matter. “Unto the Son He [God] saith, . . . Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of Thine hands . . . Thou art the Same, and Thy years shall not fail.” In the light of this, the change of Speaker evidently comes in the middle of verse 24. Jesus, the humbled Man, speaks of being taken away in the midst of His days; whereupon the voice of God reminds Him that His years are throughout all generations. These words are specially striking if compared with verse 12. There it is the Messiah who speaks to Jehovah, and says, “Thy remembrance is unto all generations.” Here it is Jehovah speaking to the Messiah

and saying, “Thy years are throughout all generations.” “From everlasting to everlasting Thou art God,” *may be said with equal truth of them both*. Not till Christ became incarnate did the truth as to the Father and the Son come into view, but here we find a foreshadowing of it.

The humbled Man, who prayed and wept in Gethsemane, whose days were like a shadow that declineth, is the Son and the Creator, and He will endure beyond all these lower created things. When the present heavens and earth are worn out, when they have served their purpose, they cannot remain for they have been defiled by sin. They will be like a worn out garment which is laid aside and changed for another. “The heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire” (2 Peter 3. 7). Thus they will pass away.

Our Psalm does not advance to that of which Peter goes on to speak, saying, “We, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.” He will bring in the new just as surely as He will remove the old. The new heavens and the new earth will also be the work of His hands. Creation, redemption, new creation, all are brought to pass by Him.

And He who does all this is the Same, whose years have no end. It has been pointed out that “The Same” is really a name of God. It occurs elsewhere in the Old Testament, though translated differently—Isaiah 41. 4 and 46. 4, are cases in point, where, “I am He,” is really

the same expression. Every creature is changeable: only the Creator does not change. "Thou art the Same," is said of the Son in Hebrews 1, and He is none other than, "Jesus Christ the Same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever," as stated in Hebrews 13.

But though it cannot be said of any creature, "Thou art the same," it can be said that, The children of Thy servants shall continue, and their seed be established before Thee." There is "a seed" who serve Him, as we have been told at the end of Psalm 22, and they and their seed shall abide. This will have its fulfilment in the millennial age, but it also has a fulfilment now. At the present moment we may identify these servants and their seed with "the men which Thou gavest Me out of the world," and "them also which shall believe on Me through their word," (John 17. 6 and 20). We come in amongst those that have believed on Jesus through the Apostles' word. Linked up as we are with the One who is the Same, we shall abide for eternity.

If David could say prophetically, "I will sing of mercy and judgment, how much more reason have we to say the same as we look back in retrospect. We can see how his words have been fulfilled, and how the very One, who presently will exe-

cute judgment in the earth, is He who once has borne judgment on behalf of others, so that mercy may flow forth in righteousness. We know too that the very One who once acted in creation has come forth into Manhood to stand on man's behalf; and that His Manhood was so real that He could speak of His strength being weakened in the way, and of His days being shortened by the suffering of death.

And we know not only that He shall continue, but that also we, who believe in His Name and are called to serve Him during this time of His rejection, shall continue, and be established before Him and His Father for ever. What we do not get in the Psalm is an unfolding of the relationships that have been established and in which we continue. These could not be made known until Christ had come and accomplished the work of propitiation and reconciliation.

It was perfectly evident however, even in the days of David, that the One who would pass through death and remain beyond it as THE SAME, would be able thereby to secure for Himself servants, who doing the will of God would themselves abide for ever.

The time is coming when we shall say of all that has not been Christ in our lives and ways, "That was all lost."

It is of *all-importance* that our inner life should be kept up to the height of our outward activity, else we are near some spiritual fall.

THE FAME OF JESUS.

James McBroom.

(Matthew 8 and 9)—*continued.*

IN chap. 9 the paralytic is a clear picture of the Jew as set up here on earth in contrast to those of the gospel period whose home is with Himself in heaven. The call of Levi is to follow a rejected Christ right outside the world. All shews very clearly the calling and place of the Gentile in the time between the cross and the glory and amplifies the teaching of chap. 8. 5-13. All this is confirmed in the conversations that followed. In a dim way (it could not be publicly declared till He was fully rejected) He alludes to His death and the way His followers would be affected. "Can the children of the bridechamber mourn, as long as the Bridegroom is with them? But the days will come when the Bridegroom shall be taken from them, and then shall they fast ..." This is the place of Christians in His absence, but if so they are brought into a new creation. The instructed believer to-day has no difficulty in seeing in all this that which is brought out in the Epistles of a later time, particularly those of the Apostle Paul.

In the remaining part these things are still more vividly set forth, for the great Master painter puts in touches that fill up the picture. The Jew as we have said is seen in the paralytic (ver. 1-8) and the raising of the daughter of Jairus further amplifies the type in accordance with Ezekiel 37, where we see the raising up of dead Israel. The poor woman that touched Him on the way shews what grace is going out to the Gentile at this time, before He puts forth the power that will put Israel in their place. The giving of sight to the two blind men shews what is pre-

paratory to the state produced in Zechariah 12 10. They shall look upon Me whom they have pierced and shall mourn as one mourneth for an only son.

It is then that the dumb demon will disappear; their tongues will be loosed to confess their sins, own their Messiah in the Person of Jesus and adore Him. "Surely He hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem Him stricken, smitten of God and afflicted. 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" (Isa. 53. 4, 5). Then also shall the words of Psalm 96 peal forth. "O SING unto the LORD a new song: sing unto the LORD all the earth. Sing unto the Lord, bless His name; shew forth His salvation from day to day. Declare His glory among the heathen, His wonders among the people. For the LORD is great and greatly to be praised: He is to be feared above all gods." And then too it shall be said, "Happy art thou Israel: who is like unto thee, O people saved by the LORD, the shield of thy help, and who is the sword of thy excellency! and thine enemies shall be found liars unto thee and thou shalt tread upon their high places" (Deut. 33. 29).

Chapter 10 should begin at verse 36 of chapter 9. This shews the heart of the Lord moved with compassion for His poor people in spite of the wickedness of the leaders, and leads to the sending forth of the twelve. They are sent forth on their mission to proclaim the kingdom of

heaven. He sets their work before them making Himself chargeable for their every need. This brings out His power in the providential sphere. But there is much more, for what man, though possessed with power to work miracles could impart that power to others?

Having been in His company as learners they now go forth as His witnesses and He presses upon them the solemn nature of their service. "Behold I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves; be ye therefore prudent as the serpents and guileless as the doves." Besides this they were to look well to their own state of soul as His ambassadors and according to their faithfulness would He acknowledge them before the Father. It is a most precious unfolding of their privileges and responsibilities as brought into His confidence and drawing upon His resources. The beautiful line of moral instruction is most blessed for all and in spite of certain modifications in the later mission is most precious for all that seek to serve the Lord.

But a point is touched in the dispensational ways of God that makes this one of the most important chapters in the whole Book. The principle which marks all prophetic Scripture is here, and if the reader has carefully pondered the character of the discourse in chaps. 5-7 it will not be difficult to follow out what is here. We allude to the marvellous interweaving of the distant and future with that which is near and present so that the men sent out by Him on this mission can be spoken of as the same men which would be busy with their work when He comes back again in glory. He so orders His words that while ap-

plying to His servants at that moment they equally apply to those who will carry the testimony of the kingdom in Israel in the day to come: passing in this way over the Church age to the immediate preparation for the great Millennial display. This clearly supposes the transition in the Book of Acts from Judaism to Christianity and the break at the destruction of Jerusalem which left room for the parenthesis gap which has lasted so long and is now about to end in another transition, namely from the Church age to the resumption of divine dealings with Israel.

It seems clear that up to v. 15, the apostolic band is chiefly in view. This was marked by the personal presence of the King. From v. 16 to 20 the language is more general having in view the preaching during the "Acts" and on to the fall of Jerusalem. Here the King is gone away and His servants are delivered up to be scourged and brought before rulers and kings. The Holy Spirit from the Father would be in them and would be the power for every emergency. He then speaks in language much more general, much of which applies at any moment but evidently with the testimony in Israel at the close definitely in view. This may be seen from the words of v. 23, "For verily I say to you, Ye shall not have completed the cities of Israel until the Son of Man be come."

Remark that it is during the time that this testimony is suspended in Israel that the gospel of the glory of the blessed God goes out to all nations in view of the church which is the body and bride of Christ. In that way the fall of Israel has brought salvation to the Gentiles,

and made room for a character of blessing which coming in after the accomplishment of redemption and the declaration of eternal counsels is much richer than anything before proposed. Nothing had ever been seen or known from God like what is known to-day of His counsels concerning Christ and the assembly. Here, alas! the failure is much greater, for while the Spirit forms the bride for the Son and leads her home to Him in glory in the light of all the precious things of heaven, the mass of Gentiles refuse this the richest of all testimonies and go on to judgment. Behold then the goodness and severity of God: upon them who have fallen, severity; upon thee goodness of God, if thou shalt abide in goodness, since otherwise thou shalt be cut away (Rom. 11. 22).

We know that the Gentiles have not continued in the goodness and favour of God and that the time of

their cutting off is at hand. The times of the Gentiles are nearing a close when Israel will be reinstated in their Land in a security that nothing can assail. They were cut off in holy government but through mercy and the faithfulness of God to His promises will be restored again. Christendom which has so long flourished under heaven's best and still continues in apostacy will be cut off in judgment never again to raise her proud head. Jerusalem having received double for all her sins, the Spirit of God moves in the valley of dry bones; the gospel of the kingdom will again be preached and preparation made for the coming of the KING. "O Zion that bringeth good tidings, get thee up into a high mountain, O Jerusalem that bringest glad tidings, lift up thy voice with strength lift it up, be not afraid; say unto the cities of Judah, behold your God" (Isa 40. 9).

Abiding in Christ.

IT is important to understand that we are called upon to abide in Christ. It is the Lord's own word to us, as well as that of His apostle John. It does not say abide in a company. The idea of abiding in a company is more readily grasped than that of abiding in Christ. The church (as presented in the Word) never had a human organisation, it had no centralisation according to man's idea. There was the local company, and there were certain privileges which belonged to it. If the church had no organisation at the beginning, certainly when Christianity has broken down in the

world, there is no good in attempting organisation now.

There is danger of people being borne along by a system—of being attached to a company. In the early days of the church it was different. A great many then were carried along by the influence of the company. Abiding in Christ must come first; you must be first held by Christ. We are in danger of imitating Christendom (building up a cause). The true secret and power of fellowship is abiding in Christ. You must have Christ before you have Christian fellowship.

PRAYER.

L. A. Anderson.

"LORD TEACH US TO PRAY" (Luke 11. 1). How we need to pray that prayer. It is so easy to get into a routine which is not *prayer* at all.

Our prayers are so often concerned with our own wants and interests that we are likely to forget that which is for the glory of God. The prayer which the Lord gave His disciples started with that which affected heaven and ended likewise, our needs coming between.

Again we learn from v. 6 of this chapter that we can bring our difficulties to God, but that we should be *in earnest*, not pray and go away forgetting that which we have prayed for. We read that Elijah was a man like ourselves yet he prayed earnestly and it rained not for three years and six months (Jas. 5. 17).

Prayer was made without ceasing for Peter when in prison (Acts 12. 5). When the prayer was answered faith and expectation were, as so often in our case, lacking.

The Lord has said,

*"Ask, and it shall be given you ;
Seek, and ye shall find ;*

*Knock, and it shall be opened un-
to you.*

For every one that asketh receiveth ; and he that seeketh findeth ; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened" (Luke 11. 9-10).

There is that simple childlike faith which *asks* and believes that the request is granted. But there is also the *seeking*, the pleading with God as Moses did so frequently on be-

half of the children of Israel. How much do we know of this experimentally for ourselves ? And finally there is the *knocking*, as Peter literally did (see Acts 12. 13-16), until the answer comes.

What an encouragement we have recorded for us in Gen. 20. 17, "Abraham prayed . . . God healed."

HOW SHOULD WE PRAY ?

1. There should be the reverent attitude and demeanour. The wise man says, "Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thine heart be hasty to utter anything before God; for *God is in heaven, and thou upon earth*: therefore let thy words be few" (Eccles. 5. 2). We must remember that we (children) are praying to our Father (Matt. 6. 6).

2. We should come to God on the ground of what He is, and what He has done in the past, even as Moses did when pleading for the children of Israel as recorded in Deut. 9. 29, "Yet they are *Thy* people and *Thine* inheritance, which *Thou* broughtest out by *Thy* mighty power and by *Thy* stretched out arms."

3. It behoves us in our supplications to God to realize the awfulness of sin in His sight. "Ye have sinned a *great sin*" said Moses (Exod. 32. 30). And are we so ready as he was to take the place of those who have sinned in order that God's glory may be vindicated? (v. 32), and see also Num. 14. 15-16.

4. In our prayers let us not forget the thanksgiving. "In everything by prayer and supplication *with thanksgiving* let your requests

be made known unto God" (Phil. 4. 6). If we only made requests of God and forgot to thank Him for prayers that have been answered, and for all His mercies and goodness to us we shall get one-sided. Fancy a child always asking its parents for something but never remembering to give any thanks or shew any appreciation of benefits received.

Did not God *prepare* the fish, the gourd, the worm, the east wind in connection with Jonah's training?—little ordinary, every-day things enough, and yet God was behind them all the time. If we receive both temporal and spiritual blessings at His hand then let us not forget to thank Him.

On the other hand we must be particularly careful not to pray to be seen of men (Matt. 6. 5) or to obtain the praise of others. We are praying to God, and if praying in public we should be the mouthpiece of those who are present. Neither shall we be heard for our "much speaking" (Matt. 6. 7).

Praying in private is quite another matter. In our own closet we can pray for many personal and other matters for which we could not pray in public; and there is no limit set for private prayer as there is for public prayer. We read of the Lord spending *all night* in prayer in the mountain (Luke 6. 12).

If only we prayed more our countenances would tell the story. "And as He prayed the fashion of His countenance was altered, and His raiment was white and glistening" (Luke 9. 28). Even the things about us and in contact with us would bear the impress of our having prayed.

WHEN SHOULD WE PRAY.

1. *In affliction* (Jas. 5. 13). Can we pray to God in connection with our troubles? Yes, indeed we can for He is interested in everything concerning us and He knoweth our frame.

Did not Hezekiah pray in his distress and fifteen years were added to his life? (2 Kings 20. 2-6). And when he received the threatening letter from Rabshakeh what did he do? He spread it before the Lord (Isa. 37. 14). Moreover, Hezekiah did not forget to pray for others when faults were present in them but "prayed for them saying, the good Lord pardon everyone" (2 Chron. 30. 18).

But let us not only pray in affliction but also when things are well with us—it is at such times that we are liable to forget that we are just as dependent upon God.

2. *Always* (Luke 18. 1). "Men ought always to pray and not to faint." The reason we are so often weak and faint is largely because of our neglect to pray regularly and habitually.

What think you was the secret of Daniel's calm serenity when the edict of king Darius went forth that whosoever should ask a petition of any God or man save himself should be cast into a den of lions? (Dan. 6. 9). I think some of us would have been found praying the whole day, neglecting perhaps our ordinary daily duties and with beads of perspiration on our brows.

Daniel, however, "kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God *as he did aforetime*" (Dan. 6. 10). Here is the solution; it is con-

tained in these four words. He had been in the habit of praying three times daily when things went well, and so trusting in God he could remain calm and confident whatever the outward circumstances might be. Note it well for it holds the secret. Are we always found so regularly in prayer that *whatever happens* we can continue our way quite undisturbed in soul?

3. *Without ceasing* (1 Thess. 5. 17). The unjust judge attended to the widow's need because she continued to plead, and is God less mindful than he was?

4. *Everywhere* (1 Tim. 2. 8). Is it necessary to go to some public building to pray? No, thank God we can pray where ever we are. God heard the cry of the Israelites in Egypt as they groaned under their taskmasters. He heard Jonah's prayer from the whale's belly.

If, however, we can pray everywhere, let us not forget that it must be "with holy hands, without wrath and doubting."

WHO TO PRAY FOR.

1. "Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that *He will send forth labourers* into His harvest" (Matt. 9. 38). It is not so much a question of praying for labourers as it of the Lord sending them forth. God-sent men and women are needed badly and for these we do well to pray.

2. "Pray for *them which despitefully use you*" (Matt. 5. 44). This it is not natural to do, but the love of God shed abroad in our hearts will soon melt hard thoughts, and we shall be able to pray for our enemies, ever remembering "the pit whence *ye are digged*" (Isa. 51. 1).

2. 2). A well-known Christian man once said to me, "Do you folks pray for kings and those that are in authority, because I find it rather unusual to do so where I attend?" May we never forget to pray for all such that God's people "may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty." Pray not only for our own land but for other lands. We enjoy such privileges in Britain that we are in danger of forgetting rulers in other lands.

4. "Pray *one for another*" (Jas. 5. 16). Yes, not only the Christian easy to get on with—there is nothing meritorious in that—for even sinners do as much, as the Lord once told His followers. Let us follow with our prayers the difficult, the troublesome and the trying ones, that will be a better test for us. We have to bear in mind that we have faults and failings too: perhaps others find *us* difficult sometimes.

CONDITIONS AS TO PRAYERS.

1. "If I regard *iniquity* in my heart the Lord will not hear me" (Psa. 66. 18). If we are going on with known sin or even allowing evil in our heart the Lord will have to turn a deaf ear to our prayers. We cannot expect answers.

2. "In *My name*" (John 14. 13; 15. 16; 16. 23). Is it possible that to some of our prayers *His* name could not properly be attached? It would be well for all of us to bear this word in mind more than we do, and as a result we should be more careful for that which we pray.

3. *Reality*. We must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him" (Heb. 11. 6). If there is no reality then our prayer is a formality only. How can that be pleasing to God?

We must realize that with Him "all things are possible."

4. "In faith" (Jas. 1. 6). What a description of the waverer we get in this verse, "like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed," and he obtains exactly nothing. "Let not that man think that he shall receive *anything* of the Lord" (v. 7).

5. "Ye ask *amiss*" (Jas. 4. 3). Consequently we receive not. Is it that our prayers remain unanswered because we are mainly thinking of our own selfish ends and desires? Alas that it is so sometimes. May His glory be always paramount.

In conclusion we have to remember that prayers ascend *silently* to God as well as those which are

audible, and that those who pray audibly should so pray that they voice the sentiments and desires of those who do not, and thus all the people can say "Amen" (see 1 Chron. 16. 36). Sometimes "Amens" are not forthcoming by reason of lack of interest on the part of the hearers, at other times because they cannot conscientiously be added.

Let us so pray that others can add their "Amen," recollecting the words of the Lord "That if two of you shall agree . . . it shall be done for them" (Matt. 18. 19). At the same time we realize our weaknesses "for we know not *what we should pray for as we ought*: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered" (Rom. 8. 26).

In Sorrow.

The blessed Lord never fails in sympathy and kindness for the inevitable sorrows of the way. If He takes away what was long an object, and for our hearts a prop, He always comes in to cheer and comfort the spirit. What balm there is for every woe in the Name of JESUS. He alone we can never lose, and He is really nearer to us than any human tie.

Christ's heart was moved when He saw sorrow. We can never forget that it is recorded, "Jesus wept." He would not have us cold and indifferent to it, nor yet on the other hand selfishly affected by it, but full of tenderness and compassion towards those who are suffering. "He has set us an example that we should walk in His steps."

If God comforts those that are cast down, then the very trial that cast them down becomes, so to speak, a door, or a chink through which He shines into the soul. God's great compassions reach us through our sorrows.

It is worth while to be cast down, if thereby I get God's comfort. And what a wonderful thing it is, to have God occupying Himself with me in my sorrows, especially when I remember who He is.

A broken heart is suited to a heart-healing God.

Christ will be a sure Friend, and even if you begin to sink in the water, He will stretch out His hand and lift you up. It is sweet to have His hand in any case, even if it is our failing foot and feeble faith that leads Him to stretch it out,

GREATER THAN JONAH.

J. T. Mawson.

THEY were great men whose deeds for God are recorded in the Old Testament Scriptures, and not the least among them was Jonah. He was a prophet with an extraordinary experience, and a ministry of unparalleled power. He had been thrust down into the very "belly of sheol" and had cried unto the Lord from those depths and been heard and delivered, and the queen city of the world, vast and haughty, and hostile to his people and his God had heard his lone preaching, and been terrified and subdued by it, and had humbled itself to the dust, and repented of its foul sins and pride and been saved from a swift and overwhelming judgment. No prophet in the world's history had ever descended to such depths as Jonah, nor been raised to such heights of success as he had. But a greater than Jonah is here.

It is with the keenest interest that the Christian considers such a man as Jonah, for he sees in him a shadow of his Lord, not the very image, but a shadow. Whatever of greatness there may have been in him or his experience and achievements was but a type of the greater greatness of Him whom we love.

His is the glory; the surpassing greatness is His.

There was not much that was loveable about Jonah, unless it was his fierce patriotism. This may have accounted for much in him that to us appears repellent. He did not want to carry any message from God to Nineveh, "bloody city, full of lies and robbery," for he knew enough about the God he served, to know that if they hearkened to His

word and repented of their sins, they would be forgiven and spared, even as it turned out. And he had no wish except that Nineveh should perish utterly without a warning. Why should the oppressor of his people be spared! So he fled, not from Nineveh, for he was no coward; it was not men that scared him from the will of God, it was from *the presence of the Lord that he fled*. What he feared was an outpouring of the mercy of God upon an alien and guilty foe. In his concern for his nation and his own reputation, he was selfish, miserable, without compassion, and despicable—as unlike his God as he could possibly be.

Jonah carried out God's will in the end, but what discipline he had to pass through before he did it, only when he discovered that the will of God was powerful and irresistible did he submit to it. What a contrast to this we have in our Lord. He needed no discipline to prepare Him for service. There was no need for yoke upon His neck, for He was not rebellious nor turned back. Our hearts are charmed as we turn from Jonah to Him, He was the perfect Servant. "Lo, I come," He said, "in the volume of the book it is written of Me, I delight to do Thy will, O my God: yea, Thy law is within My heart" (Psalm 40). "A greater than Jonah is here."

The great storm that threatened the ship in which Jonah sailed should teach us something. It was a mighty tempest, the wind that caused it was from God. With giant strokes it smote the ship so that it "was like to be broken." And noth-

ing that those pagan sailors could think of could appease its demands. They cast their costly wares into it but still it raged, they laboured hard to escape its clutches and come to their port, and they cried to their gods, but it heeded their toiling and anguished cries as little as it cared for their wealth. It wrought against them and was tempestuous and reduced them to despair. That storm required a great sacrifice; its claims could not be ignored, and there was only one price that could turn it to a calm and procure peace, Jonah must go into it, he must sink down into that raging flood; nothing else could avail. So they took up Jonah, and cast him forth into the sea: "*and the sea ceased her raging.*"

Many of us were like those mariners of Tarshish; *we had no peace.* We discovered that we were guilty before God; we had sinned against Him. His righteous judgment was against us and we could not meet its demands. We looked back upon a guilty past with dismay and the future loomed dark before us. No price that we could pay could win our deliverance from judgment or purchase our peace, and our labour to establish our own righteousness was in vain, for salvation is not of works lest any man should boast. There was but one way, one hope. One greater than Jonah must go into the judgment as our representative and substitute; He must face the storms for us, in our stead. There could be no compromise in this, it was a matter of eternal justice, of the very character of God and His throne.

We do not waste much admiration upon Jonah, and yet there was a nobility about him as he stood upon the heaving deck of that ship, calmly facing the storm at its worst

and saying, "Take me up, and cast me forth into the sea; so shall the sea be calm unto you: for I know that for my sake this great tempest is upon you." In that hour his selfishness had dropped from him and he was a submissive man, great in his submissiveness, and bowing to the judgment of God upon him as a righteous judgment because of his disobedience to God. That one gleam of moral rectitude and surrender of self makes him worthy to stand with the greatest of the prophets; but a greater than Jonah is here.

Behold our Lord Jesus. He stood forth in the hour of need and offered Himself in an absolute submission to the will of God to suffer for our disobedience; "The just One for us the unjust." And having become the Son of man there was no escape for Him if the storm was to be stilled for us: He must go down into the depths. In a deep, inscrutable, spiritual sense He had to say, "Deep calleth unto deep at the sound of Thy waterspouts, all Thy waves and Thy billows have gone over me." "The waters compassed Me about: the depth hath enclosed me round about." Only divine love could fathom those depths into which He went for our sakes, the sinners' Substitute.

We do not wonder that those sailor men, "feared the Lord exceedingly, and offered a sacrifice to the Lord, and made vows." So great a peace secured at such a price was enough to open the blindest eyes, and reach the hardest heart, and make the most dense of infidels exclaim, This thing is of God! But what of the great reality of which that was a shadow and a contrast? Those men saw Jonah no more; he

had perished while they were saved. That was all they knew; but a greater than Jonah is here. "As Jonah was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth." "But the Lord spake unto the fish, and it vomited out Jonah upon the dry land." And just as surely came our Lord forth from the dead. "He was delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification. Therefore being justified by faith we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Romans 4 and 5).

The gospel that we have believed is the gospel of peace, a peace that shall never be disturbed for ever for it is the result of the eternal settlement of every question that could disturb it. And the Lord Himself proclaimed this peace. He stood in the midst of His disciples on the resurrection day and said unto them, "Peace unto you" and He shewed them His hands and His side. It is ours now to wonder and "offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His Name."

There is another side to this story of Jonah. He was an effective sign to the sinners of Nineveh, and a sign also to that evil generation to which the Lord witnessed. He was a sign that the man of disobedience must pass under the judgment of God. It was one man's disobedience that brought death upon the human race, and death has passed upon all, for all alike are disobedient, it is the nature of every individual member of it. And not only must the acts of disobedience be atoned for but the nature that produces them must be judged. And

it is here that God has displayed His amazing love and wisdom. Divine wisdom devised the way, divine love stood forth to carry it out, power too, the power of God has completed the wonderful story. Christ *the obedient One* came down into death. By Adam's disobedience the condemnation of death passed upon all, by Christ's one great obedience many are delivered from death, made righteous, and shall reign for ever in life by one, Jesus Christ.

Christ raised up from the dead, is the last Adam, the head of a new race, to every member of which His own nature and life is imparted. But to know the blessedness of this it is necessary that the truth as to the old life and nature be acknowledged. "If one died for all then are all dead." Christ not only died for us, but in our baptism we acknowledged that we died with Him, and that death, His death, was the only way of life for us. It is the acknowledgment also, that from the old nature can spring no good thing, and it becomes our privilege in consequence of the death of Christ to reckon ourselves dead to the whole course of the disobedient life in which once we wholly lived, and live unto God through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Christ as the greater than Jonah has secured this for us, and now He lives as greater than Solomon, the One to whom we may turn for all direction in life, the very wisdom of God for us, who can solve all our hard questions, as Solomon solved the Queen of Sheba's, and who can so entrance our hearts by His personal greatness and glory that we desire nothing apart from Him.

A UNIQUE COMMUNION SERVICE.

Some of our older readers will remember with pleasure the visits of our brother Mirza Sa'eed to London. His devotion to his Saviour and Lord, his delight in the truth, and powerful words of ministry left an indelible impression on those who were privileged to meet him. This account of his first remembrance of the Lord in His death will certainly appeal to their hearts and we believe the hearts of all who love the Lord. Three weeks before this memorable Sunday he had been baptised with the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, by a Persian pastor, his tutor in English, who had been used to lead him to the Saviour. It is taken from a small volume of incidents in his life, entitled, *The Beloved Physician of Teheran*, by Isaac Malek Yonan, and published by *The Cokebury Press, Nashville, U.S.A.*

SA'EED from his childhood was trained to attend preaching services in the mosque every Friday. Later, when he became a mullah he had taken a prominent part in the services, and had religiously recited his prayers every day in the courts of the mosque as the most pious Moslems do. Now, though a Christian, he still continued his connection with Moslem religion, attending regularly the preaching service. However, he had eliminated many parts of the ritual and prayers which did not agree with his new faith and convictions, and which the public could not notice. For one thing he went through all the postures of Moslem prayer with the rest of the praying public, but he prayed his Christian prayer to God in the name of Jesus Christ his Saviour.

From day to day he was realizing that this kind of double life could not last long. He was sure in his soul that the time was coming soon when he would have to sever all his connections with his old religion, no matter what the consequences.

It was Sunday. He made up his mind to observe the Christian Sunday by spending a few hours of the day in Bible study and prayer. It

was almost eleven o'clock of a beautiful August day. He took his Bible and his lunch and went out to a vineyard at the outskirts of the city, to be alone for the Sunday meditation. In the upper room on the great day of his baptismal service, Sa'eed had for the first time in his life heard of the communion service, instituted by the Saviour as a means of grace and spiritual nourishment for the believers; and also Pastor John, in his explanatory talk on baptism, had mentioned that the communion service and the rite of baptism were the only two major sacraments which Christ had commanded to be observed and practised by believers. He also had pointed out to him the parallel records of the Last Supper in the Synoptic Gospels and in St. Paul's Epistle to the Corinthians. Sa'eed had carefully marked the places in his Bible, and was impatiently waiting for an opportune time to study them.

So, on this Sunday, sitting in the ditch of the vineyard, he was pleading in prayer for the Holy Spirit to open the eyes of his understanding while studying these passages. First he read the twenty-sixth chapter of Matthew and the fourteenth chap-

ter of Mark ; then the twenty-second chapter of Luke and the eleventh chapter of First Corinthians through. Then in the second reading he concentrated on the passages dealing exclusively with the Last Supper. His spiritual eyes being opened, he could understand the significance of the Supper and why Christ had said, "Do this in remembrance of me." The whole panorama of the Christ tragedy from Gethsemane to Calvary came vividly before his vision, culminating in the Cross of Calvary, where "He cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani." He could see the nail prints in the innocent hands, and the spear thrust in His side. He could feel the sufferings of his Master in his own body and soul. He kept repeating to himself, "All for me, all for me." The impression was so great and the inspiration so exalting that he says, "I suddenly cried like a child. Then a great yearning filled my heart to do, right there and then, what Christ commanded me to do." He had not seen before the practice of the Lord's Supper, and he did not need to have an elaborate Church ritual to direct him in the celebration. The text before him was so simple that he was not at a loss as to how he should proceed. He opened his kerchief, which contained a "lawash" (loaf) of common ordinary bread used in Kurdistan. He returned thanks and ate it. "This is My body, broken for you." Then raising his hand, he plucked a bunch of black grapes hanging overhead. Having no cup of gilded silver or any chalice of potter's make, he squeezed the juice in the palm of his hand and drank it. "This is My blood . . . Do this in remembrance of Me." He had done it. The Holy Supper had told its story. The vine-

yard ditch for him had become a holy temple, and the common meal a communion supper.

For the first time the repentant Kurd had the thrill of being the guest of honour at the sacramental table with Divinity for his host. The experience had simply enthralled him. Christians who have become accustomed to the privileges of the Holy Supper can hardly realize the spiritual depth and sanctifying power of an occasion like this upon a new believer. I do not believe that in the whole history of Christianity there ever was such a unique celebration of the Lord's Supper, when heaven and earth met in such close communion.

From the moment that he had finished his first communion service new vistas of Christian discipleship were opened before his eyes. He was strengthened in soul and body. He came to the conclusion that he must stop his double life at once. The more he thought of the compromises he had been making just to get along, the more he blamed himself for being a coward and a hypocrite. "No man can serve two masters." "Here I am, trying to serve two masters. If sinless Jesus were willing to suffer and be crucified for me, why should I shrink from suffering for the sake of the truth which I have accepted with my whole heart?"

That very afternoon was to be the end. His mind was made up to quit the mosque, the call to prayer, to sever all his connections with the religion of his forefathers, and to break the news to the family—let the great sheik and the whole city of Senneh know that Mullah Sa'eed had renounced his prophet and his religion and become a renegade.

THE LIFE OF CHRIST'S BODY.

THE body of Christ, which is the church, though in the world has a life which is altogether foreign to the life of the world, for it is the life of the Head of it who is in heaven. For proof of this I would turn to Colossians 3, where the features of its life are given—Bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering, forbearance, forgiveness, love, peace in the heart and thankfulness; the word directing the conduct and songs of praise rising in harmony from united hearts to the Lord. To what community on earth can we look for such morally excellent things? We can trace them in the Gospels in the life of the Lord. It is His life they describe; they were all perfect in Him and we can see them only reproduced in the members.

Why should the members of the body be told then to put them on, if they are features of a life they possess? In the same way as we speak of a bird putting on its beautiful plumage; it is the inward life that produces the external beauty.

The contrast to this life is that which produces anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communications out of the mouth, lying, and the like—that is the life, of the world and the flesh. Now while the Christian is united to Christ in the new life, he has still the old corrupt nature within him which is no part of what he is as a member of the body of Christ; and right well he knows, if these evil things have a place in his life from whence they spring. And knowing this he has to choose between the two. Which life will he live, and in which sphere will he move? To develop and function as a member of the body of Christ, it is absolutely necessary that the old desires and deeds should be put to death and that heart and mind should be set upon Christ and His things. To hold the Head, to abide in Christ, to cleave to the Lord with purpose of heart—this is the way by which fruit will be produced for the Father—the life of Christ in the members of *His body*.

THE CHURCH.

IT is not necessary to state that every true believer on the Lord Jesus Christ forms an indispensable part of the one church, which is His body, nobody that we know questions that; but it is necessary to insist upon the fact that those who are of the church are not of the world. They are God's called out ones. This is brought out clearly in 1 Corinthians 10. 32. From Abraham to Pentecost, most certainly from the first passover to Pentecost, mankind had been divided into two great families—the Jew and the Gentile, but from Pentecost onwards

there have been three families, Jews, Gentiles, and church of God. The distinction between the Jew and the Gentile is clear, but the church of God should stand out from both with even greater clearness, for while the spirit of the world is in Jew and Gentile alike, the Spirit of God is in the church, and the world cannot receive Him for it seeth Him not neither knoweth Him (John 14). It is by the Spirit that those who have been effectually called by the gospel have been baptised into one body.

The joys, hopes and destiny of the church are all outside the world as it is to-day. The devil is the world's god and the exaltation and glory of man without the true God and His Christ is its object. The church's destiny is bound up with Christ, it looks for His coming, for His glory, for the time when He shall be universal King, then shall it reign with Him, meanwhile it is a pilgrim and a stranger in the world, kept by the power of God. I speak of what it is in its true character, and may our desires be greatly strengthened to answer to this in practical life.

The church may be likened to a

ship that has put out to sea with a definite mission and port in view. It is not a derelict driven before the storm, and at the mercy of every gale that blows, without rudder, compass, chart or captain. The Son of God is on the bridge, the Holy Ghost is the inward power that enables it to hold on its way though buffeted by the tempest, and it will enter triumphantly at last the harbour of its hopes and desires, for the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

Those who live by sight will not realise this, but to those who walk by faith it is a joy and a stay unspeakable.

"It is good that a man should both hope and quietly wait . . ."

(Lam. 3. 26).

A.M.C.

Is all thy sky o'ercast, no faint star burning?
 Clouds after rain with swiftness dread returning?
 And art thou left in darkness deep to grope?
 "Hope"
 Comes the gentle word,
 "Hope!"

Hast thou in sorrow looked long for the dawning?
 Sigh'd for the joy that should come with the morning?
 Wept that the promise has tarried so late?
 "Wait!"
 Softly comes the Word,
 "Wait!"

Wisdom sublime far beyond thy poor knowing
 Chooses thy pathway and orders thy going,
 Calm in thy knowledge that God's time is best,
 "Rest,"
 'Tis a tender word,
 "Rest!"

Waiting shall cease, and an end be to sorrow,
 But through the ages of Heav'n's longed-for morrow,
 Songs of thanksgiving thy glad voice shall raise!
 "Praise,"
 How thy heart shall give
 "Praise!"

POVERTY: PATIENCE: POWER.

F. B. Hole.

(Psalms 109 and 110).

THE heading of Psalm 109 does not furnish us with any information as to the circumstances under which it was written, but judging from its contents it would seem very probable that like Psalm 13 it sprang out of the terrible experiences connected with the rebellion of Absalom. Then it was that David became the victim of "the mouth of the deceitful," and was rewarded "evil for good, and hatred for . . . love." Ahithophel remarkably fitted this description in his actions; just as Shimei seemed to love cursing, and to clothe himself with it, "like as with his garment." Absalom himself, upon whom David doted, fits the words, "For my love they are my adversaries."

This identification, however, though probable, is not certain, and is of no great moment. What is important for us is to discern in the Psalm, here and there at least, the very spirit of Christ. This *is* certain, for in verse 8 we have words that apply to Judas Iscariot, as is put on record in Acts 1. 20. This shows without a doubt that in this Psalm we find utterances that are prophetic of Christ.

David might speak of the wicked and deceitful as fighting against him "without a cause." True no doubt in a general way. But if these words are to be taken up in the most absolute and searching way, there is only One to whom they fully apply, and He has applied them to Himself, as we see in John 15. 25. No one but He could face the crowd of His hostile critics with the question, "Which of you convicteth Me of sin?" No one ever

died the felon's death of crucifixion, as He did, and yet have such testimonies as those given by the judge, by a fellow-sufferer, and by the officer in charge. Their testimonies respectively were, "I find no fault in Him." "This Man hath done nothing amiss." "Certainly this was a righteous Man." Truly in the most absolute sense they fought against Him *without a cause*.

Then there was Judas Iscariot, of whom Ahithophel was a kind of type. He spent some three years in the light of His love, and yet became His adversary, rewarding Him evil for good, and hatred for His love. There were also the Jewish crowds, egged on by the envious, scheming religious leaders to a fury of cursing and bitterness, similar to that seen in Shimei. Shimei threw stones and cursed as he came. The Jewish mob shouted, "Crucify Him!" They shouted it "exceedingly," Mark tells us; and as Matthew says, "a tumult was made."

These things come before us prophetically in this remarkable Psalm. Now why was this? We know who He was. We know something at least of His power and His glory. Why should He be treated thus? The answer is that all these things came upon Him in *the day of His poverty*—the day in which He took a place that led to His saying, "I am poor and needy, and My heart is wounded within Me" (verse 22).

It has been rightly said to us, "Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor." It was what He *became*. Had He come to earth in order to wear the

costliest of its diadems and the richest of its purple, He would still have been stooping to poverty. Rehoboam's brazen shields were but tinsel compared with the golden shields of Solomon, which he had lost. But Solomon's golden shields were but tinsel in the presence of the glory of God. So for Him to come down into man's estate at all was poverty, but to take up Manhood in poverty and need and affliction is more wonderful still.

He was truly and essentially God, yet He did not fall back upon His Divine power and glory in order to alter or mitigate the circumstances that Manhood involved. He entered into human life, taking man's place, with all its attendant circumstances and sufferings, in the fullest possible way, with this one great exception—all was wholly apart from sin. Hence many of the expressions in this Psalm can be read as coming to us from His lips.

His *heart* was wounded—and not merely His hands and His side. Who can estimate what that means? Perhaps the Christian poet did well to stop at the more external things in saying,

“ See from His head, His hands, His feet,
Sorrow and love flow mingled down.”

inasmuch as these deeper things frequently carry us altogether out of our depth, and it is beyond us to turn them into a matter of song. Nevertheless the fact remains—His heart was wounded, for He felt all that rolled in upon Him with an intensity of feeling that is beyond us. He had a *Divine* capacity for feeling. Our capacity is only human, and even that in us has been marred and weakened, by the fact that we have been sinners, though now redeemed and indwelt by the Holy Spirit. In Him every *human* sensibility was

carried to its highest pitch of perfection. So that on both counts the wounding of His heart must have been infinitely beyond anything that we could know.

All the evil that thus afflicted Him, to all appearances prevailed against Him, so that He had to say, “ I am gone like the shadow when it declineth ” (ver. 23). Eventide draws on, and the shadows lengthen. No matter how brilliant the day, longer and longer they grow until they decline to the vanishing point. They are finally gone when the sun is set. His sun was setting. When the literal shadows cast by the three crosses on the little hill outside Jerusalem were declining, it looked as if His sun had set for ever.

Still the closing part of our Psalm breathes an extraordinary spirit of confidence. The Holy One looks up to Jehovah owning Him as His God, and fully expecting His almighty intervention on His behalf. When Jehovah has acted men will know, as He says, “ that this is Thy hand; that Thou hast done it.” Hence He can praise in anticipation of the coming deliverance and vindication; “ I will greatly praise the Lord with My mouth . . . For He shall stand at the right hand of the poor, to save him from those that condemn his soul.”

In the day of His poverty Jehovah would stand at His right hand to deliver. This is as far as the Psalm goes.

But another day was to dawn, and we are introduced to this directly we begin to read Psalm 110. Jehovah has indeed been standing at His right hand all through His toilsome pathway and even to death—save for the hour when atonement was made, of which Psalm 22 speaks—

and now He speaks to Him in resurrection, saying, "Sit Thou at My right hand, until I make Thine enemies Thy footstool." He is acknowledged as Lord by Jehovah, and placed at His right hand, but it is "until . . ." There is a prospect before Him, and the seat He is to occupy, though high exalted, yet is provisional, until the prospect materializes. The day of His poverty is over. *The day of His patience* is begun.

To the Thessalonians the Apostle wrote, "The Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and into the patience of Christ." (New Trans.). That is why we speak of the present epoch, during which Jesus sits at the right hand of God as the day of His patience. It has already lasted for nineteen centuries. He is at the administrative centre of the universe, being Himself in fact the great Administrator. But He *sits* there, an attitude which bespeaks not action but rest. He bides His time, which is the time appointed of the Father. When the time arrives He will arise and act.

Now it is remarkable that all the thirty-one verses of the previous Psalm are occupied with the day of His poverty, and verses 2 to 7 of our Psalm deal with the day which will succeed the present epoch. The day of His patience is mentioned in the first verse, and then nothing more is said as to it. No details as to it are given: it is not the subject of the prophecy.

But that is exactly in keeping with what we find elsewhere. The two advents of Christ are the subject of an immense number of prophecies: the epoch between them is not. Others have used the expression, "The Church parenthesis,"

Now that we know that there *is* this parenthesis between the advents, we can turn back to the Old Testament and note that it contains here and there brief expressions, which if they do not exactly *announce* it, yet *allow* for it. That is the case here. No word is said to indicate what is to transpire while He sits at Jehovah's right hand, nor as to how long He is to sit there.

The Acts of the Apostles opens with Jesus called to the right hand of God, and that book goes on to show us historically how the Divine purpose for the time of the parenthesis began to be unfolded. The various epistles work out for us the constitution and charter of the church—and much else besides—after giving us the gospel foundations on which the church rests. We find that all really hinges upon Jesus being ascended to the right hand of God, since upon that depended the outpouring of the Spirit at Pentecost; and the Holy Spirit was given that He might form and indwell the church, and also be the power for all acceptable worship and service in the Name of the absent Lord.

The distinguishing features of the present epoch are that Christ sits as Man at the right hand of God, and that the Holy Spirit indwells the saints below. These two great events having come to pass, the way was clear for the revelation of the whole purpose of God concerning Christ and the church. The first verse of our Psalm, as we have noted, only refers to the first of these great things. But it is the master fact from which all else flows. It is the fact that gives character to the whole dispensation.

With verse 2 we pass into a prophecy concerning the time which

will succeed the church dispensation. It will be, as verse 3 tells us, "*the day of His power.*"

Now as regards the day of His power we get three very striking details. First, it is to be characterized by the going forth of the rod of His power, so that He rules in the midst of His enemies. Psalm 2 told us about this rod, speaking of it as a rod of iron, by which He will subdue and dash in pieces every opponent. So, evidently, ruling in the midst of His enemies must not be supposed to mean that He permits His enemies to continue. He will step into the midst of His enemies with all power in His hands, and this will mean their utter discomfiture, their everlasting overthrow. Some details of this are given in verses 5—7 of our Psalm, where the day of His power is also called, "*the day of His wrath.*"

There is just this difference however; the day of His wrath is a comparatively brief period, which ushers in the day of His power. Wrath will be needful for the clearing out of evil at the beginning of His millennial reign, but power will characterize every moment of that wonderful epoch which is to come.

The second detail we find is that in the day of His power His people will at last be willing. When first He came to His own things, His own people received Him not. Nor do they receive Him to-day. Individuals of Israel's race do so, as they ever have done; witness to which is borne in John 1. 12, 13. His people as a nation still reject Him. But in the day when the Lord intervenes from heaven to overthrow His enemies and theirs, a mighty work of grace shall take place in their hearts. Space forbids our going into details of this, but the prophecy

of Zechariah may profitably be turned to. The early part of chapter 14 tells us about the intervention in judgment from heaven. The latter part of chapter 12 graphically describes the profound repentance that will be produced in the hearts of the people—produced individually in every one of them, when they at last behold Him whom they pierced intervening on their behalf—valid collectively because wrought individually.

The terrible stubbornness and pride, which have always characterized that nation, will collapse as with a crash in all their hearts, and a new nation from a spiritual standpoint will be born in a day. The "spirit of grace and of supplications" will rest upon them. They will see things in a new light, and be willing at last.

Verse 3 is a little obscure in our Authorized Version. In Darby's New Translation it runs, "Thy people shall be willing in the day of Thy power, in holy splendour: from the womb of the morning shall come to Thee the dew of Thy youth." It seems therefore that the whole verse shows how the last scenes in our Lord's life are going to be exactly reversed. Then His people shouted for His death. They covered Him with unholy ridicule and dishonour. The youth of Israel departed from Him into a dark night of retribution for themselves. In the moment prophetically contemplated in this verse, He comes forth in power and splendour, and the youth of Israel—spiritually young at least, for they have all just been born again—flock to Him at the dawning of the millennial day.

The third detail we find in the fourth verse. The One who said to

Him, "Sit Thou at My right hand," has also said to Him, "Thou art a Priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek."

A substantial part of the Epistle to the Hebrews is occupied in unfolding what is contained in this short verse: chapters 5 to 8, with the exception of a somewhat lengthy parenthesis. It is evidently a statement of the utmost importance. It is, in fact, one of the key verses of the Bible.

One thing which stands out very clearly in Hebrews is that the priesthood of our Lord after the order of Melchizedek is an accomplished fact to-day. It is not something only to be brought about in the day of His power. This being so we might wonder that it should be set in this Psalm in connection with the day of His power rather than the day of His patience. We believe this is because though He is to-day a Priest of Melchizedek's order, He is not at present exercising functions after Melchizedek's pattern. This is shown quite plainly in Hebrews, where all the functions of His Priesthood are shown to be after the pattern of Aaron.

It was the Aaronic priesthood that had to "have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way," that had to "make propitiation for the sins of the people," that took the place of "a minister of the sanctuary." Melchizedek was concerned with none of these things. He united the function of king and priest. He was priest of "the Most High God"—the millennial name of God. He brought forth bread and wine for the refreshment of the victor. He blessed the Most High God on Abram's behalf, and blessed Abram

himself, the man who had the promises.

Now when the day of His power arrives, the Lord Jesus will act after the pattern of Melchizedek. First of all He will, "strike through kings in the day of His wrath;" and in this He will be acting somewhat after the pattern of Abram. Then He will bring forth refreshment for the weary world, and abundantly bless those who are "of faith" as Abram was. He will also bring to pass an order of things in which the earth shall be filled with blessing and praise to God.

Being after the order of Melchizedek, His priesthood abides for ever. There shall be no cessation in the outflow of blessing to men or the upflow of blessing to God. All will be secured to eternity. We need not wonder that this priesthood in contrast to the Aaronic order has been constituted with the oath of God. We may remember that the blessing of Abraham was confirmed by an oath. Here we see that the Priesthood upon which the blessing hangs was confirmed by an oath; and so we may apply to it also that word that when "He [God] could swear by no greater He sware by Himself." The Melchizedek priesthood of Christ is of supreme importance.

The day of His poverty is over; never to return. The day of His power is approaching and may be upon us very speedily; still it is not here yet. The day of His patience is NOW; and we are in it. He sits at the right hand of God, a Priest after the order of Melchizedek; and it is good for us that He at present extends priestly grace, like Aaron did, in view of our infirmities.

He never fails. He will carry us through to the end.

HIS IS THE WORK.

W. B. D—y.

Oh rugged the pathway but gentle His guiding,
 Feeble the footsteps but strong is His arm,
 Bitter the bruises, the pain, the deriding,
 But sweeter His healing than Gilead's balm ;
 This is the desert He travelled before us
 Revealing the world and its wisdom as dross,
 Leaving the glory, through love that He bore us,
 For scorn and for smiting, contempt and the cross.

Sold and condemned for the price of our pardon,
 Beaten with stripes that our tears might be dried,
 Mocked, aye, and murdered in Golgotha's garden
 That we might have life through a Saviour that died ;
 Oh what we owe to His labour untiring
 Or ever our eyes saw the light of the day,
 And now through the desert His presence inspiring
 With help and instruction each step of the way.

Hard were our hearts but His love was the stronger,
 Stubborn our spirits but patient His grace,
 Wanton our wills but He suffered the longer
 Till pride and pretension were melted in praise ;
 His is the work, not an atom is ours,
 And none shall undo it, of angels or men,
 Oh may the Spirit endow us with powers
 To magnify JESUS. Amen and amen.

The Spirit for Worship.

Worship to God, true worship, cannot separate itself from the whole body of true believers. I cannot really come with my sacrifice unto the tabernacle of God, without finding necessarily there the priests of the tabernacle. Without the one Priest all is vain ; for what without Jesus? But I cannot find Him without His whole body of manifested people. The interest of His heart takes them all in. God withal has His priests, and I cannot approach Him, but in the way which He has ordained, and in association with, and in recognition of, those whom He has placed around His house, the whole body of those that are sanctified in Christ. He who walks not in this spirit is in conflict with the ordinance of God, and has no true peace-offering according to God's institution.—*J. N. Darby on the Peace-Offering, Leviticus 3.*

THE FAME OF JESUS.

James McBroom.

(Matthew 11)—*continued.*

THE sorrow connected with His rejection, so deeply felt by the Lord, is here augmented by the message from the prison of His servant John. It but served, however, to bring out the greatness of His moral perfections. But all had been fore-known and prophetically described. The connection with Isaiah 49 is clear. I have laboured in vain, I have spent My strength for nought and in vain: yet surely My work is with My God. Jehovah answers:—"It is a light thing that Thou shouldest be My Servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob. I will also give Thee for a light to the Gentiles, that Thou mayest be My salvation to the ends of the earth." The bearing of these last words on the Church age is seen in the way the aged Simeon uses them (Luke 2. 30-32), where the blessing of the Gentile precedes that of the Jew and also in Acts 13, 47, where Paul takes them as the warrant for his mission to the nations. All the wickedness of men and devils eventually but serve God, and here we see it brought out along with His moral perfections in meeting the circumstances the place the Lord fills as Centre of the ways of God.

He sends back the messengers to tell John of the great things that they had seen, finishing with a personal word for His beloved servant. This done, He brings out in the presence of the multitude His estimate of John's worth: first his true moral greatness, then his place as Fore-runner; next He points him out as a pivot in the dispensations and last of all associates him with Himself as refused by the guilty nation. "He shall be great in

the sight of the Lord," said Gabriel; "Among them that are born of woman there is none greater," said the Lord. Prophetically foretold to fill the nearest place as Fore-runner he was also a pivot man for "All the prophets and the law prophesied until John." He came in at the end of one order of things but spoke of another. This is the explanation of the apparent contradiction of verse 11. "There hath not arisen a greater . . . notwithstanding he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he." The Lord had already cited Malachi 3. 1 in reference to John's present place and ministry (cmp. Luke 1. 17); here He refers to chapter 4. 5 of the same Prophet as shewing the Elijah ministry yet to come of which John was the pattern. So definitely is John associated with the Lord in this official way that the Lord goes on to say of him in chapter 17. 12. "Elias is come already and they knew him not but have done with him whatsoever they listed." But see the place all this puts our Lord Jesus Christ into. All John's greatness was derived from the place he filled in relation to the great Sun and Centre of all the ways of God.

In the light of all this how blessed to see John associated with His Master in persecution and death. John came neither eating nor drinking." His home was the desert and his food locust and wild honey. "They say, he has a devil." Through John came one of the greatest revivals that had been in Israel yet his head was bartered away for a dance. He stands out conspicuously in God's roll of honour and here the Lord associates him with Himself

in relation to the then past, present and future.

And now the Lord upbraids the cities that had been in such incomparable favour. They had spoken ill of John the servant, a fellow man. They attacked the Lord of glory. "Behold a man gluttonous and a wine-bibber," they said of Him, but the Lord adds "Wisdom is justified of her children." These were the people that at that moment in face of natural obstacles in themselves, and the determined opposition of those who had the key of knowledge, were taking the kingdom by force. The others could not be charmed, their moral insensibility was such as to blind them to all the grace of heaven which had been brought to their door. That ministry that began with "Blessed" (Chap. 5), here comes to "Woe" and along with it the righteous relation of the judgment to the grace and favour that had been despised.

The turn of the dispensation had come. The Lord is rejected and turns to the Father saying, "I thank Thee, Father." A few remarks on His refusal may help here. The Jews made it clear in every possible way that they did not want the Lord Jesus. The Messiah Son of God was a Man after a different order, and the distance morally between Him and man in the flesh was immeasurable. Even under divine culture as the Jew was here the new birth is a necessity. The Epistle to the Romans written later shews clearly that man is so irretrievably wrecked and lost that reconciliation to God can only be in a new Head. The Lord Jesus was at that moment on the way to the cross to bear the judgment and remove the enmity that was then at

work in His refusal, and lay the basis of a new creation in death and resurrection for the glory of God.

They sought therefore to condemn Him at every turn. In His words and works, the question of the Sabbath and the Law; the woman taken in adultery and the question of tribute money; it was no use; they were baulked and exposed at every turn. In no case could they take Him; the sending the officers for Him failed, and their defeat was such that they proposed to put Lazarus to death because of his witness to His power. The darkest possible point must be reached and that surely which shames and humbles us all is the betrayal by Judas Iscariot. What a blot on the pride of humanity: the Son of God betrayed by a friend. Even this, however could only succeed because His hour had come. He had said no man taketh it from Me (His life), and the time came when He gave Himself up saying "this is your hour and the power of darkness."

But to return; we see how the Lord turns to the Father. "I thank Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth." He is the Son whose being none can know in the intimacy of His relationship with the Father, a rejected Messiah upon the earth. These relationships subsisted in the mutuality and reciprocation of holy love and at that moment the Son could speak of Himself as the Centre of the whole counsel of God. While thanking the Father He turns and says, "All things are delivered unto Me of My Father." Let the light of this marvellous saying shine out upon the dark scene of His rejection. Hear Him speak of the place He fills in the relationships, intimacies and joys in Godhead purpose

and glory. He whom we have been thinking of is the Centre of God's ways in relation to the Father and the counsels of eternity in the grand structure of God's purpose in relation to both heaven and earth, of which but an infinitesimal part connects with Israel and the Davidic hopes.

A three-fold view stands out here which leads from the position of the Lord at that moment down to the fulness of His eternal glory. First the Messiah Son of David Whose royal rights were then refused; then the Son of Man at the centre of all things: the Centre of the vast creation of God. Greatest of all and from which all springs, He is the Son in all the intimacies of love and joy that is proper to Godhead in the relations of Deity. This latter carries us to a point beyond which we cannot go even in thought, to the unknown and knowable Son of the Father and what is proper and native to the glorious Godhead.

We may have beheld a glorious view in nature where beyond a stretch of landscape rises a range of hills, behind which, with intervening valleys, rise range upon range of mountains of ever increasing height which fill us with awe and delight as they seem to recede far and away into the unknown beyond. All the gracious unfoldings of our Lord's ministry which has been before are surpassed here in view of His sorrowful refusal, and just at the point where this is reached His glory begins to rise higher and higher towering in the sunshine of its everlasting splendour, until it passes beyond our

view for ever in this eternal grandeur of its own infinity.

We know from the Gospel of John that our Lord came to make known the Father, to reveal God. This shews that His rejection as Messiah was fore-known. He had come to make known God in a way far beyond all that the covenant relations pre-supposed, but as ever it is the Jew first. And at that moment there comes into view a new generation which becomes the vessel in which is deposited this revelation of the riches of the grace that are in the SON. "Come unto Me all ye that labour and are heavy laden and I will give you rest." To Himself the despised and rejected He calls us that He might make known to us the Father. This surely is rest; the rest of a relationship outside of Israel nationally and outside of all that is of nature as in Adam. Nor is it something only for the advanced for He speaks of it as the first thing needed.

All this is hid to the wise and prudent and revealed to babes, but amidst the accumulation of glories we must not miss the moral glory of His perfect submission. The Son whose being none can know, a rejected, slighted man! Let us attend to this in the light of the words, "Learn of Me." Whatever the circumstances may be He takes all from the Father and so orders His teaching that those who come get the revelation of the Father and learn in Him how to bow and accept every circumstance from the Father's hand.

(To Continue)

FROM GLORY TO GLORY.

Inglis Fleming.

THE Lord Jesus, the Son of the Father, gave in a few words a wonderful epitome of His whole course in grace. In one verse (John 16. 28), is a comprehensive outline of His glorious pathway from glory to glory.

“I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world; again I leave the world, and go to the Father.”

As another has said, “we have in it His glorious mission; His glorious incarnation; His glorious passion; His glorious ascension.”

“I came from the Father,” tells the story of His

GLORIOUS MISSION.

In grace the Father sent the Son. In grace the Son came from with the Father. He, the Son, alone could express the Father's heart, He alone could reveal Him. Stooping in love He came that the Father might be known, and that the Father's purposes of blessing for man might be fulfilled. “No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him.” None other was competent for this. But

“In Him most perfectly expressed,
The Father's Self doth shine.”

Thus, in this Gospel, the thought of Him, as the Sent One is prominent. He is the true Apostle. In Him, as Son, God has spoken in grace to men.

HIS GLORIOUS INCARNATION

is declared in the words “And am come into the world.” In thought we go to the Bethlehem manger. The Son of God was there in lowly grace. The wondrous thing had come to pass. The Seed of the

woman had come to bruise the serpent's head. The virgin had conceived and borne the Son. Immanuel—“God with us” was seen. “God was manifest in the flesh.” The Son had come to glorify His Father. His spotless life in incarnation led again and again to the expression of the Father's delight. “This is My Beloved Son in whom I am well pleased” was heard on Jordan's banks and on the heights of the holy mount. But He had come that He might die. Thus we hear Him say, “I leave the world.”

HIS GLORIOUS PASSION

is now in view. By the way of the cross He would depart out of this world unto the Father. His mission fulfilled, He would return to Him who sent Him. “I have glorified Thee on the earth: I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do.” His path had been as a triumphal progress through the adverse circumstances of His rejection. No man could lay hands upon Him until His hour was come. Now the hour was about to strike and He would deliver Himself up into the hands of sinful men to be crucified. “The corn of wheat would fall into the ground to die that there might be much fruit for the Father's pleasure. Then

HIS GLORIOUS ASCENSION

would take place and He would “go to the Father.” “Now come I to Thee,” He could say, claiming that His own should be with Him where He would be that they might behold His glory.

Thus from glory to glory we trace His journeying as brought before us as in four short chapters of His history.

THE MINISTRY OF RECONCILIATION. James Green.

TO Paul was committed the administration of the grace of God, which involved the gospel and the ministry of the New Testament; to him also was committed the administration of "the mystery" (Ephesians 3), which reveals the great purpose of God in reconciliation.

Expiation for sin was a necessity in respect of the throne of God, and on our part reconciliation was needed in order that we might become recipients of the love and fullness of God. It is into this latter that so many believers fail to enter. They receive with gratitude the fact that all their debts have been paid, and rejoice in the relief which this affords; but if a debtor has no more than the settlement of his liabilities, as to condition he still remains a pauper. Now it is not the intention of God that His children should so abide, but He desires that they should enter upon the boundless wealth of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding, *the millionaires of God in Christ*.

The passages in which Paul unfolds this ministry of reconciliation committed to him are, Rom. 5. 10-15: 2 Cor. 5. 18-20: Eph. 2. 16: Col. 1: 20-21: Rom. 11. 15. The reference in Heb. 2. 17 is concerning propitiation in respect of sins of His people, on which the priesthood of our Lord is based.

The underlying idea in reconciliation is the restoration of harmonious relations which have been disturbed; as in the case of a brother, Matt. 5. 24, or of husband and wife, 1 Cor. 7. 11, only that the illustration falls short in this respect, that reconciliation may be necessary on both sides,

whilst on the part of God there was no need of reconciliation, it was wholly on our side that the great necessity existed. We were enemies to Him, not He to us, and it was we who possessed a nature which was not subject to His control, nor could be.

Reconciliation in the first case is the teaching of the cross; we there learn the great love of God presenting itself in great desire to have us in happy relations with Himself, and on His part removing, (by the gift of His Son to bear the judgment under which we lay) the obstacle which sin had formed on our side. Where this is received, the enmity of the heart to God is destroyed, slain, and the soul no longer regards God as an enemy, but on the contrary as a friend who has been willing at so great a cost, to open the way by which the one time enemies to Himself might be reconciled. Further, this grace of God is towards all men, for God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing trespasses, and He maintains still this attitude in the preaching of the gospel, which has for its highest object not merely the cancelling of debts, but the bringing of men to God. It is in this sense that the casting away of Israel as a nation from the special favour of God has resulted in the reconciling mercy of God towards the world.

But what does it involve that we who once were enemies to God have been reconciled by the death of His Son? Important as a change of mind towards God is, something more was needed. Seeing that man possesses a nature which is irreconcilable to God, in order to

have the fulness of joy which belongs to the new nature begotten in us, it is necessary to know that our standing in flesh has been ended for God in the death of His Son, that is that our old moral nature which was an offence to God has been fully condemned and judgment executed upon it. Thus we have been reconciled by Christ to God, in the body of His flesh through death; and so complete is this, that our standing before God is in perfect suitability to His presence, holy, unblameable, unproveable in His sight. Our standing before God is not in the first man but the Second: not in Adam but in Christ: not in the flesh but in the Spirit; and surely no greater grace could be conferred on us, or fuller comfort afforded for the heart than to know that our acceptance is in the Son of God's love.

It is a never-to-be-forgotten experience when the soul first touches this aspect of reconciliation and enters upon a new history in Christ who glorified God in bearing the judgment of the man who was under judgment and opened a new place of acceptance in the beloved Man who has been raised from among the dead by the glory of the Father. With this object in view the apostle Paul after speaking of joying in God, Rom. 5. 11, proceeds to show how the experience of this is arrived at through the exercises related in chapters 6 and 7; the conclusion being reached in Rom. 8. In other words he shews how reconciliation is received, and joying in God becomes the habitual experience of the soul. With reconciliation the complete salvation of spirit, soul and body is connected, and consequent deliverance from the wrath which will be poured out upon the world that rejects the reconciling grace of God (Rom. 5. 9, 10).

Being justified a further salvation awaits us from the tribulation, wrath and anguish which both Gentile and Jew must endure. The mighty power of the life in which Christ lives will express itself in changing these bodies of our humiliation into the likeness of His glorious body in perfect suitability to that which we already are in Him, and to the home where He will present us to the Father with exceeding joy—joy both His and ours to eternal ages. This redemption of our bodies will mark the full result of reconciliation as regards our own salvation.

But a wider sphere is contemplated in Col. 1. 20, viz., the reconciliation of all things in heaven and earth; not the things under the earth or infernal, such not being reconcilable in their very nature in which they must remain for ever, in the state belonging to the devil and his angels. Nature is unchangeable, it can be set aside in judgment for those who accept its judgment in the cross of the Son of God, otherwise the eternal portion of those who refuse this is with those fallen beings to whom reconciliation is impossible.

But all things in heaven and on earth will be brought into perfect and harmonious relations with God. We know not how far the effects of sin have reached, but the Son of God in whom all the fulness of Deity ever was, and is, will crown His glorious work by filling a universe of bliss with an intelligent creation who shall for ever move in accord with the will of God, and express in songs of praise their unending happiness in Himself. The reconciling of all things is presented in the types of the great day of atonement, Lev. 16, in which the scapegoat is seen carrying away all remembrance of sin, and the blood by which the holy

place is reconciled is expressive of the removal of every trace of sin and the establishment of all things in accordance with the holiness of God. It is the blood of an unique Man which alone could accomplish this, and what point does this consideration give to the exclamation of the Baptist as he gazed upon the Person of the Son of God, "Behold the Lamb of God who beareth away the sin of the world."

Great will be that glorious eternity which shall witness the accomplishment of such a work, and great indeed must be the Person who can bring it about. Its joy however, has already commenced for those of whom Paul could say, "And you hath He reconciled." He has passed through death, crushed its power, and His risen, glorious Manhood in heaven is expressive of the peace of acceptance and love in which His own for ever stand. Loved as He is loved by the Father, accepted in Him the beloved, what confidence and trust, what delight in His will, becomes those who know that God has reconciled us to Himself after such a manner.

But there is yet a further thought which concerns the deeper intimacy belonging to reconciliation. Paul in writing to the Ephesian and Colossian assemblies revealed a secret which was hidden in God from before the foundation of the world. This secret involved the abolition of the enmity which the law of commandments contained in ordinances, had created between Jew and Gentile, and the bringing to pass out of both, by the cross, and the power of God one new man, reconciled to God in one body. This new formation having neither the standing or character of the Jew or Gentile, con-

sisting of members united by the Spirit to Christ in heaven, sharing His life, His heirship, and all the purposes of God concerning Him. A body which shall be expressive of His fulness and character, and through which He will fill the wide universe with the love of God, by this accomplishing the great end of the reconciliation of all things. Surely no creature mind could conceive a project so marvellous as to make aliens from God, heirs in Christ of such a wealth of glory. Neither could the creature mind know these depths of God, except by the Spirit of God, who has sealed the heirs of glory against the day which shall manifest that which He now makes known to those who are reconciled to God by the death of His Son.

Such was the apostle's ministry of reconciliation; but he adds also that God "Hath put in us the word of reconciliation," for in Paul was seen the character and walk of a man to whom reconciliation was an abiding reality: a man whose joy and purpose of life was in God: a man for whom to live was Christ and to die, gain: a man between whom and the world death's waters rolled, who in spirit was already risen with Christ and seated in heavenly places: a man whose backward look saw Him who without sin was made sin, and whose forward look beheld the redeemed made the righteousness of God in Him, the abiding witness of the perfect consistency of God with His own character and glory. Reconciliation shall then be complete, and God's great inheritance of all things be found in perfect harmony with His love and will, known through Christ, head of His body the church, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all.

Thus reconciliation is the perfect adjustment of all things to the will of God, so that there shall follow the harmonious working of all things in response to that will. In the church it will be realized in mutual joy into which no discordant note shall enter, and in which each several part fulfilling its purpose shall contribute to the whole for the display and glory of Christ the Head.

Reconciliation is to be known individually by the yielding of spirit, soul, and body to God for the

present pleasure of His will, for in no life is any incident too small but it may be made to contribute towards God's end, and be caused to work together for good with a view to conformity to the image of His Son. Whilst Paul presents the way by which reconciliation has been brought about, the apostle John, without using the word unfolds the communion and joy that belongs to it, in the present knowledge of the Father and the Son, which is characteristic of eternal life.

"Yea, the sparrow hath found an house, and the swallow a nest where she may lay her young, even Thine altars."

How beautifully this shews us the tender care of God over all His creatures. He fails not to find a house for the most worthless of birds, and a nest for the most restless. What confidence this should give us! How we should rest! What repose the soul gets that casts itself upon the watchful care of Him who provides so fully for the needs of all His creatures.

"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."

He tells us the place that He is going to take us to—it is *the Father's house*. And what makes the Father's house of importance to the child? It is that the Father is there. However feebly we may enjoy it now, when we talk of going to heaven, it is going to the Father. And the Father is not a stranger to us, the babes of the family know the Father. Jesus said, "My Father and your Father, My God and your God."

Christ is the measure and expression of God's mind with regard to man. I cannot learn it in myself or in any other christian, but in Christ. The more I appreciate Christ, the more I enter into the mind of God towards man. We need to have our loins girt about with truth. We need truth in the inward parts.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Zacchaeus and his Confession—Luke 19. 8.

“Was Zacchaeus telling the Lord what had been the habit of his life, or what he was about to do as a result of the interview? Do the words express an habitual practice or a new purpose?”—STH. WALES.

AS to this question, F. W. Grant in his Numerical Bible says, “We are surely to take it, not as a profession of what he meant to do, but as an answer to the murmured charge against him and which implicated Christ also, that “He was gone to lodge with a man that is a sinner.” “A sinner!” he would say, ‘behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor, and if I have taken anything from any man by false accusation I restore him four-fold.’ He is speaking of what he does habitually, not of what he has made a resolve to do.” We think that that is the right answer.

The charge of the people and the answer of Zacchaeus serve to bring out the grace that was in the Lord. They say, “He’s a sinner, you must not go into his house.” He says, “I’m a righteous and generous man

so you may come in without compromise.” The Lord sweeps both aside. If he was a sinner, “the Son of Man came to seek and save that which is lost.” And it was not because of his generosity and righteous dealing, which may have been the fruit of an awakened conscience, that the Lord went to his house, but because He knew him to be a son of Abraham, however much his position as taxgatherer seemed to deny it. “They which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham” Galatians 3. 7. The joyful reception that Zacchaeus gave the Lord proved him to be one of these. Neither his sins which the people knew, nor his good works of which he spoke, brought him into the blessing, but the *grace* that was in the Saviour, and the *faith* that was in him; these two brought salvation to his house that day.

 The Lord and the city called Ephraim—John 11.54.

“Can you give me any light on John 11. 54? Where was the city called Ephraim? How long was the Lord there? Why did He go there?”—TORONTO.

THERE is no agreement among those most able to decide the question of the location of this city, but it is supposed to have been in Northern Judea; nor do we know how long the Lord stayed in it. Why He went there is the important question. It was because the Jews sought to kill Him. Their rejection of Him was determined and complete. He could expect no fruit from that city in which the one pur-

pose of the chief priests and Pharisees was to destroy Him. So He went into “the country near to the wilderness (in contrast to the city of Jerusalem) into a city called Ephraim and there continued with His disciples.” Ephraim means “fruitful.” Younge gives it “doubly fruitful.” It was the name that Joseph gave to his second son in Egypt, for, said he, “God hath made me fruitful in the land of my affliction.”

We hope we shall not be thought fanciful in using Joseph's words to illustrate this episode in the Lord's history. His rejection by Jerusalem and this going into Ephraim was a great crisis in His life.

Who can tell what He suffered as He turned His back upon that beloved but rebellious city? He had laboured in it, borne witness to His Father in it, given an unquestionable proof to it as to who He was by the resurrection of Lazarus, but all was in vain, "His own received Him not." He was a stranger in His own city; it had become "the land of His affliction." The rejection of Joseph by his brethren and his sor-

row in consequence was a faint foreshadowing of this.

But if Jerusalem produced no fruit for Him only hatred, was He to be without fruit? No, He could retire to Ephraim *with His disciples*. They cleave to Him and were His true Ephraim. In them He would find fruit; they were the pattern and first-fruits of that great harvest that shall fully compensate Him for all His affliction and travail. It is the name of the city, and the reason of His going there with His disciples that appears to us to be significant in a statement of Scripture that otherwise would appear to be without interest.

Now are your children holy.

"Can you give me an explanation of the statement in 1 Corinthians 7. 14, as to the children being holy? I have been asked about it and could not give an answer"—ESSEX.

IF the passage is looked at in contrast to what obtained under the law it becomes easy to understand. Marriage with a Gentile idolator was forbidden under the law (Deut. 7. 3). The Israelite who contracted such a marriage was profaned by it and the children of the union were unclean; they were uncircumcized and shut out from the privileges that belonged to the nation in its relationship with God (Ezra 10. 3). Not so under grace: the unconverted husband was sanctified by the believing wife, and vice versa. The marriage bond had not to be dissolved, it was a sacred bond and so recognised by God, and it brought the unbelieving member of it into the sphere and under an influence where the blessing was. Hence the hope that he or she might be won and saved.

And the children were not unclean but holy, not an inward condition, but an outward position of

favour. They were to be brought up in the sphere where the Holy Ghost wrought and where the grace of the Lord and the love of God were known, a totally different sphere and atmosphere in which they would have grown up if they had been shut out from it and brought up as heathen. They were to be under the Lord's authority, trained in His nurture and admonition, and they are addressed in the Epistles as being in this place of favour (Eph. 6: Col. 3). It is a most encouraging word for Christian parents for it shews the Lord's interest in the children, how He views them, and should give confidence and expectation that they would become inwardly what they are as to their outward position before God.

The Christian household has an important place in the New Testament.

MANNA—OUR FOOD.

F.W.G.

EVEN in the wilderness, the bread from heaven was given them (Israel); not only angel's food, as the common version puts it, but the "food of the mighty" (Psalm 78. 25)—the food which makes mighty. How apt we are to think that if we are once Christians, the character of our food is of no vital import. How little is realized our dependence upon the word of God—that "man shall not live by bread alone," but by that which is its true antitype, "by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God!" If only we knew better our dependence upon this, if only God's word was searched into, not to obtain more knowledge, but that which ministers to the need of the soul (and there is nothing in all God's word that does not minister to it if read aright), what mighty men would be produced! Is it not for want of this that revivals, such as are truly that, so soon decline? Through the grace of God, some ministry has laid hold upon men, some fresh truth, it may be, or some fresh power in truth known before; but then, so often comes the lack in *going on* acquiring and growing.

God has invited us, has drawn us to Himself, and is ready to give in unexhausted grace what would maintain the spiritual life in blessing and power. But we are satisfied, as it were, with the first taste, and go no further. Thus, as the manna, kept and unused, quickly grew old and became corrupt, so the truth once enjoyed, even if not lost, becomes, as it were, without sap or lifeless, inadequate to produce what once it did produce. And why? It

has been neglected, if not slighted. It has not led, as it should, to God Himself and to the growing acquaintance with Him for which it was intended. The glow and fervour that once was, passes away therefore; and we are brought under that law which we have seen again and again so to characterize that which is earthly—of revival and decay. The unsearched pages of God's word are witness against us of how we have really dishonoured that which we have professed to believe in as, all of it, the word of God. If we are content with this, decay is assured.

Again, we read of the manna that it was like wafers made with honey (Ex. 16. 31). Honey speaks of natural sweetness, which may refresh one for the moment, as in Jonathan's case, but which we can in no wise live upon. But the manna, the heavenly food, has in it a power which does not pall; not mere natural sweetness, but that true antitype of the manna, our true food, we find indeed all the sweetness of humanity, but raised to the divine. Such honey of spiritual sweetness awakens an appetite which should never languish.

But again, we find in the manna (Num. 2. 8), that the taste of it was like "fresh oil." So the power of the Spirit is in the word of God; it is *Christ* whom it ministers to us; and in it there is perpetual freshness which will resist decay. Thus even in the wilderness we already have that which will be our food in the land itself—the meat which, as the Lord says, "endureth to everlasting life."

WINGS AND WHEELS.

J. T. Mawson.

THERE are some parts of Scripture that are not easy to understand and may even seem to be of no value to us at all, but the claim that it makes for itself is that "all Scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable" and those that believe that will read every part with expectation. But what can such a passage as Ezekiel 1 teach us? It does appear at first to be a jumble of meaningless symbols. I certainly was not surprised when some time ago a young christian said to me, "Its the wings and wheels that baffle me in that chapter, whatever do they mean?"

Well, these are figures that enter into our common everyday speech. We talk about the "flight of time" and "the wheels of fortune," and sometimes life seems so complicated that we talk of "wheels within wheels," just what Ezekiel saw in his vision. And it may be that to some, time and circumstances seem so completely out of gear that they conclude that they are the victims of blind chance. But these wings and wheels that Ezekiel saw were not blind or out of control, they were attached to living creatures that had great intelligence, moreover they were under very definite control as we shall see.

To consider Ezekiel for a moment: his circumstances were not happy. He was an exile from his beloved land, a captive under a foreign tyrant, the wings and the wheels seemed all against him. We are not surprised that he noted the flight of time. Any one who has been far from home and hoping against hope for a speedy return can understand that. He is great on dates,

he tells us the year, the month and the day on which he saw his first vision and heard the voice of God speaking to him, and he keeps it up, date after date he gives, and all with a purpose. God has His calendar, and events in the histories of nations and men must fit into it. He tells us also of the revolving wheels, he tells us of the overthrow of mighty empires, the power and glory of which seemed to make them invulnerable and everlasting. And if we had not Ezekiel's secret we might well say, Of what use can all this destruction be? Surely civilization will collapse entirely, and mankind will perish from the earth, but when we come to the end of his book we find instead of chaos the most wonderful order, a perfect system of government and a great and beautiful city the name of which is "The Lord is there." The Lord in full control. The wings and wheels move to some purpose, they go here and there, and turn and turn and overturn until He shall come whose right it is and He will establish His glorious kingdom in the earth. The Lord hath spoken it and it must be so.

But how could these wings and wheels and the living creatures to which they were attached co-ordinate and work together to this great end? The answer is found in chapter 1. 26. Above the firmament and above those wheels and wings there was a throne and upon it was the likeness as *the appearance of a man*, and His voice controlled all. It was a vision of a present great reality. There is a throne, it is the Father's throne, the supreme throne in the universe, and on that throne there is a Man, and that Man is *Jesus*. "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" (Phil. 2. 9-11). He has "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" (Eph. 1. 21). The wings of time and the revolving wheels are all subject to Him, and at His word will they fly and move, and the great end in view is that the whole world of nations and men, and the wide universe of spiritual beings and forces should be brought into acknowledged and manifested subjection to Him.

When we understand this we are not disturbed though covenants are broken, and the League of Nations fails, and pacts and treaties are but as scraps of paper. The Man at God's right hand is in control and He will deal in eternal justice with all the unrighteousnesses of men. "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay, saith the Lord." He sits above the water-floods and makes the wrath of men to praise Him. No dictator on earth is master of his own destiny. The wings of time move onward and the wheels turn and turn and the men of power and pride crash to their doom, it has ever been so, and it will be so finally, for everyone that exalteth himself shall be abased. Chapter 28 of Ezekiel might well be headed, "Dictators Beware," for therein we read of the destruction of the greatest dictator that shall ever be, and the overthrow of the one

who is behind the dictators and all the pride of men, Satan himself.

But to come to the individual life of those who have bowed down to the supremacy of the Lord and have committed themselves to Him. Are any such tempted to think that their circumstances are a hopeless tangle and have they a perpetual question in their souls? Do the times seem out of joint and the wheels always turning against them, and are they inclined to think, as those who do not know God think—that they are at the mercy of uncontrolled and fickle chance? Let such consider the fact that the Saviour is on the throne, above all the wings and wheels that perplex them. It all comes out so wonderfully in Romans 8: "It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us." He has not forgotten you, nor the apparent tangles in your life. He cannot forget you, for you are graven on the palms of His hands. He is above all circumstances, and controls all the wings and wheels that have their part in your life, you may say, "We know that all things work together for good to them that love God and are the called according to His purpose." There is the sound of the revolving wheels in those words, not a harsh, discordant, jarring sound, but harmonious with the good, acceptable and perfect will of God.

Faith and hope and patience must have their place in our souls in relation to this matter, or we may be tempted to say, like faithless Israel, "My way is hid from the Lord, and my judgment is passed over from my God" (Isaiah 40. 28). But confidence in the Lord will keep us right.

"I know whom I have believed," cried Paul, when his fortune seemed to have reached their very nadir, "and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day" (2 Tim, 1. 12). William Cowper, "the stricken deer," a man of strange experiences, got a gleam of heavenly light on the whole question when he wrote his famous hymn. Everyone who knows anything of Christian hymnary knows it, but I must repeat it here for it fits in so well with my subject:

"God moves in a mysterious way
His wonders to perform;
He plants His footsteps on the sea,
And rides upon the storm.

Deep in unfathomable mines
Of never-failing skill,
He treasures up His bright designs,
And works His sovereign will.

Ye fearful saints, fresh courage take,
The clouds ye so much dread
Are big with mercy, and shall break
In blessing on your head.

Judge not the Lord by feeble sense,
But trust Him for His grace:
Behind a frowning providence
He hides a smiling face.

His purposes will ripen fast,
Unfolding every hour:
The bud may have a bitter taste,
But sweet will be the flower.

Blind unbelief is sure to err,
And scan His works in vain;
God is His own interpreter,
And He will make it plain."

It is remarkable how constantly in Ezekiel's prophecy the words occur, "They shall know that I am the Lord." The wheels and wings shall all bear witness to that, and His people, whether His ancient Israel, or the sheep of His "one flock" (John 10), shall own at last that "as for God His way is perfect," and though now there are "the sufferings of this present time, they are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us" (Rom. 8. 18). But our present confidence and peace, and quietness of heart all depend upon our seeing Jesus crowned with glory and honour on the throne, for now there is not "the appearance of a man" that Ezekiel saw but the reality of which his vision was the shadow. There is "the bow that is in the cloud in the day of rain," . . . the glory of the Lord. "And when I saw it, I fell on my face, and I heard a voice of One that spoke" (Ezekiel 1. 28), and that voice is the voice of Him who laid His right hand on John in Patmos and 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 and death" (Rev. 1. 17, 18).

The Love of God.

Love likes to give what is permanent, what God gives you will last for ever.

Love travels faster than necessity. The father reached the prodigal where he was, before the prodigal could reach the father.

The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given to us. God would endure no distance between Himself and us. His love casts all fear out of our hearts and we are at home in His presence. The nearer we draw to Him the freer and more at home we are.

TOGETHER.

W. Bramwell Dick.

HOW simple, sweet, and comforting is the language of Holy Scripture! In the solitary word at the head of this paper there is something that commands our attention, and warms our heart. Here is the dictionary definition of it:—

Together. “Gathered to one place: in the same place, time, or company: in or into union: in concert.”

Let us keep this in mind as we proceed to consider only three of the numerous occasions on which this word is used.

“CAUGHT UP TOGETHER.”

The bereaved Christian naturally turns to I Thessalonians 4. 13—18, and draws from it that comfort that it is intended to afford.

It may be that these lines are being read by some who are sorrowing for those they have dearly loved. You have sympathized with others in their grief, but only now do you realise just what it means, and your sorrow is deep and real. Yet you “sorrow not, even as others which have no hope.” You lean upon Him who knows just exactly what it means, and by these choice verses He would comfort you. In them we are let into the secret of His coming for “His own.” We learn that when that glad moment arrives, the sleeping saints will be raised; those who are alive will be changed; and we “shall be caught up TOGETHER . . . to meet the Lord in the air.” “Gathered to one place”—the air—the present dwelling place of Satan will be the scene of his crushing defeat. “In the same place, time, or company.” “The Father’s House;” “When He comes;” “With the Lord.” “In or into union.”

“TOGETHER;” in union with each other; in union with Himself. “In concert.” With one voice we shall cry:—“O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? . . . Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Corinthians 15. 56, 57). But that is not all. We pass on to I Thessalonians 5 and read verses 9 and 10:

“For God hath not appointed us to wrath but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live TOGETHER with Him.”

Could God have destined us for anything greater than this? Whether alive on earth when He comes, or whether we have been put to sleep by Him, we shall live TOGETHER. We have lived together with our loved ones on earth, and that natural link has been dissolved, we shall, when He comes, live TOGETHER and that bond never will be severed. But, best of all, we shall “live TOGETHER WITH HIM.” With Him who is everything to us; with Him whom we long to see; we shall live TOGETHER with Him. “Gathered to one place—the Father’s house (John 14. 2). “In the same place, time, or company.” “Where I am” (John 14. 3). “For ever” (1 Thessalonians 4. 17). “With Him” (1 Thessalonians 5. 10), “In or into union—that they may be one, even as We are one” (John 17. 22).

“In concert”—

“Nor I alone, Thy loved ones all, complete
In glory round Thee there with joy shall
meet,
All like Thee, for Thy glory like Thee,
Lord,
Object supreme of all, by all adored.”

To complete this chain of joy and encouragement, we venture to cull

from the Old Testament a word that will be true of Israel in a future day, but which we feel we may, without doing violence to the interpretation, take to ourselves. We refer to Isaiah 52. 8:—

*“TOGETHER
SHALL THEY SING.”*

Here is the entire verse:—

“Thy Watchman shall lift up the voice; with the voice **TOGETHER** shall they sing: for they shall see eye to eye, when the Lord shall bring again Zion.”

To-day the Lord’s dear people do not “see eye to eye.” The Lord did not propose an immediate remedy then, nor does He seem to do so now. He did however, give the heartening word to them that “in that day,” (verse 6), “they shall see eye to eye.” How it delights our hearts to know that when the Lord calls home His beloved Assembly then we all “shall see eye to eye;” and then with the voice **TOGETHER** shall we sing.” How magnificent will be His triumph! How great will be our joy! May we re-

capitulate. We

*“SHALL BE CAUGHT UP
TOGETHER,”*

“SHALL LIVE TOGETHER,”

“SHALL SING TOGETHER.”

Could our Lord say more to encourage our hearts and to set us singing now?

“Gathered to one place:” “The Father’s House.” “In the same place, time, or company:” “Where I am:” “Where they count not time by years:” “With the Lord.” “In or into union:” “**TOGETHER** shall they sing: for they shall see eye to eye.” “In concert”—

“No stain within; no foes, or snares around;

No jarring notes shall there discordant sound;

What hallelujahs will His presence raise?
What but one loud eternal burst of praise?”

May our hearts be greatly encouraged, and in whatever circumstances we are may we look onward, upward, homeward, and, in anticipation of the cloudless joy that awaits us, sing and make melody in our heart to the Lord.

The Mercy Seat.

THE first thing that Moses was told to make of the things of the Tabernacle in the wilderness, where God was to dwell with Israel, was the Mercy Seat—and not an Israelite, save the priest once a year, ever reached it (Exodus 25). It is the first thing presented to man in the gospel. “Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation (a mercy seat) through faith in His blood” (Romans 3. 25). Israel will get to it when their Messiah, the great anti-type of the mercy seat, comes again, but we have boldness to enter the Holiest now (Hebrews 10). How?

By some great effort of our own? No; but by the blood of Jesus. By His blood—precious blood—we pass into the brightest spot, the very presence of God. The very thing that was first in God’s mind in the type and never reached by a Jew is reached now by every soul believing in Christ as the propitiation, or mercy seat, set forth by God in the gospel. “Being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. What a comfort! And how great is the grace of God in the gospel!”

THE FAME OF JESUS.

James McBroom

(Matthew 12)—*continued.*

THE glory of the Son which belongs chiefly to the Gospel of John certainly has a place of importance in the Gospel of Matthew. It is the centre from which shine out the many rays of His moral and official perfections in chapter 12. On the dark background of hatred, scorn and rejection this glory comes into bold relief. The Son is here, a Man to make known the Father, the Messiah, greater than the Temple in regard to Israel; the Son of Man, Lord of the Sabbath, in relation to mankind: greater than Jonah in resurrection power, and greater than Solomon in relation to all the glories of the Kingdom.

Chapter 12 includes the features both of Mark and Luke, and if we link with it the end of chapter 11, of the Gospel of John also. Within this section there is a concentrated view of all four Gospels. The words Son of Man (verse 8), connect with Luke; My Servant (verse 18), with Mark; Son of David (verse 23), is the theme of Matthew, while chapter 11 is the subject of John. And if for a moment we anticipate chapter 13 and think of Him as the great Prophet, Revealer and King, we have a galaxy of glories before which we bow in deepest worship and praise.

The attack by the Pharisees in this chapter is because of the incident in the corn field. The Lord graciously condescends to reason with them. These Sabbath scenes bring out the state of these leaders and shew their utter moral degradation. To condemn doing good in the alleviation of suffering betrays a class whom the Lord likens to vipers; men whose moral sensibilities were

so deadened as to put the animal before a fellow man. They indeed had become like the viper which has venom like the power of hell (Gehenna) chapter 23. 33. Could hatred go further than attempt to tie the hand of God down to an ordinance, and seek to kill GóD's Son for doing good? When the Lord healed the withered hand they went out to hold a council to destroy Him. The allusion to David and the priests shews how God is cognisant of the state of things at any time and orders men's conduct in relation to the need. Compare the permission of that which was an apparent disorder in the feast of Hezekiah (2 Chronicles 29. 30). Mercy rejoices against judgment.

Next note the power of life put forth on the man with the withered hand. He is a picture of Israel who instead of the freshness of living power to serve God which the hand represents, had become withered and decayed. "Stretch forth thy hand." How could a man with a dead hand stretch it forth? The living One who said the word imparted the power and in the presence of the exasperated Pharisees the man's hand was made whole. They held a council to destroy Him, but the Lord went on with His works of mercy. They were on the line of murder, He in the way of mercy. They were mad, He was sad (Luke 6. 11. Mark 3. 5-6).

Two things mark these leaders. They are here described by the Spirit as the bruised reed and smoking flax. First they had a pretence to support the weak but when leaned upon could only wound (see Isaiah

36. 6. Ezek. 29. 6, 7). Second, a burning hatred which is powerless, but waits its time to break out into fierceness of flame (Isaiah 7. 5). This is how the Spirit designates these men in their council of murder. But see Jehovah's Servant in the moral beauty of His service. "My Beloved in Whom My soul is well pleased . . . He shall not strive nor cry; neither shall any man hear His voice in the streets. A bruised reed shall He not break, and smoking flax shall He not quench, till He send forth judgment unto victory." His heart and hands were so full of His works of mercy that all else must stand over till they are finished. Then shall He deal with those murderers in consuming judgment. Meantime His work goes on in the remnant of His people soon to break through to the Gentiles (Acts 1. 8) from whom many shall come and hope in Him (Romans 15. 12). In the midst of His glories both personal and official which mark this section this gem of moral beauty is set (13. 21) in a way that calls forth admiration as well as adoration and leads to the fullest praise.

Here then one glorious Figure towers above all else in the chapter, and from this point down to verse 37 He meets the whole power of evil. He took no notice of the charge of casting out demons in chapter 9, by the power of Beelzebub, but does so here in a way that narrows everything down to Himself and the opposing power of the devil. "He that is not with Me is against Me; and he that gathereth not with Me scattereth." The tree is either good and its fruit good or corrupt and the fruit corrupt (verse 33). The two classes could not be clearer, and in the light of christian doctrine it is the distinction between what is of

Christ and of Adam. Here the two generations are brought out: one come under judgment as having blasphemed the Holy Spirit, and another coming into view as doing the will of the Father and associating themselves with the Son, the rejected Messiah.

Mixed with the fearful state of things which was bringing down judgment and breaking the links between Him and the nation there was much of a deeply pathetic character. The marks of moral death and decay on the one hand coupled with a people whose state could only be likened to a sheep fallen into a pit; the moral insensibility of the leaders that would hinder their rescue and charge their great Benefactor with evil, and under cover consult His death. "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem . . . how often would I . . . and ye would not!" Surely blind and dumb and possessed of a devil described the nation at that moment whose true condition was seen in their leaders.

Their leaders seek a sign (verse 38), a sign of awful portent would be given. The sign in Luke 2. 12 was His birth. A "Babe wrapped in swaddling clothes lying in a manger," that had failed to affect them; here it is His death and resurrection. Jonah had come forth from the belly of hell (Sheol) a sign to the Ninevites; the Lord Jesus Christ would come forth from victory over death a Judge to this generation. In chapter 11 three cities of Galilee were contrasted with three cities of terrible notoriety. Chorazin, Bethsaida and Capernaum had left these far behind in guilt. Here the contrast is between the men of Jonah's day and "this generation." The Queen from darkest Africa and the men of Nineveh would rise up in the

judgment against these people who were rejecting the Lord of glory. There had been an external cleansing since the days when Jerusalem's sisters were Samaria and Sodom (Ezekiel 16) but now the last state was worst of all. Whatever fulfilment this passage (verse 43-45) is yet to have, and it certainly will have a terrible one, the rejection of the Son of God passes beyond all other sin.

Since the fame of the Lord is our theme a few words on the group of chapters eleven to sixteen may help to clarify the position. We who live in the full light of revelation find it difficult to visualise the position as it was before the eyes of the people at this time. Prophecy had outlined in glowing language the coming of the Messiah in glory to reign (Psalm 72 and 96-100), but it had also foretold His rejection, suffering and death. While all were ready to receive a King in splendour there were few prepared to accept the lowly homeless Stranger. A King in Solomonic splendour would have been hailed with general acclamation, but One born in a stable and coming from an obscure village was out of the question. A King with outward display might put honour on the people and deliver them from bondage, but a lowly Stranger! who could understand? Yet the Prophets had spoken of the sufferings of Christ and the glories to follow (1 Pet. 1. 11: Psalm 22: Isaiah 53). The passage from Peter links together both comings, but the church age coming in between none could understand at that time.

The presence of the Lord among His people had all nations in view for the Incarnation was really a covenant made with all the peoples (Gen. 49. 10: Zech. 11. 10). The

Lord was there in all the grace of the good Shepherd to feed His flock, His rejection by them constituted them a flock of slaughter; a dreadful slaughter which was carried out later by the Romans. He is seen in the prophet with two staves, a rod and a staff, the one called Beauty or Favour which meant protection; the other He called Bands in view of binding Israel together in blessing. All this grace was refused and in their blind infatuation they sold Him for thirty pieces of silver, the price of a slave. (Exod. 21. 32; Zech. 11. 12, 13; Matt. 26. 15.) The consequence was that He broke the staves, the whole world came under judgment as proved at the cross, and the blessing both of the Jew and the nations postponed till He comes again after the gathering in of the church out of the world.

The Lord's rejection thus made room for the turn of the dispensation, and at this point He steps out into the wider place of Son of Man, and begins to unfold a new order of things, namely, the kingdom in the mystery and the Assembly (Church) as its inner treasure, which would result from the cross and the coming of the Spirit from Christ glorified. It was not that His rejection was a surprise which caused the formulation of a new plan. No, all was foreknown, and the perversity of the people made room for God to bring about deeper things which lay behind His outer ways with Israel.

The Lord proceeds in chapter 13 to connect His labours which had seemed to be for nought and in vain in Israel with the Kingdom as now coming in. Though refused by the covenant people the kingdom would go on but in a different way. Instead of the blessing of the nations with

Israel at the head it would be a Kingdom in mystery, as having its King, the source of life, light and glory, an object of faith at the right hand of God in heaven. This leaves room for a hint as to His Assembly, in the pearl of great price, which we shall see is the innermost thought of His blessed heart. Could anything shew the perfection and beauty of God's ways like this?

Here is the secret of the permission of Messiah's rejection. The future day of glory necessitated the cross and the call of the Assembly, that company destined in the purpose of God to be the vessel in which the Son would find all His deepest joys and God would give an answer to the creation concerning the sin question and the solution of every moral question.

To continue.

The Word of God.

Be subject to the Word of God. Seek to be a practical exponent of it as you receive it. You will find that it not only searches you, but that when it has its place in your heart it greatly enriches you with its virtues.

The reading of Scriptures as a whole, as the revelation of God to men, will give you a grasp of the truth as to what He is, and this will call forth the worship of your heart in His presence. There is no fear of your becoming too full of Scripture, it will make room for itself in your life as you are faithful to it.

If you are faithful to what you read and learn of Him, God will place you in circumstances where what you have learnt will be known *practically* by you, so that what He has committed to you *verbally* will become your *verbatim* saying of Him from your own experience.

You may cheer your spirit by detached portions of His Word, and it is well to do so, but you will not acquire that breadth and volume, in the power of which you can reduce everything into its place before God, unless you in some degree possess the comprehensive view which the apprehension of Him in a *variety* of ways and places imparts. For this the Word must be studied as a whole.

Confidence.

Do not spoil the chime of the morning bells by ringing only half a peal. Do not say, "Hold Thou me up" and stop there; much less add, "but all the same I shall stumble and fall as usual." Finish the peal of God's own music, the bright words of faith that He puts into your mouth, "Hold Thou me up, and I shall be safe" (Ps. 119. 117). He is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy—that is, not your joy but His, though a joy in which you will share. Then "unto Him, the only wise God, and our Saviour be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen" (Jude 24. 25).

“HE FOLLOWETH NOT US.”

A. J. Pollock.

(Mark 9. 38—40).

THE trouble was that the “us” was spelt in capital letters, John told the Master, “We forbad him, because he followeth not US.”

Whom did John forbid? A man, who in the name of the Lord was casting out devils. Anyhow there was POWER with this man, and his appeal to the name of the Lord was answered.

The wrong of the situation was that John was trying to prevent a man from doing good, which he himself was powerless to do. In the same chapter we read that one of the multitude brought to the disciples a demon-possessed son, a piteous spectacle. The poor father in distress said to the Lord, “I spake to Thy disciples that they should cast him out; and they could not” (Mark 9. 18), and John was among their number. They were powerless.

They followed the Lord. In that they were right and happy. But there was a lack. What was it? The disciples asked the Lord to explain why they could not cast out the demon. Our Lord put his finger on the spot. He replied, “This kind can come forth by nothing, but by prayer and fasting” (verse 29). Thus our Lord indicated the reason for the lack of power. These disciples followed the right Person, but they lacked *spiritual condition*. The man they sought to forbid did not follow with them, but there must have been spiritual condition with him, for we read, “But Jesus said, Forbid him not: for there is no man which shall do a miracle in My name, that can lightly speak evil of Me. For he that is not against us is on our part” (verses 39, 40). Our Lord told John, this man whom you forbade is “FOR US” (Luke 9. 50).

Just before this incident we read that the disciples had disputed by the way. The Lord asked them what the dispute was about. He did not ask for information for He knew everything. He asked so that they might realize the shame of what they had done. In *His* presence they were speechless. They were in the presence of the Lord of glory, who had veiled His divine glory and stooped down into lowly circumstances, and had just told them that the Son of man should be killed and rise the third day, and yet they disputed about who should be greatest. The US was spelt in capital letters, and that meant each one would fain change the US into a great capital I. It is of that stuff the Pope of Rome is made. It produced Diotrophes in the very lifetime of the apostle John and the Lord used John’s pen to warn us against such a spirit; it is natural to every one.

The Apostle Paul is a great contrast to this. He tells us of brethren who took advantage of his being in bonds to preach out of contention, supposing this would add affliction to him in his imprisonment. What was his attitude to this? Such conduct on the part of these men was monstrous. Should we be surprised if the Apostle were filled with anger at their conduct and besought heaven to confound them? How then did the Apostle act? We read, “What then? notwithstanding, every way, whether in pretence, or in truth Christ is preached; and I therefore do rejoice, yea and will rejoice” (Philippians 1. 18). There was no, “We forbad him, because he followeth not US.” It was no mere academic rejoicing. No mere lip rejoicing. It was real, genuine joy that

Christ was preached. He sorrowed over the motive that actuated these men, but rejoiced that the gospel was preached.

Our Lord did not suggest that John and the rest of the disciples should throw in their lot with this man that was performing miracles in Christ's name, which they were unable themselves to do. They were following the Lord. They continued to do so.

But what about *spiritual condition*. That would be marked by prayer and fasting. Do we prefer a Bible reading to a prayer meeting? If we do, it may well lead to searching of heart. It is likewise easy to preach in a hall set apart for the convenience of those who have fellowship one with another, but how do we fare when we really meet human need? Can we grip the man in the street with the power of the word? We need to ask these questions and put them to our own souls and demand a mercilessly honest answer!

PRAYER! Earnest supplicating prayer! Prayer in the Spirit. That is what is needed.

In 1 Timothy 2. 1-6 we are exhorted "*first of all*" not only to *pray* for all men, but to *supplicate*.

"Pray without ceasing" (1 Thessalonians 5. 17), exhorts the Apostle Paul. "Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints; and for me, that utterance

may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth to make known the mystery of the gospel," wrote Paul to the Ephesian saints (Ephesians 6. 18, 19).

"*Prayer and—FASTING!*" What does fasting mean? For practical purposes, does it not mean the abstaining from things lawful in themselves but not expedient as the soul realizes the true presence of God, and what suits Him, and what are the needs of His work? Was not Paul himself a good example of this? He had power to "lead about a sister, a wife" (1 Corinthians 9. 5), but he refrained for the gospel's sake. Do not missionaries, far away from home ties, surely lawful in themselves, sever themselves from ease, comfort, companionship and the fellowship of their brethren in home lands, in order to carry the gospel to the heathen? I knew one young brother who fasted from a fascinating hobby in order to give the money and time saved thereby to the Lord.

Fasting must be spontaneous to be acceptable to God. We see legal fasting behind monastery and nunnery walls that must be in many, many cases abhorrent to God, especially if those who practice it imagine they are winning their way to heaven thereby.

May we all be exercised about *spiritual condition*, and recognize it gladly in others, and, it may be, its absence in ourselves, so that powerlessness may be rectified.

Prayer.

There is a feeling that when a man is praying he is doing nothing, and this feeling makes us give undue importance to work, sometimes even to hurrying over or even neglect of prayer.

THE HEAD STONE OF THE CORNER. F. B. Hole

(Psalms 114—118).

THESE five Psalms form a distinct group by themselves, in which we are introduced prophetically to the coming day, in which the once rejected Christ is to be glorified and Israel His people are to be delivered. The climax of the story is reached in Psalm 118, but before we contemplate it let us note the steps leading up to it as unfolded in the four preceding Psalms.

In Psalm 114 *faith looks back and sees in the deliverance of Israel from Egypt the power of the presence of God.* The same power was to be seen too in Israel's crossing of the Jordan when they entered the Land. Other eyes may have gazed upon these stirring scenes and seen nothing but natural phenomena and remarkable coincidences; just as modern scepticism looks back and sees nothing more than that, if indeed they admit that anything happened at all. Blind unbelief is sure to err and scan God's works in vain, as the poet has told us. Even when it is driven into a corner and forced to admit that something *did* happen, it cannot for one moment discern what lay behind the something. We know by faith. It was the presence and power of God.

In Psalm 115 *faith again speaks and claims that the God who did act in this fashion in the bygone day is the living God to-day.* The idols of the heathen are utter vanity, and their folly is only equalled by that of the men who make them and then trust in them. Our God is in the heavens, and He still acts as He pleases. He is therefore worthy of all confidence, and the Psalmist calls upon Israel, the house of Aaron, and all those that fear the Lord to trust

Him as their help and shield. The closing verses of the Psalm are the confident language of faith. Without a doubt God will intervene and bless His people and all who trust in Him.

Psalm 116 *voices the sentiments of faith, just as God's fresh deliverance is being experienced.* Still viewing the Psalms from the prophetic standpoint, we may see in verse 3 an allusion to the sorrows of the great tribulation, when the godly had been brought down to the very gates of death and "hell," or "*Sheol.*" Looking back on that terrible hour, the confession has to be made, "I was greatly afflicted: I said in my haste, [i.e., alarm or agitation] All men are liars" (verses 10, 11). Now however, the speaker is delivered from death, from tears, from falling (verse 8).

Many a saint who enters the great tribulation will not be delivered, as is made very plain in the Book of Revelation. Verse 15 of our Psalm fits in with this. The death of those who fall before the persecuting power of Satan, who is the energizer of the "beasts," will be very precious in the sight of the Lord; and He will demonstrate this to be so by the special resurrection, of which Revelation 20. 4 speaks. Then, together with those who have been delivered and brought through the tribulation, there will be the sacrifice of thanksgiving in the courts of the Lord's house in the midst of Jerusalem, as is shown at the end of the Psalm.

Faith, however, looks on to the land of the living before it is reached, and that, whether it is to be reached by deliverance from death

or by resurrection. "I believed, therefore have I spoken," is the language of faith. To this the Apostle Paul referred in 2 Corinthians 4. 13, saying, "We having the same spirit of faith." Death rolled in upon his spirit and also threatened his body, but in faith he had his eye upon the resurrection world and hence was able to boldly testify, just as the Psalmist did in his day, and as those, to whom the Psalm prophetically refers, will testify in a day to come.

Faith can speak before the Divine intervention has materialized and say with confidence, "I will walk before the Lord in the land of the living." This is what we may do to-day. *Are we doing it?*

Psalm 117 is a very short one, but it strikes a very definite note of praise. It also contains two very striking thoughts. The first is that the nations and peoples are called upon to praise the Lord because of His mercy to "us," that is, to Israel. The reason for this is expounded to us in Romans 11. 12—15. The receiving of them back into the favour of God will be as "life from the dead," as is indicated also in the first two verses of Psalm 67. It will mean an outpouring of blessing which will reach out to every people, and hence all the nations will heartily join in praising God for His mercy to Israel.

The second thought of much importance is the way that mercy and truth are linked together in the second verse. Neither mercy at the expense of truth, nor truth at the expense of mercy, would be for the glory of God and the blessing of men. In the coming day when God brings to fruition all His purposes concerning Israel the mercy of God toward them will be seen to be great

indeed, and at the same time His truth will be established for ever. The foundation of all this has already been laid in the cross of Christ, and hence the same thing is true when the gospel reaches us to-day.

Psalm 118 picks up this theme and shows in a detailed way how the mercy will be displayed and how the truth will be established. In verses 2-4, the same three classes appear that we had in Psalm 115. "Israel" is of course the whole nation—the born-again nation that will enter into millennial blessedness. "The house of Aaron" is the priestly family, brought into special nearness to God. "Them that fear the Lord" is a description that would include the godly from among the Gentiles. In Psalm 115 they were all bidden to trust in the Lord who proves Himself to be a help and a shield. Here, in the light of what He has accomplished—as recounted in the rest of the Psalm—they are to praise Him and say that His mercy endureth for ever.

Three verses follow (5-7) in which the Lord's intervention on behalf of His people is declared. The past tense is used but this is quite a common feature in prophecy, since the accomplishment of what is declared is so certain that there is nothing incongruous in speaking of it as already done.

The word that is translated "distress" in verse 5 is, we are told, akin to the word "siege." Without a doubt Israel's distress is going to reach a climax during the siege of which Zechariah 14. 2 speaks, and it will be just at that critical moment that the Lord's intervention on their behalf will take place, as the next verse shows. The answer of the Lord to their cry will result in their

being brought into a large place and the destruction of their foes, as is indicated in verse 7 of our Psalm. As a result they will indeed be able to say, "The Lord is on my side; I will not fear: what can man do unto me?"

Verses 8 and 9 state the conclusion which they reach. Their confidence in man, even in princes, is broken. They recognize it is better to trust in the Lord. It has been stated that verse 8 is the middle verse of the Bible. If so, it is very appropriate. It certainly states one of the greatest facts that the Bible inculcates: the central fact upon which everything for us turns. How quickly do we put confidence in man; how slowly do we trust in the Lord! Yet to cease from man, and to trust in God is that which Israel has to learn. *And we have to learn it too.*

Verses 10-12 seem to link on with verse 7. All nations will indeed compass Jerusalem about when the day of the Lord is come: Zechariah 14. 2 expressly states this, as it also states that they do so to their destruction. This will be the moment when Jehovah appears for the deliverance of His people and the overthrow of their adversaries, and His feet shall stand in that day on the Mount of Olives. The feet that left the Mount of Olives in the vicinity of Bethany were the feet of Jehovah; and the feet of Jehovah, that yet will stand on that Mount, will be the feet of the glorified Jesus.

Thrice do we get the words, "In the Name of the Lord will I destroy them," or more literally, as the margin shows, "I cut them off," for still the past tense is employed in its prophetic significance. That the Psalmist should say, "I cut them off," is remarkable; but be it noted that he does it "in the Name of the Lord,"

which signifies that the power in which the thing is done is the Lord's, and not his own. This is fully acknowledged in verses 13-17. It is the right hand of the Lord that has achieved the victory, and the right hand of Jehovah is Christ. The Son of Man, made strong for Jehovah, is "the Man of Thy right hand" (Psa. 80. 17). Hence instead of the godly being brought down to death, they live and declare the works of the Lord.

So much for the great deliverance to be wrought in the last days, which will incite Israel to give thanks to the Lord, saying that His mercy endureth for ever.

Now notice another thing. In all these great events *the eye of faith can penetrate below the surface*. Put together the three sentences:—"All nations compassed me about" (ver. 10). "Thou hast thrust sore at me that I might fall" (ver. 13). "The Lord hath chastened me sore" (ver. 18). The first of these deals with that which will be public: all men will know when Jerusalem is the great bone of contention for all nations. The next deals with that which may not be so public. There is an adversary of a very special sort whose one object is to overthrow the people of God, just because they are the people through whom the Divine purpose for the earth is to be established. Satan is that adversary, though perhaps we may understand the "Thou" as referring to the anti-christian power through which he would crush them; were it not for the fact that the Lord helps them, and becomes their salvation, just as He did when He brought their forefathers out of Egypt.

Only faith however perceives the third thing. The chastening of God

was in all this. He becomes their salvation, but only after His dealings in chastisement have had their full effect, leading to the tremendous national repentance predicted in Zechariah 12. 9—14. God will deliver His people, but only after His chastening has achieved the happy end that it had in view.

All this is very instructive, for again and again do things work in just this way. In the remote past it was so with Job. There were the agents of his sorrows, quite open to public view—the Sabeans, the Chaldeans, the fire, the whirlwind. But behind these lay the sinister power of Satan, thrusting hard at him. Again, behind even this lay the chastening hand of God. Job's faith and patience was seen in the fact that he looked not at the third, or even at the second, cause. *He looked straight through to God*, and accepted all as from His hand. It is just the same in the present for ourselves. When trouble sweeps in upon us we are utterly distracted and often provoked if we look to second or third causes. *If we bow beneath the hand of God we are greatly blessed.*

The last part of the Psalm (verses 19—29) furnishes us with details as to the way in which the millennial blessedness is going to be secured. In the first place righteousness is emphasized (verses 19—21). In that glad epoch righteousness is going to reign; so the gate of entrance to it must of necessity be a gate of righteousness, and they who enter through it must be righteous. In the succeeding verses we find how the gates of righteousness are opened. The prophecy falls quite naturally under four heads—"The stone;" "The day;" "He that cometh;" "The sacrifice."

Christ, at His first advent, was the stone which the builders refused. This is put beyond all question by repeated quotations and allusions in the New Testament. When He arrived on the scene just over nineteen centuries ago men were very busy building their empires, their schemes, religious and otherwise. Had He been subservient to their ideas they might have been glad to work Him into their building, that He might adorn it by His supernatural powers. However, they discovered Him to be a Stone of such a shape and texture that they were unable to fit Him in anyhow or anywhere. They refused Him. *Now He returns in glory to be the Head-stone of the building which is the handiwork not of men but of God.* It will indeed be the Lord's doing, and we can understand how marvellous it will be in the eyes of those who at last see the truth, but who until lately looked upon Him as One rightly rejected.

In His glorious second advent He will be the stone cut out without hands, of Nebuchadnezzar's vision. He will fall with terrible and incredible velocity upon the proud kingdoms of men, and crush them beyond all recognition. The great winds of heaven will blow away the debris like chaff from the threshing-floor. Then the once-rejected Stone—the blessed Lord Jesus—will inaugurate a new order of things, of which He will be both the Foundation and the controlling Head.

Before proceeding with our Psalm let us pause to note that to-day—before the second advent—the same thing is true in principle in connection with the church, as Ephesians 2. 10—22 shows. First, certain things are abolished. The "enmity" and also "the law of commandments contained in ordinances" are

gone. Indeed both Jew and Gentile, in their characters as Jews and Gentiles, are gone. What is of God's workmanship, "one new man," remains. There is the new building, God's building, and of this "Jesus Christ Himself" is "the chief corner stone." Our business is to keep out in practice what God has put out, and to promote in practice what God is building. No small task this, and one to send us to our knees, even as it sent Paul there—see Ephesians 1. 16—20, and 3. 14—21.

When the once rejected Stone is established as the Head, *a new day will be inaugurated*. Redeemed men will say with exultation, "This is the day which the Lord hath made," and what a day of glory and blessing it will be! To-day we look round upon a torn and distracted world. Men's hearts fail them for fear, and Scripture speaks in no uncertain terms of what is coming upon the earth. We sigh and say, This is the day which man has made. The very term, "man's day," is used in 1 Corinthians 4. 3, though translated "man's judgment." Man's day is the day in which man insists on putting himself into the centre and forefront of the picture. It has been one long-drawn-out nightmare, and special horrors are predicted as marking its close when human iniquity reaches its climax. Man's day will be quenched in the night of judgment.

When Christ steps into the centre and forefront of the picture, the day which the Lord hath made will arrive. It will be a day of salvation and prosperity. Men will rejoice and be glad in it. It even makes us glad to contemplate it before it dawns.

Everything centres in a Person, and in verse 26 we are not allowed

to forget this. When the Psalm was written "the stone" was quite impersonal, and centuries had to pass before the significance of the word became quite clear. But no centuries had to roll away before it was revealed that blessing for men was bound up with the advent of *a Person who would come in the Name of the Lord*. He would be Jehovah's Representative. Ultimately we discover Him to be the Son, who is Jehovah, equally with the Father.

When the Lord Jesus entered Jerusalem riding upon the colt of an ass, the multitudes cried, "Blessed is He that cometh in the Name of the Lord," (Matt. 21. 9). But that was the result of a sudden gust of enthusiasm, and had no permanent significance, as the sequel showed. Within a week He was crucified. The Lord knew the worthlessness of their excited cry, and hence a little later He said, "Ye shall not see Me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is He that cometh in the Name of the Lord" (Matt. 23. 39). The Psalm speaks of the moment when they will see Him again, and utter the cry of welcome with full truth and sincerity.

Lastly we come to *the sacrifice, in the light of which God is known*. At first sight it seems remarkable that we should come to this at the end and not at the beginning. The Psalm deals with His second coming, and His sacrifice was accomplished at His first coming. Yes, but it is only at His second coming that Israel will understand it. Then, and not till then, will it burst upon them as light from heaven; and what sacrifices there are in the millennial age will be bound to the altar as simple memorials of the great Sacrifice, that once and for ever was offered at Calvary.

In coming to sacrifice at the finish, we come to that which lies at the foundation of all. If He who was the refused Stone had not become the Sacrifice, He had never become the Head of the corner, nor would there dawn the day which the Lord hath made. When men transfixed Him to the Roman gibbet, He turned His cross into an altar. The cords that held Him there were the cords of a LOVE that was both divine and invincible.

God has indeed showed us light, for we have the knowledge of what His sacrifice has accomplished. In

the light of that we are waiting for His coming which will usher in the day which the Lord hath made. Then the once rejected Stone, our adorable Lord Jesus, will stand forth in His glory.

We need not wait for that day to dawn in order to praise Him. To-day we can say,

“Thou art my God, and I will praise Thee: Thou art my God, I will exalt Thee. O give thanks unto the Lord; for He is good: for His mercy endureth for ever.”

A Two-fold Lack.

THERE is a twofold lack in many Christian souls: one is they do not rest in simple faith in *Christ risen from the dead*, the other which is a consequence of this, they do not enjoy the gift of the Holy Ghost. Many think they have the Holy Ghost merely as an influence; they have the idea of being converted by the Spirit of God, but they do not believe that He has taken up His abode in them. If you have believed the gospel of your salvation—the gospel which tells of a risen and glori-

fied Christ, who suffered and died upon the cross for your sins—you have been sealed by the Holy Ghost, He dwells in you, He is in you as really as your heart is in you. Even more so, for your heart may cease to beat, but you can never lose the Holy Ghost. You are sealed unto the day of redemption (Eph. 4. 30) and by reason of His presence in you, your mortal body will yet be quickened. God will quicken your mortal body because of His Spirit that dwelleth in you (Romans 8. 11).

Three Great Works of Grace.

I WILL tell you what the gospel does for you. First, by the death and resurrection of Christ who died for you, you are delivered from the judgment which was your just due, and which rested upon you. Second, the Holy Spirit has been sent down from your glorified Saviour to dwell in you, to deliver you from the domination of sin and the flesh and be the power of your new life. Third, the Holy Ghost leads you even now to the place where

Christ is, and assures you that it is your place. By His power and leading you are enabled to set your affections on things above where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God; and as He takes of the things of Christ and shews them to you, you know that those things surpass in their blessedness, the best that the world could give. The magnificence of the threefold blessing should arrest your heart.

BLOOD AND WATER.

T. Oliver

"One of the soldiers with a spear pierced His side and forthwith came there out blood and water" (John 19. 34).

"This is He who came by water and blood, Jesus Christ!" (1 John 5. 6).

BLOOD and water are frequently mentioned in the typology of the books of Moses, because these were essential in the cleansing of those who essayed to draw near to God.

In Exodus, judgment and blessing are evinced in both ideas. In the Passover (Ex. 12) the blood of the lamb the test of judgments which fell on the Egyptians proved the protection for the Israelites. In the Red Sea (Ex. 14) the water which destroyed the Egyptian host was the means of salvation to Israel. In Leviticus, the idea of atonement was connected with the blood and cleansing with water. Thus in this connection there were two prominent Tabernacle vessels made of brass, viz., (1) the Brazen Altar for the burnt offering (2) the Brazen Laver placed between the Altar of Burnt Offering and the door of entrance to the sanctuary proper. Both pieces of furniture were in the court of the tabernacle.

At the altar was the only place in the camp of Israel appointed for the shedding of blood. There the guilt of the offerer was transferred typically to the sacrifice, whilst the virtue of the sacrifice was reckoned to the offerer.

In the New Testament, the cross of Christ corresponds to that altar. However, Christ is the sacrifice, the altar and the priest combined in one. He is the propitiation or atonement for our sins. It is interesting to observe that the Brazen Altar had a carved horn on each of its four corners indicating the four points, (North, South, East and West), and

thus the comprehensive character of the efficacy of the blood offered upon the altar. The types of the confession of identification of the offerer with the victim through the laying of his hands thereon, the killing of the animal, the fire burning its parts, were absolutely fulfilled in the great Substitution at Calvary.

The Brazen Laver was for Aaron and his sons for washing their hands and feet with water (Ex. 30. 18, 19). Otherwise they were not fit to perform their priestly functions in the tabernacle. At their consecration the priests were cleansed by bathing in water. That operation was never repeated, and corresponds to the New Testament thought of the washing of regeneration!

They were also sanctified by the blood of the Lamb of consecration, but subsequently they had to observe the washing of hands and feet with meticulous care.

The fulfilment of the type of the Laver is in the application of the Word of God to the heart by faith. The precious blood of Christ was shed once for all. Its efficacy for ever remains (Heb. 10. 10: I John 1. 7). The righteous and holy claims of God have been completely satisfied so that God is now revealed as One who justifies the ungodly (Rom. 4. 5). The blood has made peace with God (Rom. 5. 1, 9), and believers are now reconciled (Col. 1. 21). The blood has made propitiation and sin is put away from under the eye of God.

The water corresponds to the cleansing power of the death of

Christ applied to the one who gets the good of the salvation effected by the sacrifice. It is applied in power to the believer at conversion by the Holy Spirit using the Word of God to bring him in accordance with the shed blood. In effect the Word of God removes sin from the believer's sight by causing him to see what the blood has done in God's view. The blood has made atonement and the water gives the believer to know that truth!

The Blood is mentioned first in the order of the sentence, in the Gospel, because there the prime interest is from God's side, therefore the blood must come first. While in the Epistle the matter is viewed more from our side and our appropriation of the truth, therefore the water comes first. The Word of God cleanses our hearts from the hatred which is natural to man in his attitude towards God.

The antecedent of the passage to that which we have quoted from the Gospel states that the Jews wished to hasten death by breaking the legs of the crucified, so that the bodies might not be hanging on the Pass-over day. The soldiers broke the legs of the malefactors but when they

came to Jesus they found He was already dead. A soldier expressing the brutality of the human heart drove his spear into the side of the dead Saviour, and forthwith came out God's answer to man's wantonness, in the blood and water indicating the love of God. So that there was blessing even for the cruel soldier if he cared to avail himself of the provision. The blood would set him free from his sins in the sight of God, and the water would cleanse him internally from the hatred which led him to perpetrate the cruel deed.

In Scripture, washing is always with water. The idea of washing in blood springs from analogy with Pagan practice. In Rev. 1. 5, the word translated "washing" really means "to be set free from" or "loosed from". Elsewhere the idea so conveyed is due to misconstruction of the sentences. Perhaps such theology has been moulded by Cowper's misconception of a "fountain filled with blood," founded on Zechariah 13. 1, which obviously refers to a fountain of water! "The blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, cleanseth us from all sin," does not suggest renewal of application, but permanence of its efficacy.

Reality in Prayer.

A mere formalist can always pray so as to please himself. What has he to do but open his book and read the prescribed words, or bow his knee and repeat such phrases as suggest themselves to his memory or fancy? Like the Tartarian praying machine, give but the wind and the wheel and the business is fully arranged. So much knee bending and talking, and the prayer is done. But the living child of God is different, there is an urge in his soul that makes him cast away all formality, even then his prayers do not please him, his standard is ever higher than his attainment. He wonders that God hears him, though he knows that He does for Christ's sake. He forgets himself in the wonder of that condescending grace that such as he should be permitted to have an audience with God, and that such poor prayers as his should be heard and answered.

THE MINISTRY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT.

James Green.

(2 Cor. 3).

THE Apostle Paul had a double ministry committed to him. He was made an able minister of the new testament (2 Cor. 3. 6); besides which there was given to him the ministry of reconciliation (2 Cor. 5. 18). Both these ministries have a present application in the Spirit, whilst in a coming day for Israel the New Testament will be for them an established reality by the revealed presence of the Lord on earth; and reconciliation will be made complete in a new heaven and a new earth.

The word "*diatheke*" has a double meaning; 1, a disposition of property by a will or testament: 2, a convention or arrangement between two parties, a covenant. Usually in the case of a covenant or contract there are certain terms to be fulfilled and penalties attached in case of breach of the conditions specified. On the other hand, in the case of a testament the act of one party only is concerned, those to whom the act becomes effectual being simply receivers. In respect of a covenant the death of either party dissolves the bond; in contrast to this a testament only becomes operative on the death of the testator, being of no strength at all until this has taken place. Thus the covenant of Sinai under which Israel was bound, which stood in the handwriting of ordinances, has been blotted out, being nailed to the cross of Him who had the right to enforce it; the same death giving effect to the new testament, for the blood of Jesus is that which signifies the death of the testator.

A covenant was made with Noah concerning the government of the

earth (Gen. 9), a covenant at Sinai in respect of Israel's relation to Jehovah. Another was made in the plains of Moab in regard to the tenure of Canaan. To each of these conditions and penalties were attached (Ex. 19: Lev. 26. 14-39: Deut. 29 and 30). In Lev. 26. 42 Jehovah reverts to a former covenant made with Abraham, which had more the character of a testament, for Jehovah was the sole contracting party, and moreover ratified it by Himself passing between the parts of the offered sacrifice, typically a pathway of death (Gen. 15). The law is called the first covenant and God makes no second, but calling the first old, institutes that which is new by a testament which is the disposition of His will and which will take effect for the house of Judah and the house of Israel in the last days. But inasmuch as the cross is the witness of the death of the testator, and that He has risen from the dead to be the executor of His own testament, the spirit of it becomes the joy of those who by faith anticipate that which shall be the portion of Israel when their hearts shall turn to the Lord. Christ is the Spirit of the New Testament and its provisions are effectual for all, Jew or Gentile, who believe on Him, while Israel as a nation is as yet blind to their blessing.

These terms will be found in Jer. 31. 33, 34: Heb. 8. 10—12. They are:

1. Divine writing in the heart.
2. Divine relationship.
3. Divine knowledge.
4. Divine forgiveness.

These things are the portion of believers in our Lord Jesus Christ in the power of the Spirit, and of these Paul was made an able minister, but in no sense do they form a contract between God and man, with which the liability of breach is connected. They are God's disposition without any condition to all whose faith rests in the blood of the New Testament.

It is for that the phrase, "being in covenant relationship with God" is misleading, for it suggests the possibility of breach of conditions. In 2 Cor. 3 Paul contrasts the letter of the law, with the Spirit of the New Testament. The former written and engraven in stone, rigid on God's part, and unable to produce response on the part of the people; and the later writing the love of God in fleshy tables of the heart, and producing responsive affection, by a sufficiency which is wholly of God. The first covenant was a ministration of death and condemnation and was never regarded by God as having abiding permanence. The New Testament is an abiding ministration of life and righteousness, producing an answering result in the heart, in the conscious peace of a righteous standing established by God. Nevertheless says the apostle the first covenant had a glory belonging to it, though it was but a passing one, and if this were so, how much more does the New Testament exceed in glory. His allusion is to the coming down of Moses from the mount on the second occasion (Ex. 34. 29-45).

The first time no glory was borne witness to, only the terrors of the broken law. The second time glory was seen shining in the face of Moses, for now the provision of

grace had placed the law within an ark of wood (Deut. 10. 1-5). This being typical of the mediator of a better testament who would bring into effect the goodness of God which had passed before Moses, and the name made known to him of the Lord God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering and abundant in mercy and truth (Ex. 34. 6, 7). From that time onward the covenant of Sinai was mingled with mercy, and the sacrifices which were ordained, after the ark was placed in the tabernacle, in view of Christ's coming, availed for the passing over of sins, through the forbearance of God, until they were finally removed by the cross of Christ (Rom. 3. 25). It was the glory of grace by which the law was tempered, which caused the face of Moses to shine so brilliantly that when Aaron and the people saw it, they were afraid to come nigh him, until he called them to talk with him. Still this glory was not a permanent condition, it was to be done away to make room for the more excellent glory that abides. For this reason Moses put a veil over his face, that the children should not (2 Cor. 3. 13, R.V. and N.T.) look to the end of that which is abolished. In other words that they should not see the glory fading, for they were still held under the covenant of law, which they might have thought cancelled, if they had seen the end of the shining in the face of the Mediator.

Thus they saw his face, and when he had done speaking with them, he veiled his face until he went to speak with God. The insertion of the the word "till" in Exod. 34. 33 (omitted by R. V.: N.T.: and Sept.) has given rise to the thought that Moses veiled his face whilst speaking to the people because it was too bright for them to see, but the reverse is the case, for

when he had ceased speaking with them all that the Lord had given him, he veiled his face so that they should not see the glory passing, and so remained until he went in to speak with Jehovah in whose presence he removed it.

The veil has been done away in Christ, and there is no fading glory for those who fix their gaze upon the glory of the Lord as Mediator of the New Testament. He has passed through death, ascended on high, and the glory of the full revelation of God in grace, is shining in His face. A glory that knows no change, no fading, and unlike the shining of the face of Moses, it has the power of conformity, for our Mediator is a life giving Spirit, and we have the Spirit of the glorified Man who is the image of God. It is a surpassing glory, abounding in glory, and having the Spirit we have liberty to look on the glory of the Lord and in result become transfigured in answering character to the image we behold.

Just as a veil covered the face of Moses, hiding from Israel the fact that the glory of the first covenant was fading; so the same veil remains untaken away for them in the reading of the old covenant. Hence the Jew does not see therein the glory of Christ set forth, nor does he know that its validity as a covenant between God and man is over, and that as a basis of approach to, and intercourse with God, its principle of "Do this and live" has utterly passed away. Still after the lapse of many

centuries the book which tells them if they understand it, that the Mosaic dispensation was destined to pass away, is like Moses at Sinai, veiled; although read to them every Sabbath. Or rather on the reader's heart a veil lies, for the hindrance is in themselves.

Many of the Gentiles to whom Paul preached had never seen the surpassing glory of the New Testament, and since the truth was plainly set before them, the hindrance to sight was not in the word, but in the hearts of those who did not believe it. By not seeing they proved themselves incapable of seeing. Such blindness was so extraordinary that it must have been inflicted, and by who else could this be done than by the enemy of God and man? Nothing could be more Satanic than to blind men's eyes to the light of grace and love which shines in the face of Jesus Christ; nor can ought equal the Divine power which opens blind eyes to the shining of this glory. This gracious work is carried on through the preaching of the gospel by those who like Paul are sent to open blind eyes that men may turn from darkness to light and be brought from the authority of Satan unto God. In the ministry of the New Testament everything is provided necessary to bring the heart into abiding relationship with God, so that every question that could occasion distance having been removed, the way might be open for the heart of God to unfold itself in the ministry of reconciliation.

The Son of man had power on earth to forgive sins, but He needed no forgiveness Himself.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

“At Eventime shall be Light.”

“What do you consider is the correct interpretation of Zechariah 14. 6, 7, where we read, “It shall be a day known to the Lord not day nor night etc.” Does it imply that there shall be a light other than that of the sun and moon? We read that “the nations shall walk in the light of the heavenly city” (Rev. 21), and “The sun shall be no more thy light by day, but the Lord shall be thine everlasting light” (Isa. 60)—FIFESHIRE.

THE passage must be interpreted in its setting. It describes the coming of the Lord in judgment upon the enemies of His people and of Jerusalem, a day in which “the sun shall be turned into darkness and the moon into blood” (Joel 3. 31). But it seems to have a figurative meaning also. It will be a day of searching of all hearts, which the inhabitants of Jerusalem will not escape. No man will be able to deceive himself into believing that the things that are happening are the ordinary vicissitudes of life as represented by night and day—that to-day may be dark but to-morrow will bring relief. All natural hope will be cut off. It will be the day of the Lord’s intervention in world-affairs, and like no other

day that ever was.

But when the evening time has been reached and all human hope has fled, and the end of all things seems to have come, Israel will turn wholly to the Lord and He will give them light, He will reveal Himself in mercy, and such passages as Isaiah 60 will be fulfilled for them. The next verse speaks of living waters flowing out from Jerusalem; light and life are continually joined in Scripture, they are so here. The revelation of God which is *light* to men in their darkness imparts *life* for all those who receive it, and they in turn become channels of blessing to others (see John 7. 38).

Believing in the Heart.

“What does believing in the heart mean, and what is confessing with the mouth?” (Romans. 10. 9).—STAFF.

TO believe in the heart is to have a heart interest in the matter. It is not the mere acceptance of a fact, but the realisation that that fact vitally affects me, it is something in regard to which I am no longer indifferent. In this instance it is believing in the heart that God hath raised Jesus from the dead. How does that affect me? It will not affect me at all if I do not first see that He was my substitute in judgment and death—“He was delivered

for my offences.” But if I realize that my guilt made me subject to the judgment of God, and that in love to my soul Jesus went down beneath that judgment for me, then I shall want to know what the result of that is; I am deeply concerned about it, for my own sake and for His. Was He able to bear the judgment, to make a full atonement, and satisfy the claims of justice against me? The answer is, “God hath raised Him from the dead.” That appeals

to my heart ; it is God's good news to me. I believe it with my heart ; it is what I wanted to know ; nothing else could answer the deep anxiety of my heart. " He was raised again for my justification " and believing it, I have peace with God. It means for me that the sacrifice was enough, the price of my redemption has been paid, God is satisfied and I rejoice.

" With the heart man believeth unto righteousness." An evil heart of unbelief led Adam and all his progeny into all unrighteousness and sin, and it can only be by faith in God that any man is accounted righteous. Sin came in when man questioned the goodness and the Word of God at the suggestion of the devil, righteousness is imputed when a man turns from his distrust in God to believe in Him, and to accept His word. His word to us through His chosen witnesses, the Holy Ghost-inspired Apostles, is that He has raised up Jesus from the dead, who died for our sins according to the Scriptures. We believe in God who did this and are justified by our faith (Romans 4. 24, 25; 5. 1).

To confess with the mouth that Jesus is Lord, is to be publicly owning the Lordship of Jesus. Out of the

fulness of the heart the mouth speaks. It completes the answer in me to what God has declared in the gospel. God has raised up Jesus and made Him Lord of all, He has decreed that every tongue shall confess Him. I own the rightness of this, I open my heart to receive the good news of God's salvation, and I open my mouth to confess the Lord's rights over me, I bow to His claims over me. The heart and the mouth are as one in this, the inward and the outward join in this subjection to the will of God.

The believing heart puts me right with God, the confessing mouth puts me right before men. Confessing the Lord, owning His rightful sway over me gives me the right to depend upon His grace and power to maintain me in faithfulness to Him in the face of the world and of the devil's power. This is not salvation from judgment to come only, of course, all who believe have that, it is salvation from the power of the devil, and from the yoke of sin and the snares of the world. The confessor of Jesus as Lord is in the kingdom of God, which is "righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Ghost" (Romans 14. 17). All in that kingdom are kept by the power of God.

Fruit.

Fruit is what is agreeable to God. Brethrenism is not fruit. We want to get rid of our particular associations—the self-complacency, assumption, phraseology, and that kind of thing. Fruit comes out in our relation to one another—love, joy, peace, all that is comely. It is never artificial. Fruit is Godward. Service may be fruit, but that is not the idea. Fruit reproduces itself. A meeting dies out because fruit ceases, like the churches in Asia. (R).

Love is the spirit of help, and, where true, manifests the divine nature. How blessed to know that His own ministry of love to us all is to be reflected in our ways with one another.

BANGOR, JULY 26TH, 1936.

CHRIST IS ALL.

F. B. Hole.

Genesis 3. 14—15: *Genesis* 49. 22—24: *Numbers* 24. 15—17.

WE all know that the Old Testament is the preparation for the New; so we only have to open the Old Testament at the book of *Genesis* and begin at the beginning to discover the first of the great prophecies concerning the coming of that mighty Personage, who is the foundation of everything and round whom everything revolves.

In these few verses in *Genesis* 3 we have Him first as *the Seed* and, remarkably enough, as the Seed of the woman, and not of the man. We read on through *Genesis* and we don't get many definite predictions until we come to chapter 49. True we find Him in "the seed" of Abram. The apostle Paul in the epistle to the Galatians is at pains to point out that he does not say "seeds" as of many but "Seed" as of one, and that One is Christ. This, of course, springs out of the fact that He was the seed of the woman, for the woman—Mary—was descended from Abram. This first great prediction of the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ did not fall from mortal lips. Afterwards God did speak to men by prophets, but this most fundamental of all the great predictions came from the lips of the Lord God Himself; and was uttered not to man primarily, though we are permitted to hear it, but to the great adversary, Satan, under the form of the serpent. He said, "I will put enmity . . . between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel." This word concerning the Seed of the woman is the great fundamental prediction of the coming of Christ.

When we get to the end of *Genesis*, many things have happened to the race. Israel has been called, and Joseph has acted as a shepherd, since Israel himself and his descendants are now brought down into Egypt under his sheltering hand. In the fires of Egypt they were to be welded together as a nation. Seventeen years after their arrival Israel died and blessed his sons. Now we know from Hebrews 11 that Jacob's last hours were his brightest. It was when he came to the finish that at last the power of the flesh in him was subdued, and the fire of faith that had been continually damped down by the world all his life burned with great brightness. So now he speaks as a man of faith, and when he comes to bless Joseph, he throws in that remarkable little parenthesis, printed as you notice in brackets; "from thence," not from Jacob, but from the mighty God of Jacob, "is the Shepherd, the Stone of Israel." So we discover that the Lord Jesus Christ is in view. He is *the Seed*, *the Shepherd* and *the Stone*. *Genesis* has been called, and very rightly, the seed plot of the Bible, and there you have three seed thoughts, which are marvellously developed as we go through the Scriptures.

Then I pass on to the book of *Numbers*. Of course, there are types of Christ in *Exodus* and *Leviticus*. There are many things that speak of Christ, but I am thinking of the definite predictions of His coming. So we come to Balaam who was, as we know, a false man at the bottom, but who was laid hold of by the Holy Ghost. God imposed Himself upon

Balaam so that he found it impossible to get in touch with the dark spirits of evil with whom habitually he had intercourse. He no longer sought these enchantments to use against Israel. God took hold of him and he was made to say things which were the Word of God. God can use a donkey, Balaam's ass, or man, worse than the donkey, Balaam himself. And poor Balaam knew that though he would see Him he would not be nigh Him, yet he had to speak of His coming as the Star and the Sceptre. He is *the Seed, the Shepherd, the Stone, the Star and the Sceptre*; the five-fold presentation of the blessed Saviour whom we know.

Now let us for a few moments consider these things in detail. As I was saying, the Seed is evidently the most fundamental of all. You see, God had no doubts or misapprehensions from the outset. He knew exactly the extent of the tragedy that sin had brought into the world. Adam transgressed, sin entered, and sin wholly corrupts that into which it enters. The first man and all his race was corrupted by the entrance of sin; so from the outset God made it very plain that a wholly new and original Seed must be introduced if the day was to be retrieved. Another Seed is necessary who should become *the new Fountain-head of life and fertility for man*—a Man of another order, a Man of another kind. A new Man is going to appear on the scene in due season as the seed of the woman. He came; and just because He was the seed of the virgin He was not of the first Adam's race. As Son of God, He was able to step in and achieve the victory when the first man had fallen.

Now we thank God that we can come in as of that Seed. When you

get to Psalm 22 you find it ending with the words, "A seed shall serve Him." Well, that is what perverse man has not done. He has always gone in independence of God, instead of serving God. The natural bent of mankind is to act like a wild ass—kick over the traces—do what he likes. In the Psalm you have, "God is not in all his thoughts"; which means, if you could get all his thoughts together and examine them, you would not find one thought of God. You can see it in the world around. Man is in his thoughts, and nations, and money and pleasure. But God?—No, *not God!* Now there comes on the scene One who is altogether devoted to the will of God, who *has God in all His thoughts*. He sets the Lord, as Psalm 16 says, always before Him, and has Jehovah at His right hand so He is not to be moved. And it is not surprising, of course, that the One, who is characterised by such things, ends up at the right hand of God Himself. He was, indeed, Man of such a kind that the only possible place for Him was the right hand of Jehovah, the seat of the Majesty in the heavens. This One is the Seed of the woman, and He bruised the serpent's head. That, of course, means the end of the serpent's influence. He smites him in the very seat of his intelligence, though He did it, as the prophecy indicates, at personal cost to Himself—the bruising of His heel.

But then we know the Lord Jesus Christ in other ways. Now the Shepherd speaks of *control and attraction*. The eastern shepherd goes before his sheep, exerts an influence over them, exercises control upon them. Thank God we know Jesus as the Shepherd. We have come to know His Shepherd care. We can

add many details, can we not? to that which Jacob was able to express. Yes, the Shepherd has come and we know Him and we have come, blessed be God, under His mighty guiding hand. It is very evident that the people of God are like sheep; they need the Shepherd. The Shepherd has arrived.

From another standpoint we need the Stone. Now a stone may speak of many things but it certainly speaks of *stability*. Men build their houses, make their erections, but sooner or later it all comes down. God is going to have His erection. God is the Builder and He has found His Stone. In the Old Testament that thought is greatly developed. You may remember Psalm 118. Isaiah too speaks of the Stone. We read of the sure foundation stone in Isaiah 28. In Psalm 118 we get that great word about the Stone which the builders refused having become the very Head Stone of the corner. The Lord Jesus Christ was God's Stone. Coming from *thence*, He was the Stone of Israel.

But He was a stone of such a character and shape that He did not, He could not, fit into men's building, experiment as they might. The Pharisees and others who were the national builders, busy with their religious systems, would have been glad to have had someone who could do marvellous works of power. If only He would have joined with them in a mutual admiration society, and patted them on the back and let them pat Him on the back, they would have been glad. And if He had so acted as to ensure that religious power and authority and prestige should still belong to them; why, they would have worked Him in. He would have been re-

ceived with acclamation. But no! He was not a stone of that sort. He could not be worked into man's corrupt, tumble down, ramshackle building, and they rejected Him. But in spite of their refusal He is the Stone of Israel, the great Foundation upon whom everything rests. We can say with very glad hearts, And the Foundation for us also. In Genesis these things stand in a setting that relates to the earth and to Israel. As we go further on we see they have an application to ourselves. In Ephesians 2, and elsewhere, we find He is the chief corner Stone of the Church edifice—that which God is building to-day.

When we get to the times of Balaam, although God can look upon Israel from the top of the rocks, from His own standpoint, and see them and speak of them according to His own thoughts, yet as a matter of fact the horrible perverseness of poor Israel has become manifest. What hope, we may ask, can there be if, God having called out a people to represent Him before the poor nations sunken in idolatry, they turn out like this. They were to be the centre around which God will gather the other nations for the ordering of the earth. If there is to be a settled condition of things on earth we must have Israel in the right place, the central place among the nations of the earth, and the nations blessed in and through Israel. But look what Israel is! How perverse, how bent upon going in exactly the other way to the way in which God would lead them! What is going to be done with a people like that? Why, all through the wilderness they had been running after other gods whenever they had the smallest opportunity. They had said, No, to every thought of God on

their behalf. Well, through the lips of Balaam comes this wonderful word that even yet there will arise out of that people the Star and the Sceptre. The Star speaks of *hope*, and the Sceptre speaks of *rule and government*. Where is our hope? We answer, In the Lord Jesus Christ. You may say, you are not telling us anything we don't know. I am not indeed, but do we KNOW this *as we should*?

This prediction of Balaam's may have led the wise men of the East to associate our Lord with the star when He came the first time. That *may* have been, but it is very *certain* that the thought of the star is taken up in the New Testament, and the Lord Jesus Christ does present Himself to us in the closing chapter of the Bible as "the bright and morning Star." He is the One who cannot be obscured by the clouds of this world, if the faith of His people is kept simple and centred in Him. He is the Star of hope for our hearts to-day, and looking abroad in the earth we can see to-day, perhaps more than in any other period of the world's history, that it badly needs a righteous sceptre. Psalm 45 tells us He will wield the sceptre. But here He is spoken of as being the Sceptre. Of course, the Shepherd speaks of rule, the kindly rule of the One who cares for the sheep. But when you think of the Sceptre it is the rule of power, because the prophet goes on to say, He "shall smite;" He "shall destroy." You and I may not be much concerned about the corners of Moab or the children of Sheth, but we know the earth is full of confusion and that men seem to be bent on making things worse confounded. Thank God, we know the One who is the Sceptre and in whose

hands will repose all rule and all dominion, and it is necessary that as the Sceptre He should smite. Judgment will follow just as and where it is deserved. The future, my friends, is in the hands of the Lord Jesus Christ. He is the Man of the coming day.

Now I particularly wanted to say these things to you for this reason—the tendency of our hearts is always to turn from Him to something or somebody else; so having pointed out these scriptures my little message this afternoon must be this: *Remember that it has never been supposed from the outset that there is hope or help or deliverance or blessing anywhere else but in Christ.* A great many people are looking back to Pentecost, or back to the Reformation, or back to a hundred years ago. I will not name more precisely the revival which I believe God did very graciously grant one hundred years ago, for immediately God gives a gracious reviving the tendency is *to forget the Reviver and be occupied with the revival.* Now there is nothing in any revival, except there has been revived something concerning Christ.

When the Holy Ghost came at Pentecost He came as *the Spirit of Christ*. He came from the exalted Head. He was like the holy ointment that flowed from the head to the skirts of Aaron's garments as Psalm 133 speaks. Everyone of the priestly family came under the anointing as the Man of God's purpose the great Head went into glory and took His seat. The might and power of His Name was brought by the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven, and the theme of the apostles was not the Holy Ghost, but the Christ who had died and

rose again. The living Christ became a great reality and a mighty work of God took place. Then there have been granted occasions when through mercy there has been some reviving of this: the Reformation, for instance. Though with many imperfections—there is no perfection outside of Christ—the faith of godly men laid hold of *something of Christ*, and laying hold of Him He wrought in their hearts and moved men. Each revival was wonderful and most blessed, until the minds of folk generally slipped away from the One who is the great Fountain-Head of all blessing and they became occupied with the glorious condition of things produced down here—the revival and the work. Then immediately things began to wilt and fade.

That is why, my friends, whether young or old, we need continually to be recalled to the fact that there is really no hope anywhere but in Christ. It has often been said the Church is never the subject of prophecy, I suppose, for a very good reason: the Church, after all, is only that which takes its origin from Christ. All prophecy centres not in the Church but in Him. He is the Fountain-Head. There is no hope in the Church, or the brethren, or in the revival, in you, or in me, or in the most gifted man that ever lived. All centres in Christ, and the one thing that will help us, young or old, is this, *freshly getting our hearts set on Christ, freshly getting our souls suffused with the glory and excellence of Christ, freshly laying hold of the fact that there has never yet been a situation, and never will be, which He is not equal to meeting.*

The *New Translation* renders Acts 13. 36, "David after he had in his

own age served the will of God." That is the utmost any one of us can do. It is impossible to foretell the details of the future. My business is to do the little bit allotted to me in the present as I may be enabled by His grace. I do it very imperfectly, as I can see, but the great Head on high has resources which are everlasting. To carry on His work through the years—that is His business. He will carry things through. It is getting a long time ago since as a youth I first came into a little meeting. I am glad not sorry it was a feeble concern, because I never got the idea that the movement was a prosperous thing. Still, even so, I did get an impression that here was something stable, a kind of institution for all time. *I have had to unlearn that impression.* There is no hope, never has been any hope, we never ought to have had an atom of hope, in men, or brethren, or movements, or reformation, or revivals. If God gives us revival we thank Him; it is all His mercy. But let us never get away from this; everything is centred in Christ, hanging on Him, and it always was so. It has never been supposed from the outset that there is any hope but in Him. He is *the First*, the original, as the Seed; He is the Shepherd, the Stone, the Star, and as the Sceptre He will be *the Last*.

We have a Master on high; we belong to the risen Head; we are linked with Him, and our hopes are in Him, and He is the Master of the situation, the Star of hope. We are waiting for Him, and He will wield the sceptre and this rebellious earth will quieten into peace beneath His righteous sway. *Fix your heart on Him, and you will find that you have got a Resource that will carry you through.*

SERVICE.

J. J. Anning.

*Scriptures read—**John 12. 10—28: Acts 9. 1—6: Psalms 16. 1, 10—11: Psalms 17. 15.*

I HAVE had the subject of SERVICE much on my mind, but I know perfectly well that what I have to say to you will repercuss and I shall have, as it were, to eat my own words.

But I take this courage in that my audience is not a critical one and that I know every one of you are prepared to say, with me, we are unprofitable servants. That does not take the message away, this question of service as it should affect us. I do not know what you think, but I look back to some years ago when there was much activity in open-air preaching, visiting Lodging-houses, Infirmaries and so on. I say to myself—is it the same to-day? You may think that I am getting old and like other elderly people say “things are not as good as they used to be.”

I am, however, quite sure that you know as well as I do that this world has got less room and use for Christ to-day than it had thirty years ago. The spirit of the day we live in has, I think, come into our lives and affected us so that we have got lethargic and careless. We listen to Addresses about Mary sitting at the feet of the Lord Jesus, learning from Him, and we think that is all that matters. We forget her blessed service in breaking the alabaster box of ointment and pouring its contents on His precious head.

To come to meetings and listen to ministry is not the reason why you and I are left in this world, but rather that we may be better servants. There is a good deal of spurious service about; the sort of things

that people do for a good cause, for the sake of self expression, to lend a helping hand in someone else's service, and even the sort of things people do who want to make a big noise. Years ago I remember John McNeill speak from the young prophet who lost his axe-head in the river. He very truly said that some to-day would not have bothered about its recovery but would have gone on hitting trees with the axe handle, making a big noise without bringing down trees.

To-night I want to speak to you about true service. Service such as the Apostle Paul wanted to be engaged in as soon as ever the One in the Glory was revealed to him as JESUS.

“LORD, what wilt Thou have me to do?” I do not know that this request means more than the words state and I do not wish to read any special interpretation into it, but I do know it means that this man, who was now converted in the strictest sense of the word, surrendered his life to the risen Lord and henceforth he was His bond-slave. He addresses Him as Lord—what wilt Thou have me to do?

I just pause here for a moment because I think sometimes we upset one another by interfering with regard to service. I was very struck a few weeks ago when reading a biography of the late Samuel Chadwick, best known as Principal of Cliff College, but for many years head of a Mission in the City I come from. In his early days he was sent as a lay-pastor to a small town

in Lancashire. The Chapel was a derelict and the congregation was very small. He had been told that if he preached good sermons, he would soon attract the people. This advice was followed but nothing seemed to happen. On one particular Saturday night he went over the sermon prepared for the following day when God spoke to him.

Attending to His voice the sermon was burnt and in complete dependence on his Lord he preached with the result that seven souls were saved. This was the start of a period of blessing in the place. Among the converted was a young man from Lincolnshire.

He was unable to read or write but was anxious to pull his weight in the great work that was going on, so he went to Mr. Chadwick and asked him to set him on. He was given some form of service and made a mess of it. Other tasks followed, but in all he proved himself to be incompetent. Nothing daunted he again asked for work, but this time Mr. Chadwick as a wise man said "Go to your Master and ask Him to set you on." Some time later he turned up at the 7.0 a.m. prayer meeting on a Sunday and asked those present to pray for the task he was just about to undertake. It was to go to the house of some notorious blackguards and invite them to the Service that evening. Fearing for the man's safety, Mr. Chadwick forbade his going. The reply given was "Thou did not set me on and thou can't knock me off."

Do you see the argument friends? Beware lest some of us who are rather older try to stop those who have got definite instructions. Per-

haps I had better finish the story— The man went to the house and knocked at the door, being early in the day only the father was down and he opened the door a little way to see who the visitor was. Our friend, being little and thin squeezed his way in, much to the surprise of the man who asked where he came from. He explained his mission and talked to him of the Saviour.

The man was astounded and impressed. No one had hitherto spoken to him before of his eternal welfare, and drunkard and notorious as a fighter, he broke down. That evening both husband and wife went to the Chapel and were found by the Saviour. It was quite evident then that this young man had been "set on" by his Master.

Well now, if I am going to talk to you about service we must see what it really means. In the 12th chapter of John's Gospel the Lord Jesus speaks of the Corn of wheat that will abide alone unless it goes into the ground and dies. He then goes on to say "If any man serve Me let him follow Me, and where I am there shall also My servant be." What does it mean to follow the Lord Jesus?

I think the 16th Psalm gives us the path He took when here on earth. "Preserve me, O Lord." We see that blessed One as Jehovah's Servant, we see Him who has come to do God's will in all His blessed dependence and obedience. And what has He come to do? He has come to mark or track out a path of life through this wilderness and ruin. A path of life that leads Him through the path of death, as verse 10 of the Psalm shews. He came to make a thoroughfare for you and

me. How wonderful it is for us to follow Him in it. He says—"follow Me." What does it mean? I take it that it entails following Him in the same pathway that He took.

As we look back a bit we see that every step of the track was made known to Him as in dependence Jehovah's Servant went along. At the very beginning we read of the three-fold temptation at the hand of Satan and marvel as we see Him coming out in all His wonderful perfection as the obedient, dependent Servant.

What sort of a pathway was it that he took? The 53rd of Isaiah tells us He was a Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. It was not a rose-strewn path for Him. He was rejected, He was despised, He was disappointed, He looked for comforters and found none, and yet all along the way He manifested God's glory. We see the grace, the truth, the love, the mercy and the compassion that He dispensed as He went along the road.

The people could rightly say "He doeth all things well"—He did. It was a pathway that heaven could look down on and God could put His searchlight of glory upon Him and say "This is My beloved Son in Whom I am well pleased." But He went along that path that led through death, betrayed by His familiar friend, the assembly of wicked enclosed Him, man's hatred reached its zenith and all the power Satan could muster was hurled against Him. Did He give in? No, a thousand times NO. He who could be "faithful midst unfaithfulness" was the LION of the tribe of Judah.

There was courage there, there was power there and alone He went

into death to endure the wrath of God. He went into the grave and hades and as the Lord of Life was raised. The path of life was founded, and at God's right hand pleasures for evermore and in His presence fulness of joy will complete the Psalmist's vision.

The Lord Jesus asks you and me to follow Him. "If any man serve Me, let him follow Me." What does this mean? Of Saul of Tarsus, the Lord said to His servant, Ananias, that "I will shew him how great things he must suffer for My name's sake." The Lord Himself as recorded in the 14th chapter of Luke's Gospel tells us what it costs to follow Him.

It is so easy at meetings like these to sing lustily "Saviour, we long to follow Thee." Do we? The Lord certainly wants us to follow Him. He is wanting servants at this time. He is wanting men and women to proclaim His fame and to stand for Him in a day that is the closing of days. He is coming soon. He has given us the promise "where I am there shall also My servants be." There never was such a Lord and Master. He has put up with us in our failures time and time again. His wonderful grace, His compassion still avails for us.

I am speaking to young Christians and I am keen that you should not be discouraged if some older brother or sister makes comments on your service. I was sorry to hear the other day of a party of young people, who were wont to visit an Infirmary, being taken to task by an older Christian for going there. I think myself that anyone who stumbles a young servant of the Lord has a lot to answer for. For

you, the great thing is to get the Master's directions. Self-will has no place in true service. It must be no self at all, but His will, if we are going to follow the Lord Jesus. He said, "My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me." His was a thorny path and most of us who have been going a bit can testify that we have not had an easy time, but by His grace and mercy we have nothing to talk or even whisper about regarding trial compared with the pathway of the One we follow.

The Apostle Paul certainly did have to suffer great things and perhaps some of us may have to do so in the future, but like Paul we shall find that His grace is sufficient for us. There is therefore no need to be discouraged, the great thing is to be kept for the present and to go on in dependence and obedience along the pathway He has already marked out for us.

It is just as if the Lord Jesus was—and He is—the Shepherd of the 23rd Psalm. He goes before us and leads us along.

It is a narrow pathway that leads to life, but the big thing is that the path leads to life. Therefore do not be discouraged if there are difficulties in the way—there are bound to be—or if our friends do not prove always friendly. Let us keep our eyes looking up to Jesus, He was alone and forsaken. There never was such a pathway as His; that pathway that led to glory. We have not, like Him, to go through death to God's presence. He has put death away for us by going through it. He is the mighty conqueror, the Victor and our living Lord.

I read that one verse in the 17th Psalm, as from it we see that not only are we going to be with Him throughout eternity, but we are going to be like HIM. Then we shall know the fulness of joy that is found in His presence and so as I close I would ask you, each one of you to count the cost, look at Calvary where He died for you, and realize afresh the power of love in all its constraining force to follow and serve Him.

THE GIFT AND THE GRACE.

W. H. Westcott.

Ephesians 4. 7, 15, 17.

MANY of you who are accustomed to speaking will feel sympathy for the one having to follow on after the important address to which we have just listened. I would continue on the same line, only in a different setting. I will speak of the setting in a moment or two, but you will notice in the first verse I read, you have the *gift* of Christ, and the *grace* of Christ. The first gives us the *position* that we have in regard to the truths of this

chapter; the second gives us the provision that is to enable us to support the position. Then the third speaks of the *progress* that we may make, growing up unto Him in all things; and, finally, the *practice* that flows from these exercises. To put them into the language of the epistle itself, you have first of all the *gift*, secondly the *grace*, thirdly the *growth*, and then the *good works* that follow (see chap. ii. 10).

Now as to the situation that is presented to us in this chapter. It is, of course, based upon what has been stated before in the first three chapters. God has a wonderful project in view, and He knows how urgent it is to have material that is suitable for the project. As to man, as to ourselves naturally, we are written off as dead in trespasses and sins. If you wanted to have a plantation, you would not go into the forest and look out for some tree that had long been laid low by the tempest and was rotting on the ground. You would want young saplings, young trees, in which is life; and the energy of life, to assimilate food from the soil in which it grows. But certainly you would never take a piece of rotten wood to build up anything on which you wanted to rely for strength, to make use of it. That is the lesson that is first of all set before us, that God, in looking over the race of men from top to bottom has found nothing but material He cannot use. It is a good lesson to learn as preparatory for true service.

God must create the material that He is going to use. We were dead in trespasses and sins, just living to ourselves, doing the will of the prince of this present world; and not available in any sense for God's purpose. Now it was into that world and into the midst of that race of men that God gave His Son. The Lord Jesus came in order to give effect to this project, this purpose of God. But to do so it was necessary for Him to go down into death. We do not find the pathway indicated here by which He went, but we do find this, that God raised Him from the dead. He went down there in order to close up all our sinful history under the eye of God

and inaugurate a new life, a new race of men associated with Himself and deriving from Himself in resurrection. The service then that one has to speak of is in this setting; it is the service of those who are associated with the Lord Jesus Christ raised from the dead. He is now seated in glory. In looking up to Him where He is we have the definition of the place to which God destines us.

I will try to shew in a word or two the setting which will indicate our position while here on earth. You will find the apostle in the first verse of ch. 4 urges upon Christians, that they walk worthy of the vocation wherewith they are called. And then you will find the spirit in which alone that walk can be sustained, "with all lowliness, and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love." Anything like an overbearing attitude is altogether out of place in connection with this new life and new service, this walking worthy of the vocation wherewith we are called. Instead of being proud of ourselves, asking people to observe how beautiful our order, how gracious our lives, and how wonderful our testimony, there is lowliness and meekness; readiness to take affront and never turn a hair. Look at the Lord Jesus, meek and lowly of heart. People spoke and acted against Him; people discredited, defamed Him, injured Him physically; they smote Him, buffeted Him, spat on Him; yet mark all the way through this meekness. If we are going to answer in any way to the vocation wherewith we are called we have to be prepared to face trial, to submit instead of asserting our rights (as people speak), or standing on our dignity, or defending ourselves in

the spirit of the world. He was meek and lowly in heart.

Then forbearing one another. We all know how we have to put up with a lot from each other. It is necessary to speak of that in the pursuit of this service. You will find that this new character, this new life, this new generation, is one that is marked by the presence and the power of the Spirit of God. The life that we have is associated with the Lord Jesus Christ raised from the dead, but the power by which that life is worked out in us is, of course, the Spirit. So in this wonderful epistle you find many mentions of the Spirit of God.

Beloved friends, if we are going to take up service as presented in this chapter we have to recognise that God has set aside every energy every thought, every activity that emanates from the flesh; and that He has brought in a new power, a new character of life answering to the life that is seen in all its perfection up there in glory. What He has saved us for is to set us down here in the very world from which Christ has been rejected in order to reproduce the fulness which is in Christ while He is absent. I do not think it has struck me with such force before, as of late, that the Christian economy is on this line; that the Lord Jesus Christ is rejected here but is set in honour and glory in the heavens by God, and unseen by the world. But God has formed this new race of men associated with Christ risen, yet *in this world*, and energised by the Spirit of God; in order to be here a community that corresponds with and is a reproduction of Christ in glory. In other words, as it goes on to say, we are to use diligence to keep the unity

of the Spirit. That comes into our third verse; the endeavouring—using diligence—to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. We are to use every energy, all diligence, in *this* aspect of service, refusing among ourselves everything that emanates from the flesh. As we have seen in the earlier part of the epistle, man after the flesh is set aside, or written off, as a thing that is absolutely useless for God. Dead in trespasses and sins.

It says that people corrupted themselves after their deceitful lusts, going from bad to worse, but, on the contrary to that, we, having this new life, *energised in harmony with the life of the Lord Jesus Christ*, are collectively to reproduce Christ here on earth. That, briefly, is the position.

Now will you please notice carefully, it is in verse 3 that you read of the unity of the Spirit. Then in verse 4 there are two words in italics which I want you to leave out. As printed it looks like a statement of fact, a statement of doctrine, but that is not quite the point. Anybody might well ask, what is this unity of the Spirit which we are to endeavour to keep? The reply is—“One body, one spirit, one hope of your calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, Who is above all, and through all, and in us all.” In other words, that sevenfold unity is not three circles, it is the unity of the Spirit. Verses 4, 5, and 6 are explanatory of the unity of the Spirit in verse 3; it is the unfolding of what the unity of the Spirit really is.

The gospel of God's grace is going out into all the world, and this work is carried on in different national-

ities, different countries, people with different tastes, dispositions, and environment; and instead of leaving them where they are, to continue to be part of that nation, or association, or order of things, they are brought out from all that. in their identification with the death of Christ and they form one body; that is where the unity of the Spirit begins. We now look out over all the world and think of multitudes, who like ourselves have come as poor sinners to the Lord Jesus Christ; we have put our confidence in Him, owning Him as our Lord, and we find ourselves not saved individuals only, but baptised by one Spirit into one body. It is a tremendous thought that here on earth and scattered all over the earth amongst the nations, are individuals whom it has pleased God to bless in order to make them a vessel in which He may display collectively the life of Christ. It is grace indeed on God's part that He not only saves us as individuals and sets us to individual service, but He has formed this one body and it is energised by the Spirit of God. There is one Spirit. It is not that in England we have one Spirit and in Ireland they should have another, or in Germany another. There is one Spirit and one hope of your calling. There are efforts to divide even the church into separate societies or groups as though a certain class had one calling, and a certain other class another calling different from the first. There is one hope of our calling. God is gathering out of the nations a people for His Name and they form this one body.

It is in that condition that we find this gift of Christ presented. I trust God may enable one to show your position in regard to it. I am speaking specially to those who are

Christians. Of course, if a man be unconverted he has no part nor lot in this matter. But to speak of every Christian in Bangor and every Christian in this hall, you have a special place in this one body *which no one else can fill*. It is the gift of Christ, the living Head in glory. His design is to produce here on earth a number of people who in the aggregate will be able to act as the vehicle of His own life down here. He saves you individually, and in His infinite wisdom as Head of the church, He gives you your position in the body that no one else can fill. If God creates me with a little finger He intends it to do its own function; and it is not intended that that member, small as it be, should be inactive or inert. There is one activity of life operating through the body. You individually are set in your place by the living Head in glory. His object is that your life with that of your fellow Christian may be the vehicle by which we live out His life while He is absent, and while we are left here.

Secondly, there is not only the position but the provision for the maintenance of it. Some say, I am such a poor thing, I am not worth taking any notice of. But look at that verse again, verse 7. "Unto every one of us is given *grace* according to the measure of the gift of Christ." Whatever may be your place in the body, that living Head in glory, Christ, is always rolling down the grace to enable you to function according to your place in the body. To *every one* of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ. One feels that this is a splendid position, that we are put in touch with a living Head whose resources are all infinite; and if He sets you in your place

in the "body," whether it be in this locality or in that from which you come, and in your particular environment, the local assembly, the family, the business, and so on, whatever may be the position He has given you as a member of His body, He is everlastingly engaged with you and rolling down grace to support you in it. Unto *every* one. Should you say, I know so little, look to the Lord and He will give you whatever knowledge He knows you need. You need patience and grace. There is grace rolling down from the Head in glory, and in your direction, to support you.

There is not only *position* given to us, determined for us by the Head in glory, and for the express purpose of setting out His life in the place of His absence, but there is this rich *provision*, grace from Himself alone. One has often sought for an illustration, but it occurs to me that when the children of Israel came out of Egypt, they lacked water. Moses was told to smite the rock in Horeb, and there came water flowing forth, and they drank of that rock. That rock was Christ. I think we must draw the conclusion that, in ordinary circumstances, wherever they went under the direction of God, they always had that water flowing alongside of them. It never failed, they drank of the rock that followed them. Wherever they were led of God there was this resource available from the smitten rock. Whatever they required, it might be a drink, water for cooking, for washing, for various uses, there it was, flowing, flowing, and available for every call, every camp. And there was no other resource in the wilderness. That river received no tributary, it never ran dry. It was always full and avail-

able for them in whatever position they found themselves. Beloved friends, the Lord Jesus Christ is up there in glory the unfailing source of everything God has for Christians, taking account of all the environment through which they are passing, and the desert which they are crossing. May the Spirit of God direct us to the Lord Jesus Christ as God's fulness for every requirement.

Whether yours be a large position in the body or whether it be a small position, it has been determined for you by the Lord. This would preserve us from jealousy. Sometimes one has to confess to a great danger of jealousy. I hear a person ministering Christ and I feel a wish that I could speak like that. I wish I could touch people's hearts as I see others do it. Well, each one has his own place; and whatever be the his functions in the body, the source is Christ; the unfailing, ever rolling, ever abounding supply of grace for *every one* of us. Will you take that home with you? You may desire to serve in the gospel or to serve the Lord's people; in some simple way you want to serve your Master; and above all to serve the living Head in glory, and His members on earth. Whatever may be the character of your service there is always grace for you from the Lord to enable you to carry it out.

You might think if we lived in the days of Pentecost we could understand it; but that in Laodicean days we cannot expect the fulness to be the same. But it is, it goes on. It says in the eighth verse, He gave gifts unto men. The victory, the overthrow of Satan's power, the defeat of everything that stood in the way of the fulfilment of God's project, have entitled me to this posi-

tion in grace ; and now He is up there in glory devoted to the service of the saints who form His body, and He is the Giver of gifts. It is He who gave—mark—some apostles some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers. They were given from the Head in glory. We have their ministry of the eternal truths they unfolded ; Christianity has been inaugurated on earth ; and we have the advantage of the ministry of these early servants in the Scriptures. There are some that carry on. We have still evangelists and pastors and teachers who have all come from Him. It is not that they are trained in colleges, or formed in meetings ; the gifts are every one of them set in his or her place according to the wisdom and grace of the Head in glory.

We have the ministry of pastors, evangelists and teachers, and of saints less prominent, all given according to the grace of the Head in His wisdom, where He knows they are needed. And it goes on as you see until we all come in the unity of the faith. It is not intended there should be dissensions, parties, sectarian ideas, schisms. Till we all come *in the unity of the faith* and the knowledge of the Son of God. It is in proportion as we know Him and get into living touch with Him that by the power of the Spirit of God we are enabled to represent Him down here, and *until* we all come unto a perfect man. I do not think that means till every individual is perfect. It is not a question of my becoming a perfect man in an individual sense, but it is the full grown man, the one body composed of all its living members, developed to the fullest extent in order that there should be an adequate and well proportioned representation of

the life of Christ. Such is the design of God in forming the one body, giving us the Spirit as the power, and the grace of Christ for our provision ; that there might be the working out of the fulness, the full stature of the fulness of Christ.

Thus we should be no more children tossed about by every wind of doctrine. We are made conscious that man may use cunning, crafty ways in order to divert us from this wonderful vocation ; but nevertheless speaking the truth in love we may grow up unto Him in all things. This is a collective growing as I understand ; the all of verse 13 growing together up to Christ. How harmonious ! You can understand if a man grows on one side only he will be called a hideous object, a monstrosity. If in some way or other the growth of my hand had been arrested when I was a boy it would be called out of proportion. Every Christian contributes to the expression of the fulness that is in Christ and it is for us to see that we are not stunted in our growth. The Lord help us, because so many things appeal to us on the right hand and on the left, and our minds get entangled ; and very often our interests get merged in the things of the world so that we lose the blessedness of this vocation. But holding the truth in love we are to grow unto Him in *all* things, till we come under the influence of the Head in every direction. Secret life with God, service in the church, family life, business life ; in every circle learning to acknowledge the Lord Jesus Christ as the directing intelligence.

The Christ is the anointed One. As those who have received of the Spirit we partake of the anointing,

and by the power of that Spirit of God are enabled to get everything under the control of Christ. The grace of Christ, the very life of Christ flows out to His members. "From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love." Here you find not only the *progress* but the *practice*. It is developed very fully in the remaining chapters, the practice that flows from this new position in which we have been set, in the enjoyment of this rich provision flowing from the living Head in glory and ourselves making progress in acquaintance with Christ. There comes the practice, and the consequence of it that there is the effectual working in its measure of every part. I would that I knew how to convey to you the comfort of that phrase. Of course, we are supposed to be growing together mutually, jointly, but it is according to the effectual working in its measure of every part. There are some who seem to be dormant Christians; some who seem to be dumb Christians. You wonder whether it could be said of them that every one is functioning according to the measure of his part. So much depends on your fulfilling the function that is assigned to you by the Head in glory. We were reminded in regard to our personal service it is not *man* who sets us on, but if you ascertain that you are a member of the one body energised by the one Spirit sharing in the one hope of your calling, you will remember that much depends upon your effectual working in your measure. If you are idle, if you are irresponsible to the grace and glory of Christ you cannot contribute to

the prosperity of the whole. As it says, when it is the case that there is the effectual working in its measure of every part, it makes increase of the body unto the building of itself in love, in the very nature of God; wrought out in the saints, but it depends on the effectual working *in its measure of every part*.

To put the four things together, we have this position given to us in relation to the vocation of the calling of God. In regard to this project that God has in view we are to learn that the material God uses is not the energy, the notions, the ideas that emanate from the flesh, from fallen man. He is regarded in this epistle as *dead* in trespasses and sins. God has set him aside, as it goes on to teach in the remainder of the chapter. You are regarded as having put off the old man and being renewed in the spirit of your mind, you have put on the new man; and the character of Christ grows up with no contribution from the mind or crafts of man; all derives from Christ whose grace is unfailing. The Lord Jesus Christ in the glory rains grace upon you—as though He would say to each one, young or old—I have redeemed you, brought you to Myself, given you a new life, set My Spirit in you and given grace that you may act in this capacity. What we heard from the preceding speaker is service of the greatest importance for us as individuals; but there is also *this* service in relation to the calling of God. May God give us each one in his measure to seek to answer to it, so that as far as we can contribute to that which every joint supplieth, the effectual working in its measure of every part we can give expression to the life of Christ among those that have rejected and turned from Him.

PROFITABLE.

E. P. Brown.

Philemon.

THIS brief but beautiful letter is one of two private letters written by the Apostles that have been left to us. We have this and John's third epistle. The letter to Philemon does not touch on things of public consideration, but deals with an entirely private matter, the return of a runaway slave who had been converted, and one in whom the Apostle Paul was deeply interested.

The first thing about the letter is the charm of it; it breathes the true spirit of Christianity. One has felt much concern during recent years at the number of letters that pass through the post containing matters of controversy and doing the authors and receivers a lot of harm. In this letter there is everything to make for blessing, and God would have us occupied with those things that make for blessing. Before putting pen to paper it is well to consider whether what one has to say is profitable for the help and building up of others, as there is great danger in saying things that create strife and trouble. May God preserve us in this respect.

The letter we are considering has many remarkable features; no fewer than eleven persons are mentioned, including the Apostle himself, five at the beginning, five at the end, and one in the middle. It is wonderful to note how the Apostle, a man of great powers, head and shoulders above his fellows, is yet delighted to associate himself with those to whom he refers in the letter, of whom we should not otherwise have heard.

While we see the true spirit of Christianity in the letter, we learn at the same time what held and

kept Paul through all the experiences he encountered. He speaks of himself as a prisoner, not of Nero, or of Rome, but of Christ Jesus. The Jews and the Romans must bear their share of guilt in imprisoning Paul, but how great would have been our loss if he had not been in prison. Think of the wonderful epistles to the Ephesians, Colossians and the Philippians, all written from prison. Sometimes we think of a prisoner's life as one that is unproductive and unfruitful, but remember Bunyan and the books he wrote while in captivity, and the sweetness and piety of Rutherford, through whose sufferings in prison so much has been given to us. When Paul says that he is a prisoner of Christ Jesus he means that he is there according to the will of God and in consequence of loyalty to Christ. He is a prisoner of Him whom he saw that day when he was smitten down on the Damascus road.

There are some beautiful thoughts in connection with those whom Paul associated with himself. He uses four different expressions in addition to brother and sister, (as the word "beloved" used of Apphia might be translated "sister") and these are

FELLOW-LABOURER,
FELLOW-SOLDIER,
PARTNER AND
FELLOW-PRISONER.

These four expressions convey to me the thought of a four-fold fellowship—the fellowship of service, the fellowship of conflict, the fellowship of the Holy Spirit and the fellowship of suffering. What a wonderful

fellowship is the fellowship of service. Here we have the beloved Apostle associating himself with these dear men who have not left any writings behind them and about whom we know very little, but who are his fellow-labourers. For Christians to be fellow-labourers they need not be in the same place, neither need they live in the same generation. We who are labouring for Christ to-day are fellow-workers with all who have gone before us from the beginning. Diversity of work, widely separated fields, and different periods of time do not impair unity of service. We are all working for the one Master, and being fellow-workers we shall all share in the final reward. A simple illustration may help. The first man who dug a shovelful of earth for the foundations of Cologne Cathedral, and he who fixed the last stone on the topmost spire a thousand years after (for the Cathedral took a thousand years to complete) were fellow labourers. Thus we need not decry any service, or despise any labourer, as it is just as necessary to dig for foundations as to put the topmost stone on the spire. We know we are serving our Lord Jesus Christ, and He takes note of the service of each individual, and His work is one work.

As fellow-soldiers we are in the fellowship of conflict. What an army to belong to—good soldiers of Jesus Christ—and how necessary it is to know something of the equipment as set forth in the sixth of Ephesians, the whole armour of God. How glad each soldier should be to put it on, and with the Word of God in our hands and hearts to go forth in that conflict in which every true believer has a part. The humblest believer and the most

gifted are together in the conflict, fighting for the faith delivered to the saints, and for Him who has called them to endure hardness as good soldiers. In this fellowship it is essential to keep rank, having the Captain of our salvation as our leader and guide.

The third expression used—partner—is a beautiful word, one that reminds us of that partnership to which we have all been called, the fellowship of God's Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. It is a fellowship with a common bond, embracing master and slave, rich and poor, black and white, and the Lord Himself is the bond. Paul, the honoured servant of God, and Philemon, an obscure worker in a restricted sphere, were partners together as baptised by one Spirit into that one body so dear to the heart of the Lord Jesus.

Lastly we have the fellowship of suffering, as fellow-prisoners of Christ Jesus. Suffering is that which brings out all that is sweetest and brightest in the saint of God, and one sometimes feels that we miss a great deal if we do not know what suffering is. There are many ways in which this may be experienced, but it is good to know it as suffering for and with Him as captives in the chains of love. We may suffer for our misdeeds, or we may be called to endure chastisement as sons, but the fellowship of suffering we are now speaking of is a bond that makes us realize something of the feelings of each other. "Remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them; and them that suffer adversity, as being yourselves in the body" (Hebrews 13. 3), is a word that throws considerable light upon fellowship in suffering. At the pre-

sent time we can feel for our brethren in Spain, while in many other lands the saints of God are passing through trials and afflictions that call forth our prayers in the sense that if one member suffer all suffer with it. What a joy to enter into the blessedness of what it is to belong to Christ and to be held captive by Him.

The next point that attention might be called to is the love that is behind all that the Apostle is seeking. He requests for love's sake, love being the true Christian principle of action. Love must ever remain the greatest motive to noblest action, just because it carries with it the heart as well as the reason. The Apostle could have commanded, but instead he entreats, beseeches as a brother and a friend, and out of his heart flows the love he felt for this poor, runaway slave. It is not in word we love, but work is real love in action. Loyalty to duty may save our Christian countenance in the eyes of the world, but only wholehearted love of Christ will make the Christian life attractive to men. It is not duty that inspires to love, but love to duty. It is love that gets things done when everything else fails.

Further we learn something of what relationship is from this letter. Paul beseeches for his child Onesimus. He might have spoken of him in many ways, but he selects a word than which none could be more binding or endearing, not thy slave, but my child. There are two words in the New Testament translated "child," one meaning a legal relation and one a child by natural descent, a much more vital relationship, and the one which the Apostle uses, adding that he had begotten him in

his bonds. This is the relationship to which each of us by grace has been called. We have been begotten of God and given a place which but for the death of Christ we could never have claimed and which we certainly never deserved. Onesimus, once a runaway slave who had robbed his master, thus incurring the death penalty, had heard the glorious gospel that Christ died for our sins, was buried and rose again the third day, and now his life is changed. What a story it is—"who once was . . . but now is," once unprofitable, but now profitable, a story of the possible becoming actual; of the sinner being made a son. The Apostle says as it were Profitable has up to now been unprofitable, but if you receive him back he will be true to his name, for Onesimus means profitable. In this case the name was all right, but the nature was wrong. Onesimus did not need a new name, but he did need to live up to the one he had. Both in Ephesians and Corinthians we read of what we were once, but now we have had everything reversed through the grace of God in order that we may live to Him and be profitable.

A further lesson we learn is that of identification. There is no more wonderful truth in the New Testament than that of the Saviour's identification with sinners in His death, and the believer's identification with Him in His risen life. Paul reminds us of Him who could say "He that receiveth you receiveth Me" in the way he asks Philemon to receive Onesimus as himself, not as a slave, but a brother beloved. Thus Christianity gives us a character which could never have been realised apart from the grace that has reached us. All superficial

and temporary distinctions gone and a new life entirely is entered upon by those who have been led to put their trust in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Practical righteousness is, however, a necessity, and Paul shews that Onesimus was under moral obligation to right the wrong he had done, but how could this be done? Paul says "Put it to my account," and in so doing he reminds us of One who, when we were in hopeless debt to God, and had nothing to pay, undertook our case, paid our debt with His blood and set us free.

Thank God for what has been done for us; God required what is past, but all has gone in the Cross of Christ. All has been cleared, so I am able righteously to stand before God. But there is a new life, conversion to God being a very real thing, and thus instead of living as I like I recognise what is due to the One who has every claim upon me.

Thus I learn that I am cleared by the death of Christ, accepted in a risen Christ, and am given the relationship of a child, being made profitable to the Father and the Son.

GOD'S PREVISION IN RELATION TO THE CHURCH.

R. McCallum.

Revelation 2. 1—17 and Chap. 3.

WHAT Mr. Hole has brought before us is this, that in spite of all apparent contradiction and denial, the purposes of God are being fulfilled: everything that God has in view is secured in Christ; and, dear friends, I am taking you into my confidence at the beginning of my address when I tell you that that is what I have in mind for you tonight. Two years ago I spoke of the Prevision of God in Creation: last year my theme was the Prevision of God in Relation to Movements and Happenings in the World, and tonight I want, God helping me, to bring before you the Prevision of God in relation to the Church.

Last night we were considering the Church as the Body of Christ, mysteriously united to the risen Head in Glory: the risen Lord giving to His body, the Church, gifts as He seeth it has need and minis-

tering grace that flows from on high to every member. But, as we look abroad, what a travesty of that we see in the world. So great a travesty, that we are disposed to say "In relation to the Church, at least, the purpose of God—the Divine plan — has completely broken down." Let us bear in mind, however, that Christ is the Amen, that is to say, every purpose God conceived and every promise which God ever made whether in relation to Israel or the world or the Church is secured, without any shadow of doubt, in Christ. It is said of Abraham, you remember, that when God promised him a seed "he believed God," as we read in our Authorised version, but literally it is "he amen-ed God." We say "Amen" with the thought in our heart "May it be so," but when Abraham amen-ed God he said "it shall be so," and Christ is the Amen.

Now these addresses to the Churches are assuredly prophetic, as I suppose, all here gathered will freely admit. While local churches then existing are addressed, we shall not forget that we are dealing with "the revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave to Him, to shew unto His servants." God had in view the whole history of the professing church from the moment of its decline, until that moment when utterly rejected by Christ, it shall be spued out of His mouth. While in the body of Christ there is nothing but reality, in the churches as we view them here, there is profession. They profess to be here for Christ bearing witness to Him in the world, and Christ takes them up on the ground of that profession. We see Him here, walking in the midst of the lampstands. Not now, Christ in the midst of the Assembly, do we have presented, but Christ, as Judge, walking in the midst of the assemblies—scrutinising them, watching them lovingly, and sadly observing their departure from that which should be a true expression of the Body of Christ upon earth.

I believe that the Church in Ephesus is first addressed just because it had received a specially favoured ministry of the truth of the Church through the Apostle Paul. Some thirty years have now elapsed since Paul departed to be with Christ and now we have the second epistle to the Ephesians. There is not now the same note of intimacy, for the message is delivered through an angel. There is, thank God, much that the Lord can commend. Would to God, we could find as much commendable in our local assemblies! They are commended for their work and their labour—and that means TOIL—and their patience or endur-

ance, for they had endured and toiled for His name's sake. ENDURANCE! It is the carrying on that tests us. It is easy to go for a little in the energy of the flesh, but nature soon grows weary and only the grace of God can sustain a man labouring unto weariness, so that he does not weary in his labours. In Ephesus too, they had judged the highest pretensions and refused evil and yet in spite of all, in what doubtless, we would have judged to be an ideal assembly, there is that which the Lord has to rebuke severely. It is not—"I have somewhat against thee," as if it were of little account in the sight of Christ—but "I have against thee, because thou hast left thy first love."

My dear brethren, in addressing you I address myself. We know, everyone of us, that this is where decline starts, whether it be corporate or individual, and I want tonight to challenge your heart by asking—has there been a departure from your first love? I sometimes feel sorry for the little folk coming up in our schools, submitted to all manner of mental tests—an index of brightness, an intelligence quotient or some other standard of efficiency being assigned to each, as if everything in the world depended entirely and only on intelligence. But Christ, although He appreciates spiritual intelligence and efficiency and endeavour in His interests, is the skilled physician. He is the psychologist *par excellence*, who uses the stethoscope, placing it right at the heart of things and in the Ephesian Assembly He discovered a leakage of heart. I wonder, dear brethren, if there is not something of that about us. What Christ values is love. What God values is love.

Do you remember how He sent Jeremiah into the city of Jerusalem and bade him testify unto it saying "Thus saith Jehovah: I remember thee, the kindness of thy youth, the love of thine espousals, when thou wentest after Me in the wilderness, in a land that was not sown. Israel was holiness unto the Lord and the firstfruits of His increase." Why did they follow Him? Because of what He was and independently of all thought of gain. With no thought of advantage, they followed, but there came the moment when they left Him—they forsook their first love. And Jehovah asks "What iniquity have your fathers found in Me?" It is the challenge of wounded love. If you have left Me, He seems to say; if you have forsaken Me, it cannot be without a cause. Have I departed from integrity? Have I broken My Covenant with you? And, tonight, Christ would send out that challenge of wounded love, and yet the challenge of absolute integrity and faithfulness. What have we found in Christ that we should leave our first love? Is not to leave our first love tantamount to saying that He is not so good as we first thought Him to be? So great is this slur that nothing can possibly make up for the loss of first love. My dear young brethren, if to-day you had received a letter from one who professes to love you in which the note of love was absent, you know full well that exquisite note-paper beautifully perfumed, a delightful literary style at the disposal of an informative mind could not make up for that fundamental and tragic defect. Have we left our first love? Then Christ says to us "REMEMBER, REPENT, RETURN." Do the first works. He does not say—"Give up working."

He does not say "Feel the first feel-

ings," but He does call upon us to let all that we do be characterized by that love which we had for Him at first.

Do you know what Jehovah said to those in Jerusalem? "Look," said He, "at the nations abroad. They worship false gods, and not one of them has forsaken their false gods." And is this not a modern characteristic, that while the heathen remain loyal to their gods, and those who preach false cults remain true to their cults, the professing Church of Christ is denying the Name of Him who bought them? Remember then, and repent and return. Let me say in passing too, that when Israel went out seeking no advantage God blessed them, and when they sought advantage for themselves, intriguing with Egypt and consorting with Assyria to obtain it, in seeking advantage they lost it. Never forget, my dear young friends, that if you give up Christ for personal gain, in seeking advantage for yourselves you will surely lose it. God can do more for you, Christ will do better for you, than you can ever do for yourselves.

Let us observe in this history the methods and weapons used by the devil to precipitate decline. First of all there is that which we have already considered in Ephesus—*ALIENATION*. Subtle and unobtrusive, but effective in separating from Christ and naturally leading ultimately to the complete denial of His Name. In Smyrna a second weapon was used, namely *ATTACK*, in this case a double attack, attack within the Church and attack from the world. Judaisers had come into the assembly—not necessarily Jews, but Judaisers. In reading the Epistle to the Ephesians

I have been greatly struck of late by the emphasis placed upon the sovereign grace of God. In God, the tri-une God, is the centre of all our blessings. Every blessing is secured for us by the sovereign grace of God, the redemptive work of Christ and the regenerating power of the Spirit, and having saved the believing sinner, not because of anything he was or because of anything Christ foresaw he would be, the saved one is called upon to live as one should live who has been brought into the most exalted of positions with Christ in the heavenlies. How contrary all this is to the natural thought of man. Common justice would indicate that the reward should be according to the effort, and this was, of course, God's way with Israel when they were before him as mere minors. The natural thought is, that it is a much greater incentive to be good in order to obtain salvation than to know that you have salvation and then to be exhorted to walk worthily. What confusion Satan has ever wrought just at this crucial point, pressing responsibility of walk before there is any standing in Christ. Such confusion would be the work of the Judaisers at Smyrna, who would seek moreover, to return to the ornate worship of Judaism—its magnificent building, its ornate Priesthood, its music, asserting that the incorporation of the old with the new would contribute a very desirable prestige to it and bring it into line with a noble tradition.

In Smyrna the influence of these Judaisers was withstood and the result was an attack from outside, organised by the devil. We have here, however, the magnificent spectacle of men being fiercely persecuted by pagan Rome, but remaining loyal and true to Christ while the storm of

martyrdom breaks upon their heads. Being crushed they are not distressed, being persecuted they are not forsaken, being cast down they are not destroyed; being poor they are making many rich, and as having nothing they have all things in Christ. They see in Christ the One who trod the pathway of suffering and bottomed suffering in His death, but the One who has come up the First-begotten from among the dead, and in Him they recognise that they have been begotten again to a living hope, to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled reserved for them in heaven. Smyrna means myrrh or fragrance, and these men exhibited the fruits of the Spirit. Here we have the passivity of faith. Here we have the spectacle of men under pressure, yet experiencing emotions of love, joy and peace towards God, displaying the fragrant virtues of longsuffering or forbearance, gentleness and goodness towards their persecutors, and realising in their own bosoms the growth of faith, meekness and self-control. If God permits His saints to suffer, it is in order "that the trial of their faith being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, may be found unto honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ. And if we do not suffer persecution in these lands to-day, may it not be because Satan has so corrupted the professing Church—the attack within has been so successful—that there is no need for him to wield the weapon of attack from without. Having been largely frustrated in his attack on Smyrna the enemy of souls resorted to his third device at Pergamos, namely *ALLIANCE*.

The historian records this as the Church's supreme triumph, but in truth it was the greatest tragedy in

the history of the professing church when Constantine the Emperor offered to it the patronage of the world, and the Church gladly embraced it. Have you ever noticed how the beloved Apostles in the city of Philippi treated the witness of the maid possessed with the spirit of divination. This was her testimony, "These be the servants of the most high God, which show unto us the way of salvation." Was it not a true testimony? It was! Then why reject it? Why not embrace this advertisement to their mission in the city? Because the Apostles recognised that the patronage offered was the patronage of hell. In Pergamos we find the doctrines of Balaam and of the Nicolaitanes are freely tolerated. Balaam having failed to curse Israel directly suggested to Balak that he should permit Israel, the people of God, to settle down in the land of Moab and to enter into alliances with his people. The device was tragically successful. What direct attack failed to accomplish, unholy alliance achieved. And so it has been with the professing Church; the ripe fruit of this unholy alliance we see in Thyatira which is a figure of Rome.

Time forbids entering into details, but it is interesting to note that Christ speaks to Thyatira as Son of God. And He needs to assert His claim, for she who claims to be His bride has systematically degraded Him amidst a host of saints all of them more accessible than the Christ who died. She has taken the grace of His incarnation to subject Him to His human mother, or, if remembering that He is divine, it has only been to exalt her as the mother of God. In place of christian worship in spirit and in truth, her doctrines, holy days, ceremonies,

vestments, titles, priestcraft, and superstitions are of pagan origin.

Of much that characterises Sardis—Protestantism—little better can be said. No one would speak lightly of the Reformation—a true work of God which marked its inception. For an open Bible in a known tongue, for the recovery of the truth of Justification by faith; for men who staked all upon the Word of God, we shall ever be grateful to Him. Why, as Luther was faced by that august assembly at Worms he spoke these words, "I am held fast by the Scriptures adduced by me and my conscience is taken captive by God's Word, and I neither can nor will revoke anything seeing that it is not safe or right to act against conscience. So help me God. Amen." Would to God we had men in the Protestant Churches to-day whose souls and consciences were captive to the Word of God. But to-day alas! it is generally true that having nothing to affirm they have no protest to make.

Protestantism to-day lifts the banner of doubt and of guess. It builds schools and endows universities that the youth of the nation may be taught that doubt is the beginning of wisdom and that unbelief is the hallmark of education. The taunt of want of scholarship and lack of culture has driven thousands of souls to barter the faith of Christ for German rationalism, while in the Mission Fields, as at home, a hybrid of belief and infidelity emasculating Christianity of its essential truths is being taught with devastating effect.

Laodiceanism is to be seen on every hand. The dissolution of Christendom has been precipitated

by the all but universal acceptance of the pernicious doctrine of Darwin. On the assumption that there is nothing fixed, nothing final and nothing authoritative, the Scriptures have been regarded as man's quest for God instead of God's revelation to man. And at the very moment when the Darwinian theory of evolutionary descent is being cast into the limbo of philosophical debris, professed servants of God are applying this doctrine with greater zeal than ever to Christian belief. And so it comes about that men persuade themselves that there has been no fall and therefore no need of a Redeemer. The future for them holds only vistas of unending time tending ever to perfection.

Yet in the midst of all the corruption there is something which Christ discerns which merits His approval. It is the Philadelphian spirit. You will observe that in addressing Philadelphia there is no reference to the official glories which distinguish Christ in the first chapter, but He is described now in terms of moral perfections appropriate to the surrounding conditions. He is the Holy and the True. In a day when men make little of sin, regarding it as a mere growing pain or at the worst a disease, because they have no conception of what holiness is: in a day when men declare that there is no such thing as truth, objectively Christ presents Himself to those who would be subject to Him as the Holy and the True. To be marked by these moral perfections—holiness and truth—is to be Philadelphian in spirit, and those who are such will keep His word and not deny His name.

Brethren, see to it that you do not give up the Word of God for the speculations of men. On the human plane there is nothing final and nothing authoritative, but Christ is the faithful and true Witness and His Word must remain. Whatever the speculations of men as to origins, Christ is the beginning of the creation of God. The moment you cease to regard this book as God's Word, you will begin to imbibe wrong doctrine as to the person of Christ. For Christ has set His imprimatur upon the very Scriptures most vigorously denied by men, and the moment the significance of this is realised you must give up the one thing or the other. If you will maintain that this is not God's Word you must accommodate your beliefs by accepting the wicked Kenosis theory based upon a travesty of the grace of Christ as revealed in Philippians 2, that in incarnation Christ divested Himself of that which pertained to Godhead, was limited as to the things He knew and partook of the errors of His day.

True Philadelphians keep His Word, do not deny His Name, and they keep the Word of His patience, for He is coming again. He is coming in Person and then shall everything foretold be secured in Him. But someone may say—"You will perhaps remember, Mr. Speaker, that a year ago you spoke of the Coming of Christ, and assured us that it was near. What have you to say about that now?" Just this—It is a year nearer. "He that testifieth these things saith Behold I come quickly." What do you say my brethren? Do we not say "Amen, even so come Lord Jesus?"

THE TESTIMONY OF THE LORD.

J. T. Mawson.

2 Timothy 1. 7, 8.

A FEW weeks ago his Majesty the King presented new colours to the Guards regiments. In entrusting those colours to them he told them that they spoke of the glorious history of the Guards and were an emblem for the present and the future of the soldier's honour and the honour of the regiments. I want to speak of the testimony of the Lord as the colours entrusted to us, but they are not regimental colours, as though only a section of the army of the Lord could claim them; there is nothing divisional or sectarian about the testimony of the Lord. The colours are the Royal Standard, and every loyal soldier rallies to them, rejecting all others.

It is the testimony of *the Lord*. I must stress that first of all. What does the title mean? It means His authority, His absolute rights over us; He is sovereign Lord. And we are not faithful to the colours if we are not owning that and carrying it out in practical living. "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in thy heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved." That means open and definite subjection to His will, and rallying to the colours. It was what Saul of Tarsus did when he cried: "Lord, what will Thou have me to do?" But who would not be subject to Him whose love for us surpasses all our knowledge and whose will and way for us is our greatest blessing?

The testimony of the Lord implies ignorance of Him in the place where it is raised, and more, it implies hostility and opposition. I do not think it will be necessary to talk of the testimony of the Lord in

the Millennium, for then His glory will cover the earth as the waters cover the sea, and no man will need to say to his neighbours, know the Lord; but now we are in a world that hated Him and that said "We will not have this Man to reign over us." It is in such a world that the testimony is raised, and unless we understand that we shall miss the honour of playing our full part in the great conflict.

These colours, the Royal Standard, were unfurled by the Holy Ghost at Pentecost, for He was sent *from the Father to testify of Jesus the Lord*, and His work in this respect began on that great day. And if I may pursue my figure there are quartered upon the Standard, a cross, an empty grave, a crown of glory and a universal throne. It is all Christ.

When King Edward presented the colours to his Guards, he spoke of the glories of the past that were inscribed upon them, glories won by the regiments themselves upon many a far-flung battlefield. But upon these colours it is not the glories of the soldiers of the Lord that appear. His glories only are inscribed there; the testimony of the Lord is all concerning Himself; it is what He is and has achieved, and might all be summed up in three sentences. He has been here; He is not here; He is coming back again. *He has been here*. What brought Him here? We know that it was love. Love for sinful men. It was this that brought the Saviour from above to die at Calvary. That is most certainly part of the testimony; but there is more. He came into the world as having supreme rights over it and

over all men. When God brought the First-begotten into the world, He said, Let all the angels of God worship Him, and if angels, then men surely. But what happened? He was in the world, and the world was made by Him, and the world knew Him not. He came to His own and His own received Him not. Yet He did not turn back; He set His face as a flint and He fulfilled His mission. The world saw a full and blessed manifestation of the Father; before its very eyes the Father's Name and character were declared, and it saw and hated both Jesus and His Father. The world has no cloak, no excuse for its sin.

He is not here. Because the world rejected Him, He is not here. The builders of this world's greatness are building without Him. They could find no room for Him when He was here—there was room for Caesar and Herod and Pilate, room for priests and Pharisees, room for publicans and sinners, but no room for Jesus—"Away with Him," "Not this Man but Barabbas." So they cast Him out. The cross was the extent and the evidence of their guilt, but it also became the measure and the manifestation of the love of God. The cross of Jesus testifies to the triumph of God's love over all man's hatred, of righteousness established, of holiness vindicated, of salvation for sinners and of eternal glory for God. Yes, to all this we bear witness. He is not here because the world rejected Him.

He is coming back again. His grave is empty. God has raised Him up from the lowest depths of death and crowned Him with glory and honour in the highest place in heaven. The crown is the answer to the cross. God hath made this

same Jesus whom men crucified both Lord and Christ, He has exalted Him to be a Prince and a Saviour, NOW to give repentance and remission of sins to men, *soon* to come as the Judge of quick and dead. He is coming back again. Once He came in meekness and lowliness of heart; He was in the midst of men and ever at their disposal, night and day. He was accessible to the weakest and the worst, but He is coming back again in power and glory, for His throne is to be a universal throne. His foes are to be made His footstool. The first man with his pride and sin and struggle for a glory that he cannot attain to, must give place to the second Man who will fill the earth with the glory of God. This is also part of the testimony of the Lord, and it is not more pleasing to men than any other part of it. Where is the promise of His coming? they ask. Our answer is, "He command us to preach unto the people, and to testify that it is He which was ordained of God to be the Judge of quick and dead." "God now commandeth all men everywhere 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."

This is the testimony of the Lord, the Royal Standard; the cross upon it speaks of love, infinite love. The empty grave tells of a great victory, the power of death itself is broken. The crown of glory proclaims the Father's full approval of that holy and sacrificial death; the universal throne yet to be declares the rights of Jesus to the supreme place, 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.

To Paul, our great Apostle, the colours were entrusted, and with what valour and zeal he bore them in continual conflict with the foe from city to city and land to land; but now in our Epistle his day was done. He had fought the good fight, he had finished his course, he had kept the faith and he hands on the colours to his son Timothy with instructions to hand them on in turn to "faithful men."

Are we faithful men? Faithful men rally to the colours, they uphold them, they stand for Christ, they do not speak of themselves but of Him; their doings and their cause are not their theme, but His glory; what He has achieved, and His rights. A faithful man will stand for Christ even if he stands alone. And, remember, service is individual; the Lord whom we serve has supreme rights over us. "Ye are bought with a price; be not ye the servants of men." The effort to balance your conscience and service between the Lord's will and the notions of some of your brethren will make a coward of you. He only has the right to command us, ours not to reason why, ours but to do, and if necessary, die. It has been tritely and rightly said, "You are to serve your brethren but they are not your masters." But there is most desirable and blessed fellowship in service. Mr. Brown has pointed out that Paul delighted to speak of His yoke-fellows, his fellow-labourers, his fellow-soldiers; if we are faithful men we shall rejoice when we find our brethren faithful to the colours, we shall rejoice if Christ is preached,

and grieve even to tears over those who are the enemies of the cross of Christ. It is the work of the Holy Spirit to unite the soldiers of Jesus Christ in holy zeal for His glory, and it is He that imparts the power that enables any to be faithful to the testimony.

Now a spirit in keeping with the testimony of the Lord has been given to us, and apart from this spirit we shall fail in the conflict and be deserters from the colours. "Be not thou ashamed of the testimony of the Lord" wrote Paul. The testimony is in reproach in the world, men dislike it, some hate it, the devil is set against it. It is not the fashion to be zealous for the Lord and His truth, and we being what we are, are very liable to be ashamed of the testimony; we shall be unless the spirit of power and love and of a sound mind prevails in our lives. This spirit is not the spirit of fear or cowardice, it is the spirit of courage. But what is it that makes us so cowardly so often? It seems to me that that is a profitable question to ask. Is not the first and foremost thing self-interest, the thought of self and how I shall be affected if I stand boldly for the truth as to Christ?

The great warning in the New Testament is Simon Peter. He went down from Jerusalem to Antioch and for a while was faithful to the colours. The cross of Christ had obliterated all distinction between Jew and Gentile, having brought both down into the place of judgment, but it had secured salvation for both, and from both all who had believed had been raised to a new life by Christ's resurrection, and the Holy Spirit who had come down from the crowned Christ in heaven

had united them in one body. Simon Peter acknowledged all that, and though born a Jew, he lived, as was right, in fellowship with the Gentiles who were in Christ. But when certain brethren came down from Jerusalem from James, he ceased to think of Christ and what He had wrought and thought of Simon. What will they say of *me* in Jerusalem? What will brother James think of *me*? And that thought of self made him a traitor to the colours, and it seemed as though they were to be dragged in the mire or fall into the hands of the foe. But there was one man who was not a traitor, and he held aloft the Standard, withstanding the coward Simon to the face, as he cried, "I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me, and 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." What did he mean? He meant, my reputation, what others think of me! What has that to do with it? I am crucified with Christ. All the reputation that ever I had, and all in which I prided myself, only made me an enemy of Christ, but it is all gone, and I am gone in the cross of Christ, henceforward it is not Paul but Christ. What did it matter to such a man as that what they thought of him in Jerusalem, or anywhere else? He was set for maintaining the colours, for standing true to the testimony; Christ and not Paul was everything to him. He was "a faithful man," a true Standard bearer.

Yes, SELF is a subtle power. It makes cowards of us. Crucifixion with Christ is the only way of deliverance from it. I remember when a very young Christian staying in the home of Mr. Westcott's parents.

Upon the wall of the bedroom I occupied there was a card upon which were lines that made a great impression on me. I spent half the night learning them and they have often spoken to me since. I have them here:

"Oh, send^d me forth, my Saviour,
Oh, send me for Thy glory.
Regarding not the praise of man,
And trampling on the fear of man
And fighting for Thy glory.

There is a man that often stands
Between me and Thy glory.
His name is self,
My carnal self,
Self-seeking self,
Stands 'twixt me and Thy glory.

O mortify him, mortify him,
Put him down, my Saviour.
Exalt Thyself, lift high
The banner of Thy cross,
And in its folds
Conceal Thy standard bearer."

May that spirit and desire be ever ours, for we may depend upon it it is always self that makes us cowards in the fight.

But God hath not given to us the spirit of fear, but of power and love and of a sound mind. That is not the Holy Spirit exactly, but it could not be apart from His indwelling. The indwelling Spirit imparts to us this three-fold character, apart from which we cannot stand in the evil day. It is the life and spirit of Jesus Christ in us. I have no doubt that we need power and love and the sound mind in every sphere of Christian life. Power without love might be ruthless, and love without the sound mind might be weakness. But I would emphasize each of them in its own special sphere. We need the sound mind in our individual lives. What is the meaning of it? It is a wise mind, a discreet mind. A brother was telling me to-day, as we discussed it, that it was a healthy mind, and I quite agree with that. The natural mind, always domin-

ated by a sinful self-interest in one form or another, is not a sound or healthy mind; it cannot wisely discriminate between good and evil. The Gadarenes came out of their city to see what had happened to the demoniac whose name was Legion. They found him, "sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed and in his right mind." You could not have a better illustration of a sound mind than that. He sat at the feet of Jesus as a disciple, and went at His bidding to bear witness in the city to the delivering power of the Lord. It is the touch of the great Physician and His word that heals the mind. The sound mind thinks soberly; the man who has it is not puffed up by his knowledge; he puts Christ first, and considers for His glory and not for his own interest.

The spirit of love brings in others, the hermit cannot exercise that blessed christian grace, it is as we move about among men that it is called for, and very specially as we move among our brethren. And in this we have the Lord as our pattern. "I am among you as he that serveth" He said to His disciples. In the spirit of love we shall be very considerate of one another and shall serve and not strive in a selfish way for preeminence, for the servant of the Lord must not strive, but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, in meekness instructing, even the opposers.

Yet gentleness and meekness are not weakness, as some might suppose, they are allied to true power, and we shall need this spirit of power if we are to stand fast and hold aloft the colours. We must not forget that the devil is against us and we must not underrate his power and subtlety. We are no match for him if we

face him in our own wisdom or strength; but neither is he any match for the Lord and the power of His might, and we are strong, and only strong in the Lord. You remember the words of the poet Cowper:—

"Satan trembles when he sees
The weakest saint upon his knees."

This power can only operate in dependence upon God. In this greatly favoured land we have not now to face such murderous mobs as often surrounded such a man as George Whitfield. He never flinched because the spirit of power was in him, and when on one such occasion, his wife stood behind him and cried in his ear, "Play the man for God, George," the spirit of power was in the woman. And the christian women are needed, they can be of the greatest possible help in maintaining the colours and witnessing for Christ. "Help those women which laboured with me in the gospel" wrote Paul. We are not menaced by violence now; it might help us if we were, but even so, and perhaps more so, the spirit of power is needed. In the presence of increasing indifference to the claims of the Lord in the world, and the growing contempt of the truth in the professing church, we need the spirit of power and of love and of a sound mind, apart from this spirit we shall be ashamed of the testimony of the Lord and of Paul, His prisoner, and make a cowardly surrender.

Not without a reason does Paul bind up his name with the testimony of the Lord. We must take notice of him in relation to it; we need to study his manner of life as well as his doctrine, and learn what the Lord can do in and with and through a man wholly devoted to Him. But Paul would not have us astonished

at his labours and sufferings for Christ's sake. If he could speak to us tonight he would say, Why should you be amazed at my devotion to Christ? If you had seen Him as I have seen Him you would be as I am: if you had heard Him as I have heard Him you would follow Him as I do; if you knew Him and His love that surpasseth all knowledge as I do you would hold nothing back from Him, you would lay yourself and your all for time and eternity at His feet, and be wholly and for ever at His disposal. Do not be amazed at my love for my Saviour, but be amazed at His love for me,

and for you. Say with me "the Son of God, loved me and gave Himself for me," and you will be amazed that ever you hesitated to be wholly for Him, you will be amazed that ever an idol rivalled His place in your heart, that ever you permitted self to make you ashamed of His testimony before men.

May the Spirit of God keep us continually wondering at the love and glory of Jesus, our Saviour, for if we cease to wonder we cease to make progress in the knowledge of Himself and the blessedness of His testimony, and we cease to worship.

A DIALOGUE IN HADES.

B. M. Burgess.

Luke 16. 19—31.

WITH God's help I desire to open this Scripture for the young people here in view of the hardening of men's hearts to-day against the truth and especially because hell is a fact, which truth is being abandoned on all sides. In much gospel preaching to-day there is a tendency to slur over this solemn truth of eternal punishment for the impenitent, if not to avoid it altogether, or deny it as do the modern theologians. Others have confirmed my exercises on this line, while a beloved brother known to you all emphasized the same thought in a recent letter, saying, "I feel deeply impressed with the necessity to-day of stressing more the judgment of God in gospel preaching."

In the everlasting gospel there are two threads which run through the gospel of the kingdom and the gospel of the grace of God, namely, worship owed to God on creatorial grounds, and that God should be

feared, that is, submitted to with confession of sin, because He is the moral Governor of the universe and will judge men, His morally responsible creatures. Paul, when preaching to the learned men of that day in Athens, did not argue on philosophic lines but pressed these two points.

In view, then, of men's increasing indifference to their soul's welfare it is the message of certain, unavoidable judgment that will alone rouse them from their fatal lethargy, spiritual coma, and the perilous sleep into which the great Adversary of souls lulls them. Does the fireman extol the efficiency of his fire-fighting apparatus to the man asleep in a burning house? Does he not first arouse him to his danger? Does the lifeboatman commend the excellence of his lifeboat to the sailors who insist on remaining on their vessel which he knows is doomed? Does he not rather urge the imminence of their

danger? Thus also it is our ineluctable duty to warn men of impending judgment.

Though judgment forms no part of the glad tidings, yet how necessary an introduction to it when presenting it to souls insensible to their danger! How imperative to enforce as the dreadful alternative to one who rejects grace! In fact, if I have not brought in the judgment of God I have not fully presented God and His present attitude to man. We must sound no uncertain note, otherwise better be silent than leave souls in confusion of thought. Nor should we seek to play upon the emotions, nerves and sensibilities, as is so often done, but rather to bring the light of God's revelation to illumine the darkness in which souls lie. Our business is to bring in light from God.

In this passage God puts into your hand a most trenchant weapon, like the sword of Goliath, but it must not be kept wrapped in a cloth behind the ephod. It must be unsheathed and used. This and analogous scriptures are piercing rapiers with which alone you can reach the slumbering consciences of men, therefore forbear not nor fear to use them, for only so can the armour-plate of their unbelief and self-complacency be penetrated.

It is remarkable that it is our Lord Himself, the gracious, gentle Man, who reports these facts. Who but He had authority and power to show us things unseen? None other were competent. He only can inform us with certainty of conditions after death, and compassionate love is His only motive in so doing.

The rich man is not named, for "the name of the wicked shall rot,"

but also in order that any man may put himself in the rich man's place in the framework of the narrative. These two individuals at death were both transferred with the utmost celerity to their respective places in Hades.

Their souls retain their individual entity, full consciousness, acute sensibility, unfailing memory and power of recognition, the faculties of sight, speech, hearing, feeling. If it be objected that a spirit cannot exercise these faculties, that would be to make the faculties depend wholly on the possession of the corresponding organs, and, indeed, reduce the soul to the insensate condition of a log of wood. It is not so. There exists a spiritual capacity for the exercise of these powers which is essentially inherent in the soul, and operates without the earthly organs, necessary only in the physical world. For example, Satan and his angels are spirits and have never been ought else, yet they have and exercise all these faculties and capacities, and will they not feel the anguish of the lake of fire? The legion of demons well knew that they were to feel torment in due time. These corporeal faculties, therefore, exercised by means of the bodily organs, are but the outward reflection of powers which are essential to and inherent in the soul of man, and of which he is not divested at physical death.

These two souls, then, at death enter instantly, the one a prison-house of torment, the other a place of bliss, both being temporary and but the antechambers, the vestibules, the waiting-rooms respectively of the lake of fire and heavenly glory.

The Jews had three expressions designating the place of utmost bliss,

felicity and security. They were Paradise or the Garden of Eden, The Glory of God and Abraham's Bosom, the last mentioned being the most popular. Thus our Lord uses a term well understood by the Jews and needing no explanation. In the Epistles little is said of heaven, but from the few brief references we know that a soul departing life in faith in this age of grace goes at once to be with Christ, which is far better.

For convenience's sake theologians have named the rich man Dives. We must not, however, think that he was consigned to hell because he was rich, or conversely, that poverty entitles men to heaven, though our socialist friends would like to have it so.

What brought the rich man to such dreadful doom, was, not his wealth, but his unbelief in hell, his godlessness, his life of infidel self-indulgence. Disregard to the Holy Scriptures caused his fearful ruin. No crime is charged against him. Doubtless he was a most respected and respectable citizen, but he had committed the fatal sin of disregarding God's revelation. Lazarus says nothing; Abraham takes up the dialogue. Note carefully what the poor rich man did not say, Though he cry for relief yet he asks not for release, for well he knows his doom is unalterable; he does not confess to sin, nor express repentance or regret, nor asks for pardon and cleansing, for these are not known in hell. Neither does he complain of injustice nor lodge any appeal, for he knows right well that Eternal Justice has placed him where he is, though he has not yet been arraigned at the bar of the Great White Throne. He does not say, "send me," for he knows that when the gates of death and Hades

were locked behind him his destiny was irrevocably and eternally sealed. His choice of a messenger falls on none of hell, but a believer from the place of bliss. He never calls upon God nor utters His sacred Name, whereby he shows he has abandoned all hope and is cut off from God for ever. This it is that essentially constitutes hell for the creature. His silence on these points is most striking and significant of despair. The irrevocable hopelessness of this soul, the appalling gloom of his destiny overwhelms with consternation the heart that ponders over it, as it is meant to do.

He asks for Lazarus to be sent to relieve his pain but must be told that none may or can cross that great gulf fixed for the very purpose of prohibiting all traffic. He would that Lazarus might be despatched to his father's house to warn his five brethren, knowing there is hope for the living, though none for the unbelieving dead, and is informed that his brethren have God's Word, and on his suggestion that they would repent if one went to them from the dead, Abraham infers that no shade from hades, no one raised up from the dead and going to his brethren would convince them that hell existed, if they would not give credence to God's revelation; that his brethren already possessed God's Word, that which alone saves the believer therein in all ages, and to that they are referred.

We learn from this incident that the spirit world is not far off, it is not vague; it is near, at one's feet; a stark reality is hell. When death removes a soul from earth that soul enters immediately into bliss or unutterable woe, according to its relation to God on earth. I do not re-

quire information from the nether world but rather cleansing from heaven. Can a man returning from hades cleanse my sinful soul? Nought and none can do this but the precious blood of Jesus; the righteous work of God wrought by Christ in expiation of guilt of man can alone fit me for heaven. The salvation of God is founded on accomplished justice. A man raised from the dead might inadvertently misrepresent truth, but the Word of God is infallible, inerrant, and it is to this perfect revelation of God that Dive's brethren are referred. Even as our Lord Himself said to the Pharisees: "If ye had believed Moses, ye would have believed Me: for he wrote of Me. But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe My words?"

Again, could the spirit of a man, re clothed in flesh and blood, emerging from the tomb make clearer and more certain than the Scriptures all the revealed truth of God? God has fully revealed the truth as to Himself and His will for men, and as to ourselves. This revelation is complete and sufficient to save all that will receive it. This incident reported by our Lord is unique in history and is given to us to enforce the urgency of immediate decision. Two men, neighbours on earth, are instantly transported at death, one into torment and the other into bliss—their destinies eternally unchangeable.

A great gulf fixed,
With shadows lingering o'er.
A great gulf fixed,
And stretched from shore to shore.

The gate of heaven is here on earth. It is hinged on Calvary. Time is the period and earth is the place when and where man's eternal destiny is fixed according to his attitude

to Christ. Now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation. The mention of the last day disturbs man, for it has the knell of death and judgment—to him no funeral note so tremendous, for he desires to live for his will and pleasure in the present. The last day presents to his confused thoughts certain vague terrors, ominous of divine judgment. Therefore you should at all cost enforce on his conscience the certainty of impending judgment.

Believers are not those who have escaped judgment—they have passed through it in Christ to a new life. Now love is the sworn foe of sin for ever, and the instant God were to begin to excuse sin, as man does, He would prove that He does not love man. Were God to overlook sin and make excuse for man on the ground of his frailty, infirmity and adverse circumstances, God Himself by such action would encompass the eternal ruin of us all. It is because God is a consuming fire to sin and never signs a truce with it in His own kingdom, world and universe, that He is a God of love. A man must have a clear, keen vision of sin as the enormity of the ages, never to be excused, if he is to be tender and compassionate to the man who is a sinner. Hence the very message of coming judgment is really a warning of love.

The severest words of God to man called for by man's state, and God's severest treatment, manifest most perfectly His unvarying and unchanging love. It is an eternal truth—each word, each deed, every movement of God toward man is of infinite love, and God's love to man is the basis and motive and spring even of all His most solemn warnings and judgments, and in no case

more so than in Luke 16. The Lord of love and glory, who laid down His life for sinners, draws back with measured and unerring hand the curtain of the unseen world and permits us to overhear this conversation in Hades.

There is nothing so shattering to man's smug self-complacency and pride than the unexaggerated fact of such a dreadful scene. Unutterable love to man moved Christ to give us this revelation. If you love souls you will not hesitate, extremely distasteful as it is to men, to present this side of the truth to startle men out of their unbelief and false security, that if they will not yield to the appeals of ineffable love and grace, they must tremble at coming judgment. Would you allow a weary comrade to slip into a fatal sleep in the Arctic snows and not protest? Would you let a friend continue on a path in the dark that leads over a precipice without bestirring yourself to warn? Then by all means urge and enforce the nearness of hell and of heaven, their immediate proximity and the extreme urgency of accepting God's salvation from the one that they may enter the other. The righteousness and the wrath of God are revealed facts. Nothing man resents so much, yet nought else will stir him from his fatal sleep of indifference, and rouse him to a sense of his danger. Consider the fearful contrast of the state of these two souls! One involved in fearful and irremediable ruin—appalling contemplation! the other resting in love and peace and joy. Thus our Lord would show us the thoughts of a man in hell. It is that though there be no more place of repentance for him, repentance is the only act that will keep men out of hell. He now knows

too late that hell is a fearful fact and infers that all who conceal or deny the fact are doing men a fearful wrong. To what is it then that he desires Lazarus to earnestly testify to his brethren? That hell is a fact and that repentance will keep them out of it. The testimony of a man in hell is of more weight than that of all the millions who have never been there.

Where, however, there is high truth and low practice, the truth of judgment can never be honestly testified. If my conscience is not clear toward God and before men, the truth of imminent judgment has not the place in my practical service that it has in the Word of God.

This truly awful scene, with such solemn background but enhances the wondrous grace of God. It is the deepest sorrow to God, and proves the onus of destruction upon those whose sin it is in rejecting His mercy and grace as revealed in the Scriptures and in the Person of Christ. We should emphatically point out the fact that unbelievers are plunged at death into immediate torment, having, first, of course pointed out the way of salvation.

Having laid this solemn truth before souls you may then say:

"You may die unsaved, but you will never die unloved,
You may die unconverted, but you will never die unwarned,
You may die unrepentant, but you will never die unpitied."

May God give us all the needed wisdom, power and fidelity to use His word to stir up the indifferent and unbelieving that they may be saved.

GOD'S DIVIDING LINE.

R. Turnbull.

1 Samuel 15. verses 1—22, 28, 35.

SINCE the world began, or, at any rate, since the fall, there has been before God a very definite and clear line of demarcation separating between the kingdom of God and the kingdom of darkness. As we take up our Bibles we do not go very far before we see how the Garden of Eden, so delightfully planted by God, was marred. Satan came along with his suggestions, the woman gave a ready ear to what he had to say. Then Adam was swept in. They responded to the devil's wiles; they sinned against God. God is righteous in His acts as well as love in His nature and in righteous judgment He had to turn man out of the garden of Eden, a sinner away from God. The line of demarcation was laid down that day, and man in his sin was on one side of that line and God on the other. That line remains for us to-day. The dividing line is still there before God. On one side of the line, as seen under the eye of God, there are those who have been called by His grace, who have responded to His love declaring allegiance to Christ as Lord, and who desire to walk in accordance with His word; and on the other side of that line there are those who are walking according to the course of this world, and are under the power of the evil one. I take it that we gathered here in this hall are of those who have been saved by the grace of God, and with the precious blood of Christ. We here each for ourselves can say, "He is mine and I am His," and we do desire to walk according to the word of God. It is our privilege and responsibility to do so.

In the Old Testament, and also in the New, we have many examples of those who had the opportunity of responding to the word of God. Some did and they received God's blessing. Others did not, or in some way sought to compromise and missed God's blessing. In our day, there are those who have stepped over the line and walk by faith with God. There are others in the world and of the world who know nothing of these things. It is possible to please God; it *is* possible to walk with God. It *is* possible for those who have responded to His grace to be here in some measure as the Lord Jesus Christ was here, as the dependent One, walking before God and pleasing to Him. But that can only be done as we are prepared to surrender ourselves unto Him who loved us and gave Himself for us.

As we turn for a few examples in the Old Testament, we think of Enoch. He was a man of like passions as we are, and I have no doubt there came a crisis in his life when he realised there were the two roads. He came to the parting of the ways, he stepped on to God's side, and on that side of the line he knew what it was to walk with God. He pleased God, he communed with God, indeed, God made communications to him, for we learn from Jude's epistle that in that far back antediluvian day it was revealed to Enoch that the Lord was coming with ten thousands of His saints, a prophecy not yet fulfilled but which will be fulfilled to the very letter. In walking with God, he proved to be a man of faith and walked in the path of faith and God honoured him. A favoured man

was Enoch! God seemed to have held no secrets from him, because he was on God's side of the line and was walking with God.

We think too of Moses, who came to a time in his history when he had to make a choice and he made it, choosing to be identified with the people of God, despised and rejected as they were, rather than enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season. The pleasures which were bound up with all the wealth of that land which was at his feet, but he made the choice and decided to walk with God? God communed with him and Moses communed with God. He was forty years in the back side of the desert and we do not know what communications passed there between God and Moses, but it is said that God spake face to face with Moses as a man speaketh to his friend. God was able to speak to Moses like that because he walked with God.

Another instance from the Old Testament we have in Abraham. He was called by God and he responded to the call. He stepped on to God's side of the line, and walked with God. And God said, Shall I hide from Abraham the thing which I do? He made communications to Abraham. Why? Because he was on God's side of the line and knew what it was to walk by faith with God. When the time came for the choice to be made between Lot and Abraham he could afford to give Lot the choice. Lot lifted up his eyes and looked on the well watered plains of Sodom. He thought he saw something there that would be to his profit and gain and he chose that. Abraham did not look round, he looked up to God. He knew God, the God who had revealed His mind to him, and God, true to His word,

opened out the way for Abraham, and we know how He blessed Abraham and how Lot was overtaken in Sodom when ultimately the city was consumed.

You say, These are Old Testament worthies, but what about the New? I do not think we have to search very far before we find one in the New Testament who answered to God's will. The Apostle Paul could say, I have fought the good fight, I have kept the faith, I have finished my course. Paul was one who had had a glimpse of the glorified Christ and that was good enough for him. He walked with God and God made communications to him. He was caught up into the presence of God and heard things there that when on earth again it was not lawful for him to utter. And you and I, beloved friends, can know something of what it is to walk with God according to the will of God as revealed to us in His word. We can commune with God and walk with God by faith in a world that is against Him. I wonder if in your heart there is a true desire to know more of what that means? Would to God we saw things in their true value as God sees them, and that in this world there is nothing to satisfy the longings of the heart apart from Christ, but on God's side of the line, there is everything that will satisfy and fill our hearts with joy unspeakable and our lips will be opened to sing His praises.

When we come to our chapter in First Samuel how very different it is, and we do well to take heed to the warning. We find here three outstanding figures. There is Amalek, King Saul, and there is God. *Amalek* a picture of the flesh in activity under the power of Satan, that wars

against the soul. *Saul* chosen by God to represent Him before His people. He should have been a comfort and guide to the people of God, being elected by God for that purpose. Then there is *God* over all Who was taking account of all things. Is it not remarkable God says, "I remember *Amalek*." God does not forget. God takes account of those who seek to hinder the progress of the people of God. The time had come for the destruction of these *Amalekites* and all they possessed. There was to be a complete cutting-off of all that wars against the soul. There was to be no compromise, and *Saul* was the one who was elected by God to do it. God made known His thoughts to King *Saul* and *Saul* went forward to do the will of God. But instead of doing God's will, he chose to do his own will.

God in His goodness to us in this land has put into our hands His Word, the Word of God, the Scriptures. From these Scriptures we can learn the ways of God, we learn the mind of God. We are indwelt by the Spirit of God if we are His, and then it is up to us to seek daily grace to walk in accordance with His word. But that means a surrender of self, and separation from the spirit of the world; it means the refusal of the flesh in all its activity, because the things of God and the flesh are antagonistic the one to the other and can never run together. What says the Scriptures? "Love not the world neither the things that are in the world." The good things, the things that are right in the eyes of man, but if they are of this world they are antagonistic to God, and God calls upon us to take the knife and cut clean between this world and that which is of Himself. Our great Saviour gave Himself for our sins,

that He might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God our Father; and God has called us out of it.

Saul in going down to destroy the *Amalekites* was told to eliminate them "both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass." Everything had to go but we are told he spared *Agag* the king and also what *he* considered to be the best of the flocks. Not only did he do that but to shield himself he actually blamed the people for doing it and, worse still, when he was met by *Samuel* he made the excuse that the people had spared the flock to sacrifice to their God. Could conduct such as that escape the all-seeing eye of God? No doubt *Saul* presented a bold front as *Samuel* approached him but there was the hidden sin and the prophet had to ask, "What meaneth the bleating of the sheep in mine ears and the lowing of the oxen which I hear?" There was nothing wrong with the flocks and herds; the bleating of the sheep and the lowing of the cattle were pleasant sounds. It was quite right to sacrifice to the Lord and we know that with the right kind of sacrifice God is well pleased, but *Saul* was endeavouring to hide his sin of disobedience and *Samuel* had to ask, "Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as in obeying the voice of the Lord?" Behold to obey is better than sacrifice and to hearken than the fat of rams.

We can be assured that obedience to the word of the Lord is the first thing. That which was evidently pleasing to King *Saul* was dishonouring to the Name of the Lord and so he came under the judgment of God. By his very actions he denied the word of the Lord, he failed to do

that which God had told him to do, he disobeyed, and we see the result as we read down the chapter. So far as Saul was concerned, he was of no further use to God. He was dethroned. Is there not in this a solemn lesson for us, for unless we are prepared in honesty of heart to answer to the Lord's will we sin against God, we grieve the Holy Spirit, we are of no use to God.

If in our hearts we allow the world or allow the energy of the flesh as antagonistic to the things of God, to act, we cannot be right with our offerings and sacrifices. God will have none of them. God looks down upon us, and although on the surface everything may appear to be right, as it appeared to be with Saul, yet there were things behind the scene that God heard and saw.

I wonder if in this incident we have a little picture of what may at times be going on in our own hearts and lives? God has called upon us to separate ourselves from the world and all that it means. We learn from His word that the flesh is at enmity against God and must be cut off, but this can only be done as we are prepared to sacrifice ourselves to Him who in love laid down His life for us, and the question arises, Are we prepared to pay the price that God in His holiness demands? We cannot have one foot on one side of God's dividing line and one foot on the other. There is to be a clean step over if we are to please God by walking according to the word of God.

If we realise that this *is* possible, that it *is* possible for us to walk with God, that it *is* possible for us to walk by faith and not by sight in the path-

way into which we have been called, and in accordance with the word of God, we can in His strength go on from victory to victory, realising that God has left us here that we should honour His Name.

You may depend upon it, the devil will do his utmost to hinder us from fulfilling the word of God if he can. He will put obstacles in the way or he will suggest a compromise and we shall have to be determined with purpose of heart. Do we know what that means?

You remember when Moses and Aaron went down to Pharaoh to demand that he let the people of Israel go out of the land of Egypt, God said through Moses and Aaron, "Let My people go three days journey into the wilderness that they may sacrifice unto the Lord their God. But Pharaoh was not prepared to respond to that demand made to him. He said, "Why go three days' journey, why not stay in the land and sacrifice unto the Lord?" "No," said Moses, "We must go with our young and with our old, with our sons and with our daughters, with our flocks and with our herds, we must go three days' journey into the wilderness before we can sacrifice to the Lord."

Then said Pharaoh, "If you must go, do not go very far away, keep a link on with this land." "No," said Moses, "We must go *three day's* journey into the wilderness." Then Pharaoh tried another tack. He said, "Let the men go." He knew perfectly well if the women and children were left behind the men would soon return. No, there could be no compromise, there was to be a complete and distinct break with the links of Egypt and until that break had taken place there could be no sacrificing

unto the Lord. *Three days'* journey into the wilderness, was to separate them from Egypt. I wonder if in that there is the thought of the death of Christ, for it is in measure as we understand the cross of Christ and what it means that the old links will be broken and we shall be severed in heart from the world and all it means. "God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world." Do we understand what that means? The cross of Christ stood between Paul and the world, and we either stand with Paul or we do despite to that cross.

King Saul spared Agag the king. He was evidently prepared to make a friend of him. I wonder how we make our friends? The unequal yoke is hateful to God. "The friendship of the world is enmity with God." Which is it to be. We cannot have both. You may say, I am a Sunday School Teacher. I do a little bit of preaching. I occasionally go out with tracts in my pocket and give them away. But do you love the world? Have you ever read of one named Demas and what the apostle Paul had to say of him, his co-worker at one time? "Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world." It does not say "evil world" as some people quote. Having loved this present age. The spirit of the age, what is that? Has it got hold of you and me? Keeping up-to-date and abreast of times? My

dear friends, the moment we depart from the word of the living God so surely will we meet with disaster.

Let us see to it that while we have the opportunity—and these are the days of opportunity for service for our blessed Lord and Master—let us see to it that in the quietness of His presence we allow Him to search our hearts. I wonder if in connection with our lives He will hear what answers to "the bleating of the sheep, and the lowing of the oxen," things that God had condemned? How disastrous it was in the case of Saul. He was dethroned; he lost his place before God; if we allow our affections to go after the things of the flesh failing to answer to the word of God and to discern that distinct line of demarcation that God has laid down, we shall be of no use to God.

We cannot lose our salvation, but we shall lose our place so far as testimony in this world is concerned, for we cannot have on the one hand the things of God and on the other hand the things of the world, or allow the flesh to operate. God grant that we may take a right outlook upon things in the presence of God realising that in His word He has laid down clearly for us what is His will, and that we might seek fresh daily grace to walk in accordance with His word and respond to His will so that unhinderedly and unfettered we may go forward in His service to serve the One Who in wondrous love laid down His life for us.

Do we not rest over much on the arm of flesh? Cannot the same wonders be done now as of old? Do not the eyes of the Lord still run to and fro throughout the whole earth to show Himself strong on behalf of those who put their trust in Him? Oh, for more practical faith in Him! Where now is the God of Elijah? He is waiting for Elijah to call upon Him.

THE HEAVENLY VISION.

David Ross.

"Where there is no vision, the people perish," "is made naked" (Marginal reading) or, "cast off restraint" (R.V.) Proverbs 29. 18.

"Your young men shall see visions." Acts 2. 17.

"I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision." Acts 26. 19.

THE need for separation from the world has been pressed upon us to-night, and now I wish to speak about that which will enable us to be separate, namely the power of the Vision of God. In our Bible Studies this week we have been considering the story of faith throughout the ages. There we have seen on the one hand the people perishing through want of vision, and on the other God revealing Himself to faith's keen vision and thereby separating men and women from the evil that is in the world.

We have seen how Abraham, the father of those who believe, had a vision of the God of glory and of a city that hath foundations whose builder and maker is God, and how the sight of the better city and better fatherland drew him out from Ur of the Chaldees and from the well-watered plains of Mesopotamia. Then we read of Jacob, a man with grave faults, but also of great faith. His brother Esau had no vision, but lived for the gratification of his present appetite in hunting and eating. Jacob had some regard for future values, and when he saw his shining ladder connecting earth with heaven, he realised, albeit with dread, the presence of God, and the scene of his vision became to him Bethel, the house of God. On a later occasion the vision came to him in a place which he named Peniel for, said he, "I have seen the face of God"—marvellous vision. Again in the wonder of the burning bush Moses learned the Eternity of God,

the I AM that I AM, the Covenant-keeping Jehovah, and "as seeing Him who is invisible, he endured amidst all the vicissitudes of the desert journey and the opposition of a stiff necked and rebellious people.

It was a dark day in Israel's history of which the Scripture says—"There was no open vision," the very priests of the Lord had cast away all restraints and were committing abominations in the courts of Jehovah. Then in the silent watches of the night God spoke to a lad—Jewish tradition says he had just completed his twelfth year—and in response to Samuel's, "Speak, for Thy servant heareth," the vision of a holy God was made known in the prophecy of impending judgments. It was the marvellous vision vouchsafed to Isaiah, when he saw the Lord sitting upon a throne high and lifted up, and heard the seraphims proclaiming, "Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord of hosts," which caused him to volunteer as God's messenger to a perishing people. Thus all down through the ages God has raised up men and given them the vision for the salvation of their age and generation.

And what of our age and generation, with its defiant refusal of what it calls old-fashioned notions and restraints and its determination to be modern? It needs a fresh vision. In 1926 an elderly German complained to me about the moral degeneration and lack of discipline which marked the youth of his country since the catastrophe of the World War. Then

came a man with a vision of a strong, powerful, united Germany, and with such burning enthusiasm did he preach his vision that he has so captivated the youth of his land that they are willing to accept all kind of restraints. Hitler's philosophy and methods may not be ours, but we ardently long to see the Vision of the Christ, the Captain of our salvation, stir an even greater devotion and willingness for sacrifice in our Christian youth.

Throughout the Church's history we have the same story. In the fourth and fifth centuries the mighty Roman Empire was breaking up. Men had thought that Rome was the eternal city, but when St. Augustine found her perishing under the fierce onslaughts of the northern barbarians, he turned to another and better vision and wrote his book, "The City of God," thus bringing comfort to those, who with Jerome mournfully exclaimed, "Who is safe when Rome falls?"

To the German monk, Luther, was given the vision in the strength of which he sought to purge with some success the foulness and naked shamelessness of that which called itself the Church of God. And so from century to century we have in succession the Reformation, the Puritan movement, the Wesleyan Revival, and the glorious Evangelical awakening of the early nineteenth century. When and with whom is the twentieth century revival to begin? It is wonderful what God can do with a few consecrated souls. At the beginning of the eighteenth century a French visitor declared that Christianity was dead in England, and it certainly was moribund, ready to perish, when God granted the vision to a handful of

students at Oxford. Then began a work which completely transformed England, saving it, according to one distinguished historian, from such a bloody revolution as shook France in 1789.

Young men, what you need is the *discipline* which is freely and joyously undertaken by those who have been captivated by the vision of God in the face of Jesus Christ, the One who died for us on Calvary. Let us look briefly at the supreme example of the power of the heavenly vision, viz. the Apostle Paul.

Consider first of all the *darkness* which preceded that Vision. He says, "If our gospel is hid, it is hid to them that are lost," perishing for want of the vision, because "the god of this world had blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them." Such was the condition of this young man, one of the finest specimens of the culture of that day, yet blinded by prejudice and religious pride. And such alas is the spiritual state of many of our cultured youth to-day—utterly blind. And now came the *dawning* of the Vision. Arrested on his mad, persecuting course by a light above the brightness of the sun, he saw Jesus, the risen Son of God and henceforth for the surpassingness of the knowledge of Him he counted everything else as loss. So great a revolution was wrought in him that the only comparison he can find is the dawning of the great primeval light of Gen. 1. 3, when God commanded the light to shine out of darkness. The earth was without form and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep. But

the Spirit of God was brooding there and God said, "Let light be," and light was. And so it happened with Saul of Tarsus. "God hath shined in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." He is the brightness, the effulgence, the outshining of God's glory. What a mighty *drawing* power is in such a vision to draw us so that we run after Him, and thus without regret separate ourselves from all that is contrary to His holy will. This is what fits us for pilgrimage for

"'Tis the treasure we've found in His love
That has made us now pilgrims below."

"But ah the Master is so fair
His smile so sweet to banished men
That those who catch it unaware,
Can never rest on earth again."

Shall not our prayer to him be:

"Draw and win and fill completely,
Till the cup o'erflow the brim,
What have we to do with idols,
Who have companied with Him?"

Who are the men who have been mighty for God? Surely those who have seen the loveliness of Jesus. An English traveller came to Scotland in the seventeenth century. He heard one great preacher, and then said, "That man revealed to me all the holiness of God." Another preacher moved him to say, "He revealed to me the sinfulness of my heart." Then said he "I heard a fair little man in St. Andrews and he shewed me all the loveliness of Christ." That fair little man was Samuel Rutherford, in whose writings and letters, so often couched in the words of Solomon's Song of Love, we find precious unfoldings of the glory of

"Christ who is the fountain,
The deep, sweet well of love.
The streams on earth I've tasted
More deep I'll drink above."

One day as Rutherford was preaching, the sky darkened and a thunderstorm broke. There was

a flash of lightning, and the preacher exclaimed, "To see Him, for a moment swift as yonder fire flash, were worth half heaven," and if this is so, surely it is worth more than all the world.

But a man with a vision is not a visionary. A visionary is a man who follows a phantom and forgets his present duties. A Christian, however, realises that vision brings with it a fresh sense of *Duty*. Paul received a marvellous commission with his vision, and he was sent "to open the eyes of the Gentiles, to turn them from darkness to light and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in Me." Where does your duty lie? In the office, the kitchen, the class-room, the shop, the mine, where perhaps you find nothing that is glorious or inspiring? Albrecht Durer has painted a Bavarian cottage with its smoke-begrimed rafters, rude furniture, rough and homely peasant faces—all transfigured and made glorious by the light of the presence of Christ. Some of us would like to escape from the cottage, the narrow circumstances, the uncongenial task, but in doing so we might lose the vision of Him whose presence once graced the stable, the carpenter's shop, the fisher's boat and made even a malefactor's cross glorious. This is the lesson Longfellow seeks to teach us in his poem, "The Legend Beautiful." He pictures a monk kneeling in prayer, when

"Suddenly, as if it lightened,
An unwonted splendour brightened
All within him and without him
In that narrow cell of stone;
And he saw the Blessed Vision
Of our Lord, with light Elysian
Like a vesture wrapped about Him,
Like a garment round Him thrown."

Lost in rapture he remained bowed before the Vision, when amid his exaltation he heard the tolling of the bell calling him to his duty of tending to the blind and halt and lame, all the beggars of the street. Should he go or should he stay?

Then a voice within his breast
Whispered, audible and clear,
As if to the outward ear;
'Do thy duty; that is best;
Leave the Lord to do the rest.'

Obedient he went to fulfil his duty and when that was discharged returned to find the Vision still standing there,

'And he felt his bosom burn,
Comprehending all the meaning
When the Blessed Vision said,
'Hadst thou stayed, I must have fled.'

And thus the Apostle said, "Whereupon, O King Agrippa, I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision." *Disobedience* to the vision means its loss. When anyone gets light and fails to respond to it, he loses it. What a tragedy it is when we allow anything that causes the *dimming* of the Vision. Someone recently quoted to me the text, "Your young men shall see visions and your old men shall dream dreams," and exclaimed sadly, "Why is it that we must lose our vision, as we grow old?" The reply was that this was not necessary and that many could testify to the brightening, not the losing, of the Vision with the passage of years. But how easily this dimming can take place. I can blind myself to the light of the sun by placing two halfpennies before my eyes, and alas how many have allowed themselves to be robbed of the vision by the love of money. Some have lost it—and this is particularly true of our day—by pride of intellect, allowing some passing theory of science or philosophy to rob them of the eternal Truth of God. Many a young

man has allowed his vision of Christ to be dimmed by the sight of a pretty face, forgetting to ask if, behind that pretty face, there was any sharing of the vision of God in Jesus Christ. This morning we were exhorted to lay aside every weight, but the man who takes an unconverted girl to be his wife, accepts a weight which his very Christianity forbids him ever to lay aside "till death do part." Have your hobbies, has your sport, dimmed your vision? Then drop them. And worse still, is the dimming or the tarnishing the result of passion or secret sin? Then seek the presence of Him whose power can make the vilest clean.

And what is the *duration* of this vision. Suppose the leaders and dictators of Europe do realise their dreams with which they have stirred the imagination and enthusiasm of their youthful followers—a mighty united Germany, a revived Roman Empire, a United States of Europe. Time will roll its ceaseless course and carry us all away from the very finest of man's milleniums, but "the tide of time shall never His covenant remove." Kingdoms and Empires will rise and wane, but the Church of Jesus constant will remain. Death for the Christian, instead of ending his vision, will mean but the removing of all the scales from the eyes and the full unhindered unveiling of the Mystery of God.

"But who that glorious blaze
Of living light shall tell,
Where all His brightness God displays,
And the Lamb's glories dwell?

"There only to adore,
My soul its strength may find,
Its life, its joy for evermore
By sight, nor sense, defined.

God and the Lamb shall there
The light and temple be,
And radiant hosts for ever share
The unveiled Mystery.

“THE TRIAL OF YOUR FAITH.”

F. B. Hole.

1 Peter 1. 3—9.

THERE are found in this short passage quite a number of things that have been occupying us very largely during this week. For instance, I notice that mercy is emphasized, and hope, and an inheritance, and salvation, and faith, and temptations, and trials. Now we have been in our thoughts moving amidst the first, second, third and fourth of these things; and thank God for an occasion like this when we can retire somewhat from the world and our ordinary duties and callings and give time to the consideration of the things of faith that circle around the mercy and hope and the inheritance and the salvation. Still, of course, we have got to come back to the ordinary, humdrum, and frequently rather trying circumstances of daily life.

We have got to the end of our week, and I want to have just a few words with you about this resumption of the ordinary duties of life. But, first of all, just a word on these four things. You see each of them is characterised in a certain way; each is mentioned with an adjective. For instance, mercy is *abundant* mercy. Thank God that we have received of the abundant mercy there is in our God, in that He has begotten us again. Most amazing mercy that we should be begotten of God, and begotten unto a hope which is connected with a risen Saviour. Here, too, we find an adjective; it is a *lively* hope. You know we might have been forgiven in a stunted fashion. We might have had mercy shewn to us but of a very limited order, as is always the case amongst

men, but the mercy of our God is an abundant mercy. We can admire it, when we do see amongst men something that is a pale reflection of the abundant mercy of our God.

Some time ago I either read or heard a story told of a famous pianist. It ran something like this:—A young lady, who was a pianist of considerable powers, found it very difficult to get an entrance and earn her living as she desired. She was going to give a recital in a continental city and she fell into a very sad temptation. She was to play some of the works of the celebrated Abbe Liszt, and she felt, If I could somehow get the prestige of his name (he was at the height of his popularity at that time) it would greatly help me. So she had herself advertised as being a pupil of the celebrated man, when she had never even seen him. However, when she arrived at the town a day before and booked her room in the hotel, what was her horror to see the name of Abbe Liszt in the hotel books. The great man was there himself in the town. She had a fearful night, overwhelmed with horror and remorse. She said, Whatever shall I do? I am ruined. He will refute me. I am caught indeed. After breakfast the next day she sought an interview with the great man; she told him the truth and broke into tears. He said, “My dear young lady, what has possessed you to do a thing like this? Why wreck your fair name at the beginning of your career?” She told him of her struggles and of how she was tempted to do it. At last he quietly

said, "My dear young lady, I forgive you. We will say no more about it."

That was good, was it not? It was mercy to forgive her; but he was going to shew her abundant mercy. So he said, "What were the works of mine you were going to perform?" "Oh," she said, "so and so and so and so." He said, "I would like to hear you play them on the piano." In the presence of the master she had to play a piece. He said, "Yes, very good, but I should rather play it like this." And he played the piece so that she might get the idea. Then she played it again, and he listened and suggested this and that. Suddenly he said, "Look here, mademoiselle, you *are* my pupil for I have just given you a lesson; and as I happen to have a free evening, with your permission I am coming to your concert and I will introduce you to your audience. That was handsome, was it not? He had redeemed the situation, and she found her concert a brilliant success.

That comes to my mind as an illustration of *abundant* mercy. But how faint a shadow is that of *this* mercy. He had become her musical father, but here is One who has begotten us again unto a living hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. The hope that is ours is a *living* hope because it is connected with a risen Christ, who being raised from the dead dies no more; death has no more dominion over Him. He has come out of death, and the hopes that are centred in the risen Lord Jesus Christ are hopes that will never die.

We not only have a mercy which is abundant, and a hope that is living, but an inheritance. Now you

have about four adjectives. *Incorruptible, undefiled, unfading* and *reserved in heaven*; that is to say, out of reach of man's interfering fingers, reserved in heaven for you. For that we are kept. Salvation is ready to be revealed and it is guaranteed by the power of God on the one hand and by faith as regards our side of the matter. The power of God is indeed infinite and unfailing. The inheritance is reserved for us in heaven, and we are preserved on earth for it by the power of God operating through faith.

Now faith has been very much before us in our meetings, and by it we are kept unto that *ready-to-be-revealed* salvation, which is coming. We greatly rejoice in that, though at the present moment we are plunged into these temptations and trials. They have an adjective you see—*manifold*. They catch us all unawares. The wind of temptation seems to blow from all points of the compass at once, a thing it does not do in nature. Satan has all kinds of artifices; he appears in all kinds of guises, and the flesh within is treacherous beyond all words. *Manifold* temptations, and God permits them. Many of us will be saying—That is the trouble. We come away from a season like this, from enjoying a spiritual retreat, we resume our ordinary duties in the old humdrum circumstances and there are the testings and the trials of every kind.

Your difficulty is not mine, very likely, and you may look at me with an envious eye and say, It is all very well for you. Well, is it? I may have testings of which you know nothing. Testings are so manifold. Because I don't visibly have something you have, it doesn't mean I

have nothing at all. I may have that of which you know nothing. Indeed I am sure I have. There *are* manifold temptations, and we are oftentimes *in heaviness* through manifold temptations. We feel it. The weight of them comes down upon us and we cannot escape the weight, and, let me tell you this, we are not intended to. We are intended to feel these things; so that we are tested by them. The test that they impose upon us works out things of value as the next verse says.

Verse 7 speaks of faith again, and every word of the verse is full of meaning. The trial of your faith is like the refining of gold; and, you observe it says, "of gold that *perisheth*." Gold does not perish very easily. No. When they dug up poor old Tutankhamen, with all his splendid surroundings, there were things of papyrus and fine linen of Egypt, brown with age and at a touch crumbling to pieces. But there were things of gold, and they were not much affected compared with all the other objects in that famous tomb. Gold is an enduring thing but it perishes; the inference evidently being that faith does not. Faith is much more *precious* than gold that *perisheth*. God treasures your faith, and that is the adjective He applies to it. In the sight of God faith is something of very, very great price.

Why does that goldsmith take all the pains and spend time over his crucible in which gold is being refined? Because it is such a valuable thing he wants to remove the dross and have it of the finest quality. God permits His people to be put into the crucible and tries them, even by fire, but it is because faith in His estimation is a thing of ex-

ceeding value. So we are going to look at our testings in the light of this, God is dealing with us for the refining of faith, and to strengthen it. The fact of the matter is, if we Christians suffer no testings we shall never be anything but weaklings in a spiritual sense: It is the very testings that make us spiritually strong.

Now I am going back for a moment to verse 6. There are two main clauses here. You greatly rejoice in the coming salvation though now "*for a season*" and "*if need be*" you are in heaviness through manifold temptations. It is a fact that we shall never be in heaviness through manifold temptations except there is a "*needs be*" for it. God does not test us capriciously. It is not that He delights in our testings and our heaviness or even in chastening or rebuking or scourging; we are assured of that in Hebrews 12. So we each have to say to ourselves, If God did not see some spiritual need to be met I should not be face to face with, and under the heavy pressure of, this trial.

And then, look: it is only for a season. I expect you all will remember another place where it says something is for a season. "The pleasures of sin for a season" (Heb. 11. 25). Moses lived a long life; one hundred and twenty years. He turned his back on Egypt and its sinful pleasures at the end of forty years. He had forty years in the back side of the desert. Then a much worse forty years, worried and irritated by people who behaved in a very very perverse way. God suffered their manners in the wilderness and Moses, the meekest man in all the earth, broke down under it just before the forty years terminated. I could not have stood it forty min-

utes: Moses stood it forty years, and then he could stand it no more. But Moses never regretted turning his back on all the pleasures that could only have lasted another eighty years. The reproach of Christ that he embraced only lasted eighty years.

Your trials, your testings, which God sees to be necessary they are only for a season, because He is going to reach His blessed and glorious end. He is going to make them efficacious. They are going to accomplish blessed results, and the faith that has been tested in the crucible, and like being lost, is going to be found: "found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ." Ah! this puts a different aspect on things. We ought not to be so frightfully distressed when our faith is tried. Though we may feel we are being worn out with the same kind of difficulties and troubles and exercises week after week, month after month and year after year, there is a day coming when it will be found unto praise and honour and glory; primarily, no doubt, of the God who so patiently deals with us, but also, without a doubt, to the reward of the one who has stood the testings.

My mind reverts to another story, a musical one strangely enough. The story is told of a young man who went to take lessons under a very celebrated master, great on voice production. He had very good vocal chords. The great man heard him sing and then set him a long course of vocal exercises that he was to practice for hours every day.

Up and down his voice went, up and down, in and out—a very tiresome kind of business. He went on and on, week after week, until he

was absolutely sick and tired of the whole business. However, when he remonstrated the man said, You must go on. Months passed, and to his disgust he was kept on and on and on at the same extraordinary sequence of exercises. One day, when his patience was very nearly gone the master said, Now I think we shall be able to finish these exercises at the end of next week. The end of next week came round and he began to think, Now for some lessons that are new! But the master said, "Young man, I am finished with you. I have nothing more to teach you. Go. You are the finest singer in Europe." And it was so.

Something had been wrought in him. He had not realised it but the master knew what he was doing and he developed his singing powers by a very tiresome course of preparation. He was often in heaviness through the repeated testings, not quite realising what was being done, and it is often like that with us. Young Christian, you are likely to get impatient in learning your lessons, but depend upon it God is testing your faith. We have spent several mornings discussing faith as seen in Hebrews 11. It has been a serious business. It is very certain we shall be tested in faith and if we answer to the test it will be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ.

But before he appears we see Him by faith and we love Him. We cannot see Him with our natural eyes, yet, believing, He becomes a great reality to us. All these testings clarify the eye of faith, and hence we can rejoice. Our joy has an adjective with it—*unspeakable*. Not merely greatly rejoicing, as in verse 6, but now rejoicing with a joy im-

possible of expression, and full of glory, receiving the end of our faith—soul salvation, soul emancipation.

Let us not shrink then at the thought of the testings that are bound to come, because there is the power of God with our faith to carry

us through the testings; and there is the glorious result produced by the testings as God works by them in our hearts. It is not lost exercise or waste of time. It is going to be found to His praise and honour and glory when Jesus comes.

WHEN I CONSIDER.

A. M. Chambers.

Thy fingers formed those countless worlds of light
That move in ordered beauty through the sky,
Vast tokens of Thy glory and Thy might—
These are Thy handiwork—Thine artistry
Hath set the moon in radiance there,
And hung her like a jewel rare
Upon the robe of night!

Did those same hands then toil at Nazareth ?
In pity the foul leper's brow caress ?
Or touch, compassionate, the bier of death ?
Did little children know their gentleness ?
Were they at last—Ah! can it be ?
Pierced through with bitter agony,
Stretched out in helplessness ?

This is the hand that holds thee, Oh! my soul!
Pierced, yet mighty!—all the force of Hell
Can never snatch thee from its sure control,
Nor break that clasp of love invincible !
This is the hand that holdeth thee!
Throughout a long eternity
How safely shalt thou dwell !

God's great Gift.

Who but the blessed God could have thought of such a thing as the gift of the Holy Ghost ? What can equal it ? The Lamb of God takes away all that is *contrary to God*. Is that all ? No. He gives you His Holy Spirit to bring you into all that is *according to God*. It is inconceivable to the human mind. The very immensity of it proves it to be Divine.

“BESIDE THE STILL WATERS.”

J. T. Mawson.

“*He leadeth me beside the still waters*” (Psalm 23).

THE souls of men are restless, sin has made them so, for “the wicked are like the troubled sea when it cannot rest.” But the Good Shepherd calls His sheep from their restless wandering and unsatisfied and self-willed straying and brings them to repose at His feet. He leads them beside the waters of quietness.

The simile brings a picture of peace to the vision; it speaks of restfulness of heart in a secure retreat. But it does not follow that this quietness of soul springs from external circumstances—these may be most adverse to our natural inclination, yet in the midst of them the heart may be unruffled, as another Scripture says: “Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on Thee, because he trusteth in Thee.”

One soul-enthraling incident in the life of our Lord on earth illustrates this quietness and peace to perfection. At the bidding of their Master the fishermen-disciples had launched their craft upon as still a sea as ever the sun shone upon. But they had scarce set their oars to the row-locks when the wind uprose and gradually increased until it blew a terrific gale; the very fury of hell seemed to be let loose in that tempest, and the waves roared and rolled about that one small boat with such force that those well-seasoned mariners were seized with a panic of fear. The raging of the waters without the boat created so great a storm of terror within their breasts that they cried aloud to their Master that they would perish. But what of Him? Was He afraid? Did any anxiety of heart show itself in His demeanour? Nay,

“His head was on a pillow laid,
And He was fast asleep.”

Perfect peace in the midst of the tempest! Blessed repose in the presence of the threatening waves! Why did they not share His pillow? Had that storm increased in its fury sevenfold they would still have been safe, yea, safe as when at His command a great calm laid its arresting hand upon the turbulent waves.

But what was the secret of that wonderful repose? Upon what pillow did the Lord put down His head? The secret was unbroken confidence in God; the pillow was His Father’s changeless and almighty love. He was the Man of absolute dependence, more than man, as we shall see, but truly man, committing all His way to God and satisfied to do His will alone. And the God whom He served was behind every circumstance, He sat above the water-flood and put a strong bridle on the mouth of the storm. It could not rage beyond His permission, His love would keep His loved One in all His ways, and the ever-blessed and absolutely dependent Jesus rested there. And, Christian, He gives that pillow to you, so that you may find repose in the midst of trouble; He says, “The Father Himself loveth you because ye have loved Me.” “*My peace I give unto you . . . not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid*” (John 14. 27). This is a great reality—“He leadeth me beside the still waters.” The raging flood without, but the quiet waters within.

The fear of those disciples brought forth an evidence of the

divine power of the Lord, a gleam of His Godhead glory. With tender compassion in His heart for their weakness, with the quiet of an eternal calm in His eyes, and with omnipotence in the words of His mouth, He spoke to the storm; and the great billows fell at His feet in mute submission as cowers a spaniel at the feet of his master.

The disciples marvelled at that mighty act, and, indeed, it was wonderful; but whether of the twain commands our deepest admiration, the *peace* in the tempest, or the *power* over it?

The former may even be ours, for the latter is always on our side, to be used for us when immortal love sees that the storm has taught us the needed lesson. But it is a greater thing to go through the storm reposing in perfect confidence in Him than to have it removed for us. It is more to His honour when we allow ourselves to be led by the still waters while the floods roll about us,

than to have circumstances changed to suit our lack of faith.

“Carest Thou not that we perish?” cried His disciples. Strange words from their mouths, revealing their distrust of Him. How little they knew Him! I wonder if Simon Peter remembered this faithless cry when years after he wrote to his brethren who were being greatly tried and persecuted. “Casting all your care upon Him, for *He careth for you.*” Yes He cares, and Simon Peter had proved it, and so have we, and so we shall still prove it, not because we have faith but because He is faithful.

Christians, let us trust in the Lord at all times; let us recline upon His bosom, and believe that He will not permit a single circumstance, or place us in any situation which will not further in our souls the purposes of His changeless love. So shall we be led by the waters of quietness. And though in the world we shall have tribulation, yet in Him we shall have peace.

Some Last Words.

I wish my brethren to know that at a moment like the present I am perfectly at peace as to the past, and feel more strongly than ever that there can be no neutrality in questions touching the person of our blessed Lord—or communion where there is indifference to His Name and power. Firm, decided action in separation is the only course. Love and tenderness with faithfulness is to be sought after.

As I may not be able to express myself distinctly by and bye, I wish now to say that I am in perfect peace, resting alone on the blood of Christ, the precious blood of God's Son, which cleanseth from all sin. I find this amply sufficient to enter the presence of God with. “When I see the blood I *will* pass over you.” Oh, the precious, precious blood of Christ. *W.T.*

THE GLORY OF THE SON.

W. Bramwell Dick.

(Proverbs 8. 22-31: John 1. 1-3, 14-18).

WHEREVER we turn in the Holy Scriptures we see how God delights to bring before us the glories of our Lord Jesus Christ. Sometimes in the most unlikely places we find a sparkling gem which demands our attention; calls forth our admiration; and causes us to bend the knee in humble and reverent adoration. Such we find in Proverbs 8. If we love the Lord, and if we are at all conversant with His Word, we have no difficulty in at once identifying the One Who speaks under the name of "Wisdom," as the One who, when on earth, repeatedly spoke of Himself as "The Son." In considering the two portions, indicated at the head of this paper, changes from the Authorised Version will be taken generally from well-known new Translation by the late J. N. Darby.

We read then: "Jehovah possessed Me in the beginning of His way, before His works of old," verse 22. That this is the same beginning as that of which we read in John 1. 1, there can be no question. That this person was with God in the past eternal ages is beyond all doubt. "I was set up, or anointed, from the beginning or ever the earth was." Might not this mean that He was anointed by God to be the active agent of the Godhead in creation, Colossians 1. 16, in redemption Colossians 1. 14, and in reconciliation, Colossians 1. 20-22. "When there were no depths, I was brought forth, when there were no fountains abounding with water. . . . When He prepared the heavens I was there. . . then was I by Him." Just let us read the striking questions addressed to

Job by Jehovah, as recorded in Job 38. 1-11, then turn again to our chapter and find those questions answered by the only Person who could answer because He was there. But He was there not only as the active participator in what was done, but as the object of the delight of Him with whom He was. Thus we read in verse 30: "*Then*," — when all that is set out in the verses immediately preceding took place,—"*Then* I was by Him, His nursling, or the nursling of His love." We turn to John 1. 18, for the key: "The only begotten Son which *is* in the bosom of the Father." We read Colossians 1. 22. "The Son of His love." We view those divine affections that existed between them of whom our chapter speaks as Jehovah and "the nursling of His love;" and whom the Holy Spirit tells us in the New Testament is "the only begotten Son which is in the bosom of the Father," "the Son of His love."

But more, verse 30 might also be translated: "Then was I by Him, his artificer." He was the artificer in eternity of that which He created in time, for "All things were made by Him, and without Him was not anything made that was made." "I was daily His delight, rejoicing always before Him." The centre of divine affection; the object of eternal pleasure; the One in Whom Jehovah found that which gratified His heart, and gave Him great delight. "Rejoicing in the habitable part of His earth." As another has written, "that part of the earth which was fitted for man to live on." Just as an architect who has received a commission to plan a magnificent building, and de-

cides that it shall be his masterpiece, rejoices, even before the first sod has been cut or the foundation laid, as, in his mind's eye, he sees the structure completed, and admired by all, so the great Artificer rejoiced in the habitable part of the earth before the earth's foundation was laid.

He saw, in those past eternal ages, those whom, in the region of time, He would call out from among the sons of men to form His Assembly? to whom He as Son, become Man, would reveal the Father; whom He would introduce into divine affections, and that that assembly would be the vessel for the display of the glory of God in Christ Jesus in the ages yet to come. Ephesians 3. 20-21.

We have already noticed points of connection between Proverbs 8 and John 1 to which we now turn. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." The "beginning" in Proverbs 8 and in John 1, as we have remarked, are unquestionably the same. He of whom Proverbs 8 speaks as "Wisdom" is clearly the One of whom John 1 speaks as "the Word." The commencement of this chapter has been beautifully epitomised: "In His existence eternal,—in His Nature divine—in His Person distinct." We wonder and adore as we pass from this to verse 14. "And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us." He who is the Everlasting Word, coming into Manhood, became the incarnate Word, for obviously only the Everlasting Word could become the incarnate Word and yet ever be the Everlasting Word. Oh! the marvel of it! He who is so great, so infinite in majesty and in power; the nursling of Jehovah's love; the Son of the Father's love; the artificer of the

Universe; the Word; He "became flesh, and tabernacled among us, full of grace and truth." Unrecognised in His own creation—"He was in the world, and the world was made by Him, and world knew Him not."—(verse 10), unwanted by "His own," "He came unto His own, and His own received Him not" (verse 11), and yet He tabernacled among men "full of grace and truth." But let us not miss the beauty of the parenthesis in this fourteenth verse. The inspired writer, referring to himself and his fellow Apostles interpolates: "And we beheld His glory, the glory as of an only-begotten with a father." An only-begotten is the object of his father's affection, the one round whom circles his father's purpose and plans whatever these may be.

The term only-begotten in Scripture does not refer to point of time nor to natural generation. We read in Hebrews 11. 17. "By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac: and he that had received the promises offered up his only-begotten son." Isaac was not Abraham's only-begotten son in point of time nor by natural generation, but he was inasmuch as he was the object of his father's affections, and the one in whom his father's plans, as well as God's purpose, were centred. Carry this thought into John 1. 14. "The glory as of an only-begotten with a father." What does it mean? Look at verse 18, "The only-begotten Son which *is* in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him." "His nursling," "The nursling of His love"; "The Son of His love." The One who occupied, who occupies, and who ever will occupy a position that could only be His. Let us carry this conception into John 3. 16, and sound a little deeper the unfathom-

able depth of divine love: "For God so loved the world, that He gave *His only-begotten Son*, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Now let us retrace our steps "The Word became flesh and tabernacled among us full of grace and truth."

The Eternal Word became the Incarnate Word and was found as a Man among men "full of grace and truth." Grace in abundance, for, says the inspired penman, "Of His fulness have all we received and grace upon grace." Divine fulness resident in a Man and grace lavished by Him upon the sons of men. How we love to dwell, do we not, upon verse eighteen? "No man hath seen God at any time." We can understand that, "The only-begotten Son which *is* in the bosom of the Father." Here is the eternal "*is*." He ever was in the bosom of the Father. He never left it. The Man of Sychar (chapter 4), of Bethany (chapter 11), of Gethsemane (chapter 18), of Calvary

(chapter 19), "Who has entered Heaven and is on the right hand of God" (1 Peter 3), was, and is, and ever shall be "The only-begotten Son which *is* in the bosom of the Father." He came into Manhood that He might declare the Father's Name, reveal the Father's Heart, and gather to Himself a company who with Himself, as Man, would find their delight in the Father's presence and their joy in the Father's love. It is all too wonderful for words, our poor hearts are lost in wonder and amazement as we seek to contemplate it. We look on with eager and glad expectation to our being with Him, when, free from every limitation to which we are subject here, we shall for ever explore the breadth and length, and depth, and height of that which these precious portions of Holy Scripture bring before us. May we have a deep appreciation of it now, and as a result bow our knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ in worship and in praise.

1 Peter 4.

The gospel condemns the old life *of the flesh* in which men do their own wills, and offers a new life *in the Spirit* in which they do the will of God. There can be nothing but judgment for that old life, and nothing but approval for the new.

Adam failed at the first incitement to do his own will, the Lord was tested in every possible way, even to death, and nothing made Him do His own will, He died to continue in the path of obedience, and we are sanctified by the Holy Spirit and the blood of Jesus to that same obedience.

When we yield to temptation we do not suffer at the time, the flesh within is gratified, but we suffer afterwards from an accusing conscience and the loss of communion with the Lord. When we resist temptation we suffer in the flesh, but our souls are free and we are conscious of the approval of the Lord.

THE DEATH OF THE CHRISTIAN.

A Brother.

DEATH is not a popular subject, even among Christians, yet it is one from which we ought not to shrink. We ought not to be ignorant concerning them that are asleep, especially since if the Lord's coming is delayed we must also tread the way they have gone. We are very familiar with Paul's words as to it. "To depart and to be with Christ, which is far better." "To die is gain," (Phil. 1). "We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord" (2 Cor. 5). It is evident that he thought much of death, and viewed it as an experience to be desired chiefly because it meant for him to be consciously with the Lord.

I know that the coming of the Lord is the great hope of the Church, and that we can sing with enthusiasm:

"O joy, O delight, should we go
without dying!"

but I knew a Christian man, who was well taught in the Scriptures, and most devoted to the service of the Lord, who used to say, "If I knew that the Lord was surely coming to-morrow, I should wish to die to-day." His idea was that it must be a very wonderful thing for a Christian to step out of a tired body into the presence of the Saviour, and then to know actually in his own experience the mighty resurrection power of the Lord. And there is a great deal to be said for that. J. G. Bellett, when dying, anticipated the joy of being with the "Man of Calvary," "the Man of Sychar's well," before the throne and kingdom glories were revealed.

There is, of course, with many, if not with all a natural shrinking from death, it seems so unnatural,

even though it is as common as birth. We have to remember, too, that by sin death entered into the world, and it has passed upon the whole race of men, because all are sinners. It is the judgment of God lying upon man, and we cannot forget the word which speaks of the devil having the power of death and by it keeping men in fear and bondage all their lives (Hebrews 2). Yet deliverance from the fear of death has come; the death of Christ has changed everything, it is to us the great revelation of the love of God, it has taken the sting out of death and has robbed the devil of its power; the keys of death and hades are in the risen Saviour's hands. It is evident that whatever natural shrinking there may be from it, the Christian has no need to have a single tremor in the presence of it. We say that without any question, for the Scriptures bear full witness to it, and the experience of a mighty host could be called to confirm the Scriptures.

Aged saints of days that have passed triumphed in the presence of death. I might quote Richard Baxter's saying, "I have pain, but I have peace": Samuel Rutherford's "Oh, for a well-tuned harp": John Fletcher's "I'm like a bird escaping from its cage": Melancthon's "Nothing now but heaven." This triumph or quiet peace is still the portion of those who know the Lord. I heard of a young girl in her late teens who when they thought she was gone and said so, whispered "I'm just passing into glory." I listened to the last words from a dying saint, they were, "Look up, the Lord's presence is a comfort and joy." J. N. Darby, after a long life of service said, "I have

no ecstasy, only peace." If I may be permitted to speak of myself I will tell of a great experience while waiting for an operation in a nursing home, from which I had no expectation of recovery. As the hours passed, all care and anxiety, even about others, fled away, they were in the hands of a faithful and gracious God, even as I was, and a rest too profound and complete for human words, for it passed all human understanding, filled my soul. It seems as though the Lord Himself drew nearer to me than pain and weariness and care, and I had to say afterwards, "If being just outside heaven is so wonderful, what must it be to be inside?"

A gifted poet has sung a poor, sad dirge:

"Nothing begins and nothing ends
That is not paid with moan,
For we are born in others' pain
And perish in our own."

But we may thank God, that such a hopeless outlook has no place in Christian hymnary.

"Whether we live or die we are the Lord's." Neither in this life nor the next can anyone pluck us from His hand. How secure, how blessed are all who are His. Here *for* Him, then *with* Him. We are well assured that death cannot separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord, but the Scripture says, Death is ours. "The world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours, and ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's" (1 Corinthians 3. 22, 23). That means at least, that death has become our servant, no longer a dreaded foe but a friend, drawing aside the curtain and ushering dying saints into the presence of the Lord.

There is the Lord's side of it as well as ours. The Scripture says,

"Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints" (Ps. 116. 15). It must be a joy to His heart to be able to approve of their life for Him here, but we do not think that it would be wrong to say that it must be a greater joy to welcome them to His presence when their work is done and their race on earth is finished, Stephen said, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit," and then that great triumph of love over hate, "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge." I am sure that we may say that the Lord had a great joy in welcoming His faithful, triumphant martyr to Himself, the first of a mighty army to follow. He is still receiving the spirits of His saints, and everyone that goes is "absent from the body and present with the Lord." His joy in having them with Himself must exceed theirs, though their's will be very great.

Not until the resurrection will the saying be brought to pass that is written, "Death is swallowed up in victory." For man is not complete without His body, and divine love could not be satisfied with anything less than the completeness and perfection of the loved objects. Spirit, soul and body must be conformed to the image of God's dear Son that He may be the firstborn among many brethren. Yet it seems certain from Scripture that in this intermediate state, while awaiting the resurrection, the spirits of the saints are consciously at rest and supremely happy in the Saviour's presence, even though they may not be actively serving Him as they will when they are clothed upon with incorruptible, tireless bodies.

"Thanks be unto God that giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

CHRIST—THE GREATEST ATTRACTION.

James Houston.

Addresses at Bangor, N. Wales, July 30th (continued).

(Read John 12. 20-21; 1. 33-39; Philipp. 3. 7-8).

THE Feast of the Passover had come round. The Jews, from far and near, had come to Jerusalem to celebrate it. Among them were found certain pious Greeks, whose faith had moved them to join in the festivities and in the worship of God.

Jerusalem was at its best. It offered much to attract its visitors. And, as might be expected, the Greeks would find plenty to satisfy their inquiring mind. They would see the ancient buildings, teeming with historical interest. They would see what must have been the most magnificent edifice in the world—God's temple. They would see the pompous array of robed priests, as they performed the ritual of Moses' law. In the very midst of all that was traditional, venerable, religious and spectacular, they would seem to have enough to engage them.

But they were not satisfied with what they saw. The object of their quest was not in ceremonial religious forms, nor in historical buildings. Turning aside, as those who were dissatisfied with sight-seeing, they said to Philip, one of the disciples: "Sir, we would see Jesus." To them, Christ was the greater attraction.

In this we find a certain parallel with ourselves. We have come to Bangor. While here we have seen much that could attract us. Planted down in the midst of wild and imposing scenery, for which North Wales is famous, difficult it would be

to resist the charms that surrounded us. Some of the beauty spots, which we were able to visit, made such impression on us as we shall not readily forget. The fellowship was sweet; the Bible Readings were edifying; the ministry from God's servants was most helpful; and the joy of seeing one another was great. But, like the Greeks who went to Jerusalem, we feel that all this, however it may engage us, does not of itself satisfy us. We must see Jesus. He is the greater attraction for us, as He was for them. In fact, God's people are never really satisfied unless they see Him.

A certain clergyman was called to minister to a poor congregation in a rural part of Scotland. Being a well-educated man, with gift of expressing his thoughts in cultured language, he preached wonderful sermons. But the members of his church were not edified by his learned discourses, and soon became dissatisfied. One of them, expressing the common feeling of all, wrote the following words on paper, and placed them on the book-board in the pulpit: "Sir, we would see Jesus." When the clergyman entered and saw the words, he was plunged into deep thought and exercise. They had the right effect. They led to a complete change in his life, and afterwards in his ministry. He followed the example of the apostles, and preached Jesus. This had the effect of converting many in his church to God, and of edifying the Christians in their most holy faith. Another member, willing to express

gratitude for what had taken place, wrote these words on paper, and placed them on the book-board in the pulpit: "Then were the disciples glad when they saw the Lord." None but Christ can satisfy. Sights may attract the eye; high-flown speech may engage the ear; but Christ alone can satisfy the heart. He is the greater attraction.

Looking now at our second scripture in John 1. 35-39, we see the witness of John the Baptist to Christ. The Baptist was a great man, and had been a bright light in Israel. In fact, a greater man than he had not been born of woman. So said the Lord Himself of this distinguished servant. One day, as he stood by the River Jordan, he saw Jesus walking. He became engrossed with the sight and oblivious to everything else. It was a never-to-be-forgotten sight, which completely overpowered him.

The Baptist was attracted, not by the multitudes of Israel, but by Christ, who was to him the greater attraction. Christ filled his vision, and his heart; and from the fulness of his heart, he exclaimed: "Behold the Lamb of God!" He did not address these words to anyone. He was unconscious that anyone heard them. Nor were they the official witness he gave, in fulfilment of his callings, as prophet and forerunner of Christ. They were the expression of his own personal feeling, naturally and spontaneously made, as he gazed on Christ with wonder and admiration. And the effect of them, thus uttered, was to attract two of his own disciples to Christ.

It may be laid down as a never-varying principle in witness-bearing, that when we ourselves are wholly

engaged with Christ, our testimony of Him, naturally and spontaneously uttered, has the effect of drawing others to *Him*, and never to *ourselves*. Christ is always the greater attraction. When a speaker is engaged with Christ, he will attract his hearers also to Christ. Thus it was with the Baptist. He attracted his two disciples to the same glorious Person as he had before his own vision. In his way, the faithful servant never attracts to himself, but to the subject with which he is occupied.

I was said of Cicero, that when he made some of his great orations, the hearers would become occupied with the orator, himself, and would exclaim: "Oh, what a man!" On the other hand, of Demosthenes it was said, that when he spoke, he fixed the attention of his hearers, not on himself, but on the object with which he desired to engage them. In this he succeeded. When he urged his fellow-countrymen to defend their country, he so filled them with zeal, that they would exclaim: "Let us fight!"

The Christian minister misses the mark, when he occupies his hearers with himself. On the other hand, he succeeds in his ministry, when he can engage them with Christ. It would be well, if all who minister to the Lord, would test themselves thus "with whom, or with what, do I occupy my hearers?" The Baptist is an outstanding witness to Christ. He decreases; Christ increases. He, the lesser attraction, gives place to Christ, the greater attraction. Happy and useful are those servants who can follow his example!

When Jesus saw the two disciples of John following Him, He sub-

mitted them to a test. He would know for what reason they came after Him. "What seek ye?" He said to them. What was their motive in leaving their former master, and following Him? Was it a passing feeling of admiration, that would readily give place to a change of mind, if difficulty presented itself? Or was it true heart-attachment to Himself, in a love that would surmount all obstacles, and endure all hardship? This is the test of true discipleship. It reminds us of the test Naomi gave to Ruth. But Ruth answered to it well, and would not be turned back. She loved Naomi, and was resolved, at all costs, to follow her. So it is with the true disciples of Jesus; they love Him, and willingly leave all to follow Him. It is not a question of getting anything from Him, but a question of being *with* Him. Love draws to its object. "Master, where dwellest Thou?" they said. This clearly showed they desired to be *with* Him.

If the effect of ministry, during the past week, has been to draw us to Christ, then it has achieved its right end. It is this we desire, above all else; nor is the soul satisfied till it gets Him. To be drawn away from everything to Himself; to be with Him, in the path of discipleship, learning more and more of Himself; to always have His company, by being with Him where He is; to see His loveliness, and contemplate His perfections; to sit, like Mary, at His feet, and hear His word; to rest, like John, in His bosom, in all the warmth of His measureless love—this, and more than tongue can tell, is the portion of those who are drawn to Him.

Coming now to the last scripture (Philipp. iii. 7-8), we have Christ, as the greater attraction, presented to

us in another way. He is not at Jerusalem; nor is he walking by the banks of the River Jordan; He is in the glory of God. Paul saw Him there, and was attracted to Him in that place. Thus He becomes the object of attraction in heaven, and draws His followers from earth. What can be more wonderful than a person walking on earth, attracted to Christ in heaven! It was thus Paul walked, as our chapter clearly proves. Having seen Christ in glory, he could say, "all things I count but loss"—nay, he could go further, and say, "Yea, I do count them but dung." The surpassing knowledge of Christ in glory was more to Paul than all earthly glory. With him, it was a question of allowing the lesser glory to fade away in the presence of the greater glory.

A story is told about Sir William Herschel's discovery of the planet Uranus. The astronomer had noticed one of the planets deviate from its course. He concluded that some greater attraction had done this. By the aid of his powerful telescope, he discovered that Uranus had been this greater attraction. Now Paul had a promising career as a man in this world. Eminently gifted, of noble birth, possessed of all that could give him advantage in the course of fame, he counted it all *loss*—nay, he esteemed it as *dung*. Why this deviation from the course that men take in this world? Why turn his back on the very things man seek with avidity? The answer is simple. A greater attraction came before him. Christ in the glory, eclipsed the minor attractions of earth. Thus he was drawn out of a earthly course of fame, to pursue a goal in heaven. And he pressed toward the mark for the prize of the calling on high, with his back to the world.

I was in Madrid in the year 1906. It was, I think, in the month of June. One day, when the sun was at its full strength, say, at half past eleven, it began suddenly to grow smaller. This continued till it almost disappeared. Meanwhile the stars came into sight, just as if it were midnight. Presently the sun began to grow larger, till it assumed again all its meridian brightness. Needless to say, by this time all the stars had disappeared. They were eclipsed! And this was all done in the brief space of an hour.

It illustrates very clearly how minor bodies are eclipsed by a major one. In the absence of the sun, the stars are wonderful luminaries. But in the presence of the sun, they can scarcely be said to exist. Their glory passes into insignificance—nay, it vanishes from our eyes. The eclipsing power of a greater attraction can work wonders in the physical world. How much more can Christ, the greater attraction, work in the moral world, drawing His own to Himself, and binding them to Himself by invisible bonds that can never be severed!

"IF NOT"

A. M. Chambers.

Our God IS able . . . and He WILL . . . BUT, if not— Dan. 3. 17, 18.

Doubt not His power. The starry skies
Utter from night to night His praise,
And every flower that scents the air
Proclaims the wonder of His ways.
Omnipotence His servant is,
And can He not, while thou dost pray,
Put forth His hand in mighty power
And grant thee thy request to-day?

If thou dost look at Calvary,
Thou never more canst doubt His love,
For He who hung there gave Himself
That love for thee to fully prove.
And shall the love that took Him there
Be faithless now in time of need?
Nay! Trust Him wholly—thou shalt find
A never-failing love indeed.

He can! He will! but it may be
He hath for thee some better thing,
And His deliverance shall be
Beyond thy small imagining.
God's "IF NOT" means He'll answer thee
With blessing far above thy prayer,
For He Himself will walk with thee,
And thou shalt learn His wisdom there.

ABOVE THE BRIGHTNESS OF THE SUN. T. Oliver.

SOLOMON, the wisest man of Old Testament times, in the heyday of his youth and regal splendour, wrote many songs. The choicest of all has been preserved to us in the Song of Songs! Literary people tell us that it is a superlative love lyric, which is matchless in any language. However, the Christian sees therein the added quality of prophetic character with reference to Christ and those whose hearts have been won by His love.

In the zenith of His reign, Solomon enunciated a series of proverbs which have formed a book of reference of wise judgment for men in every clime and age.

In his declining years, indeed only two years before he died, Solomon wrote a book of very different character to either of the foregoing. In the Ecclesiastes (lit. the Book of "calling together") he sets forth a very pessimistic view of affairs. These were described repeatedly as being "under the sun."

His summary of everything was vanity or emptiness, literally of soap bubble consistency! The soap bubble is very beautiful. Its film has been the subject of great scientific investigations of entrancing interest. But the bubble, notwithstanding its beauty has little permanency and when subjected to a small disturbance it vanishes. How aptly descriptive is that feature of "everything under the sun"!

Solomon also mentions the added feature of "vexation of spirit." No one had ever before, or have they ever had since, such an opportunity of enjoying to heart's content every-

thing under the sun. Yet his closing days were not joyful; indeed they were shrouded in gloom. So is the end of all whose vision is limited to what is under the sun!

However, on turning to the New Testament we see the principle emerging that there are things "above the sun." The way that this breaks in on the soul of the individual is well illustrated in the history of the principal writer on these matters in the New Testament.

Saul of Tarsus, as proud and self-willed as Solomon, was in the heyday of his life and youthful vigour when he went to Damascus to blot out the Christian name from under the sun, when a "light above the brightness of the sun" caused a complete revolution in his being and subsequent conduct. It is of great interest to note the description of that light in the three records of the story.

In Acts 9: "A light from heaven."

In Acts 22: "A great light."

In Acts 26: "A light from heaven above the brightness of the sun."

All three records refer to the same light but the series of expressions show a growing appreciation in the heart of the witness of the excellence of the light. Henceforth the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ eclipsed everything under the sun for that man. His spiritual fervour led him to press forward towards the mark of the calling on high of God in Christ Jesus. Every excellent thing under the sun became to him only fit for the refuse bin.

The young man, Saul of Tarsus, head and shoulders above his contemporaries in a moral sense, became Paul, the aged Apostle, who esteemed himself only a little worker in God's plan of action. At the end of his career, like Solomon, he was a writer. But a great contrast is presented between their writings. Solomon with everything to gratify the senses throughout his life was nevertheless a disappointed man! After thirty years of continual trial and sufferings for the name of Christ, Paul could write amid the gloom of a Roman prison,

“Rejoice in the Lord, alway” (Phil. 4. 4). “I have all and abound, I am full” (Phil. 4. 18). “I am now ready to be offered and the time

of my departure (or analysis) is at hand, I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day, and not to me only but unto all those also who love His appearing.”

In Christ the aged Apostle had found complete satisfaction and required no one else to supply his needs or to add to his joy.

Thus our affections are detached from things “under the sun,” so that we may be attached to “things above the brightness of the sun,” which find their centre in Christ, in the Glory of God.

What Thou art!

Not what I am, O Lord, but what Thou art!

That, that alone can be my soul's true rest;
Thy love, not mine, bids fear and doubt depart,
And stills the tempest in my troubled breast.

It is Thy perfect love that casts out fear;
I know the voice that speaks the “It is I”;
And in those well-known words of heavenly cheer
I hear the joy that bids each sorrow fly.

'Tis what I know of Thee, my Lord and God,
That fills my soul with peace, my lips with song,
Thou art my health, my joy, my staff, my rod;
Leaning on Thee, in weakness I am strong.

More of Thyself, oh, show me hour by hour,
More of Thy glory, O my God and Lord;
More of Thyself in all Thy grace and power,
More of Thy love and truth, incarnate Word!

ABIDING IN GOD.

James Green.

(1 John 4. 7-19).

HE that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God and God in him." In these words is expressed the present blessedness that results from the knowledge of reconciliation. John though not using the word, is largely occupied with the present result to the believer of having been reconciled to God. Hence he dwells much upon the person of the Son of God, in whom reconciliation finds its full expression; and upon His work in the value of which we are accepted; enlarging also upon the gift of the promised Comforter who is the energy of our communion with the source of eternal joy in God. "Thou lovedst them as Thou hast loved Me."

The sphere of Divine love in its highest character as Christ knows it is that into which we are brought in receiving the reconciliation. In order that the greatness of this may be known and appreciated, the Holy Spirit has formed in the midst of a world that knows not God, a circle of love embracing all saints, and this mutual love one to another may be the characteristic by which the world is to recognise the disciples of Christ. This love of the brethren is no mere human sentiment or affection flowing from natural affinity, for it is of God. It is the hall mark of a new nature in those who are born of God, for God is love. The possession of a nature which has its origin in God is a supreme necessity for the understanding of God and for the knowledge of the thoughts of Him who is the perfection of love. At the same time we do not know Divine love by the measure of our feeble apprehension of it, nor by

that which may be seen in the ways of those who belong to the family of God, we know love in that which is towards us, by a manifestation outside of ourselves, in nothing less than the fact that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world that we might live through Him. No more tender expression can be found for Him whom God has sent, than that of "Only begotten" not referring to His birth in time, but revealing the place of deepest affection in which He ever was ere time began. "For Thou lovedst Me before the foundation of the world."

How wonderful must be the reconciling desire of God's heart that He should send One so dear to Himself into this world of sin and sinners, where every surrounding was out of harmony with His purity and holiness, and this in order that those who were dead might live: that enemies might become friends; and blind eyes be made to see, and deaf ears be opened to hear the outflowing of the heart of God.

But how far did this Divine love go? It has not stayed from reaching to the uttermost sacrifice in order to attain its desire, 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." When the presentation of the grace of God in the Son failed to elicit the least response from man, indeed was met by scorn, rejection and hate, then it was that love was most fully displayed, and went to the length of meeting every demand of the holiness and justice of the Divine throne by a sacrifice of infinite value which in-

volved the death of the Son of God. This unique offering by which the whole question of sin has been settled has rendered God's glorious throne of unsullied light, truth, holiness and justice, favourable to the approach of those in whose hearts no love to God existed. The throne instead of barring the way to any such approach has become a mercy seat set forth by God; a meeting place where the cleansing power of the blood of Jesus is efficacious for the chief of sinners.

It is in this great act of renunciation that reconciliation on the part of God is made known. The cross, on which man inscribed in mockery of the claim of Him they had crucified "This is Jesus" now bears the glorious message "Herein is love." Propitiation was needed because we were guilty, in order that receiving it we who once were dead might live unto God. It has been well said that "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." God has poured out the full wealth of His love in sending into the world His only begotten Son, and by this act has brought us out of death into life, and won us from enmity to peace and reconciliation with Himself.

The perfection of the love of God expresses itself in three ways. "Towards us" as we have seen in the gift of His Son: "In us" for He hath given us of His Spirit, the distinguishing mark of His children: "With us" in view of the coming day of judgment in which love will display its triumph. The present result which these things are intended to produce in the soul, is the absence of all fear, for the consciousness of fear reveals that this perfect love of God is not received in its

entirety. Another thing is needful if the love of God is to be enjoyed in its fulness and privilege. "If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and His love is perfected in us." Only so is it possible to know the fulness of the Divine purpose. The knowledge of God in the perfection of His love is contingent on the great fact that the only begotten Son who is in the bosom of the Father hath declared Him, and this revelation is known in that circle of all saints which Divine Love has formed.

There the abiding of God is known, and there His affections are known without reserve, not only towards, but in the objects of it. In this circle and by His Spirit, for no other power is adequate to accomplish this, God abides in us, and the home and rest of our souls is found in Him. The love of God knows no narrower circle than all saints, and has no other centre from which His love can radiate than the Son of His love. The manifestation of God in the Son is the source of our knowledge of God, and in that we learn that God is love. Hence to abide in the love thus revealed is to dwell in the sphere of Divine affections which has been opened to us, and as it has been the pleasure of God to bring us there, God dwells in us, and works in us, for the furtherance of His own will and purpose. In Eph. 3. 19. Christ dwelling in the heart by faith is the means by which we are rooted and grounded in love, and learn the immensity of the thoughts of God which embrace all saints. Dwelling thus in love we dwell in Him and He in us in one blessed intimacy of the Father's affections which rest upon the Son of His love, and this is eternal life.

Three things follow from this. 1. The Divine circle where God's love

is pre-dominant. 2. The response which love begets. 3. The total absence of fear, in presence of the perfect display of God's love. A day will come in which God will judge the world in righteousness by "that Man" whom He has ordained, but that day holds no terror for the heart that is dwelling in God, for "that man" is the Son of God who loved us and gave Himself for us. It is He whose risen life has become the experience of our souls, and the revelation of whose presence will be the consummation of all we have hoped and longed for. The present consciousness of fear is a witness that the heart has not received the knowledge of His perfect love that by infinite sacrifice has met the question of judgment, and in infinite wisdom provides for all things until the day of His glory comes. It is not our love that is perfect, but His, who cannot be satisfied while any element of fear remains.

Then our identification with Him is complete, and this is known in its fulness as our thoughts embrace all saints. Whilst still in this world waiting for Him to appear, we know that in His acceptance all His are graced, His place with the Father is theirs and ours, and as He is loved so also are all His, and when He shall be manifested then shall all His appear in the same glory. "As He is" will then be revealed to an astonished universe, but its abiding reality waits not for that day, for it is ours now for present joy as we dwell in Him and He in us, and learn in the circle of all saints the communication of those things the Father has given to him. Then there is response, "We love Him." This is for the joy of God, the return to Him of the love of those He has

sought at such a cost, love produced by His own love.

This response is attained in a far higher way than the first man in innocence was capable of, for in every believer in the Son of God the capacity of a new nature has been formed, with which the Spirit of God identifies Himself as a Spirit of sonship, producing affections which answer to the Father's heart. All is of God, and therefore we are not turned in upon ourselves to find love, but called to behold His acting towards us, and this alone can produce response. He first loved us, therefore we love Him. Love on our part was non-existent but set over against this is the historical manifestation of love on God's part, for the greatest and crowning act of love on God's part was the gift of His Son, that He might go to death for us, even the death of the cross.

So easily does the human heart deceive itself as to the true character of love, that there is the need of a test in order that its sincerity may be seen. This consists in two things: 1. Love to the brethren, who begotten of God partake of the same nature. 2. Obedience to the word of God in which His will is set forth. Love to the brethren if zeal has no element of party bias or sectarian spirit in it, neither can its absence be excused by a zeal which is not according to knowledge. The brethren are born of God, they are dear to Christ who has died for them, and if this does not awaken in the heart the spiritual affections found in 1 Cor. 13, it is a proof that the love about which we may talk is a hollow pretension which arises from some other motive than love to God by whom they and we have been begotten. "Every one that

loveth Him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of Him." The two are seen to be inseparable, our love to the brethren is the sign and necessary condition of our love to God.

So conversely our love to God which is shown by keeping His commandments, is in itself the measure of our love to the children of God, for the love He has begotten can desire nothing less than the blessing of His will for all saints. They are the visible objects of His love, and this being so, that which is expressive of our attitude towards them, is also towards God. "For he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen. Love is a bond which embraces the weakest in fact such should draw out our hearts that in a ministry of love they may grow in the knowledge of God. Love of the brethren in the truth for truth's sake is not a sentiment of the flesh, for the latter never has the will of God for its object. Obedience and love are twins which cannot be separated, to do so is to destroy both and to lose their reality. We obey God when we love, for this is His commandment, and we love the brethren when we obey God for otherwise we should be apart from the current of His will for them.

Then lest this should degenerate into a system of legality it is added "And His commandments are not grievous." They are addressed to a nature born of God, and thus are not laws of bondage but of liberty, pointing the way in which the new nature can expand and grow by the full knowledge of God. It has been well said, that the marks of true brotherly love, are the universality of love to all the children of God, and

practical obedience to His will. That which has not these marks is a mere carnal party spirit clothing itself with the names and forms of brotherly love. No true love to the Father could encourage His children in disobedience to Him, yet how easy it is to excuse ourselves from the commandment of love under a plea of supposed righteousness. Neither must the practical expression of love be avoided by taking refuge in such a thought as that love may exist even if it is inoperative, for we are not to love in word neither in tongue but in deed and in truth.

Many are the needs of God's children and their spiritual necessities greater even than their temporal, though the latter must not be overlooked, but in both cases it certainly applies, "That whoso seeth his brother have need and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?" (1 John 3. 17).

Four things evidence the power for communion in life eternal with the Father and His Son Jesus Christ, and if these be lacking the joy of dwelling in God and He in us, will not be known.

1. Love to the brethren (1 John 4. 12).
2. Knowledge of the indwelling Spirit (4. 13).
3. The confession that Jesus is the Son of God, by which the world is overcome (4. 15 and 5. 5).
4. By abiding in the love of God who sent His Son (4. 16).

The joy that accompanies these things is the portion of all saints who will open to Him who stands at the door and knocks.

To dwell in God is to walk with God, to rest in the peace in which He abides: it is to cast every care upon Him, and to find in conscious weakness the sufficiency of His strength: it is to believe His word absolutely, hence to think His thoughts: it is to see things with His eyes, looking not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are unseen: it is to trust His guidance day by day in all things great and small: it is to abide in

spirit in the realm where Christ is beyond death, and without leaving our sweet retreat, to go forth and serve Him in the path of His will: it is to follow Him who ever dwelt in God, whose devotion to the Father's pleasure is the ideal of life: and to have the confidence that God is able to make all grace abound towards us, and to do exceeding abundantly above all we can ask or think.

“With Christ,” Sept. 3rd.

The Incarnation.

None

Its depths can fathom, no man knows the Son.
 God man become; Most High, yet brought so low;
 Incarnate wisdom, nothing given to know
 But what the Father spoke into His ear;
 Lawgiver, yet Himself made law to hear;
 Despot, yet Slave; Omnipotent, yet made
 Weakness to feel; Leader of life, yet laid
 In death; Upholder of the worlds, yet hung
 Upon a cross of shame; Creator stung
 Deep to the soul with His own creature's scorn;
 Of kings the King, yet mocked with crown of thorn;
 Judge placed before His judge; Sinless made sin;
 The faithful One forsaken; Light within
 Devouring darkness; Love overwhelmed with hate;
 Heaven stormed by hell; Deliverer strong and great
 Needing deliverance. Oh, the breadth and length,
 And height and depth; the weakness and the strength;
 The mourning and the mirth; pleasure and pain;
 The joy, the sorrow; and the loss and gain
 Which meet in the incarnate Son of God,
 No mortal mind can know. With feet unshod
 We may draw near, and as we gaze adore,
 As all His varied glories shine before
 Our ravished hearts.

THE FAME OF JESUS.

James McBroom.

(Matthew 13)—*continued.*

THE long chain of parables in chapter 13 bring out the glory of the great King-Prophet. In Hebrews He is the King-Priest. In the Sermon on the Mount (Chapters 5-7) the Godhead glory shines through the words, and the same is here in the Sermon on the sea. The mountain is descriptive of Israel but the sea speaks of the testimony of God among the nations of the world. No created being could behold the future ages and give an accurate description of coming events. In the seven parables before us the Lord connects His second coming with His first and shews the leading features of testimony during the time that rolls in between. He Who holds every heart under control can alone describe the future, and in His prophetic discourse we see the great Immanuel.

The first parable is given in verses 1-8, and the explanation in 18-23. Between these the Lord opens out the situation to the disciples and the place of favour to which they were called. A parallel is seen in Revelation 2. 18-23 where the Son of Man with eyes as a flame of fire and feet like fine brass removes in holy judgment the candlestick of the professing church because of its state of iniquity, and singles out a remnant, putting them in a place of favour and witness for Himself. "To you it is given," the Lord says here, "to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given . . . Therefore speak I unto them in parables: because they seeing, see not; and hearing they hear not neither do they understand . . . But blessed are your eyes, for they see and your ears for they hear, For

verily I say unto you, that many prophets and righteous men have desired to see those things which ye hear and have not heard them." As the wicked and unprofitable generation recede from the place of testimony the new company are seen separated from the nation to the place of richest favour.

The parable shews what the Lord had been doing since He began His ministry. Refused as Messiah, Son of David, He did not then begin to sow but had been sowing all along in view of a harvest from a much wider field. This work might necessitate a transition of the remnant of His people to the nations, extending the boundaries of divine testimony in the earth to a much wider sphere; a work which His rejection made room for.

He opened His heart to them shewing the secret working of Godhead wisdom in the divine ways from the beginning of the world. The One Who created the world planned also the ages (John 1. 1-3. Hebrews 1. 1-2). The inconceivable grandeur of the milky way with its innumerable hosts of suns and systems shews His creative power, but the ages with their unfoldings of moral life bespeak His wisdom and resource. Here at the turn of one age and the entrance upon another He stands in Manhood the *ONE* who planned them, the great Centre of all shewing to His disciples their place with Him in divine favour and bringing out of His treasures things new and old. If the time had not yet come for unfolding eternal things which belong to eternal counsels He, as the great centre of the time ways

of God, can speak to them of things kept secret from the world's foundation (Verse 35. cmp Psalm 78. 2).

The first of the parables describes His work on earth; all the rest describe the kingdom as set up from Him exalted to heaven. These last six are commonly spoken of as similitudes of the Kingdom, and are divided into two threes at verse 36 by the Lord's movements. The first three are spoken in the presence of all and have the external order of divine testimony in view, the last three are spoken inside the house, and have the inner spiritual side of the dispensation in view. The three outstanding elements of prophecy mark the whole six. The pre-intimation, the whole outline in range, and then the fulfilment. These again presuppose the eye of Omniscience, the attribute of Omnipotence that is almighty to fulfil and the beneficent wisdom and goodness of divine love. If He is Immanuel then the power of evil which seemed to have triumphed in His abasement and rejection can but serve His glorious design.

The parable of the wheat and tares properly understood helps greatly to the understanding of the whole, and since much has been written on this chain of parables we shall only note a few points which help to bring out the beauty of the King. "The kingdom of heaven is likened to a man which sowed good seed in his field." The parable is given in verse 24-30 and the explanation in 37-43. A man sowed good seed in his field. The Sower is the Son of Man, the field is the world, and the good seed are the children of the kingdom (v. 24 and 37-38). But while men slept the enemy came and sowed tares (28). The enemy

that sowed them is the devil; the tares are the children of the wicked one; the harvest is the end of the age, and the reapers are the angels. Thus far is the complete explanation of the parable. Now for the glory and the future of that which was gathered into the barn. The ground covered includes from Pentecost right through the church age, past the rapture of the heavenly saints, and through the preparatory providential judgments right into the scene of millennial glory shewing the whole divided into two grand parts, the heavenly and the earthly; the one the Kingdom of the Father, and the other the Kingdom under the whole heaven, the Kingdom of the Son of Man (verse 41, 43, and see Daniel 7. 27). It began as the kingdom in mystery and runs on to the kingdom in glory, and while the result of the enemy's work is only too sadly in evidence, room is left for all its inner grandeur going on to the final glory of the righteous shining forth in the Kingdom of their Father.

In the following parable (verses 31-32) the Lord foreshews the wholesale departure and development of worldliness in the christian profession during the time that the wheat and tares grow together. The beginning at Pentecost was outwardly insignificant but in process of time it grew to become a great public concern. From a small beginning, a mere mustard seed, there sprang up in process of time a great imposing commonwealth likened to a great tree which became the shelter of the birds of the air. Its passage from Pentecost and the Apostles to the church of the fathers and on to the Papacy was steady, but in the next parable the Lord shews the inner corrupting principle which was at work permeating the whole.

Having reached the point where all seemed defeat the Lord goes inside and after explaining the parable of the wheat and tares gives to His disciples a glimpse of what was really the cause of God's forbearance with the outer ruin he had previously sketched. In the next two little parables we pass from man to God, to that which, though but dimly touched, is the richest part of His eternal purpose in Christ. He began to speak inside of what belongs to the inside, of what is of priceless value to Himself; the treasure and the pearl. The treasure was unseen and unknown to all but Himself. He found it and hid it again. The great tree might be conspicuous but that which was of interest to Him can only be in evidence when He reigns. The pearl was of great value. He was seeking beautiful pearls and found one of great value and went and sold all that He had and bought it.

In the first similitude the enemy was busy while men slept; in the second there was expansion, publicity and popularity, while the third shews the hidden power of corruption that underlay it all. But in the Treasure and the Pearl there is that which is gratifying to the Lord; that which in its own indestructable beauty passes beyond the power of the enemy to corrupt. It is not merely that believers are distinguished from unbelievers as in the case of

the wheat and tares, it is the saints seen in the light of eternal purpose anticipatively in the divine nature and in the life of Christ. The great idea is preciousness; for such a pearl He sold all that He possessed, yea, He went further for "Christ loved the church and gave Himself for it." In accord with this we read of the saints being "God's workmanship" and also "He that hath wrought us the self-same thing is God."

The last of the similitudes is the net cast into the sea. In the first it was the seed sown in the field of mankind here it is the same testimony among the nations and the end carries us outside the present age to judgment. Angels, providential agents of the King, remove all that offends. Whether it be the sea or the field, all are His. His by creation and also by purchase on the cross. While all are His by double right, He acts here in the light of the latter. He bought the field, in view of the treasure and it was costly, for to secure it He had to sell all that He had. If the treasure was to be had He must purchase the whole field, this gave Him possession of all. The time is near when He shall ask and receive the heathen for His inheritance, but distinct from these is the wheat which are the children of the kingdom and the tares which are the children of the devil.

"Now the God of patience and consolation grant you to be likeminded one toward another according to Christ Jesus" (Romans 15. 5).

"Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost" (verse 13).

"Now the God of peace be with you all. Amen" (verse 33).

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS :

Salt.

"A question was raised as to the significance of salt in the Word, and the usual idea expressed that it signifies simply preservation, but that does not seem enough. You may think an answer in Scripture Truth worth while, as many have no distinct thought about it?"—STAFF.

SALT most certainly preserves from corruption, and when the Lord said to His disciples "Ye are the salt of the earth" (Matthew 5. 13), He set them as a preserving element in the midst of the surrounding evil, and that is what the saints of God are in the world to-day. But the *effect* of the salt, or what it does, does not fully answer the question as to what it is, or define its full significance in the Word.

Leviticus 2. 23, shews us that it had to have its place in all the offerings that the Israelites brought to God. It is there spoken of as "the salt of the covenant of thy God," and seems to typify a correspondence in us to the grace in which God has set us. To say "Let us continue in sin that grace may abound," and to turn the grace of God into lasciviousness would be an evidence of the complete absence of that which salt symbolises. On the other hand to "present your bodies a living sacrifice, *holy, acceptable to God*, which is your reasonable service" would be the offering with its necessary salt.

If we think of it first in its Godward aspect it seems to be the deep sense in us of our obligation to Him as having been saved by His grace and set in relationship with Him, and the energy of the new life in us that willingly, gladly takes up the obligation. It would be the holiness side of the new life, i.e., separation to God, from evil, which, of course, can only be maintained in the power of the Holy Ghost. This would have its place in discipleship too (Luke 14. 34), Apart from this energy and devotion to the Lord and separation from every rival claim, discipleship is impossible.

When the Lord said "Have salt in yourselves" (Mark 10. 50) He was shewing the necessity of this active principle of holy separation to God in the heart, which only can preserve us from the activities of the evil flesh within us. It is the working of the salt in us that only will enable us to cut off the hand and foot, and pluck out the eye, as He had said to them in the preceding verses. It will be easily understood that one who is thus separated to God and self-judged will be as salt in the world.

The Miracles in John's Gospel.

"Will you say something about the miracles recorded in John's Gospel? Are they a sample of what the Lord will do during the reign of righteousness?"—HEATON.

THE works of the Lord recorded in John's Gospel were signs—the attestation of His Person and work. There are eight of them, if we included His own resurrection from the dead, and except for this and the

feeding of the multitude (ch. 6) they are only recorded in this Gospel. The reason why they have been recorded is given in ch. 20. 31, "Many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of His disciples, which are not

written in this book, but these are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through His Name." We conclude that they were done first as signs to the nation as to who He was and from whence He came; they were the manifestation of His glory (ch. 2. 11). And they were acknowledged to be such: "No man can do these signs that Thou doest except God be with him" (ch. 3. 33). "This is of a truth that prophet that should come into the world" (ch. 6. 14). "Since the world began was it not heard that any man opened the eyes of the blind" (ch. 9. 32). But their meaning was not only for those that saw them,

they have been recorded that we might believe, and have life through His Name. They are for our consideration and blessing. They shew us the power that is in Him to meet every liability that lies upon man as a result of sin and to bring all who believe into the unchangeable and unforgetable blessing of eternal life, which is the knowledge of the only true God and Jesus Christ His sent One.

When He comes again as the Messiah of Israel and the Saviour of the world He will without doubt manifest His glory and establish men in blessing along the line of these signs.

No mention of the Blood.

"Will you explain why blood is not mentioned in the clothing of Adam and Eve with skins, nor in Abel's offering, nor at the father's reception of the prodigal when the fatted calf was killed?"—CARLISLE.

EACH type and parable is given to illustrate one particular point of the truth, and by not one of them is the *whole* truth illustrated. In the case of Adam and Eve we learn that sin had robbed man of his standing before God; his conscience made him aware that he was naked and exposed to God's righteous judgment; what he needed was a covering that he could not manufacture himself, and that only God could provide. God did provide it, the skins of victims not chargeable with the offence became the clothing of Adam and Eve before God. They were clothed as a result of a sacrifice made for them—a figure of righteousness imputed on the ground of a vicarious sacrifice.

Abel's faith laid hold upon the meaning of this; he understood that

being a sinner he could only approach God in the merits and excellence of a sacrifice without spot or blemish. Of course the blood of the sacrifice was poured out but the point in that type is the *acceptance* of the one who came to God, not on the ground of his own doings and merits, which was the way of Cain, but owning that he could have no standing before God because of what he was, and presenting a sacrifice that had suffered death in his stead. If these two types are put together they give a fairly full presentation of the gospel—God's grace that provides a perfect righteousness through Christ for sinful men, and faith that appropriates God's provision and finds acceptance with God in Christ.

The blood comes into its own true and prominent place in Exodus and

Leviticus where the people were brought into definite relationship with God and consequently needed to be instructed in His righteousness. So also it is in the Epistles written to instruct Christians in the will and ways of God, that the blood of Christ has its prominent place.

The prodigal's reception must not be separated from the two pre-

ceding parables in Luke 15. Indeed the three parables are one, and that of the shepherd seeking the sheep is the basis of them. We know from John 10 that the Shepherd had to lay down His life for the sheep that He sought and found. Because of this the Holy Spirit can illuminate lost souls and the Father welcome returning prodigals.

A Cry of need.

Help, mighty God!
Men turn their ear away
From the great voice divine,
And each one seeks his own
Dark oracle of lies.
Help, God of might,
The idols, Lord, affright.

Help, God of might!
Men slight Thy grace divine,
They mock Thy glorious love;
And the great gift of God
Is as a thing of nought—
Help, God of might,
The foe arise and smite.

Help, mighty God!
The blind now leads the blind,
Man has become as God,
The tree of knowledge now
Bears its last ripest fruit!
Help, mighty God!
For us come forth and fight.

Help, God of might,
The strong man bows himself,
The good and wise are few,
The standard-bearers faint,
The enemy prevails.
Help, God of might,
In this Thy churches night.

Fear Not.

Fear not the foe, thou man of God:
Fear not the sword, the spear, the rod—
Fear not the foe!
He fights in vain who fights with thee:
Soon shall thou see his armies flee,
Himself laid low.

Come, cheer thee to the toil and fight:
'Tis God, thy God, defends the right,
He leads thee on.
His sword shall scatter every foe,
His shield shall ward off every blow:
Fear not, press on.

And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you, Amen (Romans 16. 20).