

# SCRIPTURE TRUTH

*"Thy Word is Truth."*

THIRTIETH ANNUAL  
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*"These things I have spoken unto you, that in Me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world"*

John 16. 33.

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# Scripture Truth

VOLUME XXX.

“*THY WORD IS TRUTH.*”

1938

## HOW TO KEEP THE FIRE BURNING. J. T. Mawson.

IT was the 6th of November; a group of lads stood on a spot where the night before they had had a glorious fire; they were measuring the circumference of it, telling each other how high it blazed and talking excitedly about their contributions to it. Its ashes were still smouldering and after a while they set to work to scrape them together, evidently hoping to renew the joys of yesterday. They soon gave it up and stood silently, and I thought, sadly, viewing the results of their labour: it was wasted effort. They had no fresh fuel.

Those lads and their fire and its ashes became a parable to me, and as I pondered it, it spoke to me with no uncertain voice. I remembered times when I had tried hard to revive old enthusiasms and past devotion to Christ and His service, by dwelling on them—really raking together the smouldering ashes of the past, and I found it to be all in vain, and as I considered it I said to myself again and again, it cannot be done; if the fire is to continue to burn, if the present and future are to be as joyous and vigorous as the past, it will not be by dwelling on the past, but by finding fresh fuel; the fire must have fresh fuel every day if it is to burn with a steady glow.

Then I remembered that it was written of old in the law of the Lord, “The fire shall ever be burning upon the altar: it shall never go out” and I pictured to myself the Levites who served that ancient tabernacle, seeking the fuel from afar and watching

the altar fire night and day and feeding it continually, and I asked, How can the spiritual fire — devotion to and fervent love for Christ be kept ever burning in the soul, and whence the fuel?

The answer to my question came with refreshing speed and power. It was, The Spirit of God has come and it is He who supplies the fuel and delights to keep the fire always burning in the heart. I turned first to what the Lord Himself had said of His coming. “But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in My name, He shall teach you all things, and *bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you*” (John 14. 26). Those words secure for us in divine and infallible perfectness the *Four Gospels*, for they were spoken to the Apostles, who wrote what they remembered not according to their faulty natural memories, but by the unerring power of the Holy Ghost, that we, yes, you and I, might have the very words and know the very ways of our Lord Jesus as He spoke and acted when He was here on earth. As we hear His words and consider Him, we say to one another, “Did not our hearts burn within us while He talked with us by the way,” and to Him we say with adoration, “Thou hast the words of eternal life.” There is inexhaustible fuel for the fire in the Gospels.

But the Lord had more to say of the Spirit than that. He said, “When the Comforter is come, whom I will

send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of Truth, which proceedeth from the Father, He shall testify of Me" (John 15. 26). This testimony of the Holy Spirit is to our Lord's exaltation and glory. We have it in the *Acts of the Apostles*, an infallible testimony. If His humiliation and and grace and gentleness, His sorrows and sufferings and death as recorded for us in Gospels move us to fervent love to Him, the witness of the Spirit in the Acts fills us with triumph. He is the Conqueror, "God hath made this same Jesus both Lord and Christ." He hath "exalted Him to be a Prince and a Saviour." As we muse on His exaltation and glory, and on His Name that is above every name, and realise that He lives in His glory for us, for "He ever liveth to make intercession for us;" the fire burns within us, for here is fuel indeed. When His disciples saw Him carried up into heaven they worshipped Him and were filled with great joy and were continually praising and blessing God, and so it will be with us as the Spirit testifies to us of His glory in heaven. And how brightly the fire burned in the lives of the Apostles as with power and the Holy Ghost and with much assurance they bore witness to the glory of their Lord.

But further, the Lord said, "When the Spirit of Truth is come, He will guide you into all truth: for He shall not speak from Himself; but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak: and He will shew you things to come, He shall glorify Me: for He shall receive of Mine, and shall shew it unto you. All things that the Father hath are mine: therefore said I that He shall take of Mine, and shall shew it unto you" (John. 13, 14, 15). These words carry us on to the *Epistles* for there are the heavenly

things that the Spirit hears and reveals to us.

1 Corinthians 2 assures us of this, "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him. But God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea the deep things of God." And all these things are Christ's things, and ours because they are His, for we are joint-heirs with Him, and He gives, not as the world, but shares all He possesses with His loved co-heirs. What fuel for the fire there is in these Holy Spirit-inspired Epistles! "And He shall shew you things to come," carries us into *The Revelation*, and there is enough of the glory of our Lord unveiled for us there to make our hearts glow; but they will only glow as we have ears to "hear what the Spirit saith to the Churches."

The secret lies in keeping on good terms with the Holy Spirit. If we grieve Him the fire will die down to smouldering ashes; and we grieve Him if we are indifferent to Christ. And indifference to Christ sorely grieves His own heart; we learn this from His words to the Laodicean Church. "Thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of My mouth" (Rev. 3. 15, 16). May we be preserved from such a condition as that, but if so the fire must be fed with fresh fuel daily.

But the Spirit delights to feed the fire in our souls; it is His great work, and it is not in vain, for at the end of the Book we read that the Spirit and the *Bride* are saying, Come, to *Jesus*. The cry arises from hearts that are on fire with love to Him and will not be satisfied until they are with Him.

# THE FIRST INTRODUCTION OF THE GOSPEL INTO EUROPE.

A. J. Pollock.

**S**URELY the first introduction of the gospel into Europe must be of very great interest. It evidently sprang from God's distinct ordering. That soldier of the Church, ambassador and diplomat of heaven, the Apostle Paul, in his missionary journeys came to Troas, a town situated in the north-east corner of the province of Mysia in Asia. Europe was not far away. A short distance from Troas were the Straits of Hellespont, that narrow sheet of water, separating Asia from Europe. A sailing boat could reach the shores of Europe in three or four hours. We wonder if the keen spirit of the Apostle looked across those straits, and yearned to carry the gospel thither.

This intrepid servant of Christ slept and God spoke to him. "A vision appeared to Paul in the night; There stood a man of Macedonia, and prayed him, saying, Come over into Macedonia, and help us" (Acts xvi. 9). Assuredly gathering that the Lord was calling him to go further afield, he took ship and landed at Samothracia, the next day he journeyed by land to Neapolis and from thence reached his first objective, Philippi. These former towns were in Thrace; Philippi was in Macedonia, Greece, and the vision had called him to Macedonia.

Little did the inhabitants of Philippi know that one of the greatest days in the history of Europe, or of the world indeed, was that on which unannounced, quietly, unobserved, Paul walked into their city. Yet so it was. Our hearts rejoice to think of this simple scene with so much involved in it, more

important by far than the rise of ancient dynasties, the fall of which we have been witnessing these last twenty years.

Nowadays when a missionary descends on a city, it most generally means weeks of preparation. Committees are formed, influential citizens are begged to give their patronage, possibly a civic welcome is extended by the chief magistrate, the largest building is secured, a choir of some hundreds are drilled, and with a big flourish of trumpets the mission begins.

How different the way in which the gospel entered Europe. Paul found a few women meeting for prayer outside the city by the banks of the river. On one memorable Sabbath he joined this humble company of God-fearing women, sat down beside them, and spoke to them. Nothing spectacular in that, yet what a moment it was for Europe and for the world from that day to this!

What an encouragement to Christian women to think that this great work of God in Europe began with a few praying women. How surprised these women must have been when they heard Paul speaking wonderful things to them concerning the kingdom of God.

One woman is singled out for notice. Her name is Lydia, a seller of purple, evidently a person with a lucrative business, perhaps a widow, for she was the head of a household. The Lord opened her heart. How encouraging this is! Before Paul came, she was known as one that worshipped God. May there not be

many seekers after light that God takes note of in places where the pure gospel has not yet penetrated? The first name of a European convert was that of a woman, peacefully employed in her lawful calling, yet having a fear of God in her heart and seeking light.

There are some Christians, who can take you to the very spot where they were converted. They can tell you the very day and hour when it happened. Many cannot do this, especially the children of Christians, who have had the truths of the gospel presented to them from their infancy. We have known Christians troubled because they could not tell the time of their conversion. We remember years ago a soldier Christian in Canada saying with a bright smile, "I have had two birthdays, one natural, the other spiritual. I don't know the year in which either took place. But I know I was born naturally into this world for I am alive now; and I know that I was born spiritually because I trust and love the Lord."

The Lord opened Lydia's heart. Just as a bud gradually opens till it becomes a full blown flower, so her heart expanded under the rays of God's love. She attended to the things spoken by the Apostle Paul.

Evidently the blessing extended to her household, for she and her household were baptised in the name of the Lord. This was the first baptism in Europe. It needed great courage. If she was of the Jewish faith, it meant cutting herself adrift from all her old religious associations and the parting from many friends. If she was pagan, it meant the same thing. In these lands we have no idea what it means to take

such a stand. It means braving persecution, the refusal of work whereby to secure a bare living, the severing of the closest family ties, to step forth as a pariah, a dog, whom to kill would be in their eyes to do God's service. Lydia took this step.

Then she becomes a practical Christian. If she has been faithful, will Paul come under her roof? "And she constrained *us*," for Silas and Timotheus being the companions of the Apostle in this eventful journey.

What an example does this first European convert give us? We have known towns containing large numbers of Christians, and those responsible to arrange for some servant of the Lord, have appealed in vain for some shelter for the preacher. Many a preacher has had this experience.

May Lydia's example be stimulating. May we give not only ourselves, but our homes to the Lord. "Be not forgetful to entertain strangers; for thereby some have entertained angels unawares."

There is a pretty story told of Peter the Great, the Emperor of Russia, a man of peculiar moods. One day he disguised himself as a beggar, wandered into a village, and begged alms. Only one poor man in the whole village showed him kindness, taking him into his home and feeding him. Next day the imperial carriage entered the village, and took this poor man to live in the royal palace at Moscow. All the inhabitants of that village wished they had shown kindness to the beggar man. But it was too late.

Shall many of us wish, we had acted differently to what we have

done when the rewards come? Possibly!

We would appeal to newly-married couples to begin right in these ways. They will never regret it. "Whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water only in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward" (Matthew 10. 42). "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these My brethren, *ye have done it UNTO ME*" (Matthew 25. 40). What an honour! What an opportunity! And love will find a hundred ways in which to do it.

This mission ended in the missionaries being cast into prison. It looked a sorry finish to an encouraging beginning. The jailer was coarse and brutal. He received his prisoners, with scourged and bleeding backs, thrust them into an inner prison, putting their feet into the stocks, so that they could not lie down or rest. Nor were prisons in those times and countries anything but places of real horror: damp, noisome, alive with vermin and evil pests. And yet, and yet, these prisoners at midnight in such awful conditions sang praises to God.

And then came the earthquake, and the brutal jailer is alarmed at first lest his prisoners should escape, and then about his own eternal welfare. "What must I do to be saved?" was his eager question, as he called

his prisoners "Sirs." "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved" (Acts 16. 31), came the ready answer, and the jailer was converted with all his household. Hallelujah! The devil had outwitted himself. His servants got a wonderful advertisement, though they paid for it with bleeding backs. The magistrates, finding they had beaten Roman citizens, now politely and urgently besought their erstwhile prisoners to step forth free men out of the prison, and to their shame requested them to leave their city. So turning to Lydia's house again, they saw the brethren, comforted them and departed.

Some ten years later Paul writes an inspired epistle to these Philippian saints. They had stood the test. They formed a live assembly. But Paul is again in prison. What then is the keynote of this inspired letter? Depression? Sadness? Complaints? Not a bit of it. "REJOICE in the Lord always: and again I say REJOICE" (Philippians 4. 4). Evidently he had kept up the singing all these years, and in similar circumstances, possibly not so terrible as in the prison circumstances at Philippi, he is found still rejoicing in the Lord. He perhaps could not rejoice in his circumstances, but he could *in the LORD*. Certainly he could not exhort the saints at Philippi to rejoice, unless he were rejoicing himself. May we be found rejoicing in the Lord likewise, and learning useful lessons from this simple narrative.

---

All that Christ is, is for us to enjoy. How rich then the saint must be! But he is entirely dependent upon the Spirit of God for the power to enjoy his wealth.

If you are a Christian the Spirit of God dwells in you. How are you treating this heavenly Guest?

You will find no difficulty in telling out the love of God if your soul is dwelling in it.

## A HEARTENING WORD.

W. Bramwell Dick.

“Be strong and of good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the Lord thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest” (Joshua 1. 9).

IT was an encouraging word spoken by the Lord to Joshua as he was about to step out upon an unknown path. A path in which the trials and difficulties would not be few, and upon which he dare not venture without the assurance contained in our text. At the close of his long long life he bore witness to the faithfulness of the Lord, the immutability of His word, and the reality of His care for His people.

We are entering upon a New Year. What it holds for us we do not know, but the Lord knows and therefore all is well. It may be the last year of our pilgrimage, and before many days have elapsed we may hear His Voice calling us to meet Him in the air. If he leaves us here a little longer our individual path is in His hand. Some may carry into the New Year a weak body, an anxious mind, a sorrowing heart, business care, domestic anxiety. Others, on the other hand, may face the future with some happy prospect in view, and may hail 1938 as a year that they expect to remember with joy. Which ever it may be, we feel we are facing an untrodden path. “Ye have not passed this way heretofore” (Joshua 3. 4). We do not know what is in store for us, but He knows.

“He has marked out the path that we tread,” and knowing all as He does. His Word to us is “Be strong and of good courage.”

We are conscious of our own weakness, He says “*Be strong.*” We feel we are confronted with insur-

mountable difficulties. He says “*Be of good courage.*” The future, if we are left here, fills us with dread and dismay, He says, “*Be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed.*” If He says so, that means that He will banish the fear, and dispel the dismay, and will replace these by the strength and the courage which He alone can give. Can we be absolutely sure of this? We can! How? Because He has pledged His word. “The Lord thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest.” When the clouds are dark, when the sun is shining; when the road is rough, when the path is smooth; when torn with grief, when filled with joy; when there seems only one way for us to take, we feel the Lord would have us take it, yet we hesitate because we do not know where it may lead; He says, “The Lord thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest.” Our Lord Jesus knows every step for He has trodden it before us, and He would have us put our hand in His, follow where He leads; in our weakness lean on Him and be strong; in our fear count upon Him and be of good courage; when tempted to doubt trust Him and be not afraid nor dismayed. When afflicted with that feeling of loneliness and we think that no one understands us or cares for us, accept His assurance that He is with us whithersoever we go.

It was when “there arose

### A GREAT STORM”

and for the moment the disciples seemed to forget Who the Lord Jesus was Who was with them in the boat and in the storm, that “He arose

and rebuked the wind, and said unto the sea, Peace be still, And the wind ceased and there was

### A GREAT CALM"

(Mark 4. 35—41). Dear fellow-believer, you may have entered upon the New Year in "A Great Storm." Do not forget, we beg of you, the Lord Jesus is with you in the boat, in your life, in the storm, and in His own good time, and in His inimit-

able way, He will speak the word of peace that will result in "A Great Calm." Therefore let us "lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees" (Hebrews 12. 12): and let us step out into the New Year with confidence in our Lord, with joy in our heart, with spring in our step, with songs of praise upon our lips, because He had said "The Lord thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest."

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*"One Jesus, which was dead, whom Paul affirmed to be alive" (Acts 25. 19).*

Aye, Paul knew whereof he affirmed; if this same Jesus, who was dead, was not alive, he would have had no gospel, all his preaching would have been in vain, his days wasted, his suffering and almost superhuman energies futile; his whole life and labour, his peace as to the past, his comfort in the present, his hope for the future depended upon this fact for which he lived and was prepared to die—Jesus lives.

Yes, Paul knew, he had seen the Lord, he had heard His voice; in times of dire distress he had felt and known that his Lord was at his side, the living Lord, to make him more than a conqueror. Only one was more hated and wounded than Paul, and that was Paul's living Lord. On back, and breast, on head and hands and feet, he bore the brand of the Lord Jesus. When as "Paul the aged" he turns his marred face upon us, it glows in every wrinkle and furrow, as he cries, "He lives." And the One who lives triumphant over death, saves, and keeps all whom He saves, and can give them power, as He gave Paul power, to endure all things for His Name's sake and for the sake of His elect.

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*"They understood not what things they were which He spake unto them" (John 10. 6).*

Why did they not understand His gracious words? Because they did not love Him. Nobody can understand the words of Jesus who does not love Him. Would you understand His words better, then love Him more. How can you do that? Learn more of His love to you. Again, How can you do that? Hear His voice, listen to His words. His words are words of love, wooing words, they reveal His heart, and as you listen, love to Him will surely grow within your heart and as your love increases your understanding will be enlarged.

## CONCERNING THE CHILDREN.

R. McCallum.

*Address given at Sunday School Conference held at Edinburgh on October 23rd, 1937.*

I HAVE been asked to speak to you to-night about Sunday School Work, a work which I trust none present will regard as of little importance or demanding little preparation or forethought.

Only a week or two ago a local Minister came to school to see me and in discussing present day tendencies and the lamentable decline in morality he disclosed that in his opinion the cause lay in the church tackling the social problem. Now I am fully persuaded that immorality is to-day destroying the vitals of the nation like a canker: that the social scourge is much more widespread than most here gathered would believe: that to be indifferent to the social, national, and international problems perplexing the world is criminal, but I am equally persuaded of the futility of the Servant of the Lord attempting to deal with these with humanly devised weapons. Let the preacher of the gospel seek the spiritual blessing of the individual: let the teacher of the young seek to gain the citadel of the heart, and by the regeneration of the individual will the home, social, aye and national life be sweetened.

Shrewd men of the world have seen what many a professed servant of the Lord has missed. I am quoting now, not from a religious magazine but from a copy of the Wall Street Journal. Some time ago the Editor wrote, "The supreme need of the hour is not an elastic currency or sounder banking or better protection against panic or bigger navies, or more equitable tariffs, but a revival

of faith, a return to morality which aid recognises a basis in religion, and the establishment of a workable and working theory of life, that views man as something more than a mere lump of matter." There it is: by way of *faith* to morality: and with faith in God and in Christ, we seek the spiritual welfare of the children, which is attended by blessings in this life as well as in that which is to come.

I shall summarise what I have got to say to you under five heads, for convenience arranged under the letters P and M so that should you forget the one you may remember the other. The headings are these:—

1. Our PURPOSE in teaching or the MEANING of our work.
2. The PSYCHOLOGY or the MIND of the child.
3. A PLAN or MANNER of presentation.
4. A PROGRAMME or MESSAGE.
5. The PERSONALITY of the teacher or MYSELF.

(1) It seems incredible that any skilled workman should start upon a job without having a clear idea before him of what he intends to accomplish. How can your labours be purposive if the end which you have in view is nebulous? Let me ask you—why of all the books in the world should you teach the Bible to the child?

Ruskin has said that the characteristics of the child are humanity,

faith, charity and cheerfulness. The Bible is the book, par excellence, dealing with humanity and among its most prominent themes are these—faith, love or charity, and hope from which is begotten the experience of cheerfulness. The teaching of the Bible, then, is eminently suited to satisfy the desires of the child's heart but it does more. The Apostle in 2 Timothy 3, speaking by the Spirit of God, places the Word of God alongside of the complete development of personality from mere babyhood to complete manhood in the "Man of God, perfectly furnished unto every good work." Do you know any other such book? It is *THE* Book which we can never discard, for it is a revelation from God to man, given nowhere else, and the heart of its message is Salvation. To Timothy, Paul writes, "From a child, thou hast known the Scriptures which are able to make thee wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus." The Holy writings to which he refers are of course the Old Testament Scriptures, but the Apostle instead of looking upon them as obsolete perceives that they all find their fulfilment in Christ. The highways of the Old Testament converge upon Him, of whom the prophets spake, to whom the types pointed. And if true of the Old Testament Scriptures, how much more true of the completed Book that it contains information, which if acted upon, puts the reader in possession of salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. If you have not got the salvation of the child before you in teaching him, you are missing the mark. This salvation is something grander than deliverance from judgment and hell. It is that, but it is more. It postulates danger and promises safety; it supposes weakness and offers strength; it takes conflict for

granted but assures of ultimate victory. The salvation begins in time but endures to eternity and embraces the whole nature of man—body, soul and spirit.

For his instruction Timothy, who was the child of a mixed marriage, was indebted to his mother Eunice and to his grandmother Lois. Happy they who have imbibed instruction in the things of God at the mother's knee!

But someone may ask, Is salvation then merely a matter of belief? A short time ago while in conversation with a friend for whose intellectual gifts I have the highest respect, he remarked "Faith seems very easy for some men, but faith for me seems impossible." In answer to which I said, trying to be helpful, "I don't see why it should be so. We have to exercise faith in one another day by day. The man of business has to exercise faith in his fellow man of business. The husband exercises faith in the wife, and the wife in the husband, and all that God demands is that faith should be given a different orientation and be exercised towards Himself." His answer rather astonished me. "Hold on," said he. "Faith in God and in Christ, demands the complete surrender of my personality." He was right. It is not merely an intellectual conviction but it is the surrender of the will consequent upon conviction.

I am not for a moment going to suggest that week by week we should ask the children "Are you saved?" "Would you like to be saved?" It is unlikely that if saved, the change in the child will be catastrophic or volcanic. We should be watchful, awaiting the right moment for wise private and personal work, but always

instructing in the word of righteousness and when in God's good time the word proves effective we may be sure of this, that even on the part of the child there will be a surrender of will to Him in whom trust is placed.

2. A good workman does not only keep in mind what he intends to do: he must also consider the material which he has to work upon. For very much of what I am going to say I am indebted to Dr. Campbell Morgan, and having found him helpful to me in the capacities of teacher and parent, I pass on these thoughts, persuaded that you too will find them useful. The philosopher Kant has said that every human personality has in it three factors, intellect, emotion and volition. From the moment that a child starts to walk, and even before that, these three factors are discernible. Until about seven or eight years of age, however they appear to be unco-ordinated and even inconsistent. It is not merely that they are unequally balanced, as indeed they are, but the child is the plaything of whims — intellectual, emotional, and volitional, its physical unrest being but the outward manifestation of inward mental change. Dr. Campbell Morgan illustrates the inconsistency of these factors in the child's personality by an interesting story which the experience of all will confirm as true to type. Gladys was the seven-year-old daughter of a friend of his. One afternoon the mother left home for a few hours and committed Gladys to the care of her uncle, a bachelor and a don of one of the English Universities. To fulfil his promise to care for Gladys he took his chair and books into the garden. Before long Gladys came to him, with this question, her eyes dilated with interest.

"Uncle, can you tell me why is this rose red and its leaf green?" Charmed at the intelligent thought behind the question and delighted to be asked a question along the line of his own specialisation, he replied, "Yes, my dear, sit down beside me and I shall tell you." Yet as he prepared to answer her, he perceived that the look of intelligent enquiry had passed and had given place to suppressed mirth and pent-up laughter. Rather annoyed at the sudden change, he said somewhat sharply, "Gladys whatever are you laughing at?" "I'm sorry uncle," was the reply, "but I really cannot help it. You have *such* a funny nose!" And as he prepared to rebuke her, she jumped from his side, attracted by something else in the garden, doubtless, and so escaped the reprimand he was preparing to give her. Suddenly, intelligence had given place to emotion, and emotion to volition, and these are precisely the varying mental conditions with which the teacher of infants has to deal. This period is probably characteristically the *perceptive* age when much can be achieved by pictorial representation.

From seven or eight years of age until about the age of twelve, intellect and emotion are very much in evidence but volition is usually in the background. Children are pliable and the period might be designated the *receptive* period. This is the period during which difficult tables, new processes, and many facts are acquired at school without demur and the time too when much valuable ground-work is done at Sunday School.

Round about the age of twelve, however, a change takes place of paramount interest and importance

to the teacher, and it is important that the teacher should recognise it and understand how to deal with it. From twelve to seventeen or eighteen years is the most difficult period in the development of a boy or girl. This is the time when we either gain or lose them. Indeed Dr. Campbell Morgan avers that he cannot contemplate this period in a child's life without a feeling of extreme solemnity possessing him. For now intellect and emotion become recessive. The child does not usually continue to ask questions nor does he readily or willingly display his feelings. But at this stage *volition* dominates his personality. The child discovers that he has a will and the period might often be characterised as the *obstructive* period. When travelling from Wales to London in 1918, two of His Majesty's officers and a civilian, the three of them friends, entered the compartment in which Dr. Campbell Morgan sat. He was the outsider, but as the compartment was small he could not fail to hear their conversation. The subject of talk turned to boys and the reverend gentleman pricked up his ears. Said the civilian "I do not know what has come over my boy recently. Until a few months ago he was as nice a boy as you could meet, pliable and obliging, but now he has become a mule. But I will break his will." Unable to keep silence the doctor looked up and interrupted saying, "Excuse me, sir, but what was that you said you would do to your boy?" Surprised at him participating in the conversation without introduction or invitation he replied "I said, I will break his will." "Then," answered the other, "I trust that by the grace of God someone will break your neck before you succeed." The look of utter amazement on the face of the civilian he can never forget as he

said "I beg your pardon." To which the divine answered, "In the words of the King, whose uniform I wear—it were better for you that a millstone were hanged about you neck and that you should be drowned in the depth of the sea than that you should offend one of these little ones." To his inquiry "What then should I do?" Dr. Morgan explained that when this obstinate, obstructive, mulish age was reached, the only thing to do was to cease commanding and to start communing. Now make no mistake about this. In every well regulated home or school there are certain essential amenities and rules that must be observed. But outside of these fundamental and essential things, and especially where the personal interests of the youth are concerned, in fellowship and understanding seek to guide him. If in spite of such help and guidance he chooses his own way, well, let him have it assuring him that you are still available for advice and guidance should he desire it. The result is likely to be frankness and confidence that in 90 per cent. of cases will gain the child.

Usually about seventeen or eighteen years of age the various factors in personality become co-ordinated. If the mind has been illuminated by the Word of God, the emotions controlled by Christ as Lord, and the will made subject to the will of God, then shall we have a fit instrument for the service of Christ. But if the mind is darkened, the emotions debased, the will undisciplined then has the child become a fit tool for the devil.

3. These considerations suggest a plan or manner of presentation of truth to the child.

At the infant stage, seek by the aid of picture and spiritual song and

through the short and finished stories of the Gospels to store the mind with facts concerning the life and work of Christ.

At the receptive stage from seven to twelve years of age, the child delights in the story, which is to be continued, and the delightful narratives of the Old Testament covering the lives of the patriarchs and abounding in excellent moral precepts; manifesting the marvellous providential dealings of God and exhibiting the nature of poetic retribution, supply delightful material.

Dr. Morgan has suggested a study of historic and prophetic books of the Old Testament during the difficult period from twelve to seventeen, a study of the Acts and of the Epistles being reserved for the later period.

4. It will thus emerge that the programme or message taken over the entire Sunday School period should aim at embracing the whole book and as was emphasised at the very outset the goal in view must be, by the grace of God, the salvation—body, soul and spirit of the child.

5. And now lastly, there is the *personality* of the teacher, or *Myself*; next to the Spirit of God acting through the Word of God, the most important factor in the work of teaching. Is someone saying, "I have no personality?" Then may God help you! for without it you will never teach. Ask the Lord to give you some! Can you imagine a person indwelt by the Holy Ghost and yet wholly lacking in personality? What does it mean? It means among other things that you will be yourself—not altogether like anyone else. It means in divine things, that you will be a power for God. It means that people will listen to what you say and respect both that and you. It means that there will be the manifestation in life of those truths that you profess. And let us all remember this, that Christianity is a life rather than a philosophy.

May the Lord help us to express Christ in our living and in our teaching. May we seek to understand and win them having nothing less in view than their salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.

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*"Therefore doth My Father love Me"* (John 10. 7). That wondrous act of self-devotion by which all blessing is effected and justified for men gives to the Father's heart a new reason for the love wherewith He loves even His well-beloved Son. "Therefore doth the Father love Me, because I lay down My life, that I may take it again." He does not lay it down, as giving up that humanity which He has taken to accomplish the work,—the earthen vessel in which alone the bird of heaven could die. Nay, He takes up again, though in changed condition, the life He has laid down,—takes it to lay it down no more. His death is neither the exhaustion of His love nor the limit of His work for man. He has served in the lowest deep of suffering on earth; He serves on the Throne of glory still. And the Father's love, which thus rests upon Him as Man continually, embraces as well the fruits of His work,—the men for whom He has toiled and suffered and won.

Our acceptance in the Beloved, of which Paul speaks, roots itself in this peculiar love of the Father to the Son.

# THE APPROACHING ADVENT OF CHRIST.

F. B. Hole.

(A review of a book by the Rev. A. Reese, bearing this title).

## (1) Some general observations.

WE have before us a very substantial volume of 328 pages, recently published. Its object is to demolish the belief of a very considerable number of Christians that there is a clear line of demarcation to be observed in Scripture between the coming of the Lord *for* His saints and His coming *with* them; that the removal of the saints, and of the Holy Ghost who indwells them, will withdraw the one power capable of restraining the development of the apostasy and the unveiling of the man of sin; that then the great tribulation will supervene, having the special character of wrath poured out governmentally from heaven, and to be ended by the appearing of Christ with His saints in His power and glory. If this be a correct reading of the New Testament scriptures, it follows of course that though the church is to expect tribulation all through its earthly course it is not destined to pass through the *great* tribulation. In the book before us this belief is strenuously combatted from Scripture and denied. It is even derided as "fantastic innovations on the faith," "extravagant and impracticable delusions" (p. 272).

Our first observation is, that we are not surprised that such a book has appeared. A century has now passed since expectations of the coming of the Lord specially began to stir the hearts of many Christians, and during that time many differences of thought as to various details connected with it have come to light.

And not only this; many extravagant and even fanatical ideas connected with the fixing of dates have been mooted, only to be disproved and demolished by the efflux of time. It is contemplated in 2 Peter 2. 2, that one effect of the bringing in of teaching and prophecy which is false is the discrediting of truth—"the way of truth shall be evil spoken of." The unbeliever may well turn round and taunt us all with having involved the subject of the Second Advent in a welter of confusion. We have to confess with sorrow that we have never read any book in our life in which that confusion was so paraded before the public eye as in this; and as we closed it we realized that this fresh book had made the whole subject rather worse confounded.

In the second place, we are struck with the overpowering place which *human writings* have in this book, and presumably therefore in the mind of the author. The writers that he disagrees with are very freely quoted, and scriptures are freely quoted to disprove what they say, yet they are hardly ever used without an appeal to an imposing array of authors with whom he agrees mainly, if not altogether. The ordinary Christian who is not a trained theologian may frequently find himself in the trying position of being mentally buried under a shower of quotations which falls upon him like leaves in autumn. Some idea of this feature may be gained when we say that the book ends with a list of "Authors and others quoted or re-

ferred to," and a number of references stand against many of the names. We have run our eye over this list and make the number of authors to be 364, and the number of references 881 — on an average, nearly three references to some human opinion on every page of text. There is also furnished a list of "Publications quoted or referred to," and of these we make the number to be 244. The lists are very imposing. Very few, if any, can have devoured such a mass of literature bearing upon this subject as the author of this book. Whether he has really digested all that he has devoured is of course another matter. At any rate it must be confessed that he stands like a giant, clad from head to foot in warlike array, and the present writer feels an insignificant stripling before him.

Thirdly, we observe that in the main the book is out *to destroy*, and we consider the author a very able and skilled controversialist. By far the most telling part of his book, in our judgment, is the way in which he displays, and sets off one against the other, the differences in matters of details that have existed between those whom he designates, "Darbyists." Many of those whom he designates thus had nothing to do with the late J. N. Darby, and would be strongly opposed to his teaching in many things. Yet they happen to agree with him on this point of prophetic interpretation, and so his name is called upon them. This is quite a useful device from a controversial point of view, for it helps to accentuate the differences in the mind of the reader, and to make it look as though these differences were inherent in the teaching which is attacked, instead of lying, as largely they did, in differences of thought as

to other parts of the truth. It must be remembered also that the authors criticized cover the period of a century, during which time differences as to details easily develop.

There is a fourth observation which we have to make, viz., the author gives us in very meagre outline the exact scheme of prophetic interpretation which he favours. In this of course he again proves his controversial skill. Having quoted very copiously from the writings of those he denounces, accentuating their differences, he refrains from anything but the barest outline of his own position. He does make it quite clear that he recognizes that Scripture speaks of Christ coming for His saints as well as coming with His saints. He says, for instance, "The Coming *for* the saints and the Coming *with* the saints take place at the same crisis; the day of the resurrection and transfiguration of the holy dead, and of the renewal of Israel" (p. 133). He gives us very little that is positive beyond that, and so is relieved of the trouble of having to explain or defend the implications of his own system when under the searchlight of Scripture.

Yet, even in the brief statement just quoted things are said which raise inevitable questions. For instance, this "crisis," this "day"—does he mean a day of 24 hours such as we are accustomed to? Judging from the way he argues as to the phrase, "the last day," in John 6, and such expressions as "the day of Christ," "the day of the Lord," we rather think he does. Yet we are not quite sure, for we did not notice a clear and unequivocal statement, on the point, though of course amongst the mass of quotations and footnotes there may have been something

which we overlooked. If he does mean 24 hours, there are many awkward questions raised by such a scripture as Zechariah 12—14, with its repeated affirmations as to the happenings "in that day." Should he after all admit that the "day" is a period longer than 24 hours, a good many of his own reasonings would lose much of their force.

Here and there in the book we notice details of his own system of interpretation just creeping out. For instance:—

(1) In a footnote to page 239 he explains his view of the significance of the phrase, "coming . . . with all His saints" (1 Thess. 3. 13). This he says, "almost certainly refers to the Lord's arrival with the spirits of the holy dead." Obviously the phrase would present some difficulty to anyone believing that the Lord is going to come both *for* and *with* His saints at the same moment. He adds, "It is wrong to assert that previously raised and raptured saints are now coming out of heaven." Until we read that we had supposed that he contended for the raising of the dead saints, the changing of the living saints, the catching away of both to meet the Lord, and then all coming with Him—the whole process to be but a matter of minutes or even seconds. Now we find it a bit difficult to know just what he does mean. We should find it easier to fit in this bringing of the *spirits* of the holy dead with His coming *for* His saints. Anyhow, he is *quite sure* that our understanding of the passage is wrong, and *almost certain* that "all His saints" means such of His saints as may be dead. We presume he would give the same interpretation to verse 14 of chapter 4. But would he

to such scriptures as Jude 14, and Revelation 19. 14?

(2) On pages 244—248, verses 6 and 7 of 2 Thessalonians 2 are discussed, and he gives us an idiomatic translation and a paraphrase; "simply to get all the light possible on a confessedly obscure passage, which ought never to serve as a pillar for a doctrine," as he tells us. He asks who this person may be that restrains, and brushes aside the answer that it is the Holy Spirit in the church. He asks, "If the Holy Spirit was in Paul's mind why did he need to hesitate mentioning the subject?" We should say that he did not "hesitate" at all, nor did he "need" to hesitate. The opening words of verse 6 show why he did not give a full explanation. "Now ye know what withholdeth." The Thessalonians *knew already*, so further explanation they did not need. If we do not know, we have simply to confess ourselves to have fallen behind these first century Christians. However, the best interpretation, according to our author, is that the impersonal hindering power of verse 6 is the Roman Empire, and the personal hinderer of verse 7 a succession of Roman Emperors. So *this* is what he believes. But having read the early part of Daniel 7, it would seem to our simple minds that while this belief may not exactly involve Satan casting out Satan, it does involve Satan hindering Satan. And what Roman Emperor may be hindering to-day, is indeed beyond us!

(3) On page 294, he says, "there are many passages that presuppose the existence of a Jewish Christian Church in Palestine, at a past or future epoch of its history: a Church necessarily under the law of the land, yet rejoicing only in Christ as the

Saviour and Shepherd of Israel." Again on page 297, "we see the Israelitish Church in Judaea in Matt. 24. 16, and Rev. 12." Now he will have nothing of a godly remnant of Israel being found on earth and bearing witness in the last days. He has many a tilt at such a thought: on page 111, for instance, he speaks of "the semi-Christian, semi-converted Jewish Remnant of uncertain standing in the Last Days." And on the same page again, "the whole Remnant hypothesis is a veritable nose of wax to be turned and twisted as the difficulties dictate." This "Remnant" excites his special ire and ridicule, and he promises us ere long a whole book from the press, to refute the thought.

Imagine then our surprise when we reached pages 244 and 297. After all the scorn he has poured upon this poor "nose of wax" it really seems that he has caught hold of it himself and is twisting it in a new direction! The people are there right enough, yet if we speak of them as the Jewish Remnant we are propagating a fable: we are to call them "Jewish Christian Church," or "Israelitish Church." Not having read all the 364 authors that are quoted in this book we had not heard before of these people: nor have we seen any hint of such a "church" in the Scriptures, though we have read them for many years. On the other hand we have read Micah 5. 1—8, which speaks of "the remnant of Jacob" in the days when the true "Ruler in Israel" feeds in the name of the Lord and destroys the Assyrian.

(4) We are given an idea—somewhat vague—of how he would interpret Matthew 25. 31—46. On page 296 he calls it a "Parable," classing it with the parable of the Samaritan

recorded in Luke 10. The attitude of "Darbyists" he claims is to revel in "the complicated, the uncommon and the marvellous." Hence, "the ordinary interpretation of the Good Samaritan, with its lesson of neighbourly concern and loving service for the wreckage of society, was too prosaic and humdrum; the presence of a Levite and a Priest passing coldly by on the other side of the road, was too great a temptation for Evangelicals to miss; they must make the Parable say that Sacerdotalism cannot save, and that the good Samaritan typifies the Saviour, who can. Sound truths these—but not taught and not implied in this parable. So also with the Parable of the Sheep and Goats in Matt. 24. 31—46; for one who comes to it to drink deeper of the Saviour's spirit of philanthropy toward the hungry, the sick, the ill-clad, and the imprisoned, a thousand come to it as a problem in dispensationalism; and we all want to fit it into our scheme of the End, and especially, to 'dish' the foes of Chiliasm."

As to his remarks on the parable of Luke 10, we merely say, by the way, that if he is correct we evidently ought to see in the parables of Luke 15, only amiable lessons to shepherds as to kindly care of sheep, to women as to carefulness over money and the removal of dust from homes, and to fathers as to the treatment of dissolute sons. What interests us more at the present moment is that he alleges the passage in Matthew 25 to be *a parable to be treated in similar fashion*. We presume our author is the one in a thousand who comes to it to drink in the philanthropy it teaches, and so it presents no problem, dispensational or prophetic, to him. For ourselves we are bold enough to assert that it is no

parable at all, and that the sheep and goats are introduced in verses 32 and 33 just by way of illustration. When the Son of Man is come in His glory and the nations are gathered before Him for judgment He will act like a shepherd dividing sheep from goats. There are parables—those of the fig tree, the goodman of the house, the virgins, the lord and his servants—but verse 31 of chapter 25 picks up the thread of the prophecy from verse 31 of chapter 24.

The passage which he dismisses in this way is an important part of the Divine scheme of the end, and no thought of “the foes of Chiliasm”—whoever they may be — has ever crossed our mind in reading it. He may say, “we all want, etc. . . .” but we beg to dissent. We do not.

At any rate, the four cases cited give us some glimpse of his own treatment of some of the details involved in the discussion, and we do not find them above criticism by any means, but rather very feeble and mistaken.

Our fifth observation concerns the spirit that breathes through the book. As we do not agree with the main contentions of the writer, we found it a trying book to read owing to its rather contemptuous tone. In more places than one he complains of things written in a contemptuous spirit by some of those whom he opposes, notably W. Kelly and Sir R. Anderson. As to that we agree with him. We noticed it ourselves long ago when reading certain of their books, and deplored it. It has more than once detracted from one’s enjoyment of their works. But the extraordinary thing is that having objected to it in their books, our author so freely indulges in the same

thing himself. We append a few specimens:

“It is all consistent and ludicrous, because they began by accepting the absurdity that a cantankerous O.T. company in the strait-jacket of the Imprecatory Psalms etc. . . .” (p. 116).

“. . . theories that are blighting Bible study and Christian fellowship all over the world: theories and *traditions* that have cursed the movement from the beginning” (p. 116).

“. . . the subtleties, the distortions, and the errors that others wrote on their broad phylacteries” (p. 116).

“To anyone not infatuated with special theories the meaning . . . is as plain as a pikestaff” (p. 142).

“To refute such supreme rubbish requires either a volume or a page; we can only give it a page. . .” (p. 207).

“. . . a prey to extravagant and impracticable delusions — borrowed from a pagan writer, Lucian of Samosata” (p. 271).

“Gentile conceits of the nineteenth century . . . the Remnant fable, and the Secret-Rapture fable. . .” (pp. 275, 276).

“. . . aggressive sophistry, and fantastic exegesis. . .” (p. 287).

“But a blind man can see that the exact contrary is the truth. . .” (p. 44).

This last remark is in reference to a quotation he has just made from p. 456 of Kelly’s *Revelation* (referring to Daniel 12. 2) to the effect that, “This resurrection, literal or figurative, is before the millennium, and after it is a time of greater trouble

than Israel ever knew." So Kelly is to be convicted of being blinder than a blind man! Knowing that usually he was pretty quick sighted we turned up this reference and read the paragraph. Our author assumes that the "it" in this sentence refers to the resurrection; we judge that it refers to the millennium — "*before* the millennium, and *after* it."—for after comes the final rebellion and the great white throne. We strongly suspect that the blindness is not Kelly's. When authors look at things through the spectacles of contempt their own eyesight is often impaired.

Our last preliminary observation is that we agree with the author that very important principles of interpretation are involved in this discussion. This large and elaborate book is almost entirely occupied with controversy as to whether there is to be an interval between the Lord's coming for and with His saints, or not, and whether as a consequence the church is, or is not, to go through the great tribulation. It might seem to some a tremendous discussion over a comparatively small point. But it is not. Towards the end of the book, referring to the Lord's

prayer in Matthew 6, he says, ". . . as we survey the landscape of Darbyist interpretation, and especially of the judaizing of much of our Lord's teaching in the interests of a theory, we say confidently to our readers: this is the decisive point!" (p. 275). We do not accept the innuendo that Darby first formed a theory as to the coming of the Lord and then shaped his teachings as to the Gospels in such a way as to support it; but we fully agree that the whole question of progressive revelation—what we may call the progress of doctrine, from Old Testament to Gospels, from Gospels to Acts, from Acts to the Epistles and the Revelation—is concerned in it, and we believe that only as we discern this progression shall we rightly understand the place the Church occupies in God's plan, and so understand what is revealed as to the coming of the Lord, or even such a question as the right use of the Lord's prayer.

For this reason we purpose, if the Lord permit, reverting to the subject of this book, and in our next paper dealing with this important principle of interpretation, prophetic and otherwise.

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## The Cause of Discouragement.

If you are counting on your own strength, I am not surprised at your discouragement, but "He that keepeth Israel neither slumbereth nor sleepeth." We ought to be humbled, yes, humbled to the dust, but never discouraged. A truly humble man is not discouraged; the discouraged man is not a humble man, for he has trusted to something beside God: true nothingness cannot (do that). Simple faith rises above circumstances to Christ. Does Christ love the church less? Is He less powerful? Faith has constant unflinching confidence in Christ. I know what sorrow is, because of our failure, but discouragement I do not know.

## THE THESSALONIAN EPISTLE, CHAPTER 2.

Summarised notes of Bible Readings in London (Sutton, Nov. 13th).

TWO great things stand out in this Epistle, the fact and reality of God and the certain expectation of the coming of the Lord Jesus. These things give form and character to the Christian life described in it, whether in the Thessalonian believers or in the Apostles.

There was nothing vague or nebulous about God in the Apostle's life. He was "bold in God" to speak the gospel of God, verse 2; "allowed of God," and he pleased God, verse 4; God was his witness, verse 5, it was "the gospel of God," that he imparted to them, verse 8, and again verse 9; they were to "walk worthy of God" verse 12; and he thanked God that they received the word as the word of God, verse 13. God was the living and true God to him, and to God to whom he bore witness these young believers had turned.

Because God was real to him and because he lived before God Paul could describe the manner of his life which was in full accord with the message he carried. We shall be well repaid if we consider carefully the features of his life. Verse 1 tells us that his entrance in unto them was not in vain. How could it be when he wrought in and with God? Much labour is in vain because it is not wrought in God. We ought to be greatly concerned at the fewness of the conversions we see as a result of so much preaching. We pray that God would save souls but our prayers do not seem to get answers. Unlike the Apostle's entrance to the Thessalonians much of our labour seems to be in vain.

And yet we have the word, "Your labour is not in vain *in the Lord.*"

The question should be, Is our labour really *in the Lord*? Are we concerned to know His will, His way, or are we satisfied to go on in the ordinary rut, holding Sunday evening gospel services because it is the usual thing, and has always been done?

The regular Sunday evening gospel meeting is useful in many ways, for the gospel must be taught to Christians as well as preached to sinners, as the Epistle to the Romans shews; but that ought not to satisfy us, we pray that God will bless the word to the unsaved, and we ought to be humbled and deeply concerned when we do not get answers to our prayers.

What is the hindrance?

Probably there are many. "This kind cometh not forth but by prayer and fasting" the Lord said to His disciples. Prayer and self-denial. But those disciples were conceited men; they were puffed up because of the commission they had received from the Lord. They went so far as to forbid others who were doing what they failed to do because they followed not "with us." Their whole spirit was wrong. We must shun their folly.

No servant of the Lord ought to expect the Spirit of God to use him, if he refuses to acknowledge and appreciate His work through others. Happy is the man who understands that there is one Spirit in the world, doing one great work, by one blessed gospel, for the glory of our one sovereign Lord. His vessels are many and varied.

But how can a man bow others to the Lordship of Christ, who is not living in practical subjection to Him himself?

And let us see to it that our prayers are really "in His Name" and that we preach the word "in His Name."

The word is "go ye." We are not told to expect sinners to come to us; some may if we are attractive enough, but we must go after them; the usual Sunday gospel service is not enough.

I had a letter to-day from a sister telling of a gathering of 29 young people in her house for supper, so that a servant of the Lord might speak to them. That was labour in the Lord and would not be in vain. Women's meetings are useful; converted mothers are the most likely persons to win their children for the Lord. The first gospel meeting in Europe was a meeting of women.

The gospel preacher should not throw the blame upon his brethren when the work is not successful; he should search his own heart and ways; but on his brethren's part, they should also be exercised as to whether they may not be grieving and quenching the Spirit. What are their prayer meetings like?

God delights in the gospel, concerning His Son; it rejoices every true Christian heart; it is still His power unto salvation; it will not return unto Him void, and "your labour is not in vain in the Lord." Then we may take courage and continue to preach the word.

Verse 2. Paul had courage; not the spirit of cowardice marked him,

the much contention did not daunt him or discourage him; he was "*bold in God.*" It is when we lose sight of God that we are discouraged. Cabel and Joshua were great men in their day; because they believed God, they neither feared the giants of Judaea nor the 600,000 rebels of Israel, they were ready to stand up to both; and the three Hebrew youths were greater than despotic Nebuchadnezzar, the most powerful dictator that ever breathed, because they believed God—how grand was their word "Our God is able." If we are discouraged and growing weary and fearful it is because we are out of touch with God. Paul was not indifferent to the much contention. he felt it very keenly as 2 Corinthians 4. 8, 9 shews, "troubled on every side but not distressed; perplexed but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed." His sufficiency was God, God sustained him, he was bold in God. *He was courageous.*

Verse 3. His words and life were in the utmost purity. "Deceit, uncleanness and guile," the evil things that spring out of the natural heart had no place in his life and ministry, because he lived and wrought under God's eye; he laboured, not for self but for God; not to draw disciples after himself, but that they might serve the living and true God and wait for His Son from heaven. *His motives were pure.*

Verse 4. It was God who had entrusted the gospel to him, and he thought it a high honour to have this trust, and his aim was to be faithful to God, to please Him; and He trieth the heart; He weighs and judges the motives. *He was faithful.*

Verse 5. A flatterer is not a sincere man, he has a motive behind it,

something for himself, the flatterer puffs up those he flatters and seeks some gain for himself. Paul calls God to witness that only the truth came out of his lips. *He was sincere.*

Verse 7 shews his gentleness. What a combination is here! Fidelity to God and gentleness towards the saints. And he was not a mere Bible lecturer, or a "preach the word and leave it" man; because they were dear to him he was willing to impart his own soul to them as well as the gospel; his whole heart went with his ministry. Elsewhere he said that he endured "all things for the elect's sake that they might obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory." *He was gentle.*

Verse 10. If evil motives were absent from his life and exhortations, verse 3, positive godliness was in definite manifestation. He could call even God to witness, whose eye was on him night and day, that his life was holy, just and unblameable. And this was the sort of life he had lived *among* them. If they became models to others, it was because he had first been a model to them. *He was a pattern to others.*

Verse 11. Then it was as a father that he exhorted and comforted and charged them all. He was gentle among them as a nursing mother and wise as a father, and this would include more than public preaching, it would involve personal interest in each one of them. *He was wise.*

Verse 12. The end of it all was that they might walk worthy of God, who had called them to His kingdom and glory. To walk worthy of God would be to be like God, imitators of God as dear children. Those who served the gods of heathendom be-

came like them, those who served the living and true God are to be worthy to bear His Name. *God's glory was his object.*

Verse 13. God had called them; it was His word that had worked effectually in them. If they had received it as the word of man, it would have attached them to men, but they received it as the word of God, which it was whether they had received it or not, and it attached them to God; it brought them into His kingdom and made them heirs of His glory. For this Paul gave thanks unceasingly. He sought nothing for himself. He was here for the glory of God. God was everything to him. To him it was an unspeakable grace that he was a minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, ministering the gospel of God, that the offering up of the Gentiles might be acceptable being sanctified by the Holy Ghost. Romans 15.

Verse 14. Afflictions went with the reception of the word. May it not be that one reason why we see so little vigorous Christian life and fruit is that we have so little of the affliction that goes with the word in a world that hates it? Some get it. A godly old clergyman said to me a little while ago. "You cannot conceive the contempt with which some of our brother-clergymen treat us who preach the precious blood of Jesus."

Verses 15 and 16. The Jew was incorrigible, what a history is his opposition to the will of God; and his crowning sin, that which filled up his cup, was forbidding the gospel to the Gentiles that they might be saved. It is a grave offence to seek to fetter the word of God, or to forbid his servants to carry it to those who need it.

## EVIL SPEAKING.

Contributed.

“But I say unto you, that every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. For by thy words thou shalt be justified and by thy words thou shalt be condemned” (Matthew 12. 36-37).

The sin of evil speaking is one of the greatest hindrances to the spiritual growth of individuals and to the progress of the Church of God. Will you please carefully read, apply, and act upon the following suggestions, gathered by the writer from various sources.

### HEARSAY.

“THE late Mr. Wm. McLean tells how he was rebuked, and humbled, and how he learned a good lesson. On a certain occasion he repeated a grave matter that he had heard to the late Dr. Maclean of Bath, who, having listened quietly, referred him to Deuteronomy 13. 14, and asked him:—

1. “Have you, dear brother, ‘enquired’?”
2. “Have you ‘made search’?”
3. “Did you ‘ask diligently’? And try and find out if the story is true?”
4. “Is it TRUTH?”
5. “And is the ‘thing certain’?”
6. “Is it certain ‘that such abomination is wrought among you’?”

“Our dear brother could only acknowledge regretfully, that he had not fulfilled ONE of the six conditions, and was repeating a grave matter from HEARSAY, without making any attempt to act thereon in the Scriptural way! He never forgot the lesson and often passed it on for the good of his brethren and sisters.”

“If thou shalt hear say, then shalt thou enquire, and make search, and ask diligently; and, behold, if it be truth, and the thing certain, that

such abomination is wrought among you” (Deut. 13. 12-24).

### THE SCRIPTURE AND THE TONGUE.

James 3. 6:—The tongue is a fire.

James 3. 8:—The tongue is an unruly evil full of deadly poison.

Roms. 3. 13:—Tongues they have used for deceit.

Psalm 140. 3:—Tongues like a serpent; adders’ poison under their lips.

Psalm 52. 2:—Tongue like a sharp razor.

Psalm 57. 4:—Tongue a sharp sword.

Psalm 50. 19:—Tongue frameth deceit.

“Once I was visiting a house, and, almost as soon as I entered, the lady of the house started to relate to me a most damaging piece of information about a mutual friend. I took out a piece of pencil and paper, and started to write down what was being said. The lady asked me what I was writing. I replied, ‘I was writing down what you were saying. The matter is so serious that I must see the person concerned.’ To this the lady said, ‘Oh! don’t say anything to her; it’s all over; it happened three years ago.’ Then, said I, ‘if it is all over, why are you talking about it now?’ This treatment effected a cure, and I pass it on.”

"A very high authority has said that the tongue is a test of spiritual character. 'If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man, and able also to bridle the whole body.' A man's tongue reveals his spiritual condition, and his words reveal his character. A good man cannot be bitter. A man who is constantly imputing bad motives to others is simply describing his own state of mind."

"The tongue then, is a tell tale of the soul; the index of the dial of character and life. The secret of right speech is, therefore, a sanctified Spirit-filled heart." (Selected).

#### THE SHADY DOZEN.

"I heard \_\_\_\_\_"

"They say \_\_\_\_\_"

"Everybody says \_\_\_\_\_"

"Have you heard \_\_\_\_\_?"

"Did you hear \_\_\_\_\_?"

"Isn't it awful \_\_\_\_\_?"

"People say \_\_\_\_\_"

"Did you ever \_\_\_\_\_"

"Somebody said \_\_\_\_\_"

"Would you think \_\_\_\_\_?"

"Don't say I told you \_\_\_\_\_"

"Oh, I think it is perfectly terrible \_\_\_\_\_"

(The Outlook).

#### SPEAK EVIL OF NO MAN.

"Some time ago a few believers gathered together, and resolved that they would 'speak evil of no man.' They kept their resolution, and a revival broke out in that place. May we be enabled to 'prepare . . . the way of the Lord,' so that we may witness the greatest outpouring of spiritual blessing since Pentecost." (Selected).

#### A GENTLE HINT FOR TALE BEARERS.

Solomon describes a certain class as "tale bearers" (Proverbs 18. 8; 26. 20); Paul, in his day, named them "busybodies" (2 Thess. 3. 11; 1 Tim. 5. 13). As the race still survives we pass on this story:

A wise and godly Scottish minister was approached by one of his parishioners wanting to tell his pastor of the wrongdoings of some of the church members. The pastor asked, "Does anybody else know this but you?" "No sir." "Have you told it to anybody else?" "No." "Then," said the good man, "go home and hide it away at the feet of Jesus, and never speak of it again unless GOD leads you to speak to the man himself. If the Lord wants to bring a scandal upon His church, let Him do it; but don't you be the instrument to cause it." (Selected).

#### "TAKE HEED TO THYSELF AND THE DOCTRINE" 1 TIM. 4.

HOW SOLEMN FOR EVERY SERVANT OF THE LORD ARE THESE WORDS — *THYSELF*, FIRST, THEN THE DOCTRINE! SCRIPTURE ITSELF WILL ONLY FURNISH PERFECTLY *THE MAN OF GOD*. WE MAY BE EARNEST ENOUGH IN OUR DESIRE TO LEARN JUST SUCH AND SUCH THINGS, AND FIND NO CAPACITY, BECAUSE OF SOMETHING *WE DO NOT WANT TO LEARN*, WHICH MUST BE LEARNT FIRST. FOR THIS CAUSE WHAT WE MAY BE PLEASED TO CALL OUR OPEN BIBLE MAY BE A BIBLE WITH VERY FEW OPEN PAGES TO US.

# SPEAKING OF HIM WHILE WAITING FOR HIM.

T. C. MacCormack.

ON my return home to Dublin from India in 1888, I was greatly impressed by the fact that many Christians displayed side by side in some conspicuous place in their houses two texts, printed in large, black letters, in plain black frames, without any floral or other ornamentation. Those texts were:—

“Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another; and the Lord hearkened and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before Him, for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon His Name. And they shall be Mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up My jewels” (Malachi 3. 16, 17).

“For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first; then we which are alive and remain, shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we ever be with the Lord” (1 Thessalonians 4. 16, 17).

I was made the manager of The Bible and Tract Depot in Dublin, and I had those texts hung so that all who came into the Depot could see them. One day dear C. H. Macintosh came in and read the texts in his own very impressive manner. He then turned to me and said, “My beloved Thomas, we are doing *that* (pointing to the text from Malachi) while waiting for *this*” (pointing to the text from Thessalonians). Then he kept on repeating,

“SPEAKING OF HIM WHILE WAITING FOR HIM!”

Close on fifty years have elapsed since then; and things have altered and not for the better. I do not know one house where I could now find those two texts displayed, and not many indeed with any texts at all; and, generally speaking, where any texts are hung they are almost apologetically hidden by the multi-coloured floral or other ornamentation around them. Yes, those old-fashioned plain texts have gone—silent witnesses at any rate to the fact that he who hung them desired to let it be known “Whose he was and Whom he served.”

But whether we have those or any other texts on the walls of our houses or not, may the Lord graciously grant that His word may dwell richly in our hearts (Col. 3. 16), that the effects of it may be seen in our persons, and then it will be easy and natural to speak *of* Him while we wait *for* Him.

It is worthy of note that the Remnant, so pleasing to the Lord in Malachi, evidently continued until the Lord came about four hundred years later, for in the beginning of Luke we find some who were “waiting *for* Him”; as in chapter 2. 36-38 we are told that Anna (who was then at least eighty-four!) when she saw the Lord as a babe in the temple, went and “spake of HIM to *all* them that looked for redemption in Jerusalem.” What a joy this must have been to the heart of God, to see a dear old saint at her age, speaking *of* His well-beloved Son to all those in Jerusalem who had been waiting *for* Him! May we “go and do likewise!”

# AROUND THE CROSS IN THE GOSPEL OF JOHN.

J. T. Mawson.

THE Gospel of John glows like a priceless gem in the golden casket of the Word of God. "All Scripture is God-breathed" and is profitable, we cannot do without any part of it, but the Gospel of John is unique, it has a glory all its own; it is the beating heart of the Word. It unfolds for us the glory of the Son, the Revealer of the Father and the Giver of the Holy Ghost. The Fullness of the Godhead was pleased to dwell in Him, and John was the chosen vessel to give special emphasis to this, it is stamped upon every word and act that he records. Hear what he says in his opening chapter. "The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us (and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father) full of grace and truth." That is it, that middle sentence describes the Gospel. John beheld the glory of the only-begotten of the Father, and what he beheld he has recorded by the inspiration and direction of the Holy Ghost. And what he has recorded is for our sakes, that we might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing we might have life through His Name, ch. 20. 31.

We have the same person in all the Gospels, and each has its special significance and glory. The words of the late Robertson Nicholl, in his book, "The Incarnate Saviour," are good and true words. Says he, "What He was in any one place at any one time, He was always and everywhere: so that though the mirror of the Gospel history be broken into a thousand fragments, every fragment yields the same image of the God-man, the Saviour of the world." The glory

shines through the veil of His flesh in all the Gospels; as the golden thread was woven into the high priest's ephod, with the scarlet and blue and fine twined linen, so the Deity of our Lord is woven into the texture of them all; but it is chiefly His perfect, holy human life and nature that is seen in the first three. And this is as essential to the revelation of God and our redemption as His Deity—the Son of Man is our Saviour, but the Son of Man is the only-begotten Son of God. We do not separate the divine Being from the holy Manhood, they are indissolubly and now eternally joined in the blessed Person of Jesus our Lord. But in the Gospel of John we do see the glory of the only-begotten rather than the sufferings of the Son of Man. Hence there is a dignity and majesty about His movements in it, even when most the object of men's hatred, that arrests us and fills us with wonder and worship. It is this that we are to consider chiefly.

*"When Jesus had spoken these words, He went forth."* What words were these? They were the words of His prayer to His Father, uttered in the presence of His disciples, in which He had spoken of them as His Father's gift to Him, and desired for them that they might be with Him where He was to be, that they might behold His glory, and further that the love wherewith His Father loved Him might be in them even now. If that prayer was to be answered He must *go forth* to meet every threatening foe, and deliver them from every challenging force. We move in thought with Him along that road to the accomplishing of that great purpose of His love.

“*He went forth.*” Micah tells us that His goings forth were from of old, from the days of eternity, chap. 5.2. We do not know, for it is not revealed to us, what those eternal goings forth were, but we do know that when time began He went forth in creatorial power and wisdom; the heavens declare the glory of those goings forth, and they might well fill us with wonder, but they could not have won our hearts nor produced that faith within us that makes us cleave to Him as our only hope. But Micah had more to say of Him. It was God who spoke through him when he said, “And thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah out of thee shall He *come forth* unto Me, who is to be ruler in Israel.” In fulfilment of that prophetic word, He, “the Word became flesh.” How completely He came forth for God and His will! He said, “My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me, and to finish His work;” and hear Him in the upper chamber. “That the world may know that I love the Father,” and as the Father gave the commandment “even so I do, *Arise, let us go hence*” John 14. 31. That “hence” was Gethsemane, Gabbatha, Golgotha; and He knew all that it would mean to Him, as verse 4 tells us. “Jesus therefore knowing all things that should come upon Him went forth and said to the band that had come to take Him. “Whom seek ye?” He was not taken by surprise when this hostile band led by the traitor appeared in this resort of His; it was their hour and the power of darkness, He had come from heaven to meet it, and He met it with an unperturbed dignity.

In answer to His question they say “Jesus, the Nazarene.” A name of reproach in their dark minds and

base lips, a name to be derided and loathed, for “can any good thing come out of Nazareth?” and knowing this He answered “I AM He.” The glory of His Person flashed forth in that utterance, and in the presence of that glory they were bereft of all power to stand, for as soon as He said unto them I am He, they went backward and fell to the ground. How strange it was that their eyes were not opened, and that they did not fall down again before Him and acknowledge His power; but the god of this world had taken full possession of them and they could not turn back, and God was behind all, making their unspeakable sin work out His own purposes of love. So once again the Lord asks, “Whom seek ye?” and again they answer “Jesus, the Nazarene.” Accepting that name with all the reproach of it He answered “I have told you that I am He.” “What perfection! If the darkness comprehended not the light of His personal glory, His moral glory shall only find occasion to shine the brighter. For there is nothing finer . . . than this combination of willing degradation in the midst of men, and the consciousness of intrinsic glory before God.” *Bellett.*

“*If ye seek me, let these go their way.*” He was not an hireling that fleeth when he seeth the wolf coming, the sheep were His, He was the Good Shepherd. He must and would stand between His flock and the foe. He had said to His Father, “Of them that Thou gavest Me, have I lost none” and the testing time had come, when He must make good His word, and He was ready. The fangs of the wolf might tear His flesh, but not theirs; His very soul would be burned by the contents of the cup that He would drink for them, but not one drop of it should touch their

lips. He would be their substitute, and surrender Himself to the foe to save His flock from his power and from perdition and keep them forever in the security of eternal love.

It would appear as though Malchus, a slave of the high priest, vaunting a temporary authority, had offered some insult to the Lord, and Simon Peter, indignant and enraged, slashed at him with his sword; it was a rash stroke, and he no swordsman. His intention was to cleave the man's skull to its base, but he missed his aim and severed his ear. It was not given to John to record the healing of that ear e'er the hands of the Lord were bound, but we might well pause and consider the power and mercy of those hands that were only stretched forth to heal bound with

cords. It was John's privilege to hear and record the Lord's words to Peter. "Put up thy sword into the sheath." He needed not that carnal blade, nor the feeble arm that wielded it; the voice that had made that hostile band fall backward could have called twelve legions of angels to His aid, but how then would the Scripture have been fulfilled? "*The cup that My Father hath given Me, shall I not drink it?*" It was that that settled all things for Him. He looked at no second causes, hence the insults and ignomy did not move Him to resentment or resistance. When he suffered He threatened not for He suffered all in absolute subjection to His Father's will.

(To Continue).

## WITH CHRIST.

A. M. Chambers.

"Now he is comforted" (Luke 16. 25).

Comforted! for the everlasting arms  
That through the desert were alone thy stay,—  
Upholding thee through all thy pilgrim way,  
Have lifted thee beyond all life's alarms!

Comforted! for that same eternal love  
That chose thee for its own in ages past  
Has gathered thee unto itself at last  
In love's own home, love's deepest joys to prove!

Comforted! and a perfect answer shown  
To every question that perplexed thee here,  
A consolation sweet for every tear  
And every pang thy tender heart has known!

Now unto Him who in His matchless grace  
Loved thee and sought thee, gave Himself for thee,  
That to His image thou conformed should'st be—  
Made meet to gaze upon His blessed face—

To Him be glory and to Him be praise!  
This is the music of the heavenly throng,  
Feebly our earthly voices join the song  
"Glory to Jesus through eternal days!"

Written on hearing of the death of one much beloved in the Lord.

## THE UNITY OF THE SPIRIT.

A. J. Pollock.

IT is very significant that we are exhorted to keep "the unity of the SPIRIT in the bond of peace" (Ephesians 4. 3). We are *not* exhorted to keep the unity of the one body. Those, who imagine this is so, have a *doctrine* before them. We have known Christian men stand for this with heat and fleshly zeal, and bring about the very opposite of what they desire, for such fleshly zeal only ends in disaster and division.

But to keep "the unity of the SPIRIT" means that I must be in the Spirit myself, walking in the manner that the Spirit would lead to, in the Spirit of Him to whom the Spirit was not given by measure, when He, who was "the mighty God," stooped down to man's estate, and as Man walked in the power of the Spirit every step of His wonderful journey on earth.

It follows that the nearer we get to the Spirit the nearer we get to each other. And there is no other way before God than this. This will not drive me to read up books written on the subject, though they have their place, but to my *knees*, that I might be found walking in the Spirit. There can be no substitute for this. Am I walking in the power of the Spirit of God, or simply intelligent as to the Scriptures, and knowing little of the Spirit-filled life before God?

It is possible, alas! too common, to be a mere heady doctrinaire without any working knowledge of the power of the truth.

If this statement irritates any reader, it shows that he needs this side of things being put before him. It shows there is a tender spot, and that tender spot has been touched. Thrice happy is the man that wel-

comes the wounds of a friend. That is the straight road to healing.

"But," says some reader, "try as I may, I find it difficult to get along with trying brothers and sisters. I seek to walk in the Spirit, but others do not, what am I to do?"

Ephesians 4. 2 shows the answer to your question. First, you must be right *yourself*. It is indeed happy to be walking in the Spirit as before the Lord, but the test comes when we meet the flesh in others. How soon flesh is answered by flesh, we know in one's own experience. How slow we are to suffer what is not of the Spirit. First we are told what we should be, lowly and meek. These are two graces that grow on one stem. A lowly person is a meek person, a meek person is a lowly person.

What is the difference between lowliness and meekness? Lowliness is what I am in myself. Meekness, what I am in relation to others. Lowliness is the opposite of having exalted thoughts of myself. It is the opposite of pride, which with lust makes up the world in all its corruption. It has been noticed that individuals who have the *ego* developed to a marked degree border on insanity. Such must always be drawing attention to themselves and their doings. If they have not spoken in a fellowship meeting it is a *poor* meeting. If they have, it is a *wonderful meeting*. Alas! how we all have an element of this in us, even if we have the good sense not to bring it to the surface. We can at least judge ourselves, and make it a matter for prayer and getting into God's presence, where little men cannot strut and be important. A really humble man is humble, and does not think of himself.

A meek man is one who can stand snubs and unworthy persecution from others.

Generally you find there has been a good deal of discipline in the school of God before this is arrived at. Who stands forth as the meekest man in Scripture, but Moses? Yet he had to turn his back upon the splendour of the court of Pharaoh, and be a shepherd in the backside of the desert of Midian for forty years. What a change! Moses must have been a great man, a personality, the like of which is scarcely thrown up once in a century. He must have been conscious of great powers. Yet he had to learn this lesson. He was thus fitted to lead a stiff-necked and rebellious people through the desert another forty years, a truly marvellous feat.

It is good when a man can in the Spirit meekly take insults and snubs, and not be turned aside by such things. The more a man seeks to walk in the Spirit, the more will the enemy seek to trip such up by stirring up the flesh in others to take a contradictory course.

There rise up before one's vision our blessed Lord. He Himself says, "I am meek and lowly of heart" (Matthew 11. 29). It touches one's heart to think of "the mighty God," the eternal Son of God, the Creator of the myriad wonders of creation, the Sustainer of the illimitable universe, stooping down to manhood so completely that He could say, "I am meek and lowly of heart." We may well seek to follow in HIS steps.

The next thing our verse exhorts the believer to, who seeks to keep "the unity of the SPIRIT in the bond of peace," is longsuffering. Here let us throw in a word of

caution. It would be pride on my part, if I were to imagine that on my side was the Spirit, and perfection of conduct, and that all the flesh is on the other side. We need to be open-minded and believe that it is possible to have some irritating qualities about ourselves. We are not perfect. We ought to remember this, and walk in humility.

But suppose a brother or sister is difficult to walk with. Longsuffering is to be the motto. Not suffering once or twice, but LONGsuffering, it may be for long years.

When Peter asked the Lord if he should forgive his brother seven times, "Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but, Until seventy times seven" (Matthew 18. 22). That does not exactly mean 490 times, but it means go on doing it as long as there is a needs-be. It does not mean that we are to condone sin against the Lord, but when it affects ourselves there is to be the spirit of forgiveness ever in our hearts, and readiness to express it.

Finally in our verse we have the exhortation, "Forbearing one another IN LOVE." To maintain love to the difficult brother or sister can only be brought about by walking in the SPIRIT. The first thing mentioned as "the fruit of the Spirit is LOVE" (Galatians 5. 22). It is so easy to be a mere doctrinaire, and hold the doctrine that I should show love to a difficult brother or sister, but do I do it? That is the point.

I feel sure that if there were "the endeavouring to keep the unity of the SPIRIT in the bond of peace" there would be a great revival of true Christian life in the assemblies of God's people. May it be so.

## THE THESSALONIAN EPISTLE, CHAPTER 3.

Summarised Notes of Bible Readings in London (Kingsland), December 11th.

THIS third chapter shews that the Apostle's interest in his converts did not cease with their conversion; the same tender care that he had shewn for them while with them continued when he could not be with them. He was not only the evangelist and teacher, but the pastor as well. Behind his labours was the deep, unselfish love for those who were dear to the Lord, the love of God in him, and in this he is a pattern for every servant of the Lord.

He was concerned as to their faith, not *the* faith, but "your faith," verses 2, 5, 7, and 10. The faith is the whole revealed truth, "your faith" is the response in the saints to the revelation.

They would be established and comforted (verse 2) by the presence of Timothy in the midst of their afflictions and tribulations, for he would be able to assure them that these troubles were evidence of the reality of their faith. They had been warned that it must be so.

They were not to expect anything else but tribulation in the world. We may be sure that the Lord's words had been reported to them. "I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you" and "In the world ye shall have tribulation." To the Philippian Church Paul wrote "For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on Him, but also to suffer for His sake."

Our brethren in other European lands must be experiencing what these Thessalonians were suffering, for there seems to be a determination

on the part of the authorities to dictate to them in matters of conscience. In English speaking lands we are greatly favoured, in that the authorities are tolerant, but this has its dangers, our tendency is to settle down comfortably in the world and go to sleep.

Yet "all that will live godly *in Christ Jesus* shall suffer persecution." It may not come from the powers that be, but it will come from some quarter; from fellow workmen or even in the home. The stress should be laid on "*in Christ Jesus.*" That sets the believer outside the world in his motives and ways, he is not of the world, though in it, therefore the world hates him; it loves its own. John 15.

These suffering saints would be established and comforted as Timothy unfolded the resources that they had to draw upon. It is not in times of ease that we prove how sufficient the grace of the Lord is. It was when Peter saw that the waves were boisterous that he was held up by the hand of the Lord.

We are sure to have tribulation in some form, where there is not persecution it may come in the way of ill-health, bereavement, or stress of circumstances. It is in times of tribulation that we learn what the Lord can be to us, we shall not have these opportunities of learning His sympathy and support in heaven.

Again, the tempter having a hand in these troubles (verse 5) would give these young Christians the opportunity of triumphing over him, of being more than conquerors. They

would be encouraged and established as they were instructed in the part that he played in the matter. He would not have troubled them at all if they had not been the Lord's. Any weakening on their part or tendency to give up their faith was his temptation. The devil's energies are directed against the faith of the saints. He succeeded as the tempter in Eden by making Eve doubt the word and goodness of God, it is still his way. The Apostle was not unmindful of his wiles, see also 2 Corinthians 11. 2, 3.

"For now we live" (verse 8) is a figure of speech, shewing what the steadfastness of the saints meant to the Apostle. There was nothing about them to hinder the outflow of his love to them, and his very life was bound up with their faith.

To "stand fast in the Lord," would be not unlike "cleaving to the Lord with purpose of heart," Acts 11. It is not stand fast *in Christ*. "In Christ" is all of grace, but the *Lord* brings in responsibility. To stand fast in the Lord would be to own His authority, to be under His administration, and to be drawing upon His resources of grace for their needs in their tribulation. In continuing to stand fast in the Lord they would experience His saving power, for present salvation we must stand fast in the Lord (verse 9). The Apostle was filled with thanksgiving and joy because the triumph of their faith and his prayers were joined to his thanksgiving. He longed to see them that he might perfect that which was lacking in their faith.

He did not see them for a very long time, but his epistles did what his presence would have done. The lack in their faith was not any failure

on their part but ignorance of the truth. Ignorance may give the enemy his opportunity, so the Apostle in the next chapter says, "I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren." It was that bit of the truth about the dead saints and the coming of the Lord that they specially needed to know.

Verse 11. He joins God and our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ together in His prayer. It has been questioned as to whether prayer should be offered to the Lord or not. If He were only man it would be wrong, but He is God equally with the Father. So Paul prays to Him here. He prayed to the Father, because the Father is the source of those affections and desires that were filling his heart for these young saints, and he prayed to the Lord Jesus Christ because He it is who directs His servants. The true servant of the Lord seeks direction from the Lord, he does not look to his brethren for this, nor to the impulses of the divine nature within him, but to the Lord whose servant he is.

Verse 12. He desires that their love might increase and abound towards each other. So often it is the other way about with companies of believers. They begin by warm love towards each other, but as they discover each other's failures and peculiarities their love declines, and criticisms one of another and fault finding take the place of love. His desire was not only that this brotherly love might be active among them, but that their love might flow out to all. This is the way of divine love, and in this they had had the example of the Apostle and his companions.

Verse 13. Love and holiness go together in the life of the Christian,

the exact opposite to that which obtained in the pagan world out of which they had been called. To be unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, with all His saints, was the great end in view. "The pathway of the just shineth more and more unto the perfect day." This is not our going into the Father's house at the rapture of the saints but of our manifestation at the appearing of the Lord, the one is all grace, the other responsibility. If divine love is active more and more in our lives no blame can be attached to that, for divine love is a holy love. Our lives have to be lived in view of that manifestation. Only that which has been the fruit of divine love which is our true life will abide in that day.

Chapter 4. This holiness must have its place in our lives now, and this the Apostle pressed upon these young believers. The will of God, (verse 3) was their sanctification, they were to possess each one his body in sanctification and honour, for their bodies were the temple of the Holy Ghost. The Apostle had given them the commandments of the Lord as to this, and His commandments are not grievous.

Some would erase the word commandment from the New Testament and confine it to the Old, but it is there. "He that hath My commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth Me" (John 14). If the Lord is Lord our place is to obey.

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There are two channels of testimony—the lip and the life, and the lip should be but the expression of what has been first produced in the life.

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Pray for reality, and shun phrases and terms that may sound well enough and be true enough but which you have never eaten and digested and found true in your own soul.

The difference between His commandments and those of the law is this; the commandment of the law came to men in the flesh, who had neither the desire nor the power to carry them out; the commandments of the Lord come to those who are born of God and delight in them, and He gives the grace and power to carry them out.

No command of the Lord thwarts the new nature but directs and encourages it.

With the world around sinking back into the corruptions of Paganism we need these exhortations, and if any one despises them he despises God, and God is the avenger of all those who despise His laws in nature. God hath not called us to uncleanness but to holiness, and He hath given to us His Holy Spirit, verse 8. The power for holy living dwells within us.

From verse 1 to 8 the question is that of personal holiness, verses 9 and 10 of their love one to another, and as to this the Apostles desire was that they might increase more and more. To increase in the divine nature is the surest way of keeping the flesh in abeyance.

Next in verses 11 and 12 comes their testimony to the world, as to which they had also received commandment. They were not to be busybodies, intruding into the affairs of others, but to honour God by living quietly and honestly. Honest labour is God's way for man equally with holiness of life.

## NEW WITH YOU.

T. Oliver.

“I WILL not drink of the fruit of the vine until the Kingdom of God shall come” (Luke 22, 18).

“I will drink no more of the fruit of the vine until that day that I drink it *new* in the Kingdom of God” (Mark 14. 25).

“I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it *new with you* in my Father’s Kingdom” (Matthew 26. 29).

These variations in the accounts of the Synoptic Gospels have more than literary interest. Luke, who alone distinguishes between the cup customarily associated with the Passover and the cup of the New Covenant, simply states the fact without qualification. But Mark adds the attribute that in the coming Kingdom the fruit of the vine partaken will have a “new” character. While Matthew adds the further characteristic that the drinking will be “with you.”

The little company in that upper room on the night of the Lord’s betrayal had a dual or two-fold aspect. (1) They were representative of the remnant of Israel, who had carried on through the 400 silent years which connected the Old Testament and New Testament. For three and a half years they had been the companions of Christ. After the Church has been caught up to be with the Lord forever, there will emerge a remnant of Israel from the Great Tribulation, bearing the same charac-

teristics. With whom their blessed Lord on His triumphant return to claim the earth for Himself will drink the fruit of the vine. The act will have the peculiar significance of being new with them. They will be the lineal descendants of the company in the upper room, viewed with relation to the earth.

(2). But these disciples were also the nucleus of the new company to be formed by the coming of the Holy Ghost, consequent upon the Lord’s death, resurrection and ascension to heaven. In the Lord’s absence that company had the peerless privilege of anticipating the aforementioned celebration by a redeemed creation.

On the first of the week the disciples came together to break bread and drink wine, thus manifesting the significance of the Lord’s death, in the interval “till He come.” But in doing so the act was relieved of formality and monotony. Because in spite of His physical absence He has granted His spiritual presence. So that in very truth they had the rich experience of partaking of the cup new with Him. It is the cup of the New Covenant ratified in His blood. The cup is the expression of the heart of God. His disposition towards His own, His love in a very special way. Again we are the lineal descendants of the company in the upper room, but viewed with relation to heaven. We are linked with heaven and so have a heavenly calling.

“Is thy spirit drooping?  
Is the tempter near?  
Still in Jesus hoping  
What hast thou to fear?”

Set the prize before thee  
Gird thine armour on;  
Heir of grace and glory  
Struggle for the crown.”

J.W.S.

## “HOW SHOULD MAN BE JUST WITH GOD?”

WELL, how? God is infinitely holy, and man utterly sinful, how can man approach God?

That is the grand question. It may well perplex the infidel, and tax the mind of the reformer. The one may scout the whole thing as absurd; and the other may skilfully invent all kinds of religious plans to meet the difficulty; but neither can the contempt of infidelity, nor the many devices of the religious human brain, solve the question, “*How should man be just with God?*”

*First*, God cannot abate one iota of His holiness in order to meet the sinner. That essential element of His nature may not be diminished on any pretext whatsoever. The holiness of God stands immutable. There is therefore no hope on that ground.

*Secondly*, the condition of man is such that it cannot be mended. His nature is essentially evil. He may, no doubt, be reformed, or outwardly altered, so that the drunkard may be made sober, or the adulterer chaste; but the nature—the springs within the heart itself—remains the same. It is incurably wicked. There is no hope, therefore, in this respect either. No hope! Is the case hopeless? Most certainly it is, on the above grounds; and yet happy is it when the soul has been led to the discovery of its own total hopelessness.

None can lessen God’s holiness, so as to meet Him; and on the other hand, none can lessen his own sinfulness so as to enable God to come nearer to him. Have you truly discovered that the chasm is infinite? That these two words, of three letters each, express two prin-

ciples that can never coalesce—GOD and SIN?

It is well when this is known, for a dawning of that truth is the first shining of the light of heaven’s day upon the soul. But yet all this only goes to make the answer to our question the more intensely interesting—“*How should man be just with God?*”

Mark, “*just with God*” is the demand, and nothing short of that will do.

Well, how? The infidel may well give it up, or the mere religionist sink in despair; yet there is a way in which man—you or I, can be “just with God,” and that without the smallest modification of the sinfulness of our nature, or of God’s absolute holiness. One splendid statement, in Romans 3. 26, furnishes the divine and perfect answer, viz., “That he (God) might be just, and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus.”

Blessed answer indeed! In it we find that God is viewed as “just,” and the believer as “justified.” The two, hitherto immeasurably separated by holiness on God’s side, and guilt on the sinner’s, are now brought righteously together, so that no charge of inconsistency can be preferred! And how? Just because between God and the judgment of the sinner, comes the cross of Christ! He is the mercy seat, and there God is made known in righteousness and love.

Therefore our answer speaks of “the Justifier of him that believeth in Jesus.”

That name, in all its sweet and living charms, tells of the ground on which God, in undiminished holiness, can bless the sinner, spite of undiminished guilt. "The blood of Jesus" is the ground!

On that ground the dying thief, repentant and believing, entered paradise unchallenged. His perfect title lay in that precious blood! He could

plead no human merit, nor did he need any! He had no time for improvement, nor could he if he had! That blood-bought title needs no improvement. It is divinely sufficient. Yes, it is enough to satisfy every claim of God, and therefore to calm every fear of my soul. Mark, "God is just"—just! just! "and the Justifier of him that believeth in Jesus."

## God Understands

I KNOW well what you mean by your faith being a sort of dull acquiescence to things. I think it comes partly from the fact that we had not that startling change in our lives that some people have when they are converted later in life than we were. But don't get introspective about that. I was given a little spiritual tonic by reading 1 Corinthians 13. 12 in another Translation. "At present I am learning bit by bit, but then I shall understand, as all along I have myself been understood." You don't understand yourself, nor do I, but the circumstances in which we are are planned by One who understands our temperament exactly. We are being dealt with by an all-wise Psychologist. Therefore in coming to Him there is no need for any pretence at piety or earnestness we may not feel. We can relax in His presence because He understands us thoroughly. I don't mean that in any irreverent way, but I have thought of the words that the Lord Himself uses of His relation-

ships to His own. "As a mother," "like a father," "a brother," "a friend" in whose presence we may be very much at home. And as He understands so well He will give you the experience and the something definite you want at exactly the right time. Be sincere in your seeking but don't hurry experience or spiritual growth. (You may get more than you are ready for if you do). I have always tried to give the children a sense of the love of God. My argument is, "Would I keep from you something that I knew would be for your good and happiness?" Of course not. Then "how much more shall your heavenly Father." If ye being evil have an idea of love and pity and justice or any of these right feelings, "how much more!" I know it is related to temporal things but it applies to spiritual gifts also. Indeed so the Lord uses it. "How much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him?"

—From a Letter.

There is a depth of love which we cannot easily take in in the Lord's desire that we should know His support. Blessed be His Name! He likes to be *indispensable* to us. It is a marvellous time when one has nothing to cling to, no support, but His mighty hand reaching down from higher than the heavens. — J.B.S.

## “THE APPROACHING ADVENT OF CHRIST.”

F. B. Hole.

(A review of a book by the Rev. A. Reese, bearing the above title).

2ND PAPER: The principles of interpretation which are at stake.

WE hold it to be a fact of the first importance that God's dealings with men have varied from time to time, and that therefore we are to recognize clearly marked dispensations. Some epoch-making event has ushered in each fresh dispensation, such as the flood, the giving of the law at Sinai, the advent of Christ, the descent of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. Of these events the advent of Christ is by far the greatest, standing in a class by itself. Out of it sprang the coming of the Spirit on the Day of Pentecost, as its immediate result and crown. In its ultimate result it will prove to be the basis of the second Advent and of the establishment of the glory.

It is also of great importance that we should clearly distinguish in our minds between the *purpose* of God and the *ways* of God; that is to say, between the great objectives which God ever had in view, even from the days of eternity, and the various movements that He makes through the ages calculated to thoroughly expose and meet the breakdown and sin of man, to utterly defeat the machinations of the devil, and ultimately to carry out what He purposes, in spite of all opposition. The dispensations to which we have referred are a part of His ways, and as we consider them we see that they are marked by orderly development and progress, not only in His dealings but also in the unfolding of His purpose. As they moved forward He made Himself known in a fuller way, and His purposes became more plain. The *revelation of God* reached its climax when Christ appeared,

and *the unfolding of the purpose of God* reached its climax in the coming of the Holy Ghost and His ministry through the Apostles.

It will be well to develop these distinctions a little from the Scriptures themselves; and, in the first place, as to the revelation of God's Name.

To Moses God said, "I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, by the name of God Almighty, but by My name JEHOVAH was I not known to them" (Exod. 6. 3). In the earlier, patriarchal dispensation the name Jehovah was *known*, for we find Abraham and others using it, but *they did not know Him by that name*; that is, the real significance of it was not revealed to them. The significance of it did come to light when God put His hand to the bringing of Israel out of Egypt. Later in Israel's history we find the prophets speaking of God's relationship with His people under the figure of a father (Isa. 63. 16, 64. 8; Jer. 3. 19; etc.), yet there was a big step forward when Jesus began to speak to His disciples of "your Father which is in heaven," as we find in Matthew 5. 16, and onwards. There was again a big step forward when, risen from the dead, Jesus said to His disciples, "My Father, and your Father" (John 20. 17); and this thought is expanded in the Apostolic Writings, notably in such passages as Ephesians 1. 3, and 1 Peter 1. 3.

Then again there is a very definite development in the unfolding of

God's purposes and ways, leading to an equally definite progress of doctrine, and this in both the Old and New Testaments, as well as in the transition from the Old to the New.

The giving of the law was a big step onwards in God's ways. It brought things to an issue in regard to human sin, showing it up as transgression, and shutting men up "unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed" (Gal. 3. 19—23). Then God made known His righteous demands, displayed His power in mighty acts, and gave to Moses some idea of what He was about. We read, "He made known His ways unto Moses, His acts unto the children of Israel" (Psa. 103. 7). The mass of the people saw *what He did*, but Moses was granted an insight into *what He was about*, that the people did not possess. Yet it does not say that Moses understood God's *purpose*—such as is unfolded in Ephesians 1. 9—14; that could not be made known in his day.

When Israel nationally had sadly failed God raised up many prophets, and made known by them things that were only hinted at in the time of Moses. The prophets testified against the nations, and against Israel in particular, and then they pointed forward to the advent of One in whom the name of the Lord should be magnified and glory established in the earth. This was another step forward.

We open the New Testament and find ourselves in Matthew's Gospel, which is the one in which we find the Lord linking His teaching with the Law and Prophets, and yet bringing in an entirely new note. We refer specially, of course, to chapters 5—7, in which He shows that God

intends the law to aim not merely at the prohibited act but also at the inward disposition which prompts the act. This makes the law more potent than ever in bringing death home into the sensitive conscience (see Rom. 7. 9); but at the same time we find a new knowledge of God in His fatherly kindness and care from heaven; and thus the spirit of grace begins to appear.

But when we come to the farewell words of the Lord, as recorded in John 13—17, we find another big advance. In His discourse in the Upper Chamber, the Lord was speaking in view of all that He was to accomplish by death and resurrection within the next three days. We venture to say that the progress in the teaching between the "Sermon in the Upper Chamber" and the "Sermon on the Mount" is as pronounced as that between the "Sermon on the Mount" and the teaching given through Moses and the Prophets—if not more so. In the Mountain He was educating His disciples in view of their coming mission; not to the Gentiles, not even to the Samaritans, but to "the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (Matt. 10. 5, 6). In the Upper Chamber He was instructing them in view of His approaching absence, when on the ground of His death and resurrection, they would find themselves in a new place with a new mission, which had "all nations" as its scope.

Moreover in that discourse in the Upper Chamber He spoke of the Holy Spirit who was soon to come, and in that connection He promised further development and progress in the teaching. His words were these, "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when He, the Spirit of truth,

is come, He will guide you into all truth" (15. 12, 13). These are very important words. They show that truth is revealed as God's people are in a position and state to take it in; and that before redemption was accomplished and the Spirit given the disciples were not able to receive the truth which the Lord subsequently ministered through the Apostles by the Spirit. They also show that finality as to the revelation of truth is reached when the Spirit comes, since He guides into ALL truth. With this agrees the word of the Apostle Paul as to it being given to him "to fulfil [or, complete] the Word of God" (Col. 1. 25). He alludes not to the completing of the canon of Scripture—apparently John did that—but to the completing of the subjects of revelation, the whole circle of revealed truth.

Now if this progress of doctrine be borne in mind we shall be saved from the error of expecting to find the revelation of truth before its time. We shall find that what is revealed, and the way in which it is revealed, will exactly suit the people to whom it is revealed. We shall be delighted of course to find that when any given truth is revealed, there is nothing that contradicts it in what has previously been revealed. The earlier revelation will state the fact in broad outline with not much in the way of detail. The later revelation will fill in details and show us developments which nobody had expected, yet when we turn back to the earlier word we find there is nothing against them, and sometimes we can discern how room has been left for them. If this feature be really grasped we also shall be saved from the attempt to make the later revelation only say what has already been said in the earlier, or from the attempt to make

the earlier instructions the measure and standard for those who belong to a later development or dispensation.

These are but brief remarks on a very important principle of interpretation, yet though brief they bear quite definitely on the way in which we shall approach this book on "The Approaching Advent of Christ." Its main, one might say its only, object is to prove that there is no interval of time between the coming of Christ *for* and *with* His saints, that they are for all practical purposes the same event, synchronizing with His glorious appearing to destroy His foes. The author asserts, and proves to his own satisfaction, that the Old Testament teaches that the resurrection of saints takes place at the day of the Lord, by which he means (we gather) the exact and literal day of Christ's appearing. He will allow of no further light on this point which might modify in some particulars what he thinks he finds in the Old Testament. He recognizes that there is such a thing as a fuller unfolding of an earlier revelation, but is so sure that the resurrection is located by the Old Testament at the appearing, that he judges the whole question in the light of that. The whole structure of his book is this; that he thinks he has established from certain passages in Isaiah and Daniel that the resurrection takes place on the exact day of Christ's glorious appearing, and this Old Testament revelation appears to him to be so clear that he must bring further New Testament revelations into line with it.

An example of what we mean is found on page 68 of his book. Discussing the passage in 1 Thessalonians 4, he claims that "Darbyists themselves furnish us with reasons

that smash their central position." This is because, "They all admit, in the first place, that this resurrection in 1 Thess. 4 includes the resurrection of all the righteous dead since Abel." His comment is, "Very well then, this means that 1 Thess. 4 synchronizes with the resurrection in Isaiah 25. 8; 26. 19; Dan. 12. 1—3; 12—13; Matt. 13. 43; . . . And we have already proved that these passages clearly locate the resurrection of the saints in Israel at the commencement of the Messianic Kingdom, when Antichrist is destroyed, and Israel is converted by the appearing of Jehovah." He considers the Old Testament so clear on this subject that he can start there, and argue from what he thinks he finds. Our next paper D.V., will deal with these Old Testament passages. For the moment we content ourselves with saying that had he started with the clear light of the New Testament Epistles, especially with 1 and 2 Thessalonians, and viewed the earliest predictions in the light of the latest, he might have seen things differently.

We have now to ask a question which bears very directly upon the matters before us. It is this:—Do we find in the Old Testament any clear light upon the distinction between the coming of Christ to suffer in humiliation and His coming to reign in His glory? The present discussion turns upon the question, Will the Second Advent embrace *two stages*, with an interval between, or will it not? Discussions between God-fearing Israelites in the days of Malachi, when they had read the fourth chapter of his prophecy, might well have raged round the question, Will there be *two Advents* of the Messiah, with an interval between them?

There were a number of predictions concerning the humiliation, the sorrows, the death of the Messiah, though outnumbered by those speaking of His glory, His power, His discriminating judgment. What was the solution? We do not know that Jews debated the possibility of there being two Advents, though we have been given to understand that some held the theory of two Messiahs—a sorrowing One, and a triumphant One. But obviously on this point the Old Testament was indeterminate. Of course God could have made the point quite clear, if it had suited His ways to do so. He could have caused Malachi to write in his last chapter about "the tender mercy of our God; whereby the Dayspring from on high" should visit them rather than about the burning up of the wicked by the rising of "the Sun of righteousness," and to speak plainly about John the Baptist instead of giving a prediction about Elijah the prophet, which as subsequent events proved had a certain reference to him. But no, Malachi's closing note was a prediction as to the far-off coming to reign and not the near-approaching coming to suffer.

The astronomers tell us that not a few stars which are *obviously one* when viewed by the naked eye, are nevertheless *obviously two* when seen through a powerful telescope. This may serve as an illustration of our point. Take the early part of Isaiah 61 for instance—the passage that the Lord began to read in the synagogue at Nazareth, as recorded in Luke 4. The saint of Old Testament times read it with the "naked eye," and saw one coming, which was to bring the good tidings and the liberty of the acceptable year of the Lord, and also the vengeance that would rid the land of its ashes and

mourning. The "telescopic view" began to be apparent when our Lord stopped his reading in the middle of verse 2. There are two comings in that verse, and not one only. The case of Isaiah 61. 2 should warn us to be very careful how we handle the predictions of the Old Testament.

There is one other point in the book to which we make reference since it bears upon the particular theme of this short paper. Towards the end (pp. 273—276) the question comes up of the use by Christians of "the Lord's prayer." By the time these pages are reached Mr. Reese has warmed up to the controversy, and goes to the length of saying that Paul says that men, who teach such things as the "Darbyists" do, are deceivers. They are such as the Lord warned His disciples against in Matthew 24. They bring in "extravagant and impracticable delusions," and "in the interest of fantastic innovations on the faith, large portions of our Lord's teaching are pushed aside as inapplicable to, and even unsuitable for, Christians." Then he quotes two extracts from writers who contend that the prayer was not given to "Christians," and that those who use it "as a form" cannot know what it is "to ask the Father in the name of Christ," and having done so his comment is, "the above extracts illustrate the kind of browbeating and judaizing exegesis that is used to impose freak theories on the faithful."

Then he goes further and takes care that we shall realize how vitally the whole prophetic position that he contends for is bound up with the rightness or wrongness of one's understanding of dispensational matters. He says, "As we survey . . . Darbyist interpretation, and espe-

cially of the judaizing of much of our Lord's teaching in the interest of a theory, we say confidently to our readers: 'this is the decisive point'!" He adds, "Let the unwary Christian be once persuaded that the Lord's prayer is merely 'Jewish,' and for Jews; let him be off his guard here; let him only dally here with the word 'dispensational,' then the Four Gospels will go the same way as the Lord's prayer. And he will descend a slippery slope with no stop till he reaches an edifice called 'Dispensational House,' pleasant to look upon, but inside a house of bondage."

We are really thankful that Mr. Reese has spoken out so emphatically upon this point, for it greatly helps to show what is really at stake in this discussion about what may at first appear to be a mere detail of prophetic truth. He assures us in a footnote that he has "no quarrel with sane dispensational truth;" such as, of course, he himself would advocate. It is this "theory" that there is a definite difference to be observed between the position and state of the disciples *before* and *after* the death and resurrection of Christ, and the consequent coming of the Spirit, that rouses his ire, and which he regards as not "sane." We believe without a shadow of doubt that this difference exists, and we must accept with equanimity the epithet "insane" from his lips or pen, if he wishes to bestow it upon us. But we would enter our protest against the way in which he imputes wrong motives to those he attacks. Not for the first time in this volume does he assume that his opponents formed their "theory," and then set to work to "judaize much of our Lord's teaching," and formulate other ideas, in order to support their precious theory. We have no hesitation in affirming that

in fact things worked the other way round. It was as dispensational distinctions became clear to them, and the respective callings of Israel and of the Church were discerned, that the views of prophecy were formed, which our author so scathingly attacks.

However, there his challenge stands, and we cheerfully accept it. In spite of all the wrath and sarcasm it will bring upon our heads we shall continue to affirm that the disciples as they followed the Lord during His sojourn on earth were not "Christians," in the proper significance of the word. They were not the Church, though they were an important part of the nucleus of which the Church was formed at the Day of Pentecost. All through the centuries there had been found "an afflicted and poor people" who "trust in the name of the Lord," called, "the remnant of Israel" (Zeph. 3. 12, 13). The disciples were distinguished representatives of that remnant, who recognized the Messiah and responded to His call when He came. He knew what He was going to make of them after He had accomplished redemption: they did not. Without a doubt He educated them during His ministry for the place they were presently to occupy, though it seems that they never understood His words in any full or proper sense. This failure to understand is specially marked in John's Gospel. The words, "These things understood not His disciples at the first: but when Jesus was glorified, then remembered they. . ." (John 12. 16), were written in regard to *acts*, but they apply equally to the *teachings*. When Jesus was glorified then the Spirit was given; and then the Church began its existence, and then they possessed the capacity to understand.

Matthew's Gospel specially links on the ministry of the Lord with what went before, so it is the first of the Gospels. John's links His ministry with what was to follow, so it is the last of the four. Matthew's indicates the dispensational changes that were beginning to take place, and when we have passed the middle of it we find the Lord announcing His purpose to build His Church in terms that show it to be a yet future thing.

This dispensational change, brought actually to pass at the Day of Pentecost, as recorded in Acts 2, we most definitely assert, and Mr. Reese as definitely denies it. We think he has failed to discern a very important feature which must affect injuriously his whole conception of truth concerning the hour in which we live. He thinks we have conjured up an imaginary distinction, and he showers a lot of rather hard adjectives on all our heads — "aggressive sophistry," "Gentile conceits," "wild notion," "the Remnant fable, and the Secret-Rapture fable," "the distortion of history," "the totally unchristian sitting-in-judgment on the whole Christendom," "a Christian who plays fast and loose with the Lord's teaching, accepting it for himself in homeopathic doses, and calling the rest 'Jewish,' in order to bolster up a set of Remnant theories that are a travesty of Scripture teaching," are all found in one of his paragraphs. He may have been provoked to this kind of thing by some remarks in the pages of two or three of those whom he opposes, but we have no thought or even desire to compete with him in this type of argument. He shall have a monopoly of it, as far as we are concerned. We content ourselves in saying that we judge that he fails to see distinctions that are really there.

Each of our readers must judge for himself whether Acts 2 records a great dispensational landmark, or whether it does not. A great deal that is decisive in this controversy hangs on the answer that is given to this.

The last remark we make in this paper is that some of the remarks quoted above are a travesty of what we believe. The author groups together such a variety of teachers under the heading of "Darbyists," that it is quite possible that amongst them someone can be found to come under his strictures. For ourselves we thankfully accept our Lord's teachings in the Gospels in large allopathic doses, though we note, in view of the dispensational change at Pentecost, where the full Christianity of the Spirit's day would introduce modifications. The Lord's prayer will serve very well to illustrate what we mean. There appear to be seven petitions in Matthew 6. 9—13, and though we do not use it as a form, each petition of the seven we can and do use, though with slight modifications. For instance, the disciples were penniless men following a penniless Master, so their request about the daily bread had in it a note that is absent in our case. There are requests that very frequently spring from our lips that are totally absent in this prayer. We should address God as *our God and Father, through the Lord Jesus Christ*, because those words of His, recorded in John 20. 17, were spoken some time after He gave them the prayer. Again we should proffer our requests *in His name*, because of what He also said

at a later date, as recorded in John 16. 23, 24. All this may be anathema to Mr. Reese, but we believe it to be simply a proper understanding of the progress of doctrine in the New Testament.

In a similar way we read the Sermon on the Mount. We take it home to ourselves and find it very searching for our consciences. But, at the same time, we do not shut our eyes to the fact that in it the Lord was instructing His disciples in the principles of His kingdom, just as in chapters 8 and 9 He displayed before their eyes the power of His kingdom. There is in it one remark which gives an intimation that they were to inherit things in heaven (6. 20); but that is all. The unfolding of the results of the work of the Cross, and of the heavenly calling is not yet.

And in just the same way we read the prophetic discourse later in the Gospel. The Lord was addressing His disciples in their then state and position. They were not yet baptized by the one Spirit into the one body, and hence the Lord did not address them as *being what*, in point of fact at that moment, *they were not*. Presently they did become that, and then things were made known to them that concerned the position into which they had been brought.

Our readers must judge as to these things. Mr. Reese may denounce what we have just said in strong language. We believe it to be important truth, and a key that unlocks a right understanding of both the purposes and ways of God.

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We are never to seek to vindicate ourselves when it is a personal matter, but when the Lord's Name is dishonoured for His glory we may speak.

## FEASTS FOR THE LORD. JOHN 12.

SIX days before the Passover, He is at Bethany, in the midst of that little company who had in so remarkable a way, been witnesses of His glory, and who show us that believing remnant which, while Israel rejected Him, gathered round Him. These are soon to be the commencement of that Christian gathering which in John has been already variously foreshadowed. Here they make Him a feast, as once (and only once before), Matthew the publican had made Him a feast, though with a very different company. There as the Saviour of sinners, Matthew had put Him in company with sinners; and a feast we may be sure that meant for Him. Here it is with saints that He is found, the fruit of His salvation, and typically on resurrection ground; and here service, communion, worship, have their representatives. Martha still serves; Lazarus is at table with Him; while Mary, entering more deeply into what is before Him, anoints Him for His burial.

John alone names Mary here, as he alone points out the traitor as raising the murmuring against her, and that which moved him in it. John too speaks of the anointing of His feet, the other Gospels of that of His head. Here she is like the woman in the Pharisee's house, as in the wiping them with the hair of her head. John also tells us how the house was filled with the odour of the ointment. Thus deeper appreciation on the part of the beloved disciple seems to flow from deeper communion with the Lord's own estimate (cf. Luke 7. 44, 46). How sweet to Him was that lavish expenditure of love which others counted waste.

In the Synoptic Gospels the memorial of it goes out with the gospel: in John the odour abides in the house. Glorious testimony to a woman's act, such as we find recorded of no other. But she had learnt at His feet what she poured out there.

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I once heard a brother pray. O Lord may those who are too weak even to pray, be weak enough to lean on Thee.

“Ah me, I'm never well  
 But when I on my best Beloved lean,  
 And then I'm never ill;  
 Crosses and trials all are right,  
 And pain is sweet and trouble light  
 When Christ, my heart doth fill.”

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You are very timid, well that should be no hindrance, but should give you a fuller sense of your dependence on the Lord, and so make more room for His power. The most timid naturally are often the most effective and powerful witnesses.

## ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS

### Feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace.

"The contribution on the whole armour of God in December, 1937, Issue is good, but the writer does not say what 'the preparation of the gospel of peace' is; you might explain in your Answers." — WALSALL.

**I**T is remarkable that the Christian, arrayed cap-a-pie for conflict, should have his feet shod with "the preparation of the gospel of peace." It seems to indicate what his walk must be in the midst of conflict. He fights because he must, the warfare in which he is engaged is forced upon him by evil powers that oppose his faith, but while he refuses to yield an inch of ground to the enemy, he is a man of peace, and is kept by the peace of God; his spirit is the meek and quiet spirit, and as much as lieth in him he lives at peace with all men. He stands up to the attacks of the enemy unruffled and confident; there is a peace in his heart which shews itself in his deportment. The Lord is the example in this as in all else. He wore the whole armour of God; there was no vulnerable point of it in Him. His loins were girt about with truth, the breast plate of righteousness fitted perfectly upon Him, and His feet were ever shod

with the preparations of the gospel of peace. How unperturbed He was when His foes, stirred up by the devil, came with torches and weapons to take Him; what an evidence that He was shod with the preparation of gospel of peace it was when He healed the ear of the high priest's servant! Simon was not shod with these sandals when he struck that rash blow, he was the sport of a gust of passion. Again when men had done their worst to Him and He prayed "Father forgive them for they know not what they do," what a witness it was to the same fact. This same thing can be traced out in every step that He trod, and to consider Him will give us a clearer understanding of this piece of the armour of God than the best exposition. We remember that when He sent out His servants to go before Him (Luke 10) He instructed them to say in whatsoever house they entered "Peace be to this house."

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### Daniel's Seventieth Week.

"Apart from Daniel 9. 27, where the coming Roman Prince confirms 'a covenant with the many,' are there any events to be fulfilled during the first three and a half years of Daniel's last prophetic week? Do the two witnesses testify during that period (Revelation 11)? and where will the five months of Revelation 9 come in?" — BIRKENHEAD.

**M**ANY great events will occur in Christendom and the nations during the period covered by the last week of Daniel's prophecy, preparing the way for the judgments that will fill up the last half of it. As to the Jews themselves, crowds of them will be gathered into Palestine by God's direct intervention—their going there now is but the coming

event casting its shadow, and a very significant shadow it is. During this period Antichrist will arise among them; he will come in his own name and they will receive him (John 5. 43), and make a league with him, and the coming Roman leader will make a league with them probably through Antichrist (Isaiah 28), who will be the false prophet of the Revelation.

During that period they, like the rest of the world, will begin to say "Peace and safety." Then the storm will burst and the great Tribulation commence.

We should judge that the two witnesses of Rev. 11 will prophesy during the second half of the week. God will maintain them in the midst of Jerusalem to bear witness against the Roman beast and Antichrist and the scornful men of Jerusalem who will be in league with them, until they are slain. All these passages in which definite figures are given seem to refer to the latter half of the week—42 months, Rev. 11. 2; 1,260 days,

verse 3, and ch. 12. 6. 14; 13. 5.

The five months of torment for men of Rev. 9 may have its place in the early part of the week, as a period being set to it indicates that it is not a final judgment. W. Scott in his able Exposition says, "The duration of the Satanic scourge is limited to five months, the time of natural locust life (May to September). The time specified points to a brief and determinate period of woe, not necessarily one of five literal months." It certainly shews that all is under God's control, even the fierce malice of Satan against men. The throne is in heaven.

## Is the whole Bible the Word of God?

"In a recent issue of a well-known evangelical magazine there appeared the following comments of this question, and I should be glad if you would make a clear statement as to what in your view the Word of God really is. Do you agree with Karl Barth's view?"

"The truth is, not that the Bible in its entirety, for all time and all men, is the infallible Word of God; or that it is **not**; but that, through the activity of the Blessed Spirit speaking to our condition, the Bible becomes the Word of God.

"Macdonald in "Modern Evangelism," tells of a friend who went to Zurich to interview Karl Barth in order to ask him what he meant by the word of God. After some preliminary conversation the friend said to Barth, "Do you really believe that the whole Bible from cover to cover is the Word of God?"

"Dr. Barth had a book in his hand. With a gesture he drew an imaginary line down the page and said, "If this part of the Bible speaks to me it is the Word of God to me." Then, indicating the other part he continued, "If this part does not speak to me it is not God's Word to me."

" "But," asked the friend, "if this part of the Bible that has not spoken to you speaks to me, is it then God's Word?" "Certainly," Barth replied, "It is God's Word to you." "And do you believe that the part which is God's Word to me may some day become God's Word to you?" "Of course. Anything in the Bible may become God's Word to me." " — SUTTON.

**W**E wonder if Karl Barth has been correctly reported, if so we do *not* agree with his view of the Scriptures. They are the Word of God whether we recognise their voice or not. "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God (or, is God-breathed) 2 Tim. 3. 16. They do speak to us, but we may not have ears to hear; that is our side of the question. "He that hath ears to hear,

let him hear," Luke 14. 35. "He that hath an ear to hear, let him hear what the Spirit saith to the churches," Rev. 2 and 3. Those Israelites who did not mix faith with the word that was preached to them might have excused themselves by saying, It did not speak to us; but it did speak to them, and they hardened their hearts and would not hear it. Hebrews 3. 7, 15; 4. 2, 7. We are sure that Karl

Barth is no friend of the higher critics or the modernists, but this view of the Scripture would call forth their applause. They pick and choose, and accept what suits them and reject what does not. This we know he would not do.

“All Scripture is God-breathed,” and if we take up the Word with this conviction, and the desire to know and do God’s will it will speak to us continually, and we shall hear it; we shall cleanse our way by taking heed to it; it will be a lamp to our feet and a light to our path; we shall hide it in

our hearts that we might not sin against God.

We fully appreciate the fact that because of what we are, the grace and power of the Holy Spirit are needed to make the Word effectual within us, but it does not become the Word of God when it is made effectual, it is made effectual because it is the Word of God. My reception of it does not change it, it changes me. “To be true when it is received, it must have been true before it was received.”

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## The New Birth.

Arising out of the papers on “The New Birth” by A. J. Pollock, in our December issue, an esteemed correspondent asks the following questions:—

1. Is not new birth entrance into life?
2. Therefore is not believing the way into the new birth?
3. Can born again people be ultimately lost because they are not subsequently saved?
4. Does the divine description of Cornelius, Acts 10, indicate that he was born again, or merely a God-fearing man?
5. If new birth is “moral preparation” was not Nicodemus born again before he sought the Lord?

**I**N considering this subject, we would ask our readers to remember the words of the Lord. “The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh or whither it goeth; so is everyone that is born of the Spirit” John 3. We know that there is the new birth by the Spirit, for we see the effect of it in many lives, our hope is that all our readers has experienced it, but even to those who have had the fullest experience of it, the “how” is a mystery. “Thou canst not tell.”

1. Since the word of God by which we are born again is living. 1 Peter 1. 23, life in the soul must be

the effect of its entrance, but the Lord’s description of it is “that which is born of the Spirit is *spirit*” John 3.

2. While there must be faith in the word if it is to profit. Hebrews 4. 22, yet it is not by faith that a man is born again, but by the Spirit; on the other hand it is by faith that one is saved, or is justified, or receives eternal life. New birth is the sovereign act of God; faith comes in on the side of man’s responsibility.

3. No one born again could ever be lost, “He which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ,” Phil. 1. 6.

4. It seems certain that Cornelius, who sought God in prayer so earnestly and was so practical in his life, was born again. These were not dead works, but the fruit of a new nature within.

5. It may be that Nicodemus was born again before he came to the Lord. He seems to stand out as a contrast to those in chapter 2. 23—25, who were convinced by miracles, but in whose souls there was no divine work. In J.N.D.'s New Translation the narrative runs on "But there was a man etc.," bringing out the contrast very clearly. To

him the Lord did commit Himself and the result is seen later in the Gospel.

New birth is a necessity and is by the Spirit, eternal life is a gift and by faith; new birth introduces into the Kingdom of God, eternal life belongs to the family; new birth awakens a man to his need and gives him some knowledge of himself, eternal life is the knowledge of God and Jesus Christ His sent One. That there is a difference between the two will be understood if the words new birth be substituted for eternal life in the passages where the latter occurs.

## Baptism.

"In 'Answers to Correspondents' in your April, 1937, issue you say writing on the commissions in the four Gospels, 'Those in Luke and John are now being fulfilled—and neither baptism nor sign gifts have any place in them.' On page 94 of same issue is a helpful article in which Romans 6 is quoted in connection with Christian baptism and its deep significance for holy living. I should welcome what you may be led to communicate as to these statements that appear at variance." — HERTS.

THE difference lies between the *preaching* and the *teaching* of baptism. The twelve were sent to preach it. They had to say "He that believeth and *is baptised* shall be saved. A Jew's sins were not remitted until he was baptised, only thus could he be free from the guilt of crucifying his Messiah. When the

first Gentiles came into blessing they were baptised consequent upon being saved, Acts 10. Paul tells us that he was not sent to baptise but to preach the gospel. He did not *preach* baptism to sinners, but he *taught* it to saints, and Romans 6 and Colossians 2 shew the important place that it has in Christian teaching.

## Other Answers.

(W.McL.) The "unspeakable gift" of 2 Corinthians 9. 15 is, we believe, God's only-begotten Son.

(E.B.) The "man in Christ" caught up to the third heaven (2 Cor. 12) was Paul himself. He is there recording his own experience.

(G.M.) No true saint can remove himself or be removed from the one assembly, or church, which is the one body of Christ; he has been baptised into it by the Holy Ghost, and what God does is for ever.

(G.M.) The assembly, or church, is not only the body of which Christ is the Head, but it is God's habitation, He dwells in it now by His Spirit; not in anyone of the sections into which men have divided it, but in its entirety. "Ye are builded together, for an habitation of God through the Spirit, Eph. 2. 22 has the whole church in view. It became God's dwelling place at Pentecost and has not ceased to be that since, nor ever will, for it groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord, verse 21.

## Correspondence. The New Birth.

Dear Mr. Editor,

My article, **The New Birth**, which appeared in your December issue (1937), has evidently provoked a good deal of interest, one correspondent commenting on the article says,

"Faith seems to be left out entirely as having no connection with this work of God. I cannot but think that Mr. Pollock would not leave faith out entirely, as not being present, and I suggest that he tells us what connection it has with New Birth."

The subject of life, whether natural or spiritual is one of mystery. All life comes from God, and the secret of it is with Him.

Our only safe course is to receive the testimony of Scripture on such a subject as this. Where does Scripture say that a man in the flesh\* can have faith, producing the New Birth? There is a large and influential body of Christians, who teach that in order to be born again, there must be **previous** faith in the Saviour. Is not this the denial of the utter ruin of man, however little intended? for it teaches that the carnal mind, which is not only at enmity, but is enmity against God can exercise faith. Ephesians 2. 8 says, "By grace are ye saved through faith, and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God." There faith is not of ourselves, but is God's gift.

Let us see what Scripture teaches. John 3. 5, says, "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter the Kingdom of God." Here we find the Holy Spirit is the Divine **Agent** in the New Birth, and water (the word of God) the **instrument** used. It is clear that life whether natural or divine can only come from God. The Spirit uses the word. The Word of God in some ways lays hold of the soul, and in that lies the New Birth. It may be the sense that God **is**—not a mere surface acceptance of a fact, usually believed, but a belief that grips the soul with a sense of responsibility. Or it might be the thought of eternity, that would give a desire to be prepared for it. It might be the conviction of sin, and in many other ways.

1 Peter 1. 23 casts light upon this, "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever." Here the process of the New Birth is likened to a seed falling into the ground. The seed has life in it. The power of life in the seed lays hold in the soil. The soil does not lay hold on the seed. The word of God in the power of the Spirit lays hold of the man.

James 1. 17, 18, says, "Every good gift and every perfect gift cometh from above,

and cometh down from the Father of lights, with Whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning. Of His own will begat He us with the word of truth." Here we get the simile of begetting used.

This idea is elaborated in John 1. 12, 13, which tells that those, who received Christ, were those "which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." It is one thing to experience the New Birth, it is another to receive Christ, and John 1. 12, 13 makes this very clear. If I as an unregenerate man were able to exercise faith to bring about the New Birth, then it would be of "the will of the flesh," and "the will of man," which we are distinctly told it is not. It is "of God," "of His own will," "by the word of God," and there we must leave it.

The impartation of natural life to men and animals is a secret that no scientist has ever fathomed, or will ever do so. Take the case of synthetic milk. All the ingredients that are in the composition of milk have been brought together in their right quantities, and milk has been produced. It looks like milk, it tastes like milk. It contains all the constituents of milk, but it lacks vitamins—it lacks **life**. Only the Creator can give life.

How can a man in the flesh by an act bring about divine life? It must be of God.

It is quite evident, however, that when the Holy Spirit causes the word of God to lay hold of a man, there must be belief in that word, and in the measure of that belief there must be faith. But sometimes we cannot separate things though they may differ. We cannot separate between the sun and the rays that proceed from it. We cannot put a point of time between the stroke of the sword and the cut resulting therefrom, so who can put a time between the New Birth and faith in the operating word?

There are many things in nature we cannot explain, but we are bound to accept them. For instance the mystery of natural life. Is it any wonder that there are mysteries in the spiritual realm, which we cannot explain, but gladly accept on the testimony of God's word? Let us not try to bring things down to the level of our apprehension, but humbly accept the testimony of Scripture.

Yours affectionately in our Lord,

A. J. POLLOCK.

\*That is, a man in his unregenerate condition.

# AROUND THE CROSS IN THE GOSPEL OF JOHN.

NO. 2. Chapter 18.

J. T. Mawson.

**I**N an interesting little book entitled "The Trial of Jesus Christ," the late Lord Shaw, one of the Lords of Appeal, has shewn that every step taken in the trial and condemnation of the Lord Jesus was illegal. The precipitancy of the entire proceedings was a complete violation of Hebrew jurisprudence. Trials, even in money matters, had to be conducted in the day time, but trials for life had not only to take place during the day, but if condemnation was the result, the sentence had to be postponed until the second day. The Lord Jesus was condemned and declared worthy of death; and this before the darkness of even the night of His arrest was over. Then two or three witnesses were necessary according to law to satisfy the court that there was triable matter. "Their deposition was the beginning of every proceeding, and until it was publicly given against a man he was held to be in the judgment of the law not merely innocent but unaccused." The witnesses were put on a solemn oath. "Forget not, O witness that . . . in this trial for life, if thou sinnest, the blood of the accused and the blood of his seed to the end of time shall be imputed to thee." Further, the law of the Jews was "Our law condemns no one to death upon his own confession" and "it is a fundamental principle with us that no one can damage himself by what he says in judgment." Hence, "putting the question to the accused" as Caiaphas did, "and founding a condemnation on the answer was the last violation of formal justice." "This procession of illegality," says the learned judge, "still staggers the mind; it tears up

jurisprudence and justice by the very roots."

The key to this strange drama and unparalleled injustice has two sides to it; theirs and His. On their side, "This is your hour and the power of darkness" and "They hated Me without a cause,"—on His side. "The cup which My Father hath given Me, shall I not drink it?" Their blind and uncontrollable hatred and His lowly and perfect submission ran together in that solemn hour; and behind it all that mystery of love. "Christ suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God."

With these points of Jewish law in mind we can understand the Lord's answer to the interrogations of the high priest. "I spake openly to the world: I ever taught in the synagogue, and in the temple, whither the Jews always resort; and in secret have I said nothing. Why askest thou Me? ask them that heard Me. What I have unto them, they know what I said." The power and justice of that rebuke must have been felt by the whole court, in spite of its excitement at its own injustice and the success of it thus far, and one of them, an officer, lost his head completely and struck Jesus with the palm of his hand. The quiet answer to that blow emphasised the illegality of the proceedings without witnesses. "If I have spoken evil, *bear witness* of the evil: but if well, why smitest thou Me?"

The high priest asked Jesus of His disciples and of His doctrine. His

disciples! Was the high priest afraid of them? Where were they? Had the Lord any disciples in that hour? "Behold, the hour cometh, yea and is now come, that ye shall be scattered, every man to his own, *and shall leave Me alone.*" Thus had He said, and His word had been fulfilled. His disciples had scattered like frightened rabbits at the first approach of danger; they were gone, and the one who had boasted the most of his attachment to his Master had come back only to deny Him with oaths and curses with the court menials by the kitchen fire. His disciples could give the high priest no trouble, but His doctrine! Ah, that was different. At His doctrine that ambitious and apostate Sadducean Jew might well have trembled, for it was the utter condemnation of his life and ways, and he knew it. But why did he ask Jesus of His doctrine? He had had testimony as to His doctrine already, and that from his own officers, who had been sent to take Him on a previous day, and had returned without fulfilling their commission saying "Never man spake like this man."

John twice records the fact that He was bound: the Incarnate Word, Creator of worlds become flesh, bound with cords! Thus they hoped to hold Him fast. Their cords did not hold Him, but others did that their eyes could not see.

"Cords indeed, O Saviour, bound Thee,  
Strong, unbreakable, divine!  
Twined were they in long past ages  
Out of love for souls like mine."

"*Then led they Jesus from Caiaphas unto the hall of judgment*" and Pilate who was to play his ignoble part in this great tragedy appears on the scene for the first time.

What a confirmation of the Lord's condemnation of these leaders of the

people was their conduct now. Punctilious to the last degree as to all that was ceremonial and external, their hearts were the abode of every evil passion. They would not go into the judgment hall "lest they should be defiled; but that they might eat the passover" — "whited sepulchres which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness." And Pilate, a shrewd judge of character, saw through them, he knew that for envy they had delivered Him up, and he treated them with a well-deserved contempt. "What accusation bring ye against this man?" Why this unseemly haste and hatred? Stung by his question and probably by his manner, they answer apparently with anger "If He were not a malefactor, we would not have delivered Him up unto thee." Then see to Him yourselves, said Pilate. "Take Him and judge Him according to your law."

They hated Jesus more than they hated the Roman yoke; that yoke had been intolerable to them, but now they were ready to endure it and acknowledge it if only they could through it get rid of Him. So they confessed "It is not lawful for us to put any man to death." But above and behind all was the infallibility of His own words, "signifying what death He should die." Then it seemed that Pilate realised that the case was graver than he had supposed. What they really asked for was the ratification of a sentence already passed upon Him. It was a matter of life or death, and he must decide it.

The Lord was not silent to Pilate; before him "He witnessed a good confession." The Gentile had to be tested as well as the Jew, and having come into contact with the Truth,

Pilate, as representing the Gentile, as Caiaphas represented the Jew, must have the opportunity of bowing to Jesus or rejecting His claim. The time had come when all men, Jew and Gentile, high and low, were come under God's searchlight, to be exposed in their true nature and character.

Pilate then started that most remarkable of all dialogues by the abrupt question "Art Thou the King of the Jews?" And we discern in the Lord's answer, not an attempt to gain the favour of the judge but a note of divine pity for him. "Sayest thou this of thyself, or did others tell it thee of Me?" It was the old question, and the greatest of all questions that a man can face, "What think ye of Christ?" Did Pilate want to know? Did his question arise from a true desire to have the truth as to this arresting prisoner? Or was he repeating what he had heard, without any personal interest in the matter? The question brought out what was in him. "Am I a Jew," he cries. This is a Jewish question merely, and beneath the notice of a proud Roman, except in the execution of his duty. So men look upon Christ; who He may be is to them a mere question of religion; a question for theologians, and of no personal interest to them. But "God hath made this same Jesus both Lord and Christ," and "at the Name of Jesus every knee shall bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth: and every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." "Thine own nation and the chief priests have delivered Thee unto me," said Pilate, since they reject Thy claim and refuse Thy title what is it to me; I am Thy judge, not a would-be disciple—"What hast Thou done?"

In the absence of witnesses he was compelled to ask that question, but he might have had many witnesses, if they would have dared to speak the truth in that hour of Satan's power, and if he had been just enough to summon them to his court and remand the prisoner until they appeared, for not long before that day the multitude had said with united voice, "He hath done all things well."

The Lord did not answer the Governor's question. He was not there to talk of His works or to vindicate Himself, but to bear witness to the truth. If His own nation refused His rights, and if, as far as they were concerned, He was to be cut off and have nothing, yet He had a kingdom, a kingdom not founded and formed by sword and blood and "reeking tube" and will of man, as are all the kingdoms of this world; a kingdom nevertheless, in which those who enter it would be empowered to suffer as He was suffering, and be more than conquerors through Him who loved them, as He would most surely conquer. But "except a man be born again he cannot see that kingdom."

The Lord lays the stress on the possessive pronoun, "My kingdom," "My servants." This is one of the features of this Gospel of John; it meets us everywhere. "My Father, My Father's house, My peace, My joy, My word, My commandments, My sheep, My friends, My brethren, —He moves in this Gospel amongst things that are His own, and His kingdom is His own, for "the Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into His hands."

No wonder that as Pilate listened to these words that he could not comprehend, there was forced from him

the question. "Art Thou a King then?" Jesus answered, "Thou sayest that I am a King. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Everyone that is of the truth heareth My voice." There shone with steady glow the glory of His person and the greatness of His mission. He was a King, indeed! He was the King eternal, and He had come into the world to establish a kingdom that would never be moved. The "Word was made flesh" and He was "full of grace and truth." He came to bear witness to the truth; to tell out what God is, in a world blinded and blighted by the devil's lie. He was the truth Himself, for that is what He meant, surely, when He said, "Every one that is of the truth heareth My voice." His kingdom is truth, there is no lie in it, and to hear His voice means to obey the truth, and to be in His kingdom means to be subject to Him. No man knows the truth who does not obey it and no man is in His kingdom who has not submitted to Him.

Here are words that we should ponder in their setting. The power

of Imperial Rome was there, ruthless, bestial, God-defying—a power that in its revival will gather up its stupendous forces to hold the world against God and His Christ (Revelation 17. 14). And the Jews were there, swept by a storm of hatred against the Lord in comparison with which all the passions of the past were as a summer breeze. And He was there, a fettered prisoner, awaiting sentence of death from the Gentile judge as He had heard it from a united Sanhedrin. And standing there He spoke of His kingdom and of the Truth. There shone light divine on so dark a background, and there were words spoken that shall abide when time has ceased to be.

But Truth was on the way to the scaffold and wrong was on the throne! Yes, but that shall not always be, for "great is truth and it prevails" is eternally true. Caiaphas spoke, and Pilate spoke, but the word of the fettered Prisoner shall be the last word. They spake and had their day and went to perdition. His words abide. Heaven and earth shall pass away, but not one jot or tittle of His word shall fail.

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Happy is he who has learned to look beyond the actions of men to the power that is above all and controls all, and to receive all, favour or persecution, aids or hindrances, from the Lord. The man who takes everything from God, and refers everything to Him has found the secret of peace amid the turmoil and confusion of the world.

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In this day of grace God would have all men to be saved, and hence we have to beseech men, not denounce them. If you spend your time denouncing error you will not feed souls.

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Refute error by stating the truth. Christ is the truth. Minister Christ, sinners and saints need Him.

## PROFITABLE LIVING.

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I EXAMINED the balance sheet carefully. I had awaited it with a certain amount of anxiety realising that some of the past year's transactions had been unprofitable. My policy had been short-sighted and I had taken some unnecessary risks. Still I was hopeful that it would turn out alright. I glanced quickly to the foot of the profit and loss account and met the startling words: "He shall suffer loss!" My assets appeared to have shrunk to almost nothing and there were some curious items. Stocks of "timber," "fodder" and a peculiar entry designated "stubble," appeared to be all I had, whereas I am supposed to be a dealer in precious metals and gems. No value was given to these stocks but my auditor attached a strange footnote: "Destroyed as by fire." The auditor's certificate took a most unusual form. It read as follows: "Every man's work shall be made manifest, for the day shall declare it . . . . if any man's work abide he shall receive a reward . . . . if any man's work be burned he shall suffer loss."

A business man's allegory of life or a disagreeable dream? Perhaps, but not unscriptural, for Christian life and service are often referred to in the Bible in terms of trade and commerce, profit and loss. Though often used by the evangelist, the words of Mark 8. 36 were primarily addressed to disciples and servants of Christ, "What shall it *profit* a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?" Apparently a life lived for selfish gain means loss and conversely a life given "for My sake and the gospel's" results in true gain.

"Occupy till I come," were the Lord's words to His servants to whom He entrusted the means to trade for Him during His absence; each one being suitably rewarded when He took account of those servants on His return. "I counsel thee to buy of Me gold tried in the fire that thou mayest be rich," was said to some who knew not that they were poor and destitute of all true profit.

### *Profitable living.*

Viewed in this way Christian life is really an accounting period, trading for Christ with the gifts and opportunities entrusted to us, in view of the day which will manifest PROFIT or loss. "Look to yourselves" says an apostle "that we lose not those things which we have wrought but that we receive a full reward."

Even the business man-of-the-world knows that all is not gold that glitters. He shrewdly takes the "long view" often sacrificing temporary gains for permanent profitable trading.

Abraham in faith took the long view. He looked right on to Christ's day with gladness and in the light of this he lived a pilgrim life. His grandson Esau, on the other hand, though doubtless instructed in all the precious promises to which he became heir, put no value on them, and in fact despised his birthright, exchanging it for a mess of pottage. "What *profit* shall this birthright do to me" supplies the reason for his being described as a profane person for he preferred present pleasure to the *profit* of living in view of the day of Christ.

Some hundreds of years after this one who was brought up in royal palaces, with every advantage of education and culture, with the prospect of gaining "the whole world" of his day made a wise and *profitable* choice, Moses counted the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt. He regarded them as *false profits* and took the long view for he had respect to the recompense of the reward.

A great apostle testifies that though in religious matters he had *profited* above his fellows there came a time when the things he had counted as gain he gladly counted loss for Christ. He counted all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus his Lord. He it is who gives us, perhaps the most practical directions for profitable Christian living, and their simplicity probably explains why the secret of success, in the best sense, is often overlooked. One in olden times was mightily offended by the simplicity of the word. The word given to him may well come to us today, "If the prophet had bidden thee do some great thing wouldst thou not have done it? How much rather when he saith to thee . . ."

#### *Four words on profitable living.*

In three short letters written to young men of God, Paul lays emphasis on basic principles for profitable living.

(1) "*All Scripture . . . is profitable . . . that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works*" (2 Tim. 3. 16, 17).

Surely here is the starting point of Christian living, a thorough knowledge of the Word of God. Regular,

prayerful, reverent reading of the Scriptures lies at the foundation of both the life and the service of the man of God.

(2) "*Meditate on these things . . . that thy profiting may appear unto all*" (1 Tim. 4. 15).

Bible reading, so much neglected to-day, though an excellent start must be accompanied by quiet meditation. Time must be taken to appropriate and digest the mind of God. It is to be the Christian's daily manna and is not for himself alone, for the *profit* of this will be apparent to others. The sad poverty often evidenced in gatherings of Christians challenges each of us as to this practical exhortation to profitable living. The silence of poverty often is apparent instead of an overflow of our profiting for the edification of others.

(3) "*Godliness is profitable unto all things*" (1 Tim. 4. 8). The definite cultivation of the graces seen in perfection in Christ down here would naturally follow the two foregoing exhortations. Growth in love, patience, longsuffering, meekness, humility demands constant exercise and self-judgment. Without this, conformity to the world or natural characteristics will be seen in our lives and conversation. Malice, meanness, tale-bearing, mischief-making, evil speaking, etc., will come out if Christ is not being formed in us by daily communion through His Word.

(4) "*Be careful to maintain good works. These things are profitable unto men*" (Titus 3. 8).

This advice was apparently necessary in Paul's day. Favoured as they were by apostolic ministry and fer-

your there was the danger of allowing slothful lethargy to rob the saints of the profit of being constantly "ready to every good work."

Is there any less need to-day to apply this word to ourselves? To mention only a few of the works which surely come under this category, there occurs to the mind individual soul winning, whether by personal witness for Christ, tract distribution or service of one sort or another in the gospel field, open-air preaching, liberal giving, hospitality, especially to those who cannot return it, family prayer in Christian households. Can we claim that these, to say nothing of many other profitable exercises, are maintained in Christian circles as they were even 30 years ago? "Be careful," says the apostle, "to maintain good works." Elsewhere he makes the further statement that we are God's workmanship created in Christ Jesus unto good works and that those very works were fore-ordained of God that we should walk in them. Do not let us then neglect good works or regard such an exhortation as being on an inferior plane to other lines of Christian truth. They form a vital part of profitable Christian living.

The art of profitable Christian living would appear therefore to be made up of many daily exercises, many small or large transactions carried out in private and public for Christ and His own but all of which will come to light in the day when He comes to take account of His servants. Our trading period will soon be over, the balance sheet will be made out and our profits true or false ascertained, when every transaction will be scrutinised.

Two who both bore the same name stand out as examples of how to live and how not to live. One, Saul the king, who probably had as many favourable opportunities as any in his day, was compelled to say at last: "I have played the fool and have erred exceedingly" (1 Sam. 26. 21).

Saul who is also called Paul, at the end of his day was able through grace to say: "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness which the Lord, the righteous judge shall give me at that day: and not to me only but to all them that love His appearing" (2 Tim. 4. 7—8).

Beware of false profits!

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"Let not the sun go down upon thy wrath; neither give place to the devil." To cherish hard thoughts about anyone is to give place to the devil.

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It is easier to keep the enemy out than to expel him when he has got in; hence we need to be on the watch, and judge the very first feeling of hardness towards any to be of the flesh and not of God.

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Don't call your hardness of heart towards any faithfulness to God, it is not, it is self in some form or other. Faithfulness to God will make us very tender towards others.

## “THE FAME OF JESUS.”

James McBroom.

Matthew 14 and 15.

*“And His fame went throughout all Syria,”* ch. 4. 24.

**I**N chapter 14 the apparent triumph of evil in the death of John the Baptist becomes the occasion to introduce certain features of the Lord's glory in relation to the new thing that was coming in, namely, His church. Being rejected as the Messiah by Israel, He declares in chapter 16 that He would build His church upon an impregnable foundation.

The three incidents that follow the murder of John—the feeding of the five thousand, His going up into the mountain alone, when His disciples were sent away across the sea, and His coming to them walking on the water, shew the wisdom of the Lord in relation to God's glory and man's need in view of the transition that was taking place. The first incident shews the headship of Christ, the second His priestly service, and the third His lordship.

The grace of the Lord is seen in relation to the need of men. This is the basis upon which all that we may learn of His glory rests. The circumstances were Jewish, but the time had come for Him to put the stamp of a heavenly order upon them. He was a rejected Saviour, and about Him gathered His disciples, a remnant of the people, and then the hungry multitude. His heart went out to these for He could not be indifferent to their need. From five loaves and two small fishes He fed them all, and then said “Gather up the fragments that nothing be lost,” and there were twelve baskets full gathered up. The number twelve in Scripture often denotes divine administration through human vessels, as the twelve dis-

ciples, etc. We may apply this to what was then near at hand. The disciples were being fitted to go forth into the world with a basket each, filled with the good things of God. Their service here of carrying His bounty to the hungry multitude was a fitting introduction to the great work they were called to do after He had gone on high, and the Holy Ghost had come down at Pentecost. We may give the miracle a distant application also and see in it the time of the full blessing of Israel in the day of their deliverance, and that blessing overflowing to the nations.

How His glory shines out here, and what fame is His! Omnipotence at work in creating food, His power being at the service of His compassion, the foreshadowing of His administrative supremacy on high, He is rich unto all that call upon Him, as well as the indication that He was indeed David's Son and David's Lord who will bring in the glory and the plenty of the millennial day. His authority, capability and resources as well as His compassion illustrate for us His present place on high as the head of every man. Joseph in Egypt displayed the wisdom of headship by interpreting Pharaoh's dreams and preparing bread for the people. Our Lord is Himself that which He ministers (John 6) for here as everywhere the contrast between Him and all others is marked. “I am the living bread which came down from heaven; if any man eat of this bread he shall live for ever; and the bread that I will give is My flesh which I will give for the life of the world.”

After sending the disciples away and dismissing the multitude to their homes He went into the mountain alone. He separates His own from the mass of men while He goes on high. "Ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world" (John 15). While He is away the world goes on forgetful of all His benefits, and His own are tossed upon the waves, the wind contrary, verse 24. The sheet of troubled waters is not an inapt figure of what the devil—the prince of the power of the air—has made this world for those who witness for Christ. Taking the distant view, the disciples represent all that is proper to Israel and about them the storm will rage to its very height, for they have yet to pass through "Jacob's trouble." But then He will appear for their deliverance. He came once and the nation refused Him, but in the language of Scripture He will appear the second time to them that look for Him unto salvation.

His coming will bring their travail to an end for as soon as He entered the ship the wind ceased. The darkest time of Israel's history is fast approaching when in deep distress the remnant of them will cry "For Thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are counted as sheep for the slaughter. Awake, why sleepest Thou, O Lord? Arise, cast us not off for ever" (Psalm 44). At that time of terror He will appear. Then shall they see Him whom they have pierced and shall weep, a national weeping, every family apart. He who plants His footstep on the sea will bring them to their desired haven.

But the incidents have a present application. He has gone on high, and ever liveth to make intercession

for His own who are buffeted by the storms of life, yet in another sense He draws near to them. The act of Peter in leaving the boat to go to Jesus on the water has long been used to illustrate the transition from Judaism to Christ. Having been refused by Judaism the Lord is outside it, and the system that refused Him answers to the boat. There was no room for the Lord either in the world or amongst His people Israel, the outside place was His, and Peter by his act indicates the place of the believer in the outside place with Him. For his witness for the Lord the man in John 9 was cast out of the synagogue but he found the Lord there, or the Lord found him there.

The new thing which began at Pentacost, namely the formation of the House of God and the Body of Christ by the Spirit was not a continuation of Judaism. The Apostles and those brought in by their labours were gradually brought from their earthly hopes and expectations to the joy of having part with Christ in glory. We learn from the Book of Acts how this transition was effected and see the forbearance of God in bearing with that system which had crucified His Son. God bore with it in the forty years between the Cross and the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans. Peter's leaving the ship to go to Jesus is a beautiful expression of what it is to join Christ outside the world, the One disallowed indeed of men but chosen of God and precious.

In His answer to the terrified disciples the Lord said, "Be of good cheer, I am." It is well known that this is the right rendering of the words. We see Him thus a Man yet the great "I Am" in a scene that

shows figuratively all the power of evil under His feet. He walks upon the sea as His by double right: in Godhead He created it and in Manhood it forms part of His vast domain and in a coming day when the universe, animate and inanimate, hymns forth His praises, the sea shall join with all other parts in that universal song. "Let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad; let the sea roar and the fulness thereof, Let the field be joyful, and all that is therein; then shall all the trees of the wood rejoice before the Lord" (Psa. 96: 12, 13).

The sea is often taken in Scripture to represent the restless forces of evil. At its creation He had shut it up within doors when it brake forth as if it had issued out of the womb. He had set bars and doors and said, Hitherto shalt thou come but no further; and here shall thy proud waves be stayed. Again it is said "The floods have lifted up, O Lord

the floods have lifted up their voice. The floods have lifted up their waves. The Lord on high is mightier than the noise of many waters, yea, than the mighty waves of the sea" (Job 38. 8-11. Psa. 93. 3-4). Here in the double rights of His Divine-human Person the Lord Jesus Christ is seen with all the powers of evil figuratively underneath His feet. What a scene for our devout contemplation; well might we adoringly sing "Crown Him LORD of all."

At the end of the chapter He is received where He had been before refused (See chap. 9). He is coming and will be received in the world that preferred its commerce and its swine to the holy One; meantime we are permitted to enrich our souls with all the moral wealth of such unfoldings of His glorious Person morally and officially as come out in the incidents where He made the very needs and distresses of His people to draw out the riches of His grace and glory.

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The oyster turns the grit or the intruder into a pearl and the Christian may turn a slight into intercession for the one who has slighted him and so gain a double blessing. He gains a blessing for himself in his communion with God and secures a blessing for the one who slighted him. "Pray for them that despitefully use you."

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Paul says, "Through evil report and good report" he did not stop to explain; a true servant of God has not time for that, and to defend oneself only leads to further charges.

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Your character may not be vindicated down here—Jesus died under a cloud. A soul who is in the secret of the Lord's mind must be content to be unappreciated. To have the approval of the Lord should be our one desire.

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I consider self-vindication unworthy of anyone standing for the Lord and for His truth, and I never saw a case of it where the one in the right did not suffer loss. — J.B.S.

## THE THESSALONIAN EPISTLE, CHAPTER 4.

Summarised Notes of Bible Readings in London (Forest Hill), January 8th.

**C**HAPTER 4. 13—18. We speak of the catching up of verse 17 as the *Rapture*, as distinguished from the *Appearing*. At the Rapture the Lord will come for His saints, at the Appearing He will come with them.

The words which have the Rapture particularly in view are this one; John 14; Philippians 3. 20, 21; and perhaps Revelation 22. 20, 21.

It is interesting that this word and that of John 14 were spoken to comfort sorrowing hearts. In John 14 the disciples were sorrowing at the thought of losing their Lord; here the saints were sorrowing because of the loss they feared their dead friends would suffer.

It was an utterly unselfish sorrow. They were looking for the appearing of the Lord in glory, ch. 1. 10, and they feared that their brethren and sisters who had died would miss the triumph and glory of it, and to assure them that they would miss nothing this word from the Lord was given.

The 14th verse refers then to the Appearing and not the Rapture. When Christ does appear God will bring those who sleep through Jesus with Him; they will not miss His triumph. The following wonderful revelation from the Lord shews how this will come about.

Notice on what this is based. "If we believe that Jesus died and rose again" Jesus *died*, His saints are *put to sleep* through Him. All that death meant as the judgment of God He suffered for them, He felt death's sting, but He rose again; He has overcome the power of death for His saints; it cannot hold them because it

could not hold Him. His death and resurrection is the pledge of their resurrection. The devil had the power of death once, but Christ through death has annulled him in that respect, that He might deliver those who through fear of death were all their life time subject to bondage (Heb. 2). Our Lord has supreme power over death and the unseen world, hence no believer need fear death; those who have passed through it have been put to sleep through Jesus. Some have taught that it is the spirits of the dead saints that will come with Him, what follows shews how wrong that is.

The ignorance of this young church gave the Lord the opportunity not only of comforting their hearts but of giving this revelation to Paul, which is the true hope of the church.

The dead in Christ have the precedence, those that are alive and remain will not go before them, which was the old meaning of the word prevent. They shall rise first. Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds. We must lay stress on "together." It is a great word in our Faith. Jesus died to gather together in one the children of God that are scattered abroad (John 11. 52). And in spite of all the efforts of the wolf to scatter them still, and to keep them apart when scattered, they shall be gathered together at His coming. Whatever else the jasper wall of the heavenly Jerusalem may mean, it will include every saint of God of the heavenly calling; it will be an inclusive wall; all will be together, not one excluded.

Here is a suggestion for our consideration; the shout of the Lord is for the church; the voice of the archangel is for Israel; the trump of God for men generally. All will sound simultaneously, but the effect of them will not be simultaneous. "In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye" the church will respond to the shout, the effect of the other sounds will not be immediate. Until the rapture of the church takes place no prophetic scripture can be fulfilled, but when that does take place all the wheels of God will be set in motion to fulfil His words in regard to Israel and the nations. The Archangel, who is Michael, is Israel's prince (Daniel 10. 21), "the great prince which standeth for the children of thy (Daniel's) people" (Daniel 12. 1). In Jude 9 and Revelation 12. 7 we find him concerned about Israel's matters. The church will not need the Archangel's voice. The Lord's shout will be enough of it; it is His voice and not the Archangel's that all that are in their graves shall hear (John 5. 28). The Lord concerns *Himself* about His church, and those who are His brethren, as this passage and John 14 shew; but the angels will specially move for Israel, led by Michael; and they will begin to gather the scattered nation unto Canaan, according to God (Matthew 24. 31). The work of divine gathering will begin as soon as the church has gone. Jews going there now may be that event casting its shadow before it. The trump of God will be universal, such passages as Zephaniah 1. 16 and Zechariah 9. 14 indicate that the effect of it will be judgment upon men, but it will eventuate in all nations being brought into subjection to Christ, until everything that hath breath will praise the Lord. The point is that every thing depends upon the com-

pletion and catching away of the church, but that event will be the signal for the train of prophecy which has been shunted from the main line to let the church express pass, to move on to the main line again.

The New Translation reads, "the Lord Himself with an assembling shout." It will be the shout of a triumphant leader, assembling His forces, and every one of His own will instantly respond to that shout. And it has also been said to be a shout of pent-up joy. This is the time of the Lord's patience; He has waited long for His church, His bride; at last the moment has come for which He has waited, and He greets it with a shout of joy. Then He will present His church to Himself, a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, as Ephesians 5 tells us.

It is in the air that He will meet us. The air is Satan's stronghold; the seat of his power; he is the prince of the power of the air (Ephesians 2. 2). It is from the air that he carries on his increasing warfare against God's saints, and it is in the air that the Lord will meet them. Could anything demonstrate how complete is the Lord's victory over him more than that? No wonder that he pours ridicule upon this great hope. He does his best to separate *the hearts* of the saints from Christ now, he does his best to obscure this hope, and if he could he would prevent Christ from having His own, but he cannot; right through the hosts of the rulers of this world's darkness and spiritual wickedness in heavenly places (Eph. 6. 12) the saints will pass, and there they will meet the Lord.

The unbelieving scientist says, Impossible, the law of gravitation

would prevent it; but he overlooks the fact that our bodies are to be changed (1 Corinthians 15. 52; Philippians 3. 21). Our natural bodies are to be changed into spiritual bodies, bodies of glory. The law of gravitation is a natural law and controls natural bodies; it will not control spiritual bodies. Spiritual laws will control spiritual bodies, and the supreme law in the spiritual realm is that Christ is supreme in it. He is Lord there, His word controls all.

His title Lord has a very prominent place in this passage. We have the word of the Lord, the coming of the Lord; the Lord Himself; we shall meet the Lord; and be for ever with the Lord. He moves in His authority and power through the whole event, and the result is that wherever He is, there His saints shall be; He is with them now in their conflicts and tribulations, they shall be with Him then in all His glory and triumphs. No doubt all the saints of God from Abel will share in the rapture; even though they are not of the church, they are Christ's, for their faith looked on to His coming, and they will be raised from the dead at His

coming as 1 Corinthians 15 says. It is clear from many passages that they had some light as to resurrection, they died in faith; but they did not know anything of the rapture; it is church truth and could only be revealed when the church had come into being.

The greater number of scriptures that speak of the coming of the Lord have His appearance in glory in view, and that is our testimony to the world; the rapture seems to have the character more of a family matter. Enoch, the first of all the prophets, prophesied of the Lord's coming to *judge*; and this was the testimony of Peter in the house of Cornelius, and Paul's on Mars Hill in Athens, it is ours too; but to one another we talk of this hope; the coming of the Lord not as Judge, but as the Bridegroom of His church. His coming for His saints. So we read "Wherefore comfort one another with these words."

The word is encourage; it means, hearten one another, and if we are to do that, we must speak from the heart; the hope must be a reality in the heart, and not merely a doctrine in the head.

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A man who is self-centred must be unhappy. There is always a joy in self-sacrifice. But it is the love of Christ that moves us not to live unto ourselves; to be under the constraint of His love is the secret of joy. We may know the meaning of His words, "that My joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full," but it will be as we follow Him in His way of obedience to the Father's word and will and in self-forgetful service.

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Which would you rather have, a smooth path or a rough one in which the Lord must shew His face to you in every step of it? Your suffering may be great and your trials many but if you have the sympathy of Jesus in them and His strength to carry you through them, is not that worth something? In heaven you will have a new body and no weakness or pain, but then the day for learning His tenderness will be over; make the most of that day now, and thank Him for it.

## SPIRITIST PROPHECIES COME TRUE. A. J. Pollock.

**A**N enquirer goes to a Spiritist seance, and gets into touch with a medium; and is amazed how he can be told secrets in his life which the medium has no chance of knowing by ordinary methods. Moreover he hears a prophecy as to what will happen to him in the near future, and lo! the prophecy comes true.

What is the enquirer to do? Is it not logical to be convinced of the truth of Spiritism when such extraordinary things happen? and thus many a seeker mistakes darkness for light and error for truth, and gets entangled in demonism.

The Bible puts its finger on the spot, and helps us at such a juncture where help is most needed. Circumstances arise which cause bewilderment. Where can we find help and guidance? The Bible furnishes help in the clearest and most lucid fashion.

Turn to Deuteronomy 13, 1—5. Here are words written by a sharp instrument on tablets of baked clay—words written by Moses more than three millenniums ago, and yet adapting themselves without effort to the circumstances of the 20th century after Christ.

*“If there arise among you a prophet or a dreamer of dreams, and giveth thee a sign or wonder.*

*“And the sign and wonder come to pass whereof he spake unto thee saying, Let us go after other gods, which thou has not known, and let us serve them;*

*“Thou shalt not hearken unto the words of that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams: for the Lord your God proveth you, to know*

*whether ye love the Lord your God with all your heart and all your soul. Ye shall walk after the Lord your God, and fear Him, and keep His commandments, and obey His voice, and ye shall serve Him, and cleave unto Him.*

*“And that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams shall be put to death; because he hath spoken to turn you away from the Lord your God, which brought you out of the land of Egypt, and redeemed you out of the house of bondage, to thrust thee out of the way which the Lord thy God commanded thee to walk in. So shalt thou put evil away from the midst of thee.”*

A fulfilled prophecy is to be judged not by its bare fulfilment, *but by its teaching*, by its moral and spiritual influence exerted upon the individual. In other words, a tree is known by its fruit.

There are, indeed, two kinds of prophecy—one true, the other false—one divine, the other satanic; one of God, the other of the devil. Spiritual help will draw the individual nearer to God, strengthen him in the truth and lead him in the paths of righteousness. Satanic deceit will lead him away from God and the truth and draw him into evil paths and entangle his soul in satanic toils, and lead him to eternal destruction.

Take Spiritism. Suppose I go to a seance and the medium relates to me the very secrets of my life, unknown to any but myself. Of what use is this to me? None whatever. Its use is to enable the medium or the Spiritist system behind the medium to get me into their toils. By and by I am led on, and I find out eventually

that Spiritism is against the Bible and the gospel of the grace of God.

Therefore I am not to be impressed by the uncanny knowledge of all my inner secrets manifested by the medium; nor by prophecy coming true, but judge the system by its fruits. These fruits are corrupt and satanic and tend to moral and physical destruction of its dupes. Shun it as you would the pestilence.

A tragic example of what has been before us occurred in the closing days of the reign of Saul, the first King of Israel — according to the commandment of Deuteronomy 13 Saul had cut off out of the land of Israel those who had familiar spirits, in other words those who were mediums.

Saul, forsaken of God because of his evil way, is hard pressed by the Philistines. In his perplexity and sore distress he turns to the aid of the evil he had sought to exterminate. He enquires after a woman with a familiar spirit, and hears of one at En-dor. Disguised to allay her fears, he bids her bring up the prophet Samuel — Samuel the wise

and godly man of God, who had given good counsel in the past.

As a medium the witch of En-dor expected to bring up a personating demon, who should deceive Saul that he was brought into touch with Samuel.

But when God intervened, and allowed Samuel himself to appear she cried out in her utter astonishment. In a moment she saw through the disguise of the King. His excessive tallness, head and shoulders above all his subjects, would give him away. This is the only place in Scripture where the living is said to have intercourse with the dead. The exception proves the rule only broken by God's behest by the one solitary exception.

In the New Testament the Spirit of God speaks, expressly warning us of latter day deceits when seducing spirits and doctrines of demons will lead men away from the faith of the Scriptures (see 1 Timothy iv. 1—3). We judge of things by the ultimate end, and on this Spiritism is condemned as diabolic, corrupting, destroying.

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*“God and the Word of His grace”* (Acts 20). God and the word of His grace remain, if all else fails, and here surely is a sufficient resource for us, whatever the test, whatever the trial, either from without or within. And that word is able to build us up, and nothing else can, and give us an inheritance among them that are sanctified. The riches of the word of God's grace are unexhausted though the souls of millions have been blest by it; its wealth is for the *sanctified*, for those who are set apart for God. It has no limit, if we are straitened it is not in the word, but in ourselves. May God stir up His people to draw upon this wonderful income and live up to it.

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There is more happiness in the fact of being in communion with God, than in the things He communicates.

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When a Christian is out of communion the work of the Holy Spirit is to speak to his conscience, instead of using him in service.

## “THE APPROACHING ADVENT OF CHRIST.”

F. B. Hole.

(A review of a book by the Rev. A. Reese, bearing the above title).

3rd Paper: Resurrection in the Old Testament.

THE second chapter of this book is entitled, “The resurrection of the saints in the Old Testament.” It deals particularly with *four* passages which in the opinion of Mr. Reese definitely locate the resurrection at the exact moment of the appearing of the Lord; and as it is admitted on all hands that the “Rapture” takes place at the time of the resurrection of life, he considers that having established this point his opponents are defeated, his case is won. From the point of view of his argument it is the most important chapter in his book, for he closes it with the remark, “These conclusions are fatal to the new theories of the Second Advent;” and in later chapters, as we pointed out in our last paper, he argues from what he believes he has established in his second chapter. Just as a mathematician, such as old Euclid, states a proposition, proves it, and then uses it in subsequent propositions, either to advance his reasoning or to exclude some contrary line of reasoning, so apparently Mr. Reese uses this second chapter of his. We must therefore examine it.

The *first* passage is Isaiah 26. 19, which he quotes in the Revised Version, as being clearer than the Authorized. Darby’s New Translation is very close to the Revised in this verse. This verse contains, he claims, “the first clear statement of a resurrection.” His two points are, (1) this is the resurrection of saints, as unfolded for instance in 1 Corinthians 15; (2) “this resurrection is to take place at the Day of the Lord, when Jehovah shall come, and Israel shall be reconciled to Him . . . Here

we have the Coming of the Lord, the conversion of Israel, the establishment of the Messianic Kingdom, and the sidereal signs in heaven that immediately precede them. Living Israel is restored, and the sleeping saints are brought to life, at the beginning of the Messianic Reign, not some years or decades before, as the new theories require.” He is referring of course to the whole of chapters 24—26.

Now in these three chapters we have a glowing account of how Jehovah will intervene at the end of this age for the deliverance of the godly in Israel, and the judgment of all His foes and theirs. Jehovah will reign in glory before His ancients in Jerusalem, and *that*, we know in the added light of the New Testament, will be the Messianic reign of Christ, though no allusion to the Messiah appears in the passage. All, however, is stated in language of a poetic and figurative sort, and there is no attempt to place different details in their exact chronological order: for instance, Jehovah reigns in the last verse of chapter 24, the great feast for the peoples is in chapter 25, and after that comes the mention of resurrection, and not until verse 20 of ch. 26 is there mention of the “indignation” which describes, we believe, the great tribulation. There is nothing chronological in all this. Yet Mr. Reese believes he can see such an exact chronology as precludes the thought of there being a few years or decades between the resurrection and the Lord’s appearing. The order of these predicted events may be pretty clear if we are permitted to read into

them the added light of the New Testament; but this is interpreting the Old in the light of the New: a thoroughly sound procedure, but not what Mr. Reese does here.

We join issue entirely, then, with our Author on this point, and assert that there is nothing in the passage that fixes the accomplishment of this 19th verse at the exact day of Christ's appearing. We fully agree that "This resurrection is to take place at the Day of the Lord, when Jehovah shall come," inasmuch as "the Day of Jehovah" in the Old Testament signifies the coming *period* when He will assert His rights in judgment and also His supremacy in the earth, and not merely the exact *day*, or even *hour*, of His public manifestation, as the arguments of this book would demand. We ask our readers to specially note this point, and judge as to it, for we shall have exactly the same remark to make as to all the other Old Testament passages that he quotes.

But now we have to assert, in answer to his first point, that when we read, "Thy dead shall live; my dead bodies shall arise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in the dust; for thy dew is the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast forth the dead" (R.V), the words are used in a figurative sense exactly as similar expressions are used in Ezekiel 37, 1—14. Mr. Reese states that the explanation which "Darbyists" give of this passage is "a flat denial that a bodily resurrection is referred to"; he quotes Kelly as saying, "It is no question of bodily health, but of national revival." This he *denounces* pretty vigorously, calling it "spiritualizing." He *argues*, if we may spiritualize this passage from the Old Testament, then, "it is clearly the

hollowest inconsistency to cavil at those whose explain away the resurrection in the New." He *claims* that in this verse, "Phrases are used, one after another, that preclude all possibility of spiritualizing." He *asserts* that, "Throughout the whole Bible we meet with no passage that gives, in the same compass, so unequivocal a testimony to the doctrine of a bodily resurrection." This assertion we simply do not believe. John 5, 28, 29 contradicts it. Our Lord's words recorded there are far clearer, more decisive and explicit; and hardly more in number.

Now it so happens that there is no dispute as to the general significance of the passage in Ezekiel 37. It is admitted that it predicts the resuscitation of Israel from their "graves" among the nations. Mr. Reese says, "It is fitting to admit that here we have the idea of resurrection used in a symbolical way." But he proceeds to say, "Seizing hold of this case of a figurative resurrection in Ezekiel 37, Kelly and others seek to justify their spiritualizing the resurrection in Isaiah 26. 19, and Daniel 12. 2, 3 . . . Now I have already shown that the principle of spiritualizing, Daniel 12. 2, 3, originated with that mad Porphyry; . . ." (p. 50). It appears that Ezekiel is interpreted as being figurative and symbolic by almost all commentators, both Jewish and Christian, and Mr. Reese does not attempt to controvert their position. He attempts to show that in Isaiah 26 the language used, and the context, is such as demands a literal understanding of the words. The careful reader of his book will also notice that whilst he uses the words *figurative* and *symbolic* to describe the interpretation of the passage where we all agree, when it is a case of passages as to which we do not agree,

his opponents are *spiritualizing*, like the mad Porphyry!

Mr. Reese gives certain reasons which show, he thinks, that Ezekiel 37 is to be understood in a figurative sense; whereas he claims that Isaiah 26. 19 must be literal. He takes four statements of that verse and says, "If terms such as these do not signify a literal resurrection from the dead, what terms can?" We might request him to read verse 13 of Ezekiel 37, and then ask him precisely the same question. The fact is that both passages use the language of resurrection, and only the context, and the whole drift of prophetic testimony in the Old Testament, will enable us to discern what is the significance of the words.

Let Isaiah 26 be carefully read. It opens with a song of salvation and perfect peace for those who trust in Jehovah, the Rock of Ages; and it proceeds to speak of the judgments which must be executed in the earth before the salvation and peace of the millennial era shall be enjoyed by the godly. Verses 12—15 are the acknowledgment that all has been wrought by the hand of God, whether in destroying those—whether men or nations—that held dominion over Israel as lords, during these many centuries, or in blessing and multiplying Israel itself. Verse 16 speaks of how Israel turns to God in her distress. Verses 17 and 18 give us the voice of the godly in Israel acknowledging their complete impotence and ineffectiveness; they have accomplished nothing. Verse 19 is the Divine answer, guaranteeing that all shall be accomplished by the resurrection power of God. The dead shall live. "My dead bodies," that is, those whom God can really claim as His in a spiritual, and not merely

natural, sense are to arise. Those who are dwelling in the dust of the nations, buried among them, are to rise and sing, according to verse 1 of the chapter. It will be the time of "dew," that is, the beginning of a new day for them. The earth will "cast forth" the dead, indicating the energy with which the Gentile world will help to restore the godly in that day. The whole passage gives us in the figurative language of Old Testament prophecy that truth that is indicated in Romans 11. 11—15, particularly in this, that the receiving again of Israel into favour is going to be "life from the dead." A work will be accomplished in resurrection power when scattered Israel is raised up and restored, though they are not literally raised from the dead, and of this work Isaiah 26. 19 speaks.

We notice that when on page 36 our Author summarizes the verse under four statements he omits the fifth thing, viz., "thy dew is as the dew of herbs." But then he had just stated, "Phrases are used, one after another, that preclude all possibility of spiritualizing," and to have put that fifth thing in would have sadly spoiled his sweeping statement! It is a statement that *can only be understood* in a figurative sense; as also is the case with the statements of verses 17 and 18, and also verse 20. The drift of the passage seems to us most evidently to be that, when God intervenes in His judgment, Israel's *enemies* will perish and disappear for ever, and *they* will be recovered from "all the ends of the earth," and at last made to live in a real sense.

Regarding this passage our answer, then, is that in spite of the vigour of his language we do not think Mr. Reese has made out his case for an interpretation entirely

differing from that which is acknowledged in the case of Ezekiel 37; and secondly, that if he had made out his case as to this, there is nothing in the passage that authorizes him to locate the predicted happening at the exact moment of Christ's appearing.

One other argument as to this verse we might notice. It occurs in his paragraph at the bottom of page 37 and top of 38, and is to the effect that the resurrection contemplated cannot be figurative, signifying "the national revival of Israel," *because that means the people in the land and in league with the coming Prince according to Daniel 9. 24*, whereas the resurrection of the verse is after the tribulation and consequent upon the coming of Jehovah. We do not accept his confident location of the resurrection of this verse at that exact moment, but also we do not believe that any regathering into the land on the part of the Jew, out of which springs their league with the coming Prince, is any work of God at all, though permitted by Him. Here we rather think that Mr. Reese has misunderstood those whom he opposes. If Ezekiel 36. 24—27 be read, it will be seen that when God regathers His people it will be in connection with an inward and spiritual work, which in New Testament language is a "new birth." The preliminary gathering of the Jews into Palestine, which results in apostasy, Antichrist, and the great tribulation, is not what we have in mind at all, but rather that ultimate regathering which is distinctly a work of God and involves His Spirit operating in their hearts, such as is predicted in Ezekiel 11. 17—21; 36. 24—28; 37. 12—14; and many other passages. As far as we are concerned therefore his argument here is of no force, and we

doubt if it is to many of those whom he classes together as "Darbyists." A similar remark might be made as to other arguments which he brings forward.

The *second* scripture adduced is one in the same prophecy, verses 7 and 8 of chapter 25. His argument is the same—Here is the resurrection of the saints, located at the exact moment of the appearing of Jehovah, that is Christ. We again affirm that no such exact location is possible from the terms of this prophecy, and at the same time are glad to discover the resurrection in the words, "He will swallow up death in victory," in the light of 1 Corinthians 15. 54. The Apostle's use of this quotation is worthy of our close attention, being very instructive. The Revised Version, which Mr. Reese quotes, has "for ever," instead of "in victory," and Darby's version has those words in the margin. If they are accepted it only adds point to what we have to say.

The words as they stand in verse 8 are not very explicit. We need the added light of the New Testament to be sure what they exactly signify, and when we do get that light the words are not quoted as though the resurrection of 1 Corinthians 15 exhaustively fulfilled them. For a full explanation of this remark we must refer our readers to a footnote to Matthew 2. 23, which occurs in Darby's New Translation (large edition with full notes). The gist of that note is that three different words are used in connection with quotations from the Old Testament, each with its own distinct significance—"in order that" it might be fulfilled—"so that" it might be fulfilled—"then" was fulfilled. The first signifies, *the object of the prophecy*: the second,

not simply its object, but *an event within its scope and intention*: the third, merely *a case in point*, where what happened was an *illustration* of what was said in the prophecy. This footnote is very illuminating in regard to many passages. Now the word used in 1 Corinthians 15. 54 is *the third*. The Holy Spirit shows us through the Apostle Paul that the resurrection of the saints is a case in point, illustrating what is meant by "He will swallow up death for ever." It *illustrates* but does not *exhaust*, for death will not disappear for ever until the eternal state is reached.

"In victory" is the New Testament paraphrase of the Old Testament "for ever." So the resurrection is clearly an event which illustrates what the prophecy means, as being a case in point. In the light of this we need have no wonder that no exact chronological order is given in Isaiah 25. The swallowing up of death for ever indicates Divine action over a wide range of time which cannot be located in one point of time, as Mr. Reese would have us believe.

The *third* scripture adduced by our Author is Daniel 12. 2. As to it he argues in just the same way, and this time it does seem pretty evident that this "awaking" of the "sleepers" in the "dust of the earth" does occur at the time that Daniel's people are delivered, so that it tells in his favour if a literal resurrection be meant. But is it meant?

We have no hesitation in saying that here again we have just the same figurative language as is used in the other prophecies. The words *sleep* and *awake* are figurative, and may represent death and resurrection, and on the other hand they may not. *The dust of the earth* must be literal to suit Mr. Reese, but it is not literal

in such a passage as Isaiah 51. 21—52. 6. This particular scripture should be carefully considered at this point as it gives us very similar thoughts to Daniel 12, couched in very similar figures. Jerusalem and Zion—representing the true Israel of God's election—is to awake and shake herself from the dust. She had laid her body "as the ground and as the street," in days when she sojourned in Egypt, and was oppressed by Assyria. Daniel sees them awaking from the dust of other oppressing nations that have risen since the days of Egypt and Assyria, but awaking to be brought under God's discriminating judgment, as a result of which some go into the everlasting life of the millennial age and some go down to condemnation, just as we find in the parable of the sheep and goats, in Matthew 25.

Mr. Reese admits, "That the idea of resurrection may be used in a figurative sense is not at all unreasonable," yet he affirms that such terms as are used here *must* have a *literal* meaning. His main contention against a figurative sense seems to be that the whole teaching of Scripture is that Israel is to be gathered to Palestine *before* the time of trouble starts, and that as Daniel 12. 1—3, if taken figuratively would indicate a gathering *after* the time of trouble, the figurative interpretation must be abandoned. This argument of his on pages 43 and 44, is but a repetition of that already noticed on pages 37 and 38. Our reply therefore is just the same. A considerable number of unbelieving Jews will be in the land under Antichrist at the time of the tribulation, but the great awaking and regathering of Israel, when God really puts the godly and the meek into possession of the earth, will be after the tribulation. All the

rebels will then be gone. Ezekiel 20. 33—38 is very explicit to this. We judge that Mr. Reese misunderstands the prophetic testimony as to this point.

It may be fitting just here to remark that we think he equally misunderstands the way in which the term, "Remnant," is used by those whom he opposes. We cannot of course speak for the rather heterogeneous crowd whom he classes together as "Darbyists," but we are sure that Darby himself used the term as indicating the *godly few* of Israel as distinguished from the *unbelieving mass*, as we have it in Isaiah 10. 20—22; Jeremiah 23. 3; Zephaniah 3. 11—13;—"a remnant according to the election of grace" (Rom. 11. 5). In this sense we ourselves should use the term in speaking of the remnant of prophecy, and not as merely indicating a remainder apart from any question of spiritual condition. Mr. Reese's "Remnant . . . consists of those who *escape uninjured* [his italics] the desolations of the last days" (p. 39). Their *physical* escape, not their *spiritual* escape, is what characterizes them in his thoughts.

Misunderstanding matters thus, he finds amusement in some of the statements he opposes. Says he, "To speak of a *martyred* 'Remnant' is a ludicrous contradiction in terms . . . They will not die. And we do not usually speak of *drowned* 'survivors' of a shipwreck. Just as incongruous is it to speak of a martyred 'Remnant.' This is the first of several fictions." The godly who will "not worship the image of the beast" (Rev. 13. 15), and are killed, we should call the "martyred remnant," and identify them with the "saints of the Most High" whom the king "shall wear

out," according to Daniel 7. 25; and this in spite of it appearing funny to Mr. Reese—and perhaps many of those who read his book, and know very little of the authors he attacks, may join in his mirth! His strictures appear to us, not funny, but certainly rather strange and somewhat sad, seeing that a writer who has devoured such an astonishing mass of literature for and against these views might be expected to understand more accurately what he assails.

There is one more remark that must be made before we leave the opening verses of Daniel 12. It is this, if a literal resurrection is predicted here, then taking the passage, as it stands in both the Authorized and the Revised Versions, a general resurrection is indicated, some to life and some to judgment. This does not suit Mr. Reese, so he proposes other translations backed by the opinions of a few Jewish Rabbis, which he thinks obviate the difficulty. This difficulty is one which, if sustained, would be pretty fatal to his view. His method of meeting it by appealing to special and little known translations is a distinct weakening of his case.

The *fourth* scripture he brings forward is Daniel 12. 13, and his point is that Daniel was to rest in the grave until the resurrection which is to be "at the end of the days." To this phrase he gives the meaning of, "the exact moment of the public appearing of Christ." Our assertion is that no such exact meaning is either stated or implied.

On these four passages Mr. Reese bases his case as deduced from the Old Testament. He acknowledges that the resurrection implied in Ezekiel 37, and Hosea 6. 2, is figurative and not literal. Thus far we have followed him in the attack which he has

launched, over the ground which he has himself chosen: we conclude by travelling on to ground which he has not traversed and which, though found in the New Testament, is very pertinent to the discussion in hand. Will our readers consider very carefully these two final considerations.

First: the question as to resurrection was submitted to our Lord Himself by the Sadducees; He settled it by appealing to Old Testament scripture, and His reply reduced them to silence. The record of it is in Matthew 22. 23—33; Mark 12. 18—27; Luke 20. 27—38, — three times repeated, so Mr. Reese cannot have been ignorant of it. Since He has settled where resurrection is to be found in the Old Testament, why did Mr. Reese discuss the whole question, in a chapter by itself, without making so much as one reference to what He said? In the 18 pages of his second chapter we are well-nigh smothered with the opinions of human writers, but the great pronouncement of Omniscience on the point is completely ignored! This seems to us unpardonable, though by no means inexplicable, for the pronouncement tells so heavily against him.

More than once in this second chapter our Author links together "the Sadducees and the Darbyists." He admits that the "Darbyists . . . believe in the resurrection," but asserts that if they be permitted, "like the Sadducees" to interpret these four passages in the light of Ezekiel 37, "then we shall have no texts on the resurrection left to us" (p. 50). Having our Lord's words in the Gospels in mind, we could hardly believe our eyes when we read this: but there it is!

In reply to the question of the Sad-

ducees, the Lord Jesus found the resurrection in an Old Testament passage which evidently they had never thought of—one too which their opponents, the Pharisees, had never thought of—and it left them stunned and speechless. He said not one word of Mr. Reese's four passages. He did not find the resurrection there! This is a very very awkward fact for Mr. Reese, and for his interpretation of those four passages. It goes a long way to undermine his interpretation, and it appears, by his own showing to leave him with no text for resurrection in the Old Testament. It leaves us however quite undisturbed. We are content to find the resurrection where the Lord found it.

As we remarked, Mr. Reese claims that "These conclusions are fatal to the new theories of the Second Advent." We really think that we might now rejoin, "Our Lord's pronouncement is fatal to his exegesis of the four passages." But before closing we must give what we understand by His pronouncement — though with extreme brevity.

His argument as to Exodus 3. 6, turned upon the fact that God pronounced Himself to be the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, centuries after they were dead to the world of men. Though in the unseen world, they were alive to Him; and the unseen world being an intermediate and not a final state, there must be a final state, and that involves resurrection. Now the Sadducees' question, based upon the story about the woman with many successive husbands, showed that they conceived of resurrection as being simply a reviving and restoration to life on earth under the conditions familiar to us; and evidently the Pharisees had no understanding of the resurrection

which enabled them to counter their argument. Had they only known, how effectively they might have defeated their opponents when they produced their favourite argument, by saying, "Your whole conception of resurrection is erroneous. It does not involve a mere resuscitation for earth, but means transference to another region altogether, where different conditions prevail."

It was our Lord who spoke of "They which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead" (Luke 20. 35). The Pharisees could not have given that crushing answer. Why not? Because no CLEAR LIGHT as to either "*that world*," nor as to "*the resurrection from the dead*," that introduces to it, is found in the Old Testament—not even in Mr. Reese's four passages.

This brings us to the second of our two final considerations — "Our Saviour Jesus Christ . . . hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality [incorruptibility] to light through the gospel" (2 Tim. 1. 10). Without any question "incorruptibility" is the correct word here, and the passage shows that there was no real bringing to light of that world of incorruption into which resurrection will introduce us, until Christ had appeared, and annulled the power of death by His dying and rising again.

The conclusion, then, is irresistible that we must not expect to find in the Old Testament clear and explicit statements as to resurrection: *we must not do* exactly what, in

point of fact, *Mr. Reese has done* in his second chapter. He must have read this verse in Timothy, as well as the three passages in the Gospels: did he not realize their significance? We cannot tell; but we can see that, having ignored the warning light they give, he has tried to read into the Old Testament what is not there, and involved himself and all who follow him, in confused and mistaken exegesis. We close the chapter wondering if also in Mr. Reese's mind resurrection only involves being raised up again to live on earth. He is so busy attacking other people that he has no time to tell us his own thoughts in a very explicit way. From other remarks he makes, we hardly think it can be so; yet if it were, he is really nearer to the Sadducees than the "Darbyists" that he condemns.

Mr. Reese is so sure of his interpretations of these Old Testament passages that, in the beginning of his next chapter, he claims they are so subversive of "the new theories of the Advent" that "we should be warranted in claiming a verdict on the main issue" on the ground of these "four unambiguous texts;" but he continues, "nevertheless it is desirable to examine the teaching of the N.T. as well." We shall certainly, if God permit, go forward into the New Testament in a future paper, since all the light we want is there. But our readers can observe for themselves, from the N.T. passages we have cited, that Mr. Reese's view-point as to the matter at issue in the O.T. is not that of the Lord Jesus, nor of His servant the Apostle Paul.

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Let the truth professed take full possession of your soul, otherwise when you speak you will be a mere parrot.

## ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS

### Laodicean Conditions.

“Do Laodicean conditions represent the present state of the church, or are present conditions better understood by viewing the last four churches of Revelation 2 and 3 as running concurrently?”—G.M.

TO say that Laodicean conditions represent the present state of the church would be far too sweeping a statement. They most certainly represent one aspect of the present day profession, for indifference to Christ—(“neither cold nor hot”) and a boastful self-sufficiency (“rich and increased with goods”) are wide spread. But the Holy Spirit of God dwells in the church and He is carrying on His work, persistently and successfully; He is taking the things of Christ and shewing them to those who have ears to hear what He says to the churches; and as a result the Spirit and the bride are saying, Come, to the Lord Jesus (Rev. 22). That is the Philadelphian aspect, and is as real as the Laodicean. As long as the Holy Spirit is here He will withstand the full development of Laodicean conditions and maintain such as those that are approved in the letter to Philadelphia. When He is taken out of the way at the rapture of the church to meet the Lord in the air (1 Thess. 4), there will be nothing left in the profession of Christianity but these Laodicean conditions and the Lord will spue it out of His mouth.

You are right, we believe, in viewing the last four of the seven churches addressed in Rev. 2 and 3 as running concurrently to the end. The coming of the Lord having its place in the letters to three of them, and not in the first three would indicate this. The corruptions of Thyatira

point definitely to Popery; the dead orthodox of Sardis to the State churches by law established, or may embrace Protestantism; Philadelphia indicates a condition of soul or an attitude towards the Lord that is dear to Him, rather than a definite church position. The Philadelphians are those to whom the Lord is everything, and they would answer in these days to those “that feared the Lord and speak often one to another of Him” (Malachi 3. 16). They have love to all the brethren, for Philadelphia means that; they treasure His word, consequently are obedient to it, and are devoted to His Name, who is the Holy and the True, and are looking for His coming again. But as Moses wist not that his face shone, so those who in any measure bear these desirable traits are not occupied with themselves and their witness or their state, but with the Lord. The Laodicean state is the exact opposite to the Philadelphian; in it there is a proud self-sufficiency that rejects the word of the Lord, refuses to own His divine glory and supreme rights, and is entirely indifferent to Him, being well satisfied with its own fancied wisdom and progress; it is Modernism, and “the form of godliness without the power.”

If we would bear the Philadelphian character we must have ears to hear what the Spirit saith to the churches.

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Where self and self-will are in evidence the Holy Spirit has no place or room to act.

# AROUND THE CROSS IN THE GOSPEL OF JOHN.

NO. 3. Chapter 19.

J. T. Mawson.

**P**ILATE'S examination of Jesus was brief, and his judgment was swift and sure; it was the only one he could have given, for there was no evidence of any crime nor charge against Him as yet. So to the impatient, waiting Jews he declared as the administrator of Roman law. "I find no fault in Him at all." And that if it meant anything, surely meant acquittal, the instant release of the Prisoner and the dispersal of the mob.

But Pilate's prestige at Rome was more to Pilate than justice, and he had wantonly and grievously insulted these Jews on several occasions of late, and they were quite capable of appealing to Caesar against him; it might be politic to appease them, and here was the opportunity; he would conform to one of their fiercely guarded customs. It was the great Feast, and they had clamoured that a prisoner should be released to them as was usual, he would pretend to favour them and release "the King of the Jews," if it was their wish. They would surely not hesitate in the choice between Jesus and Barabbas. Thus would he escape from an annoying situation and please them at the same time. Their answer must have been like a blow in the face for him. "Then cried they all again, saying, Not this man, but Barabbas." And the comment of the Spirit of God on that cry is, "Now Barabbas was a robber."

They cast their unanimous vote for the law-breaker, the man of violent passions and violent words and deeds. He was the world's choice

then, and is now, and yet will be when it has its last opportunity of choosing. "Then that man of sin shall be revealed, the son of perdition; who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God" 2 Thess. 2. 3. "And power shall be given him over all kindreds, and tongues and nations" Rev. 13. 7.

"Then Pilate therefore took Jesus and scourged Him." What was the antecedent to that "therefore"? May we join it up with Pilate's verdict of not guilty? I think we may. Indeed, that is exactly how Luke puts it in his account of the matter. Pilate said, "Behold, I, having examined Him before you, have found no fault in this man touching those things whereof ye accuse Him . . . I will therefore chastise Him and release Him." Whatever excuse may be found for Pilate, his decision was wickedly callous and brutally unjust. It was as though a judge in a modern Assize Court said, The prisoner is absolutely innocent of the crime. I will therefore pass upon him the sentence of 20 strokes of the cat. That is Luke's side of it, but it seems to me that John goes beneath the surface and reveals the very heart of the man. It was at the cry of the Jews, "Not this man" that Pilate took Jesus and scourged Him. These Jews were thwarting him, they were giving him much trouble, they were daring to challenge his verdict, his honour was at stake and the dignity of his office; he was an angry man and upon whom should he vent his rage? Well, the prisoner was a Jew; they surely would not care to see one of their own race subjected to the ignominy

of the Roman scourge. We do not know whether "the terrible flagellum" or the lictor's rods were used on this occasion, but whichever it was the victim was stript and stretched with thongs on a frame and beaten, and no Roman could be subjected to such shame. Pilate seemed to have hoped to strike at the pride of the Jews as well as at his unresisting Prisoner whom he had come to hate because he feared and could not understand Him. The scornful pagan in that hour of darkness was as thoroughly under Satan's power as were priests and people, and Jesus the Son of God, was the object of the hatred of all; they hated Him without a cause. Let Pilate wash his hands if he will, they will never be cleansed from the stain of that blood which by his order was forced from the flesh of the Son of God at that scourging. And yet he and his mercenaries were but fulfilling the ancient word, and not only testing the lowly submission of their Victim to the will of God, but proving His divine foreknowledge and power, for He it was who spoke through the prophet, saying "I gave My back to the smiters and My cheeks to them that plucked off the hair: I hid not My face from shame and spitting." Isaiah 50. 6. It was He who gave His back to their cruelty, and no power of man or devil could have compelled Him.

Then was He handed over to the soldiers to do as they would with Him, and this pleased them well; not often did such sport come their way. He was a king, or claimed to be; they would crown Him then, but with thorns; and if a king, He must wear the purple, so on His bruised and bleeding back is cast a soldier's cloak, as substitute for a royal robe, and thus arrayed they hail Him, and

because of His meekness they smite Him with their hands. Pilate watched them for a while, and then as though to spring a surprise upon the clamouring crowd outside, and it may be in the hope that a sight of His marred and bleeding form would satisfy their hatred, he went forth again and saith unto them "Behold I bring Him forth unto you, that ye may know that I find no fault in Him." "Then came Jesus forth wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe, and Pilate saith unto them, Behold the Man!"

Well might they have answered, "If you have found no fault in Him, why have you scourged Him?" But what did he mean by "Behold the Man!"? Was it that they were compelled to look upon Him that in the day of judgment they would remember that sight? "As many were astonished at Thee: His face was so marred more than any man, and His form more than the sons of men." But they were not placated; the sight of Him only stirred their hatred to its depths and their full determination declared itself in their cry "Crucify! Crucify!"

The long drawn out duel between Pilate and the Jews is of sad and absorbing interest. The chief priests were as clever as they were wicked, almost; they were too clever for Pilate, and it mattered not to them what weapon they used in the conflict so long as they were successful. Every blow they struck, and the blows were foul blows, weakened the Governor in his efforts to counter their determination that the Lord should die. And yet they claimed to be "wholly right seed" and boasted that they had Abraham for father, and were they not the custodians of the oracles of God? For

fifteen centuries they had been under divine culture; as a nation they were the vineyard that God planted, and of which it was written: "My well-beloved hath a vineyard in a very fruitful hill . . . and He looked that it should bring forth grapes, and it brought forth wild grapes" Isa. 5. 1, 2. Here were the wild grapes, and worse, here were the husbandmen of that vineyard, saying, "This is the Heir, come, let us kill Him, and the inheritance shall be ours" Mark 12. 7, and every effort of Pilate's to thwart their fell purpose failed. Pilate sinned, grievously sinned in this great crisis in human history, but their's was the greater sin. These religionists, the custodians of light, the moralists of the day, with the greatest privileges that men had known since creation, were the supreme sinners, and as we contemplate them we cease to marvel that the Lord said, "Ye must be born again." "That which is born of flesh is flesh," and the most intensive culture of it only brought out more clearly its terrible nature and fruit.

But see with what deliberate and Satanic cunning they meet all Pilate's moves to beat them in this conflict:

Pilate: "What accusation bring ye against this man?"

The Jews: "If He were not a malefactor, we would not have delivered Him up to thee."

Pilate: "Take ye Him and judge Him according to your law."

Jews: "It is not lawful for us to put any man to death."

Pilate: "I find no fault in Him at all. But ye have a custom, that I should release unto you one at the

passover: will ye therefore that I release unto you the King of the Jews?"

Jews: "Not this man but Barabbas!"

Pilate: "Behold, I bring Him forth to you, that ye may know that I find no fault in Him. Behold the Man!"

The chief priest: "Crucify! Crucify!"

Pilate: "Take you Him, and crucify Him: for I find no fault in Him."

Jews: "We have a law, and by our law He ought to die, because He made Himself the Son of God."

Jews: "If thou let this Man go thou art not Caesar's friend; whosoever maketh himself a king speaketh against Caesar."

Pilate: "Behold your King."

Jews: "Away with Him, away with Him, crucify Him."

Pilate: "Shall I crucify your King?"

The chief priests: "*We have no king but Caesar.*"

What man could tell the sorrow of the Lord during those hours! These were "His own who received Him not," the great men of the city over which He had wept, who were now leading the people in the clamour for His blood, the very people who had cried "Hosanna" as he had entered the city but a week before. He was the Son who would have made them free indeed, but they preferred Caesar and the Roman yoke to His blessing, and in rejecting Him they were rejecting His Father, whose love He had brought near to them.

How keen must have been His sorrow, not because they hated Him with such violence only, but because they hated His Father also. "They have both seen and hated both Me and My Father."

We are tracing the foot-steps of our lowly suffering Lord from Gethsemane to Golgotha as they are recorded for us by John, and we must feel how the unspeakable hypocrisy of the Jews increased the sufferings and multiplied the sorrows. That they might not be defiled, and that they might eat the passover, they would not enter the judgment hall. They would observe to its last detail their ceremonial law, and yet howl like unclean dogs for their prey. And as a result the bewildered Pilate, in the hope of finding a way, hurried the Lord Jesus inside and out of the judgment hall again and again and again.

"They led Jesus from Caiaphas to the hall of judgment" ch. 18. 28.

"Then said Pilate, Take ye Him" verse 31.

"Then Pilate entered into the judgment hall again and called Jesus" verse 33.

"Then came Jesus forth, wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe" ch. 19. 5.

"When Pilate therefore heard that saying . . . he went again into the judgment hall and saith to Jesus. . ." verse 9.

"When Pilate therefore heard that saying, he brought Jesus forth, and sat down . . . in a place that is called the Pavement, but in Hebrew, Gabbatha" verse 13.

"Then delivered he Him therefore unto them to be crucified. And they

took Jesus and led Him away" verse 16.

For the greater part of those weary hours the mouth of Jesus was silent. Once only since Pilate turned his back on "the Truth" did He speak, and that when Pilate anxious to assert his authority with his Prisoner, even if the Jews mocked at it, cried "Speakest Thou not unto me? Knowest Thou not that I have power to crucify Thee, and have power to release Thee?" Did the Lord acknowledge the authority of the Roman judge? Yes, in the ways of God, that disobedient people had been put under the yoke of Rome, and since the Lord had said to them "Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's" He would not flout the authority of Caesar's delegate. But God was over all, and Pilate could do nothing that day except as permitted from above. God was not responsible for the black flood of hatred that was pouring out from the hearts of the Jews, nor for the lesser sin of the vacillating judge who was ready to stoop to any injustice to save his face, but He did make Himself responsible for the channel in which the sin of Jew and Gentile flowed. He made the wrath of man to praise Him. The Lamb "verily was fore-ordained before the foundation of the world," and He being delivered by the determinate counsel and fore-knowledge of God they with wicked hands crucified and slew. Acts 2. 23. The sin of man was fulfilling the will of God; events were moving rapidly to the hour when that sin would rise in its utmost strength against God, but in that hour His love would triumph, for "God commendeth His love towards us, in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us."

(TO CONTINUE)

# THE SUPREMACY OF CHRIST.

T. Oliver.

(Read Hebrews 2. 7—17).

**T**HE supremacy of Christ in every connection over the men who were His forerunners is amply demonstrated in Scripture. In Himself, Christ presents all the great and glorious characteristics which were displayed in the typical men of the Old Testament. It was the will of God to make such men in olden times prominent in order to display the qualities of which Christ would ultimately secure complete fulfilment.

In the geographical atlases of 70 years ago, Africa was simply an outline of the coast for the most part. But every physical feature known today existed then but could not be shown because unknown. Similarly, the excellent men of the previous era formed a sort of outline of the Truth which was to be filled in detail later by the coming of the Son of God.

1. Adam was established head of creation, everything being put under him, but that feature was very imperfectly exemplified by him. The perfect fulfilment awaited the coming of Christ. He is the true head! Everything in creation is put under Him although that is not true to sight yet. In the meantime it is a subject for faith. We see Jesus who was made for a little time on a lower plane than the angels in order that He might suffer death. It is striking that the literal statement is "we know Jesus." We know him intuitively, i.e. by a new intuition which we did not derive from natural sources, but on the principle of faith.

2. But we also see Him crowned with glory and honour, as the One greater than Solomon. No king had

ever such undisputed sway and glory as Solomon had. So much so that he became the centre of attraction for the whole earth (vide the Queen of Sheba incident). But the record of the glory of Solomon is completely eclipsed, when the glory of God in the face of the Lord Jesus Christ appears.

3. Verse 11 of the chapter shows that the features manifested by Aaron as chief of the priestly family are literally fulfilled by Christ as the One who sanctifies. In verse 17, He is stated to be the merciful and faithful High Priest, making propitiation for the sins of the people, not in the figurative way that Aaron did.

4. In verse 12, the Lord declared the name of God to His brethren as Moses representatively made known that Name to the children of Israel (Exodus 6. 1—9), and in verse 15 He delivers with an eternal salvation His people from the thralldom on account of the fear of death in which they had been until He appeared. Moses was the deliverer from the Egyptian house of bondage with the object in view that the people might be properly connected with the Tabernacle, i.e. the House of God, which was a temporal and typical deliverance only.

5. In verse 10, He is the Captain or Leader of salvation. That corresponds to Joshua who led the people into the land. When in danger of being carried away with the sense of his own importance Joshua had a vision, outside Jericho, when he was introduced to the real Captain of the Lord's Host, in whose pre-

sence even the honoured Joshua had to put off his shoes as standing on holy ground. Jesus, our Leader is Jehovah. Joshua did not originate the path. He was only entrusted with part-time conductorship. But Christ was the Originator of the path of salvation along which He is conducting the many sons to glory. That end being reached will put on the copestone of salvation, or its completion, i.e., the sense of making "perfect."

6. In verse 12, we have a quotation from the 22nd Psalm "In the midst of the great congregation will I sing praise to Thee." David was the Psalmist, the sweet singer in Israel.

But David although a very wonderful man was only giving provisional expression relative to the Leader of the song of praise in the midst of a redeemed creation. At the present time Christ anticipates that day of glory by leading the praise in the midst of His assembly.

7. In verse 13, Christ proclaims Himself as associated with the family of faith which God gives to Him. Abraham was the federal head of the family of faith with relation to the earthly calling, but Christ is the fulfilment of that description as perfectly manifesting the features of the heavenly calling.

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## "HE IS DESPISED AND REJECTED." A. M. Chambers.

No joys of earth my Saviour knew,  
 No flowers along His pathway grew;—  
 Briars and thorns—a harvest grim—  
 Was all the earth brought forth for Him!

*The day shall come when to Thy feet  
 The desert shall bring blossoms sweet,  
 Fragrant the wilderness shall be,  
 The parched ground be glad for Thee!*

No earthly honour decked His Head,  
 No pageantry was round Him spread;  
 A crown of thorns—a gibbet high—  
 His sum of worldly dignity!

*But out of Heaven the edict rings,  
 "Thou Lord of lords and King of kings  
 Rule and authority put down,  
 And wear the Universe's crown!"*

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"Ye are bought with a price; be not ye the servants of men." Being redeemed we should disown and reject every authority that conflicts with that of Christ.

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"That in all things He might have the pre-eminence." If I do not give Christ the supreme place in my life and service I am not in accord with the mind of God.

## “CONCERNING CHRIST AND THE CHURCH.”

James Scott.

THE church occupies a large place in Holy Scripture, because she plays such an important part in connection with the glory of Christ. She appears under many figures, but the most wonderful, perhaps, is that of the bride, which speaks of the purest and deepest affection, of mutual trust and confidence, and of the sweetest and most intimate communion. The name is found only in the Apocalypse, where she is also called the Lamb's wife; but the relationship is clearly implied elsewhere in Scripture.

To the Corinthians, for example, Paul writes: "I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ" (2 Cor. 11. 2); and, when treating of the *relative duties of husband and wife*, he can find no happier or more suitable comparison than Christ and the church (Eph. 5. 32).

With such scriptures before us, though we still await the consummation of this mystical union, we are encouraged to anticipate its holy joy, by the cultivation of bridal affections, and a walk consistent with our high destiny.

For the starting-point of our present meditation we shall take the lovely story—we might call it the *love story*—of Genesis 24.

Although the church is not the subject of Old Testament revelation, and as a matter of fact does not come into view, nevertheless it lay hidden there in type, awaiting the revelation of the mystery "which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto His holy apostles and prophets by the

Spirit; that the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ by the gospel" (Eph. 3. 5-6).

In the light of that revelation we get a glimpse of something profoundly deep underlying the simple story of Genesis. The story itself, of course, is the divinely inspired record of a historical fact; a thing we do well to remember, and to maintain in face of its denial by an ever increasing number of the accredited spokesmen of a fast apostatising Christendom. We not only believe this; we believe also that, in the intensely human narrative, we have a type, surpassingly beautiful, of the long-hid mystery; the first hint, as it were, of that which was latent in the mind of God; which has been so aptly described as "The Divine Masterpiece." (Truth for Believers, iii. 181).

No formal exposition of the history is necessary; but in it we observe three salient features of distinctly typical import; and if we connect these with the Epistle to the Ephesians we shall find that what is foreshadowed in Genesis, is unfolded in the Epistle as the climax of the divine wisdom; the best wine kept to the last.

The first thing we notice is the expressed wish and intention of Abraham to get a suitable wife for Isaac, his only and well-beloved son, and this we shall designate

### THE PURPOSE OF THE FATHER

Abraham's vision, doubtless, soared beyond the circumstances of his own day, and in its sweep em-

braced the future greatness and glory of the promised Seed. Indeed, when we remember the words of our Lord to the Jews,—“Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day; and he saw it, and was glad,” (John 8. 56). — we are inclined to believe that the vision took in something of the greater glory of the day of Christ.

The story is full of interest as it goes on to relate how the instructions of Abraham were carried out, and his wish fulfilled. The servant is introduced, but his name is not specifically mentioned. He does not speak of himself: the greatness of Isaac in the home of Rebekah is his theme. He says: “I am Abraham’s servant. And the Lord hath blessed my master greatly . . . and Sarah my master’s wife bare a son to my master when she was old; and unto him hath he given all that he hath.” Could anything point more definitely and distinctly to Christ, the eternal Son of the Father? Of Him it is written, “The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into His hand” (John 3. 35). And again, “He raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places. And hath put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be the head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all” (Eph. 1. 20, 23).

Passages like these—and there are not a few—create no surprise, for the Son is worthy of all the love and honour that the Father can bestow. The purpose of God goes far beyond the calling out of the church: it has in view the glory of Christ, and everything must find its place in relation to Him, “that in all things he might have the pre-eminence” (Col. 1. 18). The wonder is that the church should have been chosen to share everything

with Christ; that, in the purpose of the Father, we who believe on the Son should have been marked out for association with Him in His glory, and in the love which ever rested on Him here. Yet such is the place, the portion, and the prospect of the Church, and nothing short of this could satisfy the heart of Christ. So, at least, we read. Is it possible that we are mistaken? Does it seem all too good to be true? Listen, then, to the revealing words of our Lord as He prays to the Father: “And the glory which Thou gavest Me I have given them; that they may be one, even as We are one; and that the world may know that Thou hast sent Me, and hast loved them, as Thou hast loved Me” (John 17. 22, 23).

What shall we then say to these things? There can be only one answer from the heart that knows anything of the love of Christ. “And every man that hath this hope in Him purifieth himself, even as He is pure” (1 John 3: 3).

One thing more in this connection before we pass on. All this was *eternally purposed*. It was ever in the mind of God, and is not affected by what we are, or by anything we have done. It is the pure outcome of divine wisdom, love, and mercy. Nothing can change it; and no power in heaven, earth, or hell can prevent its perfect accomplishment to the everlasting satisfaction and glory of God the Father. (See Eph. 1. 3—6; 3. 11).

We are reluctant to leave this fruitful theme, but we must needs pass on to the second, and central point of the subject, which may be expressed as

THE PURCHASE OF THE SON;  
and it will be observed that these words

answer the question which naturally arises as to how the purpose of the Father could be accomplished.

To the magnificent faith of Abraham this was a comparatively simple matter, though all-important as a step towards the fulfilment of the promise. God was the Actor, so that there could be no hitch or hint of failure; and the consent of Rebekah, upon which the issue depended, was willingly and gladly given.

How different when we think of the antitype! Sin barred the way, and had to be removed before the Father's love could be revealed, and the Son set forth as an Object for the heart. From the New Testament we learn how this was effected, and we learn at the same time that it was no afterthought, but foreseen and settled by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God.

Purpose necessitated the Incarnation, and the Incarnation involved the Cross. God now takes us into favour in the Beloved, "in Whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins according to the riches of His grace" (Eph. 1. 7). That way lies the only road to blessing for sinful men, consistent with the holiness of God.

Nothing like this is found in Genesis 24. There we read of jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and raiment, which the servant gave to Rebekah, and of precious things given to her brother, and to her mother. These speak of redemption, and divine righteousness, and the beauty of holiness. All these are ours in Christ. God has given His Son, and with Him He has freely given us all things. But there is nothing here to suggest the one great sacrifice of infinite worth which alone made it possible

for God so to act. For that we must go back to Genesis 22.

What a scene is opened out before us! Abraham and Isaac are the actors, but we are carried irresistibly away beyond them to the eternal counsel, and on through the ages to its ratification at Calvary. The fact of the cross—God's remedy for sin, and His provision for man's need,—is foreshadowed in a truly marvellous way; but notice that it is the voluntary burnt-offering here, "an offering made by fire, of a sweet savour unto the Lord" (Lev. 1). Keeping this in mind, how impressive and suggestive the words in verse 6 become, which are repeated in verse 8: "*they went both of them together.*"

We are confronted with an impenetrable mystery. "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out!" Harken to the Man of Sorrows as He wends His way to Calvary: "For I came down from heaven, not to do Mine own will, but the will of Him that sent Me" (John 6. 38). "And He that sent Me is with Me; the Father hath not left Me alone; for I do always those things that please Him" (John 8. 29).

"Obedience to the Father's will  
And love to Him did all fulfil."

How complete the picture is when seen in the clear light of the New Testament, and how perfect the arrangement of the details! But if Rebekah be taken as a type of the church, the bride of Christ; what, it may be asked, becomes of the promises to Israel? Are they to be superseded and fall to the ground? By no means, "For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance"

(Roman 11: 29). In chapter 23 the national Israel is set aside typically in the death of Sarah, and the way is cleared for the call of the bride. Israel's day is coming when every promise will be fulfilled, but not until the church is completed and taken to glory.

We come now to the third outstanding feature of the story, and in the activity of this unnamed servant we get a remarkable type of

### THE POWER OF THE SPIRIT.

This is the Spirit's day (John 14. 20), and it is characterised by His abiding presence. It began at Pentecost, and will close only with the rapture of the saints, at the coming of the Lord.

Abraham's servant is a striking personality. How thoroughly he enters into the spirit and feelings of his master, and how evident is the delight he finds in magnifying his master's son! He is humble and unobtrusive, yet he makes his influence felt, and we recognise him as the moving force throughout. He cannot be hurried, yet he will suffer no unnecessary delay; and, with the one object in view, he will not be satisfied until he has stated his business and that object is attained.

Rebekah's ready response would lead us to believe that the servant had imparted to her his own enthusiasm and love for Isaac. "I will go;"—the decisive word is spoken, which meant the severance of old ties and associations; and "Rebekah arose, and her damsels, and they rode upon the camels, and followed the man" (verse 61). It was a venture of faith in a new path, led and sustained by a new power.

We may be sure that the journey was not pursued in silence, and we

are willing to hazard a guess as to the chief subject of conversation. Henceforth Isaac was all in all to Rebekah, and she would be eager to hear all that the servant could tell, while he, for his part, would never grow weary in speaking of the object of her choice. So the time would quickly pass; and when the end of the journey was reached, Isaac would be no stranger to Rebekah. He came forth to meet her, "and she became his wife; and *he loved her.*" (ver. 67).

The first mention of love in the Bible occurs in chapter 22. It is the love of the Father for the Son. The next mention is here in chapter 24, and that is the love of the Son for His chosen bride. "Christ also loved the church, and gave Himself for it" (Eph. 5: 25).

We should, indeed, be slow of heart to believe, if we failed to see in all this a vivid picture of the presence and power of the Holy Spirit. Consequent upon the ascension of Christ, the Spirit came down to bring demonstration to the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment; to bear witness concerning the glorified Man at God's right hand; to gather out of the world a bride for Christ; and to act as Comforter and Guide until He brought her safely home.

Soon we shall see His face, and hear His heavenly voice; and surely the Spirit will have His own joy in presenting us to Christ. This is the day of absence and opportunity. Let us live and labour for the Lord in the power of the Spirit, whose delight it is to make much of Christ, and to give us a foretaste of things to come.

"And see, the Spirit's power  
Has ope'd the heavenly door,  
Has brought me to that favoured  
hour  
When toil shall all be o'er."

# “THE APPROACHING ADVENT OF CHRIST.”

F. B. Hole.

(A review of a book by the Rev. A. Reese, bearing the above title).

4th Paper: Resurrection in the New Testament.

THREE chapters in this book are devoted to the resurrection of the saints in the New Testament: chapter 3 dealing with the Gospels; chapter 4 with St. Paul's Epistles; chapter 5 with the Apocalypse. The sixth chapter is devoted to the parable of the Tares and the Wheat. We may attempt a brief review of three of these chapters in this article.

In the Gospels four passages are adduced, as proving that the Lord will come *for* His saints and *with* His saints at the same moment, no interval being between; that moment being the very day when He is manifested in His glory.

(1) John 6. 39—54; 11. 24; where five times over we get resurrection “at the last day.” Mr. Reese contends that here we have indicated, “the closing day of the age that precedes the Messianic Kingdom of glory” (p. 54), which agrees with what he thinks he has found in the Old Testament. In his mind apparently “the closing day” is a literal day of 24 hours, for he goes on to argue against those who believe “that the expression ‘last day’ refers not to a literal day, but to the last period of God's dealings with men in time; that is, to the age of the kingdom, which follows this present age, and will extend to the Last Judgment, when the rest of the dead are raised” (p. 55).

Now that is exactly what we do believe; and in very definite proof of it we should quote John 12. 48, where for the sixth time we get the expression, “the last day.” Mr.

Reese only alludes to this verse in a footnote, where he dismisses it because in it “nothing is said of resurrection. It refers to the generation of unbelievers who survive to the advent, which is viewed as near.” That is, he contends, if we understand him aright, that we must narrow down the Lord's words to mean that only such unbelievers as may happen to be on earth at the Advent will be judged by the Lord's words at the moment of His manifestation. This narrowed meaning enables him to give to the expression in this verse also the force of the last day of 24 hours.

So, according to Mr. Reese, this great and unqualified pronouncement of our Lord is to be qualified in our minds in this peculiar way. We are to brush aside every other application but that! Since however we are not concerned to support Mr. Reese's views we decline to do it. We assert on the contrary that every word of our Lord is characterized not by narrowness but by breadth of application, and this is specially true of His great sayings recorded in John's Gospel. Chapter 12. 48 deals with the one who “rejecteth Me, and receiveth not My words.” Chapter 5. 24 deals with, “he that heareth My word, and believeth on Him that sent Me.” We should as much think of limiting the “shall not come into condemnation” and “everlasting life” of the one verse to a special few believers, as we should think—under the misguidance of Mr. Reese—of limiting the judgment of the other verse to unbelievers who survive to

the Advent. No: we decline to do it in either case.

Declining to do it, it becomes obvious at once that the expression "last day" *does* refer to *an extended period of time*. It includes the judgment of the ungodly as well as the resurrection of the saints. So these texts in John yield no proof of what is alleged.

(2) Luke 20. 34—36; where we read of "that age, and the resurrection from the dead" (R.V.). His point is, "first, the Messianic Age, then the resurrection. The resurrection of the just is the first result of the Messianic reign" (p. 57). If it could be shown that here our Lord was engaged in a controversy in which matters of chronology were concerned, his argument would have a fairly substantial basis. It was not so however. What was involved was the ignorance prevailing as to the new order of things into which resurrection would introduce the saint. Those accounted worthy to attain *that age*, by passing through earth's troubles without dying, will enjoy the new conditions on earth. The disciples and others believed that. But they did not know that those worthy to attain *that age and the resurrection* would be brought into a heavenly sphere and into new conditions of bodily existence. That was the Lord's statement and not the assertion of a nice chronological point. That age has a heavenly side to it as well as an earthly; that was the point of instruction. Hence the order was very natural—"that age, and the resurrection." First that of which they had *a little* understanding; then that of which they had *no* understanding. Rising from (i.e. *from amongst*) the dead was a mystery to them, as Mark 9. 10 plainly shows.

(3) Matthew 13. 43; where "the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father." Mr. Reese informs us that, "the Lord is expounding Daniel [12. 3], and setting forth the transfiguration of the risen saints at the resurrection" (p. 58). "It is to take place *at that time*, that is, at the time when notorious sinners and stumbling blocks are rooted out of the kingdom (vv. 41, 42); the transfiguration of the risen saints takes place simultaneously with the destruction of the ungodly at the Advent. We are not to suppose that the saints had been transfigured a generation before and concealed in heaven" (p. 59).

*Simultaneously*, did you notice? As with the Old Testament passages, so here, he is hunting for chronological evidence, and thinks he has picked up the scent. We have no hesitation in saying that matters of greater moment than an exact chronology were occupying the Lord when He spoke this parable. But even from this chronological standpoint his argument entirely hangs upon the three expressions, "the harvest," "the time of harvest," and "the end of this age." If they mean a day of 24 hours in which, as in a flash, all the ungodly are destroyed and the saints are raised, then there is some point in his argument. That they do *not* mean such a day is very evident if we consult other scriptures which deal with the end of the age. Read Zechariah, chapters 12, 13 and 14, and note the variety of things that are to take place "in that day." It will be *a period*, though *a short period*, as we are glad to learn from Romans 9. 28 — for "a short work will the Lord make upon the earth," when it is a question of judgment. This being the case, there is really

nothing in Mr. Reese's arguments on this point.

However, he feels the passage to be so important that he devotes a whole chapter to it, in which he quotes many authorities for and against small details, as to how exactly the tares are bound in bundles for burning and the wheat gathered into the barn. The fact is that the parable tells us nothing as to these details, and if we try to read them into it we very easily overshoot the mark, and press the parable beyond its just limits. The rapture of the saints had not been revealed when the parable was spoken, and hence it is not specifically referred to. The Lord spoke in general terms of the great disentanglement which is only to take place at the end of the age. Then, and not till then, will "the children of the wicked one" be cast into the fire, and "the children of the kingdom" shine forth. Not a word is said in the parable as to resurrection. In the light of subsequent revelation we are sure that the risen saints will shine forth in their heavenly condition, but a multitude will enter the kingdom on its earthly side without dying at all, and these will shine forth also. The passage is quite indecisive as to the point that is at issue. It cannot be quoted *to prove* an interval between the coming of the Lord *for* His saints and *with* them. Neither can it rightly be quoted *against* it.

There is just one point in this special chapter that we might refer to. On pages 99 and 100 he quotes certain arguments from B. W. Newton's *Second Coming*, in which he asserts that if we say that the saints are to be removed from the earth before Antichrist is revealed then the tares

must be removed too before he appears. This assertion assumes that both operations take place together in a day of 24 hours, as our Author maintains. With this assumption fixed in his mind, Mr. Newton asserts that if we say the saints are to be removed from earth before Antichrist is revealed, "we must say that Antichrist is to be revealed after Christendom has ceased to exist, and after the age of evil in which he is to act is ended. Will anyone, on reflection, assert this?" We hardly need a moment's reflection to reply that we do not assert it, nor do we believe that any "Darbyist" ever asserted such a self-evident absurdity. We only assert that "the harvest" is a period, and not a literal day.

Mr. Newton knew of this assertion for he added a footnote saying, "Some have endeavoured to avoid the force of this argument by suggesting that the words, 'end of age' may mean an indefinitely lengthened period. But no period can be more definitely marked . . . Is Antichrist to arise after this?" Where we have inserted the dots Mr. Newton printed verses 39—42 of Matthew 13, beginning with the words, "THE HARVEST is the end of the age." He speaks of the harvest as a *period*, but "definitely marked," instead of being "indefinitely lengthened." If Mr. Newton's argument is to have full force the harvest ought to be comprised in a literal day. We are quite content with his calling it a period. The harvest *is* that; but even in Palestine, with its seasons much more regular than ours, it is not a *definite* period, *from the chronological standpoint*: its beginning and its duration vary from year to year. Now it is exactly from the chronological standpoint that we are discussing things. The harvest of Scrip-

ture is, we claim, a somewhat indefinite period, like the harvests of this world. During the harvest both wheat and tares are dealt with, but not on exactly the same day or even year.

Having thus quoted Mr. Newton, ending up with his question, "Is Antichrist to arise after this?" Mr. Reese says, "To this awkward question no reply has been given, for none is possible." It is possible, we suppose, that in all the hundreds of books which Mr. Reese has read no one notices these remarks of Mr. Newton's; but if, because of this, he wishes to predict that no reply can or will be given, he merely proves himself an inaccurate foreteller. Mr. Newton virtually supplied us with the answer himself. The harvest is a period and not a literal day — the thing is so obvious.

(4) Luke 14. 14, 15; where the Lord speaks of being "recompensed at the resurrection of the just." Mr. Reese claims that the fact that this recompensing at the resurrection is connected in the next verse with the kingdom, means that the resurrection occurs just as the kingdom begins. Believing, as we do, that the saints will be rewarded in connection with the kingdom, but that first they have to stand before the judgment seat of Christ, that He may award them their places in the kingdom, we also think of the kingdom in connection with any recompense that is given. There is nothing in this passage to help the special view that Mr. Reese advocates, or to hurt ours.

In the chapter dealing with the Epistles of Paul four passages only are cited—we must remember that the point discussed is, for the

moment, only the resurrection of saints, not the full truth of the coming of the Lord. The passages are: Romans 11. 15; 1 Corinthians 15. 50—54; 1 Thessalonians 4. 13—18. (R.V.); 1 Corinthians 15. 21—26. The third of these passages is of such importance that we reserve it for a later paper. On the other three a few remarks as to Mr. Reese's exegesis may be made.

(1) "Life from the dead" in this passage is said to be the resurrection of saints which synchronizes with the conversion of Israel. As to this we merely remark that the receiving of Israel back into Divine favour is going to be an event of a resurrection character, as Ezekiel 37 has shown us. That in the brief "end of the age" period we shall have both the literal resurrection of saints and the figurative resurrection of Israel we fully believe. Mr. Reese may *read into* this passage the view that he attempts to support; but it is not there otherwise.

(2) The verses towards the end of 1 Corinthians 15 are referred to for the one purpose of discovering some "clue to guide us in our inquiry concerning the time of the resurrection." This clue he finds in verse 54. The resurrection will take place when Isaiah 25. 8. is fulfilled. Now that verse in Isaiah he has already considered, and he concluded that it fixed the resurrection at the exact moment of the Advent of Jehovah and the establishment of the kingdom. From the Old Testament he now proceeds to reason as to the New.

Here is a case illustrating what we said in our last paper. Assuming he has proved his earlier proposition, he now uses it to advance his reason-

ing or exclude some contrary line of reasoning in the later Scripture. He says, "What do we find? Why, that the resurrection of the saints, and the victory over death, *synchronise with the inauguration of the Theocratic Kingdom, the coming of Jehovah, and the conversion of living Israel.*" (p. 63). Believing, as we showed last time, that his exegesis of Isaiah 25. 8 is mistaken in important details, we find that his "clue" does not lead him to the point he wishes. His argument we regard as valueless.

On page 65 he quotes a passage from Darby's *Second Coming*, in which he believes he catches him tripping, and making admissions which contradict his own teaching and support Mr. Reese's thoughts. In this passage Mr. Darby points out the connection between the verses in 1 Corinthians 15 and in Isaiah 25. He is showing that the Advent must be pre-millennial, and he says the resurrection "takes place at this time which we call the millennium: when the Jews being restored to their place on earth, there is that era of blessedness among nations which is commonly called the millennium . . . . And thus it appears that the time when this resurrection takes place is the time when the Lord restores Israel, when He establishes Israel's place in Zion, and takes away the veil from off the face of all nations." Mr. Reese's comment is, "Sound doctrine! Yet every word of it is a complete refutation of theories telling us that the resurrection does not synchronise with the millennium and the conversion of Israel, but precedes them by a period . . ." Mr. Reese also quotes Kelly and Trotter as writing in similar strain.

At first sight all this might sound conclusive and even crushing. We

read it again more carefully, and at once perceive that the fallacy does not lie with Darby or his friends, but with our Author's use of the word *synchronise*. Darby's paragraph he says, refutes the idea that "the resurrection does not synchronise with the millennium;" that is, Darby teaches in this passage that *it does synchronise*. We have read the passage and find that is just what Darby does not say. He says, "at this time," "the time," by which he means, the period when this age is closing and the millennium about to begin, as distinguished from the period when the millennium is closing and the eternal state about to begin. It is Mr. Reese and not Darby who is so intent upon an exact chronology, and the bringing of events into one day. It looks as if he is so intent that he cannot avoid reading his own chronological thoughts into Darby's words. Now you can soon demolish your opponents if you are permitted to interpret the terms they use in the light of your own thoughts instead of their thoughts, as revealed in the context.

We have thought it worth while to refer to this as it is a sample of the kind of thing that we have elsewhere in this book, and so we ask our readers to be on their guard as they may read it. We now pass on to,

(3) The verses in the earlier part of 1 Corinthians 15, which are referred to because he thinks that the words, "they that are Christ's at His coming," are inconsistent with there being the resurrection of all the saints when Christ comes for them, followed by a supplementary raising of saints subsequently martyred under "the beast." We quite agree with Mr. Reese that here we have the three ranks, (1) Christ, the Firstfruits. (2) The redeemed at His coming. (3)

the end, when the rest of the dead are raised. Yet we believe that His coming is spoken of in a general way, without any attempt to differentiate between the two stages that mark it.

If we think of the first Advent we can discern different stages: for instance; His incarnation, when He came to Bethlehem; His coming forth in ministry, when He appeared in Galilee; His sacrificial work, when He died on the cross outside Jerusalem. Sometimes we distinguish be-

tween these different stages, and sometimes we do not, but just speak of His first Coming. The New Testament references to the second coming may be classified in just the same way. Sometimes it is distinctively His coming for His saints; sometimes distinctively His coming with them; sometimes His coming in a general way. The resurrection of life takes place at the second Advent. There is nothing here that either denies or affirms the particular point at issue between us.

(TO CONTINUE)

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## “Two or Three.”

You say, “We are very weak, just two or three at the prayer meeting.” “Two or three”! Why if those two or three gather together in the Lord’s Name; if they gather together because they love Him and desire that His cause should prosper, they are not weak. HE IS THERE. How can they be weak if He is in the midst of them? *They are an assembly of God.* Weak they would be in themselves if He were not there, but with Him in the midst they are mighty with God; for “if two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of My Father which is in heaven” (Matthew 18. 19).

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## God’s thoughts of His own.

The activities of faith hang upon God’s point of view. The knowledge of God’s thoughts is the power of service in the church. God keeps His sheep *always*, that is to say, He always loves them. If I see one of His sheep wandering, it is very sorrowful, and looking at it with man’s judgment only, one might be inclined to abandon it, but remembering that it is a sheep, I act towards it as God thinks of it. Faith takes up the thoughts of God as to the objects of His love.

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“Ezra had prepared his heart to seek the law of the Lord, and to do it, and to teach in Israel statutes and judgments” (chapter 10. 7).

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By sitting at the feet of Jesus we shall both delight His heart and find ourselves in the place of unspeakable blessing.

## THE FATHER'S GIFT OF THE SON. Inglis Fleming.

**T**HE Gospel of John presents to our delighted view the triumphal progress of the Son of God.

Though rejected and refused in the world His hands had made, though denied His rights by the people, Israel, He had so privileged, yet He is Master of the situation wherever we follow Him through the inspired pages of this Gospel.

In spite of all which His enemies could do He will carry out the will of His Father, and He will have "His own," who are the Father's gift to Him.

He manifested His glory to His enemies. But they would not have Him to reign over them. Was He defeated! No, to them He says, "Ye also have seen Me and believe not," but adds "*All* that the Father giveth Me shall come to Me and him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out." Notice that it is to *His* opposers that He makes this assertion. They might do and would do their worst. But in the midst of their bitterest antagonism His Father's gift to Him would be made good. "*All*" of these "shall come to Me" He victoriously declares. In perfect submission to the Father's will and delight in carrying it out He then says,

"For I came down from heaven, not to do Mine own will, but the will of Him that sent Me. And this is the Father's will which hath sent Me, that of all which He hath given Me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up at the last day. And this is the will of Him that sent Me, that every one which seeth the Son and believeth on Him may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day" (John 6. 36-40).

What words of power and of grace are here!

He will have the Father's gift, and yet the way is open for every one to have everlasting life.

And what delight it is to the heart of those who believe, to know that they are part of the Father's gift to the Son. We rejoice in the oft-used words "Him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out." We find comfort in knowing that He will never, no never, cast out one who comes to Him. But possibly we have not carefully examined the context of the precious statement. Graciously He receives the vilest and the worst sinner. Never, no never, will He reject one who comes. But He receives such *as His Father's gift of love to Him*. And will He ever reject them either when they come at first, or at any time after they have come to Him?

The writer of these lines has an old watch. It is an excellent timekeeper and is useful on that account. However it is not beautiful in appearance. It is somewhat large for the pocket, and is out-of-date according to more modern ideas. but it is esteemed most highly and worn most constantly and is among the most treasured possession he has. Why? It was a love gift from his devoted, Christian mother, who has long since gone to be with the Lord she loved. The gift is cherished for *her* sake and would not be parted with for the choicest watch of most recent production.

"The Son of the Father," in doing "the will of the Father," has received the gift of the Father, and He values every one who is part of that

gift and will never lose one of them. He values us who believe upon Him as a portion of the expression of the Father's love. It is *not* what we were in ourselves, not what we have been since we came to Him. It is what we are as

### GIVEN OF THE FATHER

to Him in the hours of His rejection in the world.

In John 10. 27-30, the Good Shepherd (Who gave His life for the sheep), is again speaking to the Jews who believed not. To them He shows something of the blessedness of those who are numbered among "His own."

*"My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me: and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand."*

Then He adds that which links them with His Father's love:

*"My Father, which gave them Me, is greater than all: and no man is able to pluck them out of My Father's hand. I and My Father are one."*

In a fellowship of love and power the Father and the Son are viewed as preserving the given ones from all that the foes can effect. The Son keeps for the Father. The Father keeps for the Son. The heart of the Father gives in love. The hands of the Father and of the Son keep in power. And no one can snatch away the gift. What communion of interest we are called to consider with regard to all (ourselves among the number) His sheep.

Given by the Father. Received by the Son the Shepherd. They are HELD SECURE in spite of every enemy.

Turning to John 17 we find yet other thought concerning the given ones. In verses 1 and 2 our Lord prays that He may be glorified in order that from that glory "HE" MAY "GIVE ETERNAL LIFE TO AS MANY AS" THE FATHER "HAS GIVEN HIM."

He desires that they may be brought into fulness of enjoyment even now. Into fellowship with the Father and with Himself. Then He adds, *"This is life eternal that they may know Thee the only true God and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent."*

In his Epistle the same apostle exclaims with evident delight "Truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ. And these things write we unto you that your joy may be full." The great thought in eternal life is *the height of privilege* to be known by its possessors. It is heaven begun on earth in *fulness* of blessing. And this is now given to every believer upon the Son. The gift is ours whether it is enjoyed in greater or lesser measure. Valuing His Father's gift to Him He bestows priceless favour upon them all that they may share with Him His own delights before the face of His Father, now our Father and, His God, now our God (Jno. 20. 17).

In John 17. 6, we read, "I have manifested Thy name unto the men which Thou gavest Me out of the world." The condition in which the given ones were found comes before us now. They had been

### “OF THE WORLD.”

They had been part and parcel of that system of things which is “not of the Father.” In themselves they were not different from the rest of Adam’s race. But chosen out of the world in the sovereign mercy of a Saviour-God, they were given to the Son. To them He made known the Father’s hallowed name that His joy and peace might be theirs. Thus He introduces them into a new world, the world of the Father’s deep affection, and so their link with the world of hatred is broken for ever.

All this was in accordance with the Father’s counsels before the world began to be. They were chosen before the earth’s foundation.

### “THINE THEY WERE AND THOU GAVEST THEM ME” (v.6)

They were treasured by the Son as having been the Father’s choice and as being now bestowed upon Himself, entrusted to Him on the Father’s behalf. Happy indeed are all who have come to the Son, and who know that they were in the Father’s thoughts of affection for His Son in eternity.

“I pray for them . . . which Thou hast given Me for they are Thine” (v. 9). Left for the time in a world of evil, of antagonism to the Son, and where the Father had been seen and hated, the present intercession of the Son is made on their behalf. For this He ever liveth. And “if any man sin we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous, and He is the propitiation for our sins” (1 John 2. 1-2).

It is thus that the given ones are maintained in their course. His pre-

sent ministry upholds the feeblest of the number, as He ministers to them grace and succour from on high.

So He keeps now, “those that Thou gavest Me” as He kept those of their number when on earth. And we sing with thankfulness

“Through manifold temptations,  
My soul holds on its course,  
Christ’s mighty intercession  
Alone is our resource.”

Neither slumbering nor sleeping, our Lord is ceaseless in His prayer for us.

But the best is to come. We are allowed to hear our Lord’s longing for us as He prays (verse 24) “*Father, I will that they also whom Thou hast GIVEN Me, be with Me where I am: that they may behold My glory, which Thou hast given Me for Thou lovedst Me before the foundation of the world.*”

Nothing short of this will satisfy His heart. The loved ones, the given ones, must be in His company where He is. He would have them in glory with Himself. Already He had said “I go to prepare a place for you, and if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself, that where I am there ye may be also.” Now He prays that the jewel given Him may have its setting in glory. Glorious ultimate for all His own!

As we consider these thoughts and purposes and desires of the Father and the Son should not our hearts rise in wonder and in worship and our lives be yielded in deepest gratitude while we await the grand consummation at our Lord’s coming again.

## THE THESSALONIAN EPISTLE, CHAPTER 5.

Summarised Notes of Bible Readings in London (Norwood), February 12th.

**T**HE latter part of chapter 4 shews us how the coming of the Lord will affect His redeemed people. The Apostle in chapter 5 proceeds to shew how the coming will affect the world. He speaks of "the day of the Lord." It stands out in contrast with "man's day" (1 Cor. 4. 3, N.T.). We are in man's day now, and every part of the world proclaims the mess he has made of things, and that after 6,000 years of effort and experience.

The day of the Lord will bring man's day to an end in judgment; then and not till then will injustice, pride, cruelty and strife be driven out to make way for righteousness and peace. Many Scriptures describe the day of the Lord. Isaiah 2. 12 says "For the day of the Lord of Hosts shall be upon everyone that is proud and lofty; . . . and he shall be brought low". Isaiah 3. 18, "In that day the Lord will take away the bravery of their tinkling ornaments . . . Thy men shall fall by the sword; and thy mighty in the war." Joel 1. 15. "Alas for the day! for the day of the Lord is at hand; and as a destruction from the Almighty it shall come." Joel 2. 11. "For the day of the Lord is great and very terrible: who can abide it?" It is the day of judgment for a godless world, but it will usher in blessing for the remnant of His people Israel that shall seek Him. "In that day shall the branch of the Lord be beautiful and glorious, and the fruit of the earth shall be excellent and comely for them that are escaped of Israel." Isaiah 4. 2.

As to "the times and seasons," he does not write to them. The Lord had said to His Apostles, "It is not

for you to know the times or the seasons which the Father hath kept in His own power," Acts 1. They are not revealed to servants, but this is revealed, that that day will come suddenly and without warning as a thief in the night. The Lord had spoken of this in Matthew 24. There is nothing men of the world fear more than the Lord's intervention in world affairs. They have come to deride the very thought of it. "The scoffers in the last days say, Where is the promise of His Coming?" 2 Peter 3.

It will not be a time of "peace and safety" when that day comes; it will be the time that Revelation 6 describes, under the opening of the seals; but out of that state of anarchy and strife the Beast and the false prophet will arise (Revelation 13) and those two devil-inspired men will take things in hand, and the nations will hail them and follow them as the saviours of society and leaders against Christ and God. Revelation 17. Men will put their trust in them and hope that they will reach universal peace and safety under their despotic rule, and then the storm will burst, and destruction be their end.

But the Christians will not be overtaken thus by that day, for they are not of the night, but "sons of light, sons of day" (N.T.). We do not belong to the night that will be startled by the coming of the day of the Lord. "Sons of light" means that we are that characteristically. We are that first because of our origin, we have been born again, by the word of God which liveth and abideth for ever. That word enlightened us, it brought us out of our darkness "into His mar-

vellous light," our day began when we received it. "The entrance of Thy word giveth light." But we are not only children of light by birth, but must be sons of light in character: we are to shine. This is linked up with holding forth the word of life in Philippians 2. We hold forth the word of life in what we say, but we shine by what we are.

Suppose a young Christian is the only Christian in an office, shop or home! What an honour! He is there to shine as a child of the day and turn others from darkness to light.

But we shall not shine if we sleep. The man who sleeps is indifferent to his surroundings, he does not know the time or what is happening about him. We have not to be like that but to "watch and be sober." A watchman if faithful is alert. The enemy is alert and the darkness is great; we must not allow spiritual lethargy to creep over us.

As to the Lord's coming, He has put "waiting" and "watching" together, Luke 12. Waiting means "I'm ready"; watching means, "I'm expectant." We might be ready and go to sleep, we shall not sleep if we are expectant. To be awake means to have all our faculties alive in a spiritual way—"ready unto every good work." And with this alertness we need protection, and the three great features of our Christian faith become our protection as they are active in our lives. The breast plate of faith and love — would be faith active towards God and love active towards our brethren and all men; while with the head covered with the hope of salvation we shall be preserved from depression in spite of the

darkness around us and the evident progress of evil.

God has not appointed us to wrath—the day of the Lord that is coming—but to obtain salvation, and the way of our salvation is given in chapter 1. We "wait for His Son from heaven, Whom He raised from the dead, even Jesus, our Deliverer from the wrath to come." He "died for us that whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with Him." That is, the "we that are alive and remain," and "the dead in Christ" have alike this great prospect in view,—not to be judged by Him when He comes to judge;—when He died for us He bore our judgment—but to live for ever with Him who loved us and gave Himself for us. The repetition of the words as to comforting, or encouraging yourselves, come in well here. We have great things to talk about; things that encourage and edify us as we wait in the darkness for the advent of our Lord, but we must come *together* for this. "Not forsaking the assembling of yourselves together as the manner of some is, but exhorting one another, and so much the more *as ye see the day approaching.*" (Hebrews 10. 25).

The exhortations that follow are of the greatest importance and must be obeyed if an assembly is to prosper. First there were those among them who *laboured in the Lord*. These were not Apostles and prophets, greatly gifted men, but local men who loved the saints for Christ's sake. They are necessary, and should be greatly valued; they are often burdened, and should be supported by the love and prayers of their brethren. They are over you *in the Lord*, their responsibility is to Him. The Lordship of Christ is very pro-

minent in this Epistle, it enters into every truth and relationship in it, progress and peace are impossible where there is not subjection to the Lord. "Be at peace among yourselves" is a needed word, but how often forgotten; but we know from whence strife comes, James tells us—"even of your lusts that war in your members."

There will always be with us, as there was at Thessalonica, the unruly, the feeble-minded or faint-hearted, and the weak, and these test us as to how far we are formed in divine grace. We must not expect all the saints of God to be of one stature, but if they are saints, then patience is called for. God is the God of patience and consolation, and these features should be developed in everyone of us. Consider how much patience He has had and still has with every one of us. Forgiveness and not revenge must be our attitude towards all. With our Lord as our pattern we should not have thought that such an exhortation was necessary, but evidently it is.

"Rejoice evermore, pray without ceasing, in everything give thanks." We must be continually in the consciousness of God's favour if we are to rejoice evermore; and realise our dependence upon Him if we are to pray without ceasing, and accept *everything* from His hand, if we are to give thanks in everything. But this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning us, and His will is good, acceptable and perfect.

"Quench not the Spirit. Despise not prophesyings. Prove all things; hold fast that which is good." These three exhortations have the ministry of the word in view. 1 Corinthians

12 shews us that the Holy Spirit is sovereign in the assembly of God, and has given gifts for the edification of the body. These gifts are many and varied and if scope is not given them, the activities of the Spirit are quenched and the saints suffer. It should not be difficult to see how grievously the Spirit must be quenched in organised systems of religion where one voice alone is heard in ministry and how great the loss to all must be, including the minister, by these human substitutes for God's way. Everything that is given by the Spirit is of value, it may come through lowly and undistinguished vessels but it must not be despised. But all must be tested and proved. "Let the prophets speak two or three and the rest judge." Spiritual faculties have been given to us that we should exercise in discerning what is of God, and all that is good we must hold fast. "But let everything be done decently and in order."

Now the Apostle turns to God and desires that they may be completely sanctified; spirit, soul and body being preserved blameless to the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. To be sanctified is to be set apart for God. Spirit, soul and body make up the whole man, and it is the whole man that has been purchased for God by the blood of Jesus — ye are bought with a price—and it is only right that all should be for God. There are many things both in us and about us to hinder this, hence the Apostle's prayer to the God of peace that He would do it, and his confidence is that He will fulfil His own purpose. He is faithful, Who has called us to this.

The Epistle does not close there, it goes further and lays upon whoever received this letter the responsibility

to read it to all the brethren. "I adjure you by the Lord that this letter be read to all the holy brethren" (N. Trans.). A solemn charge and one that we readily forget. How far are we thinking of *all* the brethren? and what effort are we making to spread the truth among them all? Let us beware of treating the truth as

though it were our monopoly. We may be sure that much of the dearth and spiritual death may be traced to our lack of desire to see the truth circulated among all the brethren. May we be delivered from all sectarian prejudices and selfishness, "*The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.*"

## "NOW I SEE."

W.B.D.—y.

I never saw  
The deadly bonds about my spirit tied  
Till all my vaunted strength had failed beside  
Thy perfect law.

I never heard  
The searching voice of truth till Thou had'st laid  
Against my soul the keen and glittering blade  
That is Thy Word.

I never knew,  
Until I saw upon the Roman tree  
The spotless Saviour smitten there for me,  
Love deep and true.

I could not feel  
True joy, until the Holy Spirit stirred  
In pow'r, and to a risen Lord I heard  
The trumpets peal.

Learning is very real work, and there is no maturing without it; no one matures brilliantly who does not learn sufferingly. Easily got, easily gone, was never so corroborated as in the highest things.

Seeking after Christ is the mark of real growth, as one increases in divine things the more Christ is needed and found to be everything. The more one grows the more one seeks Him, because one wants Him more.

We all have as much of Christ as we desire—no more, and no less. If our desires are large and we open our mouth wide He will fill it. On the other hand, if we are but feebly conscious of our need, and little only of Christ will be supplied.

## ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

### “Believing” and “Trusting.”

“I notice that many evangelists in their preaching use ‘believing’ and ‘trusting’ as synonymous terms. Sinners are urged to **trust** in the Saviour, ought they not to be told to **believe** the gospel concerning Him? A few comments on the subject might be interesting and helpful.”—L.

**W**E cannot expect the evangelist in the fervency of his appeal to be an exact theologian, or trouble himself about the exact meaning of words, and we should say that in urging men to trust in the Saviour he is fulfilling one part of his commission, for he is urging them to commit their souls with all their needs to Him, yet no one would or could trust Him who did not first *believe* the testimony that God has given concerning Him. Hence the evangelist’s great work is to preach “the gospel of God concerning His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.” “Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.” “How shall they

believe in Him of whom they have not heard?” Christ must be preached, the great facts of His death and resurrection must be made known, when these are believed as the gospel of God, then, and not till then, can the soul trust Him in the true meaning of the word. To be exact we should say that it is the one who has believed the gospel that trusts in the Saviour; it is when a man has believed in God that he can trust Him about his life and all its details, as well as the eternal blessing of his soul. Trust is the consequence of receiving God’s testimony by faith.

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### Will men be saved after the Church is completed?

“Is there any Scripture to support the view that persons of responsible age living before the Lord’s Coming (1 Thess. 4. 16) will be given another opportunity of salvation after that event?

“Does Revelation 7. 9—14 indicate that Gentiles will be saved between the rapture of the Church and the appearing of the Lord through the preaching of the Kingdom?”—PRESTWICK.

**T**HERE are many Scriptures which declare that there is no hope for those who finally reject the gospel of the grace of God: “He that believeth not shall be damned” (Mark 16. 16). “He that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him” (John 3. 36). “Behold, ye despisers and wonder and perish” (Acts 13. 41). “How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation” (Hebrews 2. 3); and many others. Upon all such the door will be closed, never to be opened, Luke 13. 25-27. But God will not hold those who have never heard

the gospel responsible for rejecting it, and after the Church has been completed and caught up to heaven He will begin a new work in the world amongst both Jews and Gentiles. The Lord spoke of this in His Olivet discourse. (Matthew 24). “And this gospel of the Kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations: and then shall the end come” (verse 14).

The great multitude of Revelation 7. 9—14 will probably be the result of this preaching among the Gentile nations.

## AROUND THE CROSS IN THE GOSPEL OF JOHN.

NO. 4. Chapter 19.

- J. T. Mawson.

"**T**HEN came Jesus forth, wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe." Why does John only record this appearance of the Lord thus arrayed before the people? Matthew and Mark tell how the whole band of soldiers was called together to the mock coronation, and Luke wrote that "Herod and his men of war set Him at nought and mocked Him, and arrayed Him in a gorgeous robe," but makes no reference to the crowning with thorns. There must be a reason for the prominence that John gives to this special suffering and shame endured by the Lord. What is it?

In our Gospel He is not presented to us as the Son of David, the King of Israel as in Matthew, nor as the faithful servant of man's need and God's glory as in Mark, but as the Word, the Creator of the world, who had come into it to be its Saviour. The world belonged to Him for He made it, and as the Son in the eternal Bosom He was the Heir to it, but it was under the curse; man's disobedience had brought the curse upon it, and thorns were the product and abiding evidence of the curse. He had come to redeem the world; to remove the curse and bring in the blessing, and to do this He must bear the curse. He has redeemed us from *the curse of the law*, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree (Gal. 3. 13), but the original curse fell upon Him, and the sign of this was the crown that He wore. "Then came Jesus forth wearing the crown of thorns." Oh the shame and the glory of it! Shame to man, who crowned Him: to us all, for we all

had our part in it; glory to Him who in divine compassion for God's glory and our salvation took the curse upon Him that by His death He might remove it.

And now we understand the full meaning of Pilate's cry "Behold the Man." He knew not what he said, but we know, for then there came forth the representative Man, the Son of Man, our Substitute. He had spoken thus of Himself. "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up," and now we "Behold the Man" consecrated to our cause and crowned with our curse. But who is this Son of Man? Hear His own words. "For God so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten Son." The thorn-crowned Man is the only-begotten Son of God. It is thus that John reveals Him in his Gospel to our astonished gaze and we understand why the crowning with thorns is so prominent in it.

"The Word became flesh," and having come thus into manhood He could take no other way than this. He was sinless; He was holy; He was as holy in His manhood, wearing the crown of thorns as He ever was in His Godhead glory, hence the curse had no reference to Him personally, but having espoused the cause of the ruined race, he *must* bear the curse, if not He would have remained a solitary man for ever, and God's purpose for man would have failed and Satan would have triumphed. In the hope of holding mankind under the perpetual curse of God Satan offered to Jesus every crown under the sun, and men would have made Him king

when He fed them with bread, but He would take no crown from Satan or from men, but this crown, the crown of thorns. Every other crown was tarnished; there was not a kingdom of righteousness on earth over which He could reign. One crown alone the earth could give that He could take—the crown of thorns. If He was to be the Blessor He must bear the curse.

Pilate said, "Behold, I bring Him forth to you." But Pilate's part in that presentation was merely incidental; the chief factor in that hour that controlled all the circumstances was not Pilate's will or his authority, but the will and purpose of his fettered and thorn-crowned Prisoner, and His obedience to His Father's command; hence we must put the statement in capitals, "*THEN CAME JESUS FORTH, WEARING THE CROWN OF THORNS.*"

We have considered His goings forth in the Garden, as recorded in chapter 18; they continue here; not only did He *come forth* wearing the crown of thorns, but in verse 17 we read "He bearing His cross *went forth* into a place called the place of a skull, which is called in the Hebrew, Golgotha. Pilate had his part in this for it is said, "Then delivered he Him unto them to be crucified," and in that act the culpability of the time-serving judge reached its climax, "And they took Jesus and led Him away" and in that the greater guilt of the Jews was consummated; but the injustice of Pilate and the frenzied hatred of the Jews could not have brought the Lord of glory to Golgotha; "*He went forth* bearing His cross." He offered Himself without spot to God. He had said to God, His Father, "Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is writ-

ten of Me) to do Thy will, O God." And to His disciples He had said, "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.*" That "hence" had been reached at last, and without hesitation or haste He went forth bearing His cross. This was their hour, but it was His also, for "now is *the Son of Man* glorified and God is glorified in Him." There was a dignity that belongs not to earth about that lone Figure. Here was MAN after God's own heart, bearing man's inhumanity to its utmost limit without resentment or retaliation, and bending His bruised and bleeding back to the cross because it was the will of God. His form was scarred and His visage marred, and a lewd and mocking rabble followed Him through the gates of David's city to Golgotha, yet a glory shone forth in Him in that hour that will abide for ever. That going forth was the march of a King to His coronation and triumph.

"Where they crucified Him and two others with Him and Jesus in the midst." Other Gospels tell us of the "two other"; but it was not given to John to do so, he had eyes only for Jesus. The malefactors were there, but they were incidental; Jesus was in the midst, the centre of that scene, the centre of man's scorn and hatred, as in a day yet future He will be the centre of God's throne, the object of God's infinite and eternal approbation, and of the worship of a multitude that no man can count.

"And Pilate wrote a title and put it on the cross, and the writing was *Jesus of Nazareth the King of the Jews.*" John tells us, as also does Luke, that this title was written in Hebrew, Greek and Latin. These

languages represented the religious, the philosophic and political worlds—everything in which man trusts and boasts, and the title was written thus that all the world might know that Jesus the Nazarene, crucified by men, is King. The chief priests rebelled against the writing and would have had Pilate change it, that He might die under the title of an imposter, who had made a false claim; but the writing was unalterable, penned by Pilate but indited by the Holy Ghost. It abides, the unimpeachable witness against the Jew, and the cause of his long travail, which travail shall deepen in the years yet to come until the great tribulation shall be reached, when in no country on earth will he find rest for the soles of his feet.

All the four Gospels tell us of the soldiers' gamble for the garments of the Lord. John particularises the coat without seam, woven from the top throughout, as the one article for which they cast lots. A man's coat was his own; even if he had given it in pledge during the day it had to be returned to him at night, according to the law of Moses. These clothes for which the soldiers gambled were the Lord's only possessions, and even these were taken from Him. How poor He became for our sakes! But why is this seamless coat which the soldiers would not rend, prominent in John's record? We deprecate fanciful interpretations of Scripture, but if a man's garment indicates his character, and it often does so in Scripture, then we venture to suggest that this garment might symbolise the perfect evenness and consistency of the Lord's life and character—He was all that He ever said. But clearly the fact is recorded that we might have light on the Old Testament Scriptures, the soldiers did not

know it, yet by their callous conduct they were fulfilling the Scripture which said—"They parted My raiment among them, and for My vesture did they cast lots." Thus we know that a thousand years before He came the great sin-offering Psalm foretold these things of Him.

I have said that the garments of the Lord for which the soldiers gambled were His only possession, but there was Mary, His mother. Even though He had had to put the relationship into the background at the beginning of His ministry, it was there, and now at the end of His life it came into view again; she was "His mother." Four times John uses the word "His mother." The tenderness of His love flowed out to her and He committed her to John. He could have cared for her miraculously, but there was a more excellent way. John stood by the cross with Mary and some other women, "The disciple whom Jesus loved," probably a youth of twenty years, and who had leaned his head upon His bosom at the Supper, was not His disciple only but His friend; he could be trusted, and to him Jesus committed this precious legacy, and he proved himself true to the trust.

This committal of His mother to John was His last act before yielding up His life in sacrifice for us, and it calls for our earnest consideration. Was the Lord in that hour caring only for His mother and His loved disciples? Has not this act something in it to teach us? No two persons on earth loved that Lord more than His mother and John, and none were more truly the objects of His tender solicitude. His last word to them was a command that they should dwell together in love and mutual help; He bound them to-

gether for this in a new relationship. But He has done this for all His own and everyone of them is loved with the same love wherewith He loved these favoured two, and His command is that they love one another and dwell together in peace in the new relationship that He has placed them in. He died "that He should gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad" John 11. 52. And He has given them a commandment: "This is My commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you" and "Ye are My friends if you do whatsoever I command you" John 15. Alas, the seamless robe has been rent by hard and legal hands, and the new relationship that Jesus died to form has

had little hold upon the hearts of those who have been brought into it, and family quarrels have dishonoured the Lord, and grieved the Holy Ghost and proved how small is our claim to be the friends of Jesus. Ah, we need to be drawn afresh to the Cross, and to stand there with "His mother, and His mother's sister, Mary the wife of Cleopas, and Mary Magdalene, and the disciple whom Jesus loved," and to hear afresh His words, "Woman, behold thy Son!" and "Behold thy mother!" and again, "I am the good Shepherd: the good Shepherd giveth His life for the sheep . . . There shall be one flock and one shepherd." "Feed My sheep."

(To continue).

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## "Thou God seest me."

"*Thou God seest me*" (Genesis 16. 23). "Father, I have sinned against heaven and *in thy sight*." "*His father saw him*, and had compassion, and ran and fell on his neck and kissed him."

How I hated that text in those former days before I knew God, but what a joy it is now!

"Thou seest me, O God, and plain beneath Thy sight appear  
The tale of years that vanish, and all secrets deep as night.  
Thine eyes are searching through me, yet I will not shrink nor fear;  
Thy heart is full of tenderness, Thine arm of help is near,  
And Thou, O God, art Love as well as Light!

Thou seest me. Each word and inmost thought alike is known,  
My comings and my goings though Thyself I cannot see;  
Though blindness well might smite me, from the light before Thy throne,  
My soul bows down to bless Thee for Thou callest me Thine own,  
And seeing me, Thou lovest—even me."

"And the Lord turned and *looked* upon Peter" (Luke 22. 61). "And when the Lord *saw* her, He had compassion on her, and said unto her, Weep not" (Luke 7. 13). "And when Jesus came to the place, He looked up, and *saw* him, and said unto him, Zaccheus make haste and come down: for to-day I must abide at thy house" (Luke 19. 5).

## THE LION AND THE LAMB.

J. S. Blackburn.

*"Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing"* (Revelation 5).

THE question raised in our chapter is one which is surging around us in the world. Who is worthy to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing? For this, we learn from the answer given, is a part, at least, of the meaning of the question asked by the strong angel, Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof? (Rev. 5. 2). The world has attempted many an answer to this question; and particularly in our own day it is ready to choose its men, and shower upon them glory and honour, and heap power and riches into their hands. If we enquire into the character of these men, we may find that they are men of pride, cruelty and unbridled ambition. Yet they have qualities that cause them to be hailed with enthusiasm, and then command an allegiance that almost amounts to worship. But far above the strong currents which agitate the minds of the earth dwellers (the sea and its waves roaring and men's hearts failing them for fear) there is a Throne. On that throne sits One who lives for ever and ever; He is ceaselessly adored by the hosts of heaven; and will finally rule in the kingdoms of earth. In the vision of our chapter, He is attended by the executors of His judgments, and surrounded by the completed company of the redeemed saints in heaven, and there is a ready answer in heaven to the question "Who is worthy to receive power and riches?"

Who has not been filled with wonder at the singularity of the figures used here? The seer wept much because no man was found worthy to

open and read the great scroll of God's will for the earth, but one of the elders, answering his grief, said "Weep not, behold, the Lion of the tribe of Juda hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof." His amazement, as he turned in response to the elder's words, is preserved for us. "And lo . . . a Lamb, as it had been slain" (Rev. 5. 5, 6). And as He took the book out of the hand of Him that sat upon the throne, the four and twenty elders fell down and worshipped the Lamb, and when the echoes of the new song had reverberated to the utmost limits of the universe, again the saints fell down and worshipped Him that liveth for ever and ever.

The reason for the Lamb's worthiness, is that He was slain. That precious blood that has redeemed to God out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation, is the Lamb's title to everlasting glory and exaltation. In addition to this, however, we surely have in the singular figures used, instruction as to the moral character of the Man whom heaven delights to honour. He is the Lion who has prevailed, and He is the Lamb who was slain. What volumes of precious instruction are in these two figures. In answering Samson's riddle, the Philistines said "What is stronger than a lion?" (Judges 14. 18). Again, in the Proverbs we have "A lion is strongest among beasts and turneth not away for any" (Proverbs 30. 30), — the lamb on the other hand is the emblem of unresisting weakness, (in His case this weakness was meekness), so that the Scripture says "He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter,

and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so He openeth not His mouth” (Isaiah 53. 7).

Are not the lion and the lamb in every man? How strong men can be for *themselves*; how utterly weak for God (and this weakness is not meekness). Those men who in the world have been accounted worthy of great power, are men who in a pre-eminent degree, have been strong for themselves. A strong man is one who will not be turned aside from the road leading to the attainment of his object. Napoleon was such a man. No scruples of conscience, no bowels of human compassion, no entreaty of wife or friend, no opposition of puissant foe turned him aside, in the heyday of his strength, from the ruthless directness of his path towards the chosen goal. To such a man men were willing to give power and riches. For such a man, men were willing to die, but toward God . . . !

The Name extolled in heaven, belongs to One who, in the manner of His life amongst men, was a lion, and turned not aside for any, in the things pertaining to God; while in the things pertaining to Himself, He was a lamb, unresisting; and like a sheep before its shearers is dumb, He opened not His mouth.

We read of Him driven into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil, in order that what was in Him might be made manifest. The tempter was the “strong man” whom none had spoiled for forty centuries. In that first temptation, the aim was to turn the Lord aside—not a startling glaring error, but the merest hairsbreadth from the will of God; but such was His greater strength that He turned not aside. At the same time, what

perfection of weakness for Himself is shown in that His power is withheld from ministering to the most elementary of material human needs, when another than His Father “shewed it” to Him (John 5. 20). In all the parts of that life we can discern the same unique combination of strength and weakness. The prophet Zechariah tells how He was commissioned to the task in which He “laboured in vain and spent His strength for nought” (Isaiah 49. 4). “Thus saith the Lord my God; Feed the flock of the slaughter” (Zech. 11. 4). The Shepherd, prophetically recounting the manner in which he responded to the word, says “and I fed the flock.” It was an apparently fruitless labour, for the shepherd’s staves, Beauty and Bands, were to be broken; the flock was the flock of slaughter; and would forsake the faithful Shepherd and cleave to an idol shepherd. The Gospels contain the record of the unswerving vigour with which He pursued this commission. “And Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the Kingdom and healing every sickness, and every disease . . . But when He saw the multitudes He was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad as sheep having no shepherd” (Matthew 9. 35, 36). Such was His strength, yet when the disciples would call Him to receive the applause of the Capernaums, there was nothing in Him to respond to such a motive, and He stretches out toward those “other cities” intent only on the purpose for which He came forth (Mark 1. 37).

Above all, this strength and this weakness are shown, as the end approaches, when the Prince of this

world, who had left Him for a season, comes with marshalled hosts of darkness, to turn Him aside. The Spirit of Christ had said aforetime by the prophet "The Lord God hath opened my ear, and I was not rebellious, neither turned away back" (Isaiah 50. 5). These words describe a positive putting forth of strength, how He gave His back to the smiters, and His cheeks to them that plucked off the hair, how He set His face as a flint.

"Firmer than Carmel's might,  
When the long-leaping tide  
Shivers its thousand shafts of light  
Far up his patient side,

His will unshaken stands  
Though that wild sea of wrath,  
Upsurging to its utmost bands,  
Breaks foaming in His path."

And ever joined to this strength, there is the perfect weakness of the Lamb. We see it in His rebuke to Peter, who like us was weak when it was time for strength in watching with the Master; and strong, when the Master was to be weak as a lamb led to the slaughter. We see it in circumstances in which one of man's strongest impulses—the impulse to justify himself—is awakened, in that He was silent before Pontius Pilate. We may see it, with amazement, when those twelve legions of angels were not allowed to smite the despisers of their Lord.

"Lo, sheathed in shining light  
Heaven's wondering warriors stand,  
With pinions clothed for downward  
flight,  
Waiting their Lord's command.

But never comes that word,  
That night knows yet no dawn,  
And still must each impatient sword  
Sleep on each thigh undrawn."

"He was oppressed, and He was afflicted, yet He opened not His mouth: He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so He openeth not His mouth" Isaiah 53. 7.

Such was the character, here on earth, of the Man who is the theme of heaven's praise. What shall we say to these things? What immense value in the sight of God, that there are on earth where the Lamb was slain, a few who, by reason of the grace that has saved them, and of the blood that has redeemed them, are in the mind of heaven! What grateful incense ascends to the Father's throne, when here on earth the feeblest saint gives expression to the praises of Jesus! And shall we not seek so to admire this mind of Christ, that we also may become, on the one hand "stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding" in the things of the Lord, and on the other the reflection of the meekness and gentleness of Christ?

The seal which the Lord puts upon the perfection of Scripture is as plain as possible. "Scripture cannot be broken." The fact of its being Scripture guarantees the absolute inspiration of the very words used. Not only this or that statement which it makes can be demonstrated as true, but the mere fact of its being in Scripture sufficiently vouches for it. The highest Critic that can be never criticizes Scripture, but affirms the truth of all of it; and the futility of all men's efforts to break it in pieces. They are doomed of necessity to defeat and dishonour, as is all the rebellion of the creature against God.

# THE FAME OF JESUS.

James McBroom.

The Gospel of Matthew.

Continued from Page 58.

**W**E may sum up the 15th chapter of our Gospel in the words exposure and disclosure. The exposure of the heart of man and the disclosure of what is in the heart of God. Both Peter and John speak of the Lord as holy and righteous, both features shine out here in the exposure of these leaders of the Jews who were again finding fault because the disciples did not conform to their traditions. The Lord quotes from the Scriptures in which they boasted to bring home to them their hypocrisy. To possess the outward form of religion with the heart untouched is the most dreadful of all states in which a man can be. Zeal for religious observances with an unsubdued spirit sears the conscience and hardens the heart, and blinds men even to the extent of refusing aid to helpless dependents under the pretext of faithfulness to God.

He deals first with these blind leaders and then in verse 10 turns to the multitude, and lastly addresses the disciples, verses 15—20. To these last He describes the utter corruption of the human heart in a way that corresponds with the Holy Spirit's summing up of the human race in the three great branches of it—Shem, Ham and Japheth (Roms. chs. 1—3). There appears to be some correspondence with Romans 7 and 8 also. The Lord goes to the root of things, He exposes the condition of the human race. His words are of universal application. In Romans 7 we hear the cry for deliverance from this state of things in view of entering into the liberty of chapter 8; and here the exposure of man's condition precedes the wonderful revelation of

the church in chapter 16, where we learn that those who form it are of the same nature as Christ Himself, the builder of it.

As always the Pharisees displayed the perversity of the flesh, but in the incident that follows the power of the devil is revealed; both were opposed to Christ, and the truth is that it is through the flesh, or fallen condition in which man is, that the devil works against God; he has succeeded in turning against the Creator His best workmanship. But have we not to-day something which closely resembles what is disclosed in these chapters? Apostasy from the faith once for all delivered to the saints is spreading with alarming rapidity in Christendom, the leaders of this apostasy answer to the leaders who opposed the Lord, while we have a strong evangelical element, for which we may be thankful, which answers to the state of the disciples: real souls who have tasted that the Lord is gracious, but like the disciples not fully able to avail themselves of the great resources that are for them in Christ. Then there are those, who may be of no account in men's eyes, who like Peter have learnt of the Father something of the glory of Christ and what the assembly is to Him (chapter 16). It is a blessed thing to know that He who was "cut off and had nothing" so far as Israel and the kingdom of this world went, did not go until He could say, "I will build My church." We may thank God that in the midst of the growing apostasy we may through grace appreciate the glory and the grace of Christ and appro-

appropriate the precious things of heaven of which He is the Administrator.

There is something unusual in the Lord's manner towards the woman of Canaan. We cannot recall a case in which He refused to answer except in the case of Herod, and there He was carrying out His own injunction "Give not that which is holy to dogs." From Him who came from heaven freighted with divine bounty to meet all need there was no answer to a cry of need. Why? The answer from a dispensational point of view may be twofold. A Gentile could not be met on the ground of the Messianic testimony; she had no claim on the Son of David as such. Though morally, as the sequel proved, far beyond the Jew, she cannot be heard on that ground. Secondly, all that which the nation had refused He will honour. The relationship and blessings of Israel will yet be owned and met, for the gifts and calling of God are without repentance. This Gospel may be said to present Him as the Minister of the circumcision to confirm the promise made to the fathers but if we look at the text we have cited we shall see that it finishes with the words "*that the Gentiles might glorify God for His mercy*" (Romans 15. 8, 9).

The mercy of God transferred this woman from the place of a dog to blessing of the highest character. She owns Him Son of David, she owns Him Lord and acknowledges Israel to be the children and herself a dog, but beyond that she has a sense that the One she is addressing cannot refuse to meet her need. Her *faith* penetrates through every difficulty, dispensational or otherwise, right to the heart of the Lord and it meets as it always does its full reward. He said, "O woman, great is thy faith."

To her as to ourselves the crumbs turn out to be the very best; like the baskets taken up after the desert feast they speak of the precious things of heaven.

Here again note the combination of glories which meet and shine forth in the Person of our Lord. He cast out the demon but did not go to where the girl was; He is God, omnipresent, and His power is in operation everywhere and so He met and answered the faith of the woman out of His sovereign mercy. The moral perfections of His Manhood are seen in the way He acts, while what is official and dispensational comes into evidence in the way He guards and honours the place of the people who had already dishonoured and rejected Him.

The feeding of the 4,000 sets forth the unwearied patience and ungrudging beneficence of the Lord. He had already fed her poor with bread according to Psalm 132. Here He repeats and extends His bounty in a way that fits exactly into that moment, namely the widening out to all nations the testimony of His grace. The feeding of the 4,000 seems to have been a miracle of greater proportions than that of the previous feast where 5,000 were fed. There are certain peculiarities in regard to time, place and numbers which seem to indicate this; while both were the fruit of Omnipotence the bearing of each was different. The time was later as witnessed in their sitting upon the ground or earth and not on the grass as in Perea on the eastern shore of the Lake of Galilee.

There the people would be mostly Gentile, as we read "Galilee of the Gentiles." But perhaps the

most notable difference lay in the difference of the numbers used. The numbers five and twelve, in the first feast are pretty much Jewish as seen in the Pentateuch and the twelve tribes, while four and seven are numbers that speak more of the creation in relation to God. Four speaks of what is universal, and seven of divine bounty ministered to the creature. Seven can be viewed indeed as four and three which gives God in Trinity in relation to the universe. Taken with all the circumstances it is clear that we are much more on Gentile ground and in the gospel age. In the former there were twelve small baskets, one for each of the disciples, here there were seven large baskets, as those who read the original tell us. In the former we have a ministry begun at Pentecost which like all committed to men broke down, in the latter we have that which speaks of heaven's administration which never breaks down because it is in the

hands of God.

This turns us to the blessed One Himself who ever is the guarantee of divine fulness of blessing in unbroken continuity. If the exposure of man was deep, shewing the universal state and not that of the covenant people only, the disclosure of the heart of God to meet it was also complete. "I have compassion on the multitude . . . and I will not send them away fasting lest they faint in the way," was the revelation of His blessed heart, shewing forth His moral glory and bringing in His activities which display Him in Divine Omnipotence and grace. This again put forth in such a way as to go far beyond the need and create the position for seven large baskets to be gathered up as if He would bring us to the very heart of God in its limitless outflow towards His poor fallen creatures in their need.

(To Continue)

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It is to the *heart* and not to the *head* that Christ reveals Himself, so the more heart you have the more you will get manifestations of Him.

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Whether for walk, conflict, testimony, service or worship, our only and all-sufficient power is the Holy Ghost.

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There can be no likeness to Christ except as the result of the work of the Holy Ghost within us, and He works by taking the things of Christ and shewing them to us; He displaces self to make room for Christ.

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The natural man does not understand the things of God, it is the Holy Ghost who gives the power of apprehension; the more a man depends upon his intellect the less he knows of the things of God.

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*"It is I; be not afraid."* The realisation of Christ's presence is the antidote to every possible fear; and the way to comfort people is the ministry of Christ in the power of the Spirit.

# “THINK ON THESE THINGS.” 1 PHIL. 4. 8.

A. M. Chambers.

*“As he thinketh in his heart so is he” (Proverbs 23. 7).*

I dallied with a doubtful thought;  
 “What harm can be,” said I,  
 “In merely thinking of a thing  
 And letting it pass by?”

But ere I was aware that thought  
 Had entered in my heart,  
 And firmly there ensconced itself,  
 Refusing to depart.

Anon it to a monster grew,  
 It bound me foot and hand,  
 And in the kingdom of my mind  
 Established its command.

My will a helpless captive lay.  
 I,—powerless to be freed,—  
 But for my God’s delivering grace  
 Had hopeless been indeed!

*My Lord and Master, guard, I pray,  
 The portals of my mind;  
 Grant that no soul-defiling shaft  
 May easy entrance find!*

*But let the lovely things and true,  
 The things of good report,  
 Where virtue is, or any praise,  
 Mould my most inward thought!*

## Redeeming the Time.

Two men riding on horseback came to a trough to water the horses. While the horses were drinking, one of the men spoke to the other a few words about his soul and the Saviour, and then they rode away in opposite directions. But the words uttered were the salvation of the one to whom they were uttered, and he became Mr. Champion, one of the most distinguished of missionaries to the heathen. For years he wondered who it was that had rendered such a service to him and to God, and did not find out until a bundle of books was sent to him in Africa, in which was the biography of Brainerd Taylor with a picture of him, and he recognised the face of the man who had seized his opportunity and spoken the word that had saved his soul.

## MARY — “BLESSED . . . AMONG WOMEN”

A. J. Pollock.

THERE are two sets of people, who go terribly astray on the subject of the Virgin Mary — the Rationalists and the Ritualists. The Rationalists, in other words, the Modernists, often say they do not believe in the virgin birth, or that it matters not one way or the other what is believed on the subject.

The Ritualists, in other words the Roman Catholics, exalt the Virgin Mary to be “the mother of God,” to whom worship and prayer are to be made. Further on her behalf a papal decree has falsely set forth that hers was an “immaculate birth,” that is the Virgin Mary was born sinless, and without a trace of the fall.

Both of these positions are *blasphemous*. Both are born of ignorance of God and opposition to His Word.

Those who refuse to believe the Virgin Birth throw doubt on Genesis, Isaiah, Matthew, and Luke. They cease to have any right to call themselves Christian men.

Let us see how the Modernists flout Scripture in refusing to believe the virgin birth.

*Genesis* 3. 15. When our first parents fell, the striking prophecy came from the lips of God Himself. “I will put enmity between thee [*the serpent, Satan*] and the woman, and between thy seed and *her seed*; It shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise His heel.” Think of the wonder of this. Moses inscribing on tablets of clay these words in the wilds of the Sinaitic Desert. Who told Moses to write of *the women’s seed*?

He knew that physiologically no such thing existed in the natural world. He certainly would not have written as he did if he had not been inspired of God to do so—to point out the Virgin Birth so early in the world’s history.

Moses tells us these are *the Words of GOD*. These modernistic ministers tell us it does not matter what we believe on the subject.

Let us pursue the enquiry a little further.

*Isaiah* 7. 14. “Therefore the Lord Himself shall give you a sign: Behold a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call His name Immanuel.”

Here seven centuries before the birth of Christ the Virgin Birth is given as a SIGN by the Lord Himself. It does not matter whether we pay attention to the sign or not, says the Modernists. Can there be anything more contemptuous, more blasphemous?

The sign was definite. The Son born of the Virgin was *Immanuel* (God with us). By this sign is divinely marked out that “God was manifest in flesh” (1 Timothy 3. 16); that “the Word was made flesh” (John 1. 14).

We come to the New Testament. The beginning of Matthew’s Gospel gives us the account of the Virgin Birth from Joseph’s side; that at the beginning of Luke’s Gospel gives Mary’s side. Both accounts are satisfying. A difficult situation is cleared up with the utmost delicacy and beauty of description.

Joseph's doubts are cleared up by the angel of the Lord appearing to him in a dream, telling him that what was conceived in the Virgin's womb was of the Holy Ghost. We are told that "all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, "Behold [*literally THE*] virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call His name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us" (Matthew 1. 23).

This wonderful sign is a matter of indifference to the Modernist. The word of the Lord Himself is a matter he can take notice of or not, as it suits him. Such an attitude betrays the blind unregenerate carnal mind. No Christian can take this attitude, so insulting to God and the Scriptures, and the Saviour of mankind.

In Luke's Gospel Mary has her difficulty, but with similar delicacy, as is exhibited in the Gospel of Matthew, she is assured that this wonderful honour has been put upon her, that she, the chosen Virgin, should bear a Son, and that He should be called JESUS (Jehovah-Saviour).

It is upon the infallible Word of God that our faith in the great and vital fact of the Virgin Birth is based, and the more we search the Scriptures the more our faith is confirmed.

We turn now to the side of the Ritualist. The Virgin Mary was born with a sinful nature. That she was the subject of the gracious work of the Spirit of God in her soul, there is no doubt. She was indeed a saint and a prepared vessel for this great honour put upon her. Her outburst of praise to God—a veritable mosaic of Old Testament quotations, prov-

ing her intimate knowledge of Scripture in the presence of Elizabeth, the expectant mother of the forerunner of the Messiah, John, the Baptist, is a beautiful testimony to us.

She exclaims, "My spirit hath rejoiced in God *MY Saviour*" (Luke 1. 47). Like all who are taught of God she recognised her *sinful* estate, and that she needed a Saviour, and had found One in God Himself. How can such a dogma as the immaculate conception, viz: that the Virgin Mary was born sinless, be promulgated in the face of her own confession of sinnership in the finding of God as Saviour?

The Lord was sinless, though born of a Virgin, who needed a Saviour, as we have seen; He had no sinful father, but the Holy Ghost's power came upon Mary so that it could be said to her, "That *HOLY* thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God" (Luke 1. 35).

Adam was created innocent; his descendants are conceived in sin and shapen in iniquity (Psalm 51. 5), which simply means that since sin came into the world man's sad heritage is a sinful nature. The Son of God in His manhood was alone *holy*. We have a threefold testimony as to this, "Who knew no sin" (2 Corinthians 5. 21); "Who did no sin" (1 Peter 2. 23); "In Him is no sin" (1 John 3. 5).

Then again how illogical to call the Virgin Mary "the Mother of God." A mother—a human mother as Mary was—is antecedent to her son. But God is from all eternity to all eternity, without beginning or end. Who can be *His* mother?

There are in the Roman Catholic hierarchy men of acute intellect and great scholarship, and yet this blasphemous and illogical title is given to a sinful woman, who needed a Saviour.

Again, as to making the Virgin Mary the object of worship, and the one to whom prayer is to be made. Only God should be worshipped. To worship the creature is blasphemous. To say that the Virgin Mary's heart being tender and compassionate, she should be approached to intercede with her Son, and soften His heart, is indeed strange, and an insult to her, as it is a blasphemous libel upon her Son.

When our Lord was on earth, did not the sinful and distressed, the sick and the diseased, come *direct* to Him? Never one was rebuffed. Never once do we read of their asking His mother to intercede for them. The Lord never refused any supplicant. "And great multitudes followed Him, and *He healed them ALL*" (Mark 12. 15). Does not 1 Timothy 2. 5, at one stroke sweep away the intercessor and saints of the Romish system, when it says definitely, "There is . . . ONE Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus; who gave Himself a ransom for all" (1 Timothy 2. 5, 6). The Virgin Mary did not give herself a ransom, but our Lord did, and He, who did that, may well be trusted in the matter of approach to Him, and not to any intermediary. Such an attitude puts more honour on the Virgin than approaching her, as if her qualities of tenderness and compassion were superior to His, and that He needed intercession to soften His heart and persuade Him to be compassionate.

Surely such a system as gives "a big Virgin a little Christ" could not exist, if the Scriptures were read and studied.

Let us see the place Scripture gives to the Virgin Mary. Reading the Scriptures in the knowledge of the lengths of unscriptural adulation to which Ritualism has gone in regard to the Virgin Mary, it looks as if this tendency was foreseen. Quietly, and none the less effectively, the Virgin Mary is given rightful honour, but no more. She is indeed "blessed among women."

The angel tells her she is "highly favoured" (Luke 1. 28). Could any woman have a higher favour than to be the mother of our Lord according to the flesh? "Blessed art thou among women" (Luke 1. 28), is the salutation of the angel. "Blessed" she certainly was. Note, it does not say "*Most* blessed." The language is restrained. No room for Mariolatry there.

There is a beautiful scene depicted in Luke 2. 25—35. Simeon "just and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel" went by the Spirit into the Temple. At that very time "the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do after the custom of the law," thereupon Simeon took the wondrous child into his arms, and blessed God, and turning to "Joseph and His mother . . . blessed them."

The word "blessed" is used in two senses. Simeon *blessed* God in the sense of the creature worshipping the Creator, the worship that man can give rightly alone to God, and which God alone can rightly receive.

But there is another sense in which the word, *blessed*, can be used. We

read in Scripture, "Without all contradiction the less is blessed of the better" (Hebrews 7. 7). We read that "Jacob blessed Pharaoh" (Genesis 47. 10)—he, the man who knew God, was morally greater than a heathen monarch, though he might be the mightiest in the world at that time.

Now note Simeon blessed Joseph and Mary. He did not bless the Child with them. That would have been altogether wrong. "The less is blessed of the better." The Lord was not "the less" nor was Simeon "the better" and he knew that the Child was God's salvation, the Lord's Christ. Surely Mariolatry is rebuked in a scene like this.

*Mark* 15. 40. "There were also women looking on afar off; among whom was Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James the less and of Joses, and Salome." Here we find the Virgin Mary's name is second to Mary Magdalene's first. Further she is not described as the mother of our Lord, but of James and Joses and Salome (see *Mark* 6. 3). The Romish Church denies that the Virgin Mary had other children than our Lord, but Scripture states it plainly. The supernatural did not set aside the natural.

*Matthew* 27. 56. "Among whom were Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, Joses, and the mother of Zebedee's children." Again, the Virgin Mary is named second to Mary Magdalene, and said to be the mother of James and Joses, and not of our Lord.

*Matthew* 28. 1. "In the end of the

sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the sepulchre. "The other Mary" is most probably "the mother of our Lord." She is put second again to Mary Magdalene, and we can identify her as being "the other Mary."

*John* 19. 25. "Now there stood by the cross of Jesus (1) His mother and (2) His mother's sister, (3) Mary the wife of Cleophas, and (4) Mary Magdalene." Here the Virgin Mary is put first, but simply one of four, but described as "His mother."

*John* 20. 11. "But Mary [Magdalene] stood without at the sepulchre weeping" — "Jesus saith unto her, Mary" (verse 16). It is remarkable that it was Mary Magdalene, and not the Virgin. Mary, that had the supreme honour of welcoming her risen Lord, as He made Himself known as the Good Shepherd that called His sheep by names—"Mary," and became the bearer of the wonderful message to the disciples, "I ascend unto My Father and your Father: and to My God and your God" (verse 17).

*Acts* 1. 14. "These all continued with one accord in praise and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with His brethren." Here "the women" are mentioned first, then "Mary the mother of Jesus and with His brethren." The fact that the Lord's brethren according to the flesh are mentioned will account for "the mother of Jesus," being the description used.

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He was a wise father who said to his son as he bade him farewell on his starting out in life. "My son, it is always safe to trust in God."

## “THE APPROACHING ADVENT OF CHRIST.”

F. B. Hole.

(A review of a book by the Rev. A. Reese, bearing the above title).

No. 5. Resurrection in the Apocalypse, and 1 Thessalonians 4. 13—5. 11.

**I**N his chapter on the resurrection of the saints in the Apocalypse, Mr. Reese dwells upon two passages, chapters 11. 15-18 and 20. 4-6 (R.V.). These we must turn to for a moment.

(1) He is sure that the resurrection is indicated in chap. 11, particularly in verse 18, for several reasons (a) because it is the last trumpet, and in 1 Corinthians 15 we get “the last trump” mentioned: (b) because “the time of the dead to be judged,” means “the righteous dead only,” and so “the resurrection is unquestionably implied:” (c) because at that time “the reward is given to the prophets, the saints, and the godly:” (d) because at this time the coming of the Lord *does* take place, as evidenced by the omission of the words, “and art to come,” in all the later versions — including Darby’s. The words are not there “because God in Christ *has now come*:” (e) because the last trumpet brings the inauguration of the Messianic Kingdom, according to the scriptures we have already had before us.

It is very evident that the seventh trumpet brings us to a climax in the ways of God. So far we are in agreement with our Author: but not much further, for he evidently reads the passage under the chronological obsession which controls his thoughts. He must still synchronize the resurrection and the exact beginning of the Kingdom. He must of course have read verse 7 of the previous chapter: but did he really take note of it? What does it say? Why, “In *the days* of the voice of the

seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished. . .” The ways of God, in His government of the earth, have been full of mystery, which will persist until “*the days*” when the seventh angel begins to sound his trumpet. In those *days* the mystery will vanish and His ways be brought to a triumphant conclusion. Our assertion is that “the days” must indicate not a precise and almost instantaneous occasion, as all Mr. Reese’s arguments presuppose, but *an indefinite period of time*.

We further have to observe that there is no mention of the resurrection in the passage. Mr. Reese infers it from the words, “the time of the dead to be judged,” since he understands these words as referring to the righteous dead *only*. Our reply is, that the words do not refer to the righteous dead *at all*. It is the time of judgment that is referred to, not the time of resurrection. The saint has to be manifested before the judgment seat of Christ, as regards his works; but into judgment, properly speaking, the saint never comes — as witness. John 5. 24.

Verse 17 views the Kingdom as an accomplished and existing fact. Again and again it is the language of prophecy to speak of things as accomplished, which in point of fact are not yet come. Directly the seventh angel sounds, the elders celebrate, as being already accomplished, the whole result of God intervening and assuming a control of the rebellious earth which He will never let go. Verse 18 summarizes those results.

He will deal with the angry nations in his wrath. The time of judgment is come, involving the judgment of the wicked dead who had opposed Him in earlier days; which judgment will take place at the end of the day of the Lord, and before the eternal state begins. The reward will be given, in the Kingdom, to the prophets and saints. All those who have destroyed the earth will be themselves destroyed, whether before the millennium, or after it, as we read in chapter 20. 9.

All these things come to pass in "the days" that are inaugurated by the blowing of the seventh trumpet. God moves in majesty to His great objectives without hurry. Mr. Reese may wish to compress things, in our thoughts, into a moment of time. That might have the advantage of bringing matters more within the compass of our little human minds; but it carries with it the terrible disadvantage of causing us to miss the breadth and fulness of the thoughts of God.

In discussing this passage, Mr. Reese again shows how he misunderstands the position he is attacking. He says, "according to the theory, the prophets, saints, and God-fearers are rewarded years even before the *first* trumpet sounds; according to Scripture, they are judged and rewarded at the time of the seventh trumpet. Could contradiction be more hopeless?" He makes this statement as to "the theory" because *we hold* that the "elders" represent the risen and glorified saints, **and he thinks** that their crowns and thrones must mean they are already rewarded in the kingdom. But we are already made "kings and priests unto God" (Rev. 1. 6), and the description of the elders in chapter 4

simply fits in with that. The kings and priests are now in heaven. It is the place they occupy according to the counsel and work of God, and not, as yet, the reward which will be theirs when the Kingdom is established. This consideration sweeps away all his strictures on Kelly (pp. 76, 77), as well as other remarks he makes. So also it is with his remarks on page 77, as to Luke 14. 14, fixing rewards at the resurrection. He claims we are "in open opposition to the words of Christ." We say that resurrection will bring us to heaven, and that there we shall at once stand before the judgment seat to receive the Lord's verdict as to our course on earth, and be apportioned such reward as He sees fit: then the public appearing when rewards will be enjoyed in the Kingdom. Mr. Reese insists on an interpretation to fit in with his obsession: recompense at the very instant of the resurrection. We are no more in opposition to these words than he is. We believe that "at" means "at that time, things being unfolded in orderly progression:" he believes it means "at that very instant of time." That is all.

(2) Revelation 20. 4—6 he quotes in the R.V., which differs very little from the A.V. If we understand Mr. Reese aright he sees in verse 4 three classes. (1) Those who sat upon the throne who are, "The whole body of saints who live to see the Parousia at this time; they are transferred from earth to occupy thrones in the kingly rule of Christ; it is the Rapture of the survivors in 1 Thessalonians 4. 17." (2) The souls of those beheaded, "for the testimony of Jesus, and for the Word of God," who are Christians, for, "Unnumbered multitudes throughout the Church's history, including Peter and Paul, have been slain for the testimony of Jesus and

for the word of God. It is here they rise." (3) Those who "worshipped not the beast," who are "those who fall in the last Great Tribulation." Class (2), he strongly insists, must include Christians, and he says, "The proof of this is simple: the Church herself is not raised until this very time."

So, in this verse Mr. Reese sees the *resurrection* of the Church; but as (1) is "the *Rapture* of the survivors," we are left with only (2) and (3) as giving us the resurrection of the Church, in the raising of the Christian martyrs, and those who fall in the Tribulation. What about the great mass of Christians, who do not live to the Advent, and neither qualify as martyrs nor fall in the Tribulation?—what about the nine out of every ten of whom the Church is composed? They do not appear here at all according to this interpretation.

And one other comment we have to make. In the preceding vision (19. 11—21) we have the appearing of Christ in His glory for the overthrow of His foes. This is "the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ *with all His saints*" (1 Thess. 3. 13). If Mr. Reese's explanation of this verse in chapter 20 be true, *the Church is raised after the Advent, and does not come WITH Him after all.*

Our conclusion is that Mr. Reese's exegesis here is *an impossible one.*

We come back to the explanation which Mr. Reese would call "Darbyist," viz., that here we see in (1) no resurrection at all, but the saints *already raised*, and who have come *with Christ, taking their distinguished place in the Kingdom.* Then, associated with them, two supplementary classes who *are* raised as the result of the glorious appearing: (2) those martyred for their witness in

the last days, and (3) those who suffered for refusing the beast.

We now turn to the passage, in 1 Thessalonians, which we omitted last time; offering first a few remarks on earlier scriptures which refer to the coming of the Lord.

The prophets of the Old Testament have much to say about the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord, with its results in the judgment of all the nations; but statements as to the actual coming of God Himself are not very frequent. Habakkuk 3. 3—6 bears witness that God is coming, and Zech. 14. 5 goes further in saying, "The Lord my God shall come, *and all the saints with thee.*" Enoch had prophesied to the same effect in antediluvian days, though his words do not appear in Scripture until the last of the epistles is reached. No explanation is offered at the time of these predictions as to who these saints are or how they come to be with Him, so as to follow in His train. In Daniel 7. 9—14 a further fact comes to light, inasmuch as "One like the [or, a] *Son of man*" comes "with the clouds of heaven."

When we reach the Gospels, we find the Lord in His prophetic discourse (Matt. 24; Mark 13; Luke 21) alluding to Daniel 7. The allusion is particularly clear in Matthew where He speaks of the appearing of "*the sign of the Son of man in heaven.*" His appearing would be a sign which they would recognize, having heard about it through Daniel. In this discourse the Lord does not mention the saints who come with Him, nor of His removing saints to heaven: He speaks of the gathering together of the elect from the four winds by means of angels, and also, in Matthew's Gospel, of the gathering to-

gether of all the nations that He may judge and discriminate between the sheep and the goats.

In John's Gospel however the truth concerning His coming is carried a distinct step forward. When Jesus gathered His disciples in the Upper Chamber, it was because He knew that "His hour was come that He should depart out of this world unto the Father," and His word to the disciples was, "In My Father's house are many mansions . . . I go to prepare a place for you." In following Him the disciples had lost any place they might have had on earth, and now they are promised a *place in heaven*. Then He added, "If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also."

In our second paper we pointed out that though the Old Testament has so much to say as to the coming of Jehovah and of His Anointed, it gives us no clear declaration as to there being two Advents in view. The Lord Jesus, during His ministry, made this quite clear however. Those who listened to the discourse recorded in Luke 12. 35—46, and especially to verse 40, heard words which indicated that He who had come once was coming again. But neither in that passage nor in His prophetic discourses recorded in Matthew 24, Mark 13, and Luke 21, is anything said which shows that His coming would mean the transference of saints from a place on earth to a place in heaven. That transference is indicated for the first time, so far as we are aware, in John 14. 3. In His discourse in the Upper Chamber (John 13—17) the Lord addressed His disciples, not as representatives of the godly remnant of Israel, but as the nucleus of the

church which was about to come into being, since one of the characteristic features of John's Gospel is that Israel's national place is seen to be forfeited from the very outset (see 1. 11—13) and a new generation—those born of God—comes into view. The promise of John 14. 3, we therefore believe, was given to the disciples as representing the church, which fifty days after was to begin its existence. Our place is in heaven in the immediate company of Christ, and He is coming personally to receive us to Himself in that place.

We rejoice greatly in this added light, but even so there are still details which have not been explicitly revealed. This the Lord Himself stated when, having predicted the almost immediate coming of the Holy Ghost the Comforter, He said, "He will show you things to come" (16. 13).

Amongst the earliest of the Epistles are Paul's to the Thessalonians. In these two a good deal of further light breaks forth by the teaching of the Spirit. We refer particularly to the passage, 4. 13—5. 11, in the first Epistle, and 1. 6—2. 17, in the Second. In the book we are reviewing a few verses from the earlier passage are considered in chapter 4, dealing with the resurrection of the saints in Paul's Epistles, and again more fully in chapter 11, entitled "The Parousia of the King," and there are a few references to this passage elsewhere. We confine ourselves in this paper to the passage in the first Epistle, giving a brief synopsis of it.

Some of the saints amongst them had died, and the Thessalonians were sorrowing about them unduly as the result of being ignorant "concerning them which are asleep," as

to how exactly the coming of the Lord would affect them. To comfort their hearts the Apostle makes known to them what will happen when the Lord comes for His saints. They were quite aware there was to be "the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ *with all His saints*" (3. 13), for this had already been clearly predicted. But how were the saints to *reach the heavens* from which He was to come, so as to come with Him, and how would their loved dead be affected as to their prospects in that day? Verse 14 assures them that it is as certain that God will bring these, whom they had lost, with Jesus when He comes, as that Jesus Himself died and rose again. His death and resurrection indeed is the pledge of their future glory.

But what is the procedure to be in regard to these dead saints? Paul makes it known to them "by the word of the Lord"; which is, we believe, a formula indicating that what he now writes is not the reiteration of truth already revealed, but a fresh revelation from God. We repeatedly read of "the word of the Lord" coming to various prophets of the Old Testament.

The fresh revelation is that the Lord Himself is going to descend from heaven to the clouds with a shout and with manifestations of angelic power, and that at that moment the living saints will have no precedence over those asleep: that, as a matter of fact, the dead in Christ shall rise first. Then the living ones are to be caught up together with them to meet the Lord in the air, and in that way we all are to be with the Lord for ever. Two things are definitely settled by this revelation. First, that the coming of the Lord *includes* this action by which the

saints are caught up to the heavens, so that they may come forth with Him in glory and take their allotted places in connection with His kingdom. In the light of other passages we have no hesitation in speaking of this as the *preliminary* action, in view of the saints *subsequently* coming forth with Christ in glory. But of course just that is strenuously denied by Mr. Reese. Second, it is settled that the dead saints will be considered *first*, when He comes for His saints; and they will come *with* Him in the day of His glory. Mr. Reese endeavours to whittle all this away by saying, "The only 'revelation' that he made there was concerning the relation of surviving to sleeping saints at the Advent, this and nothing else."

Chapter 5 reads straight on from chapter 4, but opens with a striking contrast. We must digress for a moment to remark that Mr. Reese claims that, "This passage causes great embarrassment to Darbyists, and they are reduced to unnatural explanations to square its teaching with their theories" (p. 157); and again, "The true significance of this section is obscured for Darbyists by the unfortunate break into chapters at this point" (p 158). It is a fact that the A.V. breaks into chapters at this point: so does the R.V. though, divided into paragraphs rather than verses, the break is less conspicuous. It is Darby's New Translation which reads straight on at this point. He prints verses 15—18 of chapter 4 in brackets, and inserts a small indication of the beginning of chapter 5: otherwise the whole passage from verse 13 of chapter 4, to verse 11 of chapter 5, is printed *in one paragraph*. Mr. Reese fills pages 159—162 with other versions and paraphrases of the passage—though only

one of the five is anything like a real translation—yet *nowhere* does he print the passage without a break. No! it is *precisely* this Darby, who has laboured to emphasize that *there is no break* in the passage; and yet the “unfortunate break” has “obscured” the “true significance of this section” to Darbyists! He may say of the Darbyists that “the Secret Rapture delusion has blurred their vision,” but it occurs to us that possibly his own vision is not of the very best. At all events, we warn our readers against the acceptance of his many sweeping and drastic assertions of which this is a sample, without checking the basis on which they rest.

The contrast we referred to lies between verse 13 of chapter 4, and verses 1 and 2 of chapter 5: between that which they did *not* know and that which they *did* know. The details which Paul revealed as to the coming for the saints had *not* been known to them, whereas concerning the times and seasons which culminate in the day of the Lord, there was no need for him to write: ye “*know perfectly*” is what he says. Now Daniel 2. 21 shows us that “the times and seasons” have to do with God’s government of the earth, and Acts 1. 6, 7, that they have to do with the restoring of the kingdom to Israel. The Thessalonians were in no difficulty as to these times and seasons: all that they needed to know about them they knew perfectly. And yet, they were imperfectly instructed as to what is to happen at the resurrection and rapture of the saints. It is obvious then that in the mind of Paul—and therefore in the mind of the Spirit—the *resurrection and rapture are no part of the times and seasons connected with the day of the Lord and the earthly king-*

*dom*. If they were a part, those words “know perfectly” could never have been written. This is a very important point, and we ask our readers’ careful attention to it. Mr. Reese’s whole case rests upon the resurrection, the rapture, the times and seasons, the day of the Lord, being but aspects or parts of one and the same thing.

That the saints, to whom Paul wrote, were disconnected from the earthly scene, to which the times and seasons refer, is also clearly seen in verses 4 and 5. The world was “in the night,” but they were *not* in darkness. The world is “of the night” and “of darkness,” but they were *not*, being “children of light” and “children of the day.” They had a spiritual origin wholly distinct from the origin of the world, and so have we. Their day of the Lord will fall suddenly with destructive force upon the world, but they and we are not appointed to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ. He died for us that whether we wake or sleep we should live together with Him. *By the rapture*, spoken of in verse 17 of the previous chapter, we shall escape the wrath and reach the Lord, to live together with Him for ever. This Mr. Reese strenuously denies. He prints the end of chapter 4 as being “Concerning the dead,” and the early part of chapter 5 as being “Concerning the living.” He carefully cuts the paragraph in two, printing one half on one page, and the other half on the next page. And on only the page before he has told us that the break at this point has obscured the significance of the section to Darbyists! We read the section in one paragraph, as Darby has printed it, and note that the living are mentioned in the end of chapter 4, as well as the

dead. Mr. Reese's division of the section has no basis in fact. By dividing at all, he is merely doing the very thing himself that he has incorrectly accused his opponents of doing.

One word in this passage remains to be considered — the word, "wrath." We definitely hold it to be a word which covers the great tribulation. We may put it in another way by saying that though that terrible period will be marked by great human wickedness and great Satanic and demonic activity, all of which will bring tribulation in its train, yet the severest element of all will be the outpouring of the vials of God's wrath. It is this which will make it to be such a time of tribulation as never has been, and never will be again.

By saying this we expose ourselves to a considerable outpouring of sarcasm, and one might almost say wrath, on the part of Mr. Reese. In his concluding chapter he deals with this assertion (pp. 281—288) calling it the "trump card" of the Darbyists. We agree that it is a point of decisive importance, and for this reason possibly he becomes particularly angry in dealing with it and says a good many unjustifiable things. For instance:—Darbyists "spend an immensity of time . . . in pointing out that the Church by the blood of Jesus is delivered from the wrath to come . . . Why not . . . prove to us that the Great Tribulation is the wrath of God? This, however, is the last thing that Darbyists can be brought to do." Really? Possibly, however, Mr. Reese does not know "Darbyists" quite as well as he thinks he does!

He quotes Darby as remarking that only six texts deal with the Tri-

bulation—(Jer. 30. 7; Dan. 12. 1; Matt. 24. 21; Mark 13. 19; Rev. 3. 10; 7. 14). He adds, "But I can suggest two others that they leave alone; and I do not wonder that Darby and Kelly should have omitted them, for they smash their whole case on the Great Tribulation. I refer to Rev. 13. 7 . . . And Rev. 12. 12—17 . . . According to Darby and his followers, the Great Tribulation is the wrath of *God* against the Jewish people for their rejection of *Christ*. According to Scripture, it is the *Devil's* wrath against the saints for their rejection of *Antichrist*, and adherence to Christ. Let the reader once see the Scripture truth on this point, and the whole Darbyist case will be exposed as a campaign of assumptions, mis-statements, and sentiment."

It is evident to us that, by his remark about the six texts, Darby did not mean that there were no allusions to the Great Tribulation in other passages, but simply that these six are where we find it explicitly stated. Mr. Reese suggests two other scriptures that allude to it; and we will suggest some more.

Our answer to these remarks can be given with brevity. The two scriptures which are adduced do not "smash their whole case," for the case is misunderstood—we do not wish to think it is wilfully misrepresented. The antithesis drawn, between God's wrath and the devil's wrath, does not exist in our minds. We admit both, and believe that both play their part in the tribulation. But we believe that as God in His greatness towers above Satan, so His wrath overshadows Satan's wrath, and is the element in the tribulation which makes it *great*, and unmatched in all time, either before or since. We entirely believe there

will be saints on earth who will suffer at the hands of the devil and their fellow-men in that dreadful time. Mr. Reese contends that the tribulation is to be limited to that. We contend that it is not.

The tribulation is to be the time of Jacob's trouble, but it also is to "come upon all the world," so that every nation will be involved.

Psalms 2 is a prophecy. What does it say? That the kings of the earth and the rulers are going to concert together against Jehovah and His Anointed, and that Jehovah will "speak unto them in His *wrath*, and vex them in His sore displeasure." If men do not "kiss the Son," they will perish "when His *wrath* is kindled but a little."

Now read Isaiah 26. 20, 21, and then Zephaniah 2. 1—3. In these scriptures the "indignation" and the "anger" are from God, and not from the devil.

Wrath from God does lie in a special way upon blinded and unrepentant Israel. Luke 21. 23 speaks of it connected with the siege of Jerusalem under Titus; and in 1 Thessalonians 2. 16 Paul speaks of wrath having come upon them to the uttermost, twenty years or more before Jerusalem was destroyed. He meant evidently, not that the wrath was executed, but that it was irrevocably determined. That wrath, we believe, will reach its climax in the great tribulation.

We read Revelation 15, and 16, and note the details given as to the pouring out of "the vials of the wrath of God" on the earth. We discover that the fury of that wrath specially smites all that is subservient to the "beast" and the false prophet," those Satan-inspired men that head up the final revolt of apostate Chris-

tendom and Judaism. In these seven last plagues is "filled up the wrath of God." The words "great tribulation" do not occur here, but since it takes place at the time of the "beast," and since it is the worst hour in all the earth's troubled history, what can this filling up of the wrath of God be but the great tribulation? Tribulation engineered by Satan is bad enough, but that inflicted by God in His holy government of men and nations on earth is far worse. In the great tribulation both elements combine.

So we come back to 1 Thessalonians 5. 9, and rejoice in its significance. We repeat that the whole paragraph, one and undivided, tells us that saints will lose nothing by death before the Lord comes. They will be brought with Him when He appears in His glory, inasmuch as He is coming for all His saints, whether dead or living, and all shall together meet Him in the air and be for ever with Him. This happy event, as to certain details of which the Thessalonians had been ignorant, is not a part of the times and seasons and the day of the Lord, since as to that they had been perfectly informed. That day will come as a thief on the world; but the saints are entirely disconnected from the world, as having a new and distinct origin—children of light and of the day. That being so, they are to be distinct from the world in their ways and behaviour, and wear "the helmet of salvation" as a protection; knowing that God has not appointed them to the wrath which will reach its climax in the great tribulation, but to that salvation that will be theirs when Christ comes for them and they are raptured to heaven.

Such, we submit, is the plain sense of this important paragraph.

## ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS

### Resisting unto Blood.

“What is the meaning of striving against sin and resisting unto blood” (Hebrews 12. 4)—SUTHERLANDSHIRE.

**S**TRIVING against sin does not contemplate sin *within* us as in Romans 6. “Reckon ye yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin” (verse 11). It is the power of sin *without* that would compel the man of faith to quit the path of obedience to the will of God. The Lord Himself, in whom was no sin was confronted by this power and He resisted unto blood. He would not be turned from the path of God’s will. The martyrs who might have saved their lives strove against sin and resisted unto blood when they suffered for their faith.

The Hebrew Christians had resisted so far, but were in danger of yielding, and the Apostle is urging them to fight on. In English speaking lands we are not slain for the Faith, but we may often be confronted with the question as to whether we will do the will of God and suffer or yield to menace or seduction for a path of ease. It is not unlike “Whosoever will save his life shall lose it, but whosoever shall lose his life for My sake and the gospel’s the same shall save it” (Mark 8. 35).

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### Does Satan know our thoughts?

“I have heard it said that Satan does not know our thoughts. Can you help me as to this, and how to think according to Phil. 4. 8.”—HANTS.

**S**ATAN is not omniscient and so we should say that he cannot know our thoughts, except as he knows what we are prone to by our words and actions. God only knows our thoughts and that even before we think them. But Satan is able to suggest thoughts, we read “the devil having now put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon’s son, to betray Him” (John 13. 2), but we should judge that that was made possible by the fact that Judas had harboured and cultivated covetous thoughts. The devil can and does suggest ways by which

evil thoughts that we may harbour may be carried into effect? Our safety lies in the mind being continually renewed by thoughts that the Holy Ghost will give from the Word, and it is in that way that we shall fulfil the exhortation of Phil. 4. 8.

The devil’s “fiery darts” (Eph. 6), are thoughts that he would shoot into the minds of those whom he cannot seduce, probably infidel thoughts and questionings of God’s goodness; the shield of faith is our protection against these.

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What power there is in the God-breathed Scriptures! Luther, that tough intrepid German monk, had discovered a copy of these Scriptures in Latin, and the reading of them shook him to the very centre of his soul. He trembled before no man, but he trembled at the word of God, and cried “My sins, my sins.” And when he found pardon and peace through Christ, he wrote to a friend “Come over and join us great and awful sinners *saved by the grace of God.*”

## AROUND THE CROSS IN THE GOSPEL OF JOHN.

NO. 5. Chapter 19, continued.

J. T. Mawson.

WHAT chapter in the whole Book of God can compare with this? In it we reach the climax of the Gospel of the only-begotten Son, the Father's sent One; it glows with His glory. In another place John says, "In this was manifested the love of God towards us," and again, "Herein is love." It is all here, and here the Son of Man is glorified and God is glorified in Him.

The Gospel opens with the declaration of His eternal glory and creative power, and John the Baptist, His forerunner, bore witness to the people as to this, but when He appeared, a man among them, John gave another testimony, for he seeing Jesus coming to him, saith, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." Heeding John's word, we do behold Him in this Gospel as He treads His onward way from one Passover to another until the last of them all is reached. We behold Him as the Lamb without blemish and without spot. As the Israelites of old were commanded to take a Lamb on the tenth day of the month and have it in their houses that it might dwell with them until the fourteenth day when it was to be slain for their deliverance, so we see the Lamb of God, dwelling among us, full of grace and truth. There was no blemish in Him, and we follow Him with an ever deepening sense of His holy fitness to be the sacrificial Lamb, until we reach

"That sacred spot for sin-stained sinners—CALVARY."

But He was not only the true Lamb of the Passover, He was the substance of all the shadows, and He ful-

filled all the God-given types. In the Book of Leviticus God commanded Israel to bring to Him burnt offerings and offerings for sin; they were five in number—the Burnt Offering, the Meat Offering, the Peace Offering, the Sin Offering, and the Trespass Offering. But though God-appointed they were of no value except as fingers pointing onward to the coming of the great Offering, and in them God had no pleasure. All His pleasure was centred in His beloved Son, who said, "Lo, I come (in the volume of the Book it is written of Me), to do Thy will, O God." And here we see Him fulfilling that eternal vow.

It may be right to say that the burnt offering aspect of His death is prominent in our chapter. We most surely see it in the words, "And He bearing His cross, *went forth*," for in that willing submission to the will of God He offered Himself without spot to God; then He showed also how much He loved us, for we read, "Christ also hath loved us, and hath given Himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour" (Eph. 5. 2); but we cannot shut out the sin offering from John's record. Here was the Lamb of God, the bearer away of the sin of the world (ch. 1), here was the Son of Man, lifted up, as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, "in the likeness of sinful flesh and a sacrifice for sin" (ch. 3); the blood also that flowed from His side, of which only John speaks, is the blood that cleanseth from all sin; and the Scripture which was fulfilled when the soldiers gambled for His raiment is found only in the great sin-offering Psalm

(22). The trespass offering is here also, for when He cried "I thirst," and they gave Him vinegar to drink, the Scripture was fulfilled which says "In My thirst they gave Me vinegar to drink," which Scripture is the 69th Psalm, the Trespass Offering Psalm. The Peace Offering is here, for when Joseph and Nicodemus and those women, with tender hands and hearts overflowing with love to Him, bore His body to its burying in the garden tomb, they were most surely in the fellowship of His death, sharing in their measure God's thoughts of Him.

Nor can we pass over the meat offering, which was of fine flour mingled and anointed with oil. He had said, "Now is My soul troubled, and what shall I say?" ch. 12. But now with unruffled peace He meets every test: the treachery of Judas, the faithlessness of Peter, the venom and hatred of Caiaphas, the vacillation and injustice of Pilate, the frenzy of the people, the callous brutality of the soldiers and all the suffering of the cross, not all combined can force one hasty word from His lips or turn Him aside from His will to glorify God. He is the perfect Man, drinking the cup that His Father had given Him, and the more severe the test the more fully revealed is His perfection. Here is the fine flour mingled with oil. He had said to His disciples on an earlier day, "I have meat to eat that ye know not of." But now He shews that He has strength to draw upon that none of them knew. What hidden resources are His!—this solitary suffering Man, the object of the hatred of men, and foot to foot with the powers of hell. God is His trust and hope, and He wavers not; there is no faltering in Him, or shadow of turning. He is the same through all the agony until He bows

His head and gives up His spirit.

We consider Him now in those closing moments. He is reaching the end of His mighty undertaking, and knowing that all things were now accomplished He speaks of His bodily suffering for the first and only time; and this only serves to bring out the perfection of His human nature. He is no stoic boasting indifference to pain, He suffers and He declares it. His strength is dried up like a potsherd and His tongue cleaves to His jaws (Psalm 22) and He saith, "I thirst." In this same Gospel He had appealed to a Samaritan woman for water, now His cry is to whosoever will hear it. Is that cry more than an expression of need? Is there not in it a final test for His foes? They had shewn Him no pity, who had always pitied them, but will they relent at last in answer to that poignant cry? They answer Him with vinegar, the sourest thing the earth can yield, and they fulfill the Scripture which says "They gave Me also gall for My meat and in My thirst they gave Me vinegar to drink" (Psalm 69).

The world still offers Him vinegar, what shall we give Him? Certainly He would not have suffered on the cross of Calvary if He had not thirsted for what we can give Him. Can we withhold from Him the sweet wine of true hearts?

" . . . He thirsted there  
For love of sinners, who in glory fair  
Shall own His love, and owe eternal praise  
To His death sorrows."

But the great reason why He declared His agony of thirst was *that the Scripture might be fulfilled*. As a man in obedience to the will of God He had lived by the Word of God; it had been His delight and His meditation day and night, it was

His weapon when in conflict with the great enemy, and His guide throughout His earthly life. He could have prayed His Father for more than twelve legions of angels and escaped all the suffering, "but how then shall the Scriptures be fulfilled, that this it must be?" He had said when His disciples would have defended Him with the sword. Step by step He had exalted that word and now this only had only remained unfulfilled. In the midst of this great event and just before the final word was spoken did this detail matter? Yes, it mattered. The Scriptures must be fulfilled in every letter. It carried the authority of the living God with it, and could not be broken. And shall not we who are His disciples, reverence that same Word? If we are disciples indeed we can do no other.

When Jesus had received the vinegar, He said, It is finished: and He bowed His head, and gave up the ghost. His work was done, that great work which the Father had given Him to do; and by it God is glorified, the prince of this world is beaten and cast out, and our souls are saved. The door is open now and no power on earth or in hell can shut it—the door of Salvation; it is open for the poorest, the weakest,

and the most sinful. He is that door, as His own words assure us. "I am the door, by Me, if any man enter in he shall be saved." What triumph abides in this word! "It is finished." Who but the eternal Son come from the Father to do His will could have uttered it? We rest upon it in the full assurance of faith.

And He yielded up His spirit, and in that He fulfilled His own word. "Therefore doth My Father love Me, because I lay down My life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of My Father," John 10. Many have sought to account for His death by some natural means. It is all futile, even when it is reverent; this was no natural death, it was as miraculous as His birth and His resurrection. He through the eternal Spirit had offered Himself without spot to God, and the Prince of life and the Lord of glory, the Son of God and our Saviour, hung dead upon the cross, and "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins."

*(To Continue).*

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Christ gave not Himself by halves.

God cannot be satisfied with a half obedience.

Abraham obeyed. Faith is always obedient.

Jacob had experiences, but they were the experiences of the subtle ways of his own heart. Abraham had experiences but they were experiences of the faithfulness of God's heart.

Jacob is a warning, Abraham an example.

## KEEPING THE NIGHT WATCH.

Inglis Fleming

“**A**ND it was night.”  
This is the Divine comment when Judas had gone out to betray our Lord.

And it is a night to be remembered by us. The Lord of glory has not forgotten it. From the glory He told afresh to Paul the significance of the Remembrance Supper He had instituted. The record is prefaced by the word, “The Lord Jesus the same night in which He was betrayed.” He would have us recall again and again that we are in a world where He has been and is rejected (1 Cor. 11. 23).

We may delight in the fact that our Lord has died *for us* to secure our present and our eternal happiness. But while we do so we may forget His rejection by the world through which we journey. The Lord in His Supper reminds us of this.

We are in the night of His betrayal still. “The night is far spent and the day is at hand,” but the darkness of His being refused here is not to be forgotten. “We are not of the night but of the day.” We are “not of the world, even as Christ is not of the world.” We are Christ’s. *His place* is our place. A place of acceptance and the nearness before His Father and our Father, His God and our God. But *His place* before the world is our place also. Shall we accept the one and refuse the other. Shame will be ours if thus we act.

Now what is our privilege and responsibility in the Night Watch? It is to worship and to witness. As Christians we are part of a holy priesthood and part of a royal priesthood. As a holy priesthood we form

a spiritual house to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. As a royal priesthood we are called to shew forth the excellencies of Him who has called us. With life and lip we are to witness for Him. Blessing God in worship within the veil, we are to be of blessing to others in the world of His betrayal, expressing something of His grace and goodness among men.

Psalm 134 may be considered as to this double aspect of our priesthood. It is the last of the Songs of Degrees. The stages of the pilgrimage are past. From strength to strength the journey has been pursued. Zion and the sanctuary are reached. Praise and worship are called for to Him who has brought them out of the depths and through all the perils of their way. Thus they exclaim,

“Behold bless ye the Lord all ye servants of the Lord which by night stand in the house of the Lord.”

Praises day and night will go up to the Lord Jehovah from a restored Israel in a time yet future, but rapidly nearing. “The Signs of the times” declare plainly that the day is approaching (Matt. 16. 3, Heb. 10. 25).

For us as Christians we may rejoice that even in the night of Israel’s silence as to praise we can lift up our voice in the praises of our God and Father.

On the ground of the one offering of Christ, offered once for all, at the cross, Israel will be brought into blessing, and be a vessel of praise. But we fill the gap. It is ours to bless *now*. “Accepted in the Beloved,” re-

joining in our relationship as children of the Father, and blessed "with all spiritual blessings" now, our hearts well up in songs of adoration.

But in a special sense it is to be remembered that

"*By night*" we "stand in the house of the Lord," as worshippers.

Honour indeed is this! Loosed from our sins in His own blood. Freed from every entanglement. Cleared from everything which hindered our praise. Thus it is we are made a kingdom, even priests unto God and His Father. He who loves us—the Son of God—has brought us into this large place of dignity and delight.

Of old the fire upon the altar of burnt offering was burning "*all night unto the morning.*" It was never to be put out. "It shall never go out" was the solemn direction. That altar spoke of, and speaks of Christ and His glorious atoning sacrifice. Its

value shall never be lost sight of. In virtue of it we stand while the night runs its course. And with hearts attuned in the sense of His grace we "bless the Lord." Lifting up holy hands, sanctified to Himself our hearts and voices express His worthiness. *This* is our highest service and should take precedence of all other.

"The Lord that made heaven and earth bless thee out of Zion" closes the Psalm. We bless Him. He blesses us. And in the sense of this rich blessing, His blessing, "out of Zion" that is, in royal grace and bounty, we can bless others. So it is that as "called" to "inherit a blessing" we can dispense blessing to others around us (1 Peter 3. 9).

Let us ponder it well.

It *is* night. We are not *of* the night. But *in* the night we are allowed of God to be worshippers within and witnesses without while we wait for the day, "the day of Christ" soon to dawn.

## The Love of God.

The more I look at this *love* the more I see of its perfectness. When there was not one single good thing in us, God commended *His love to us*. We were just sinners and nothing but sinners when Christ died to save us.

There is no accounting for His *love*; there is no estimating it. There is no limit to His *love*.

If I have not rest, what I want is a deeper sense of sin. I must learn what sin is at the cross; and then I shall see the love that has met it and suffered for it, and thus my soul gets rest.

To be hungry is not enough. I must be really starving to know what is in His heart towards me. When the prodigal was hungry, he went to feed upon husks; but when he was starving, he turned to his father's house, and then learnt the *love* of his father's heart.

J.N.D.

## INSTRUMENTS.

A. J. Pollock.

**A** TOUCHING story is told of the late Sir Frederick Treeves, the eminent surgeon, who operated on King Edward VII., when he was stricken down just before the date of his coronation. He was travelling in Syria, when an accident occurred on the railway. Stretched out before him lay a man badly injured internally. Sir Frederick was very agitated and distressed, as he exclaimed, "If only I had my instruments with me, I could have saved that man's life." What a poignant situation!

And cannot this find its counterpart in divine things. God needs instruments in His work. "How shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent?" (Romans 10. 14, 15). How gracious of God, who could do without anyone of us, to use instruments.

And all this is based upon the great Instrument God used, even our Lord Jesus Christ, for Romans 10. 15, continues, "As it is written, How beautiful are *the feet of THEM* that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things." Though Romans 10. 15 speaks of "*the feet of THEM*," Isaiah 52. 7, from which the quotation is made speaks of "*the feet of HIM*." "How beautiful upon the mountains are *the feet of HIM* that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth." "Behold upon the mountains *the feet of HIM* that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace!" (Nahum 1. 15).

It was the prophet Isaiah himself, who God used to write the striking

prophecy of the coming of the Lord as God's great Instrument for bringing salvation to men, and heralding it forth. It was Isaiah, who heard God's challenge, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" It was Isaiah who responded, "Here am I; *send ME*" (Isaiah 6. 8).

What a privilege to be sent by the Lord on His errands and with His message, it may be to distant China or India or Africa or South America, or the far-off islands of the seas, or it may be to your next door neighbour, the people that live in your street or town, or in the villages within reach of a humble pushbike, and the ability to purchase and scatter a few tracts.

May we not all be fired by the example of *THE GREAT INSTRUMENT*, our Lord Jesus Christ? True it is that He was more than an Instrument. He was not a channel *only*, He was the Source. He was not a Man merely. He was God.

So the opening of John's Gospel tells us in simple yet deeply profound words:—"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, . . . and the Word was made flesh" (John 1. 1 and 14). Yet the gospel of Mark presents Him as the Sent One, Servant of Jehovah, the great Instrument of God's will. Though in "the form of God" He took "the form of a servant" (literally *a bondsman*). Truly, a mystery no creature can ever understand. "No man knoweth the Son, but the Father" (Matthew 11. 27). His service was indeed unique. He alone could provide salvation by dying on the cross. That service He alone could and did render.

But it is left to us to be His instruments. What an honour! Shall we through sloth miss this wondrous distinction?

We all know how exceedingly careful the surgeon is to have *clean* instruments. They are boiled in anti-septic fluid, and treated with the greatest care. The surgeon must have clean instruments. So it is in God's work. We read, "If a man therefore purge himself from these (*vessels to dishonour*), he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and **MEET FOR THE MASTER'S USE**, and prepared unto every good work" (2 Timothy 2. 21). "Be ye clean, that bear the vessels of the Lord" (Isaiah 52. 11).

Scripture abounds in instances of how God prepares His servants to serve Him. Abraham walking through the land of promise, yet a stranger and a pilgrim. Joseph for years in prison and bondage to fit him to be God's servant in the land of Egypt. Moses in obscurity for forty years at the backside of the desert to fit him to be the leader of God's people through the awful desert of Sinai.

When Saul said to David, "Thou art not able to go against this Philistine to fight with him; for thou art but a youth, and he a man of war from his youth;" David replied, "Thy servant kept his father's sheep, and there came a lion, and a bear, and took a lamb out of the flock; and I went after him, and delivered it out of his mouth; and when he arose against me, I caught him by his beard, and smote him and slew him" (1 Samuel 17. 33—35). David could point to *secret* training in view of *public* opportunity.

Even the world knows something

of this, not spiritually of course, but in natural things. The Rt. Honourable Winston Churchill wrote, "Would you rise in the world? You must work while others amuse themselves. Are you desirous of a reputation for courage? You must risk your life. Would you be strong morally or physically? You must resist temptations. All this is paying in advance; that is prospective finance. Observe the other side of the picture; the bad things are paid for afterwards." In his own life these aims and maxims are abundantly exemplified. But the Christian does not ask, Would you rise in the world? but, would you be God's instrument? It means hard work whilst others play, presenting your body a living sacrifice, something that costs and hurts, a sacrifice acceptable unto God, and which indeed is only reasonable in view of His abounding mercies to us, chiefly in the sending of the great Instrument of His will into this world, procuring us salvation and divine life, without which every other mercy would be meaningless.

Our great Exemplar not only risked His life, but came on purpose to die, a death apart by itself in its unique character and unparalleled sufferings. "This is He that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ; not by water only, but by water and **BLOOD**" (1 John 5. 6). Paul risked his life, and lost it and yet found it. "He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life *for My sake* shall *FIND* it" (Matthew 10. 39).

God's call is urgent. The cry still sounds forth, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for US?" May our answer be like Isaiah's, "Here am I, *send ME.*" If *God* sends, all is well.

# THE FAME OF JESUS.

James McBroom.

Matthew's Gospel. Chapter 16.

THE cleavage between the Lord and the leaders of Israel becomes very manifest at the opening of chapter 16. Like many leaders in Christendom to-day, they were materialistic, but stood convicted of moral blindness, for they could discern the face of the sky, but Him they knew not, nor the time of their visitation. His refusal to give them a sign left them in their darkness. He had already exposed the blindness of the nation when He gave Jonah as a sign against them in chapter 12, here He goes further and turns away from them. "He left them and departed," verse 4. It is humbling to see that the disciples with all their privileges as being always in His company were hampered by materialism also. When He warned them against the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees their minds ran on food; they seemed incapable of receiving moral instruction.

It is interesting and of great importance to note that before bringing out the truth of the Church for the first time in His ministry to them, He warned them against these two leavens. The leaven of the Pharisees is Ritualism, and the leaven of the Sadducees is Rationalism. The pure truth of the Church has been corrupted all down the centuries by one or other, or both these leavens, and was never more so than to-day. It is the enemy's work, and he knows that no one can know the blessedness of the truth of what the Lord speaks of as "My Church" who is under the influence of the doctrines of the Pharisees or the Sadducees.

Amid the conflict of opinions con-

cerning our Lord there came from the lips of Peter a true confession as to Who He was, "the Christ, the Son of the living God," but Peter did not arrive at this great confession by natural observation, it was a revelation to Him from the Father in heaven. This confession goes beyond that of Nathaniel's in John 1. 49, which had Psalm 2 in view, and beyond that of Martha's in John 11. It was the revelation of One who though truly Man is beyond the estate of man—the Son in Manhood into whose hand the Father has put all things. And it has often been truly said that no one can understand the truth of the Church who has not first apprehended the truth as to the Lord's person.

It is as "the Christ, the Son of the living God," rejected as Messiah by Israel, that He becomes the builder of something that He can call His own. As the rejected One He stood with His disciples, — the babes of ch. 11. 25, looking forward to the time when in virtue of redemption He would begin to build His assembly, a new spiritual structure wherein He would deposit and carry through all the blessings which Israel had refused. This building began at Pentecost, and it necessitated the transfer of the disciples from Jewish relationships and hopes to that of living stones in a living house, built by the Son of the living God.

His Church, the Assembly, derives its existence from Him as the Son of the living God, but the Kingdom is bound up with Him as the Son of Man. He had said, "Whom do men say that I *the Son of Man* am?"

After speaking of the Assembly, He proceeds to speak of the kingdom and its administration as it exists in mystery to-day — i.e. in its hidden character, in contrast to the time when it will be in public display. To Peter He said, "I will give to thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." This clearly refers to the place given to Peter in the front rank of the testimony as seen in the Acts of the Apostles. He it was who was used of the Spirit to open the Kingdom for the Jews in chapter 2, and for the Gentiles in chapter 10. Binding and loosing was committed to all the Apostles (chapter 18) and seems to refer to the way heaven ratified their work as under the control of the Holy Spirit.

This passage brings together the Assembly and the Kingdom. The one is the inner and the other the outer. It has been said that the Kingdom is the bulwark of the Assembly. We remember that David had to establish the Kingdom before Solomon could build the temple. In the Epistle to the Ephesians the assembly is viewed as the fruit of the eternal purpose of God in its richest and highest place of blessing as God's house, His habitation, a holy temple in the Lord; consequently in chapter 6 the saints are exhorted to stand against the wiles of the enemy, having on the whole armour of God. They are to be strong *in the Lord* and the power of His might. Administration is the thought here. Those who are being built up a spiritual house are subjects of Christ as Lord, and fitted to take up His interests. The Lord is the great Administrator in the kingdom and in

His might the saints stand against the enemy, while at the same time they are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit, ch. 2. 22.

At this point the Lord is seen in each of the first three Gospels acting in the light of Isaiah 8. 16—18. Bind up the testimony, seal the law among My disciples and I will wait upon the Lord that hideth His face from the house of Jacob . . . Behold I and the children whom the Lord hath given Me are for signs and wonders; etc., etc. Here He charged His disciples that they should tell no man that He was Jesus the Christ (Matthew 16. 20). Having introduced the new thing which He would build, the necessity of His death comes before Him; and Peter, the one who had just been so greatly favoured drops so low as to rebuke Him. Such is man. How often the very greatness of our blessing throws us off our guard. Lest he should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations given to him Paul received a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet him. He who had so signally honoured Peter has to rebuke him saying, "Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offence unto Me for thou savourest not the things that be of God but the things that be of men."

The recipients of divine favour cannot have a place in the world that crucified their Master. Having given them a place with Himself in the new resurrection order of things which He would set up they must take up their cross and follow Him. It is well for each to count the cost. If a person would essay to follow a rejected Christ he cannot consistently be one with the world that crucified his Master. To take up the work of

God and to be in it in the holy influence and power necessary for carrying it on, life must be given up in the sense of citizenship status, rank and all that man counts dear as man in his place in society here. In another place the Lord said "If the world hate you, ye know that it hated Me before you" (John 15. 18). In the passage before us it is not the world casting off the Christian but his giving up the world because of his identification with Christ in an-

other order of things which is divine. These men had given up the world, Peter says so later (see 19. 27), and His Master does not contradict him, and in spite of his lapse in chapter 16. 22, he still had the keys and moreover had the place of honour as being one of the three whom the Lord was just about to take with Him into the holy Mount to witness the glory of the Son of Man in His Kingdom.

## A SONG AT NIGHTFALL.

A. M. Chambers.

Psalm 3. 5. Psalm 4. 8.

Father, we lay us down to-night  
 In sweet security;  
 Thou wilt sustain us by Thy might,  
 For lo! the darkness and the light  
 Are both alike to Thee.

Father, how precious is the thought  
 Of Thy sufficiency;  
 Whatever change the day has wrought,  
 Whatever joys or sorrows brought,  
 We leave them all with Thee.

Each hope or sore anxiety—  
 Each care however small,—  
 We tell Thee in simplicity  
 With children's trust,—for without Thee  
 A sparrow doth not fall.

Thy love a pillow soft shall be  
 For every weary head;  
 Thus cradled in tranquility—  
 The peace that flows from faith in Thee—  
 All fear is banished.

To-night then may our spirits be  
 As free from anxious care  
 As when in Heaven, exultantly  
 We'll lift our gladdened eyes to see  
 Eternal morning there!

*Tune: Golden Bells, 402.*

## THE CAVE OF ADULLAM.

T. Oliver.

**D**AVID therefore departed thence and escaped to the cave Adullam; and when his brethren and all his father's house heard, they went down thither to him and everyone in distress and in debt, and everyone discontented, gathered themselves unto him, and he became a Captain over them and there were with him about 400 men (1 Samuel 22. 1—2).

The history of David shows in manifold types the administration of God which is in faith in this era. We may first refer to his complete victory over Goliath, which typifies Christ's complete victory achieved at Calvary over the power of darkness and him who had the power of death, that is, the devil. Subsequent to that episode we have the incident of Jonathan whose soul was knit with the soul of David; analogous to the scene recorded in the 20th chapter of John's Gospel when the Lord on the evening of His resurrection day came into the midst of the little company of disciples and proclaimed peace unto them. And when He had displayed the unchallengeable marks of His passion they were overcome with joy.

But the impression made on Saul was entirely different. Jealousy filled his heart, when he heard the song of the women, that David had slain his ten thousands while Saul was only credited with thousands. In the Gospels we read that it was envy which led the Jewish leaders to deliver Christ for execution by the civil powers. Saul became persistently the sport of evil spirits and his hand held a javelin in order to smite David. So it has ever been through the cen-

turies, the orthodox has persecuted what it did not understand. Four hundred years ago, the powers of evil all over so-called Christian countries in Europe were exerted in oppressing and seeking to stamp out the sparks of real light from God. With true prophetic vision, Latimer being burned at the stake encouraged Ridley his partner in suffering, with the words "Be of good cheer, Master Ridley, we shall this day light a candle in England that by God's grace, I trust, will never be put out."

The sequel to Saul's systematic persecution was that David ultimately took refuge in the almost inaccessible Cave of Adullam, in the face of a great cliff only about two miles away from the valley of Elah, the scene of his great victory over Goliath and the Philistines. We may use here a word spoken to the Hebrews who were clinging to a system of religion that had been set aside by the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus. "Let us go forth therefore *unto Him* without the camp bearing His reproach" (Heb. 13, 13). The motley crew which accompanied David would have fallen out amongst themselves on the first day of their association if it had not been for the magnetic power of their leader. Therefore in our times the passage in Hebrews would lose its force if the two small words "*unto Him*" were omitted. If we seek an antidote to the ills which afflict the Christian profession by monastic seclusion outside the bounds of orthodox religion we shall be grievously disappointed. The only bond which will hold us together is the appreciation of the peerless qualities of Christ, as the power of attraction.

The elements of David's company looked refractory. They had been in distress, in debt, in discontent. It has been well said that common differences are not likely to prove a satisfactory cause of union. All the societies of men are founded not on negative but on positive considerations. It would be fair to expect that a chemical society is composed of members with a common interest in chemistry and so on. But there was a company with nothing in common but their grievances against society. So in Christianity the members viewed from natural considerations would be esteemed a heterogeneous association. But we have to learn that in the new state, there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian nor Scythian, bond nor free. So that racial, ecclesiastical, intellectual or social considerations are obliterated. But therein Christ is all and in all (Col. 3. 11). So that the Christian bond is not founded on natural considerations whether negative or positive, but by a complete disestablishment of these and the introduction of a new bond in the Lordship of Christ.

In every department of human affairs organisation is the order of the day, so much so that man tends to worship the machine. People occupy themselves with the mere mechanism of Christian profession, with statistics of progress, usually measured in terms of numbers and affluence, while the sense of the reverence due to the Lord's name is being gradually eliminated from the mass of the profession. So that people disturbed with the unsatisfactory state of affairs who seek a remedy by going outside the sects of Christendom will find that such procedure will offer no solace to the hungry soul, if the at-

traction is not unto Him. Any other kind of exodus will lead to barrenness of soul. As we realise the Lord's attractive power we shall find rich compensation for the reproach or special stigma which attaches to His name.

David's ill-assorted company became the nucleus of his mighty men in the subsequent day of glory. He was their captain or head, typical of the two-fold aspect of Christ's pre-eminence. (1) Lordship, (2) Headship. David's men were not a mere collection of freebooters. They were really the only defenders of the frontier of the country against the incursions of the Philistines and the Amalekites. So to-day the defence against the flood-tide of rationalism on the one hand and of ritualism on the other is not vested in the hands of organised religion but in the hands of those who are bearing the stigma of the Lord's name. Organised religion is torn between the forces of reason and ritual, so that right-minded individuals therein are powerless to offer any effective opposition. The Philistines robbed the fruits of the harvest in Israel (1 Sam. 23. 1). So those who masquerade as Christians before the world without any real title thereto would seek to rob us of the sense of the preciousness of Christ, presented in the Scriptures.

Abiathar, the sole survivor from the massacre of the priestly company in Nob fled to David. Under the influence of the spirit of error Saul, who had started well, ultimately became a persecutor and his hands imbrued with the blood of martyrs. So Germany, the home of Luther and the cradle of a great part of the Reformation, has now dissociated itself

officially from Christ's name, and ere long will be dyeing her hands with the blood of both Jews and Christians.

But when Abiathar fled to David he did not come empty-handed; he brought an ephod in his hand. The casual observer would have said why did he burden himself with such an useless piece of luggage! He realised that the all important matter was having connection with the Lord. The ephod speaks of prophetic insight. We may be certain that persecution will tend to make us more desirous of having the Lord's mind on everything. We shall want to have special guidance. There is no doubt whatever but that very special guidance is being given to the people of God in these lands where persecution is rampant.

Samuel died and all the Israelites were gathered together and lamented him (1 Sam. 25. 1). Samuel had long ceased to be a power in the land. The people, like their king, had resented his criticism. But after his death when they knew that no scathing indictment would fall upon their ears, they sought to salve their consciences by making a demonstration of sympathy. Many people act similarly nowadays. In Scotland it used to be fashionable in religious circles to commemorate the Covenanters, whose testimony would have been a stern rebuke to the conduct of the bulk of the commemorators. Recently there have been celebrations of the centenaries of the births of Spurgeon and Moody. Is it likely that the majority of the celebrants would have relished the sharp words of these men? Would not many of them have considered the evangelists as too narrow-minded for the liberal

ideas of the present day?

The last incident we shall consider is that of Nabal (1 Sam. 25. 3). "Nabal" means "fool." He was obsessed with the idea of making all he could in this world irrespective of his indebtedness to either God or man. That he was descended from Caleb (the man of heart for the Lord) is a tragic reference. How often we find men of the world, real "go-getters," who did not respond to early Christian training and are now wholly given up to the worship of mammon. At this stage we may well express our thanks for the abundant mercy of God which has preserved many of us to have some measure of apprehension as to what is due to His interests and the honour of the name of the Lord.

Nabal, like his successor in the Gospel parable, left God out of his reckoning. The latter wanted to build bigger barns. But at that juncture, like the death knell of Belshazzar, came the word of the Lord "Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee!" Nabal took what was analogous to an apoplectic fit on hearing of the generosity of his wife at his expense. It is worthy of note how often he used the pronoun "my," as to his possessions. Yet he neglected his soul, the only real possession he had. Nabal's example is very much that exhibited in the parsimony of the twentieth century. Everywhere one hears that retrenchment is necessary. Churches which were full to overflowing in the nineteenth century have to coalesce. Their evacuated buildings are converted to the use of cinemas, shops and all sorts of secular purposes. That the Lord's arm has shortened is an impossible tenet! Then we

must conclude that the contraction is in man's arm. Well, the challenge comes to ourselves. "What about the length of our arm?" Because it is an easy matter dealing with these

things in the abstract. We require to let the keen edge of the Word have its own innate power on the individual.

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## A Prince and Saviour.

W.B.D.—y.

He Who on earth was bruised by men  
 Is raised by God on high;  
 He Who was murdered lives again  
 In power and majesty;  
 In heaven the throne of honour now,  
 The sceptre and the kingly sword,  
 The Victor's crown upon His brow . . . .  
 The glory of the LORD:  
 And He to Whom all knees shall bend  
 Awaits the sounding of the hour  
 When He shall rend from end to end  
 The semblance of the strong man's power.

Lo, even now upon the earth  
 For man in faith to know  
 The foretaste of His fame goes forth—  
 Of Satan's overthrow:  
 Behind the roar of mortal storms,  
 Amidst the turmoil, tears and pains,  
 The Kingdom in a mystery forms—  
 The KING in mystery reigns;  
 And servants quick to His commands  
 Deliverance to the captives tell,  
 For by His hands are snapped the bands  
 Of sin and suffering, death and hell.

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As a Christian you stand between the first coming of Christ, when He accomplished redemption, and His second coming when He will take you into His glory, and meanwhile the Holy Ghost dwells in you—what an unspeakable gift is that! He makes you cry "Abba, Father"—the children's cry, and He is the witness to you that you are a child, as He is also the earnest of the great inheritance. He gives to you the certainty of the efficacy of Christ's precious blood, makes you conscious of your present place in the Father's love and favour, and leads your heart onward to the glory.

## “THE APPROACHING ADVENT OF CHRIST.”

F. B. Hole.

(A review of a book by the Rev. A. Reese, bearing the above title).

No. 6. 2 Thessalonians 2, and some final considerations.

WHEN Paul wrote his second Epistle to the Thessalonians, a fresh difficulty had been created in their minds owing to the persecution they were enduring, and the action of some unprincipled men who had gone so far as to forge a letter in Paul's name to support the idea that the day of the Lord was upon them. Had that been a fact, they would of course have already been virtually in the great tribulation. Paul begs them not to be for one moment shaken in their minds, and appeals to the truth he had established in his first Epistle, as to “the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto Him” (2. 1).

As we saw in the first Epistle, so again here, Paul differentiates most clearly between, “our gathering together unto Him,” and “the day of the Lord.” He says, in effect, “You might have known that your sufferings cannot mean that the day of the Lord is present, by that which I have already told you as to our being, ‘caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air’.” Mr. Reese's book is written to convince us that the Lord will come *for* and *with* His saints at the same moment. Paul beseeches them by “the coming” that they do not imagine that “the Day” is come. Mr. Reese is beseeching us to imagine that they are one and the same thing.

In chapter 1 of this second Epistle, the Apostle had shown them that the revelation of the Lord Jesus would bring trouble and overthrow upon those who were persecuting them,

whilst they would enjoy perfect repose amidst the tremendous scenes of judgment. It does not say that they would enjoy rest *for the first time* at that exact moment, but that the day of the Lord will mean rest for the saint as distinguished from the tribulation of the world. So here are two good reasons that should prevent us interpreting our tribulations as meaning the onset of the day of the Lord: first, that Day means rest for us; second, there is the truth, already established, of His coming and our gathering to Him in the air.

Then there is a third good reason, unfolded in verses 3—14 of the second chapter. The Day will not come until the apostasy takes place and the revealing of the man of sin; and these two things will not take place until the power and Person, that act in restraint, are removed.

This predicted apostasy is not merely a time of coldness and defection in the church, such as has all too often been witnessed, but the total abandonment of the Christian faith, root and branch. This apostasy is coming, and there are very ominous signs of its approach. A few signs even appear in this book we are reviewing, since the Author in his eagerness to refute the “Darbyists” sometimes quotes from questionable writers: as, for instance, on page 253, where a number of erroneous ideas creep in, the worst being that Jesus on the throne of God “was, in fact, no longer merely a man.” This obviously infers that on earth He had been *merely a man*, an idea which is

consistent with Unitarianism, but which we altogether repudiate. In Christendom these signs are now multiplied, and it is of course the apostasy of Christendom which here is predicted. If only the true saints of God could be eliminated from the "churches" of our land the apostasy full-blown would be at once complete. We believe that no apostasy, in the proper sense of the word, can take place as long as the saints in their thousands are here, for *they* will never apostatize. We further believe that once the Lord has come and we have gathered unto Him, a veritable landslide of apostasy will strike Christendom at once.

The great Restrainer of verse 7, we believe to be the Holy Spirit, who came in a peculiar way at Pentecost, thus forming the church, and will, as regards this peculiar aspect of His presence, depart when the church goes. In our first paper we alluded to Mr. Reese's effort to find here allusion to Roman Emperors, as well as the Roman Empire. So we now content ourselves with saying that we are sure that no *man*, nor *anything human*, is great enough to restrain the power of darkness and of the devil. *One who is God* is needed for that.

Once the saints are gathered to Christ and the Restrainer gone, there will be this outburst of Satanic powers and deceits, and to all this God will add the blinding of men by an act of His government, sending a strong delusion. This act of God will play a part, by no means inconsiderable, in the great tribulation. In contrast to all this we are said to be chosen to salvation and called to obtain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. Here we again reach the point to which we were conducted in

verses 9 and 10 of chapter 5 in the first Epistle. Not wrath but salvation is the church's portion.

This leads us to consider the Lord's promise to the church in Philadelphia, as recorded in Revelation 3. 10, "I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation." Mr. Reese spends pages over this passage commencing with page 199; his argument being that the preposition translated "from" does not necessarily mean "out of," so that it may merely mean preservation *through* the tribulation. Says he, "The preposition *ek* may possibly mean immunity from, but more probably it means *out of* in the sense of being 'brought safe out of'."

His reasonings as to *ek* are very much open to question, but we shall spend no time on them, since the falsity of his interpretation of the passage is better shown by emphasizing two words that he seems to practically ignore — "keep," and "hour." How can the promise mean "*bring safe out of*" when it does not say "Save from," but "*Keep from*." And not only keep out of tribulation, but out of "*the hour of temptation*;" that is, out of *the period of time* in which the trial takes place. He quotes Rev. 12. 6, 14, to prove that saints may be kept out of tribulation, while being still left on earth. Yes, but the Philadelphian church is to be *kept out of the hour* of world-wide trial. This cannot be by being placed in some earthly shelter while *passing through the hour*. Being kept out of, or from, the hour must mean being translated into a region outside every hour into which time is divided.

If any would say to us that this exemption is only promised to the Philadelphian church who had kept the word of Christ's patience, and

therefore may only apply to saints of special devotedness, we should have to reply by pointing out that things promised to the seven churches must not be understood as special and exclusive to those to whom the promise is made. Verse 11 of chapter 2 is a very clear example. The saints at Smyrna are not the only ones to be exempted from the second death.

In Revelation 1. 19 we have a divinely given division of the book. John wrote "the things which are" in chapters 2 and 3; and the closing words of verse 1 of chapter 4 show us that at that point he begins the narration of "the things which shall be hereafter." This shows that church history ends with chapter 3, and that chapter 4 starts with a moment when church history is over. We did not notice any reference to this key verse (1. 19), which unlocks the whole book to our understanding, in the book we have been reviewing. Had our Author read Revelation in the light of this verse, he might have understood its contents more accurately.

In the light of this verse we are not at all surprised if we find saints from the earth amidst the heavenly scenes described in chapters 4 and 5. They are represented, we believe, by the twenty-four elders. This, of course, Mr. Reese will not have, and he claims that the idea of their representing the redeemed is "now abandoned by pretty well every expositor in America, England and Germany . . . They are simply Angelic leaders in the worship of heaven" (p. 224). He also asks, "If the Twenty-four Elders represent the raptured saints in heaven before the Seventieth Week, why do we not see the saints themselves instead of twenty-four symbols?"

Well, and if they are angels, why do we not see angels (as so often in the book) instead of symbols? The answer to both questions would be the same. Because Revelation is a book of symbols. Spiritual discernment is needed, we know, in order to interpret the symbols aright.

Consider two or three facts. The word for elder is the ordinary word *presbuteros*, from which our word presbyter comes. A word very fitting in connection with men, but utterly incongruous in connection with angels. Our lives are measured by time, we speak of elder and younger, but in connection with angels all such ideas are out of the question. The symbol is congruous as regards men: wholly incongruous as regards angels. That is the first fact.

Their white robes and golden crowns proclaim them to be kings and priests, as we have already discovered the saints to be, in verse 6 of chapter 1. This is a second fact.

A third fact is that they are 24 in number. This was the number of the courses into which Israel's priesthood was divided, as recorded in 1 Chronicles 24. 1—19. In the 24 elders we have the priestly company complete in heaven.

Mr. Reese lays great stress on the fact that the R.V. and Darby's version omit the "us" and "we" from verses 9 and 10 of chapter 5. That is to say, the new song which they sing is impersonal. They celebrate the whole great redeeming work of God, rather than their own part in it. Mr. Reese deduces from this that they have no part in it. We deduce from it that the saints in their glorified condition are lifted right out of the smallest suspicion of a selfish view of

things into the full apprehension of things as from God's standpoint. At last they know, even as they are known.

Our task now is nearly done. Although almost on every page there are matters as to which we should have to express some measure of dissent from our Author, there is much that can be left unmentioned. Just a few points however remain to be noticed.

Mr. Reese devotes one of his chapters to "The Parousia of the King," pp. 140—166. One of his great points is that modern researches have shown that "parousia" is a kingly word, since it was used "for the *arrival* of kings and rulers, or the visit following." From this, he claims, we must deduce that the coming of Christ as King must be understood wherever this word is used. So of course it must be, if parousia is used *exclusively* to indicate such kingly occasions. His reasoning falls to the ground however when we discover that the word is just the ordinary word for coming, and has no such exclusive use. To give one illustration: in 2 Corinthians 7. 6 Paul speaks of "the *coming* of Titus." The word used for his coming was *parousia*. Was Titus a king?

In this chapter too he has some very sarcastic things to say about "the secret rapture." He speaks of "the strange doctrine of a secret, invisible advent of Christ." In his first chapter, pp. 22, 23, he summarizes the teaching of his opponents as being that, "The Coming of Christ 'for the Church,' . . . will take place secretly: none of the unconverted will witness them." He then quotes a passage from C.H.M., in which he points out that only believers saw Jesus ascend into heaven, when the

angels said He would so come in like manner; and from which he teaches that He will only be seen by His saints when He comes for them. Quotations from Kelly and Darby follow, to the same effect. But neither the words "secret" nor "invisible" occur in these quotations. Further, having read right through his book, we did not notice any quotation from writers that he would designate "Darbyist," in which these words were used. They are Mr. Reese's words.

It is a fact that there is no record of any unbeliever seeing Christ in resurrection. As a Minister of the Gospel, Mr. Reese preaches the resurrection of our Lord from the dead. He is a consistent man, and no doubt makes it plain that he believes in "a secret, invisible" resurrection. It is also a fact that no unbeliever saw Him ascend into heaven. It was "a secret, invisible" ascension. If Mr. Reese admits the secrecy and invisibility of both His resurrection and ascension, we shall not object to his accusing us of saying that there will be a secret and invisible coming for His saints, as distinguished from His public appearing with His saints in glory. It would be no more "a strange doctrine," however, than the doctrine of His resurrection or His ascension.

Even so, we shall not use those two adjectives ourselves, as we do not think them exactly suitable to any one of three events. Invisible is definitely wrong, and secret not exactly right. We should prefer to speak of it as a *private*, family affair, in contradistinction from that which is *public* and for the world.

Before we close it is necessary to say that there is no dispute between us in regard to the glorious appear-

ing of Christ. When He shall appear the saints shall appear with Him, and that will be the time of their public reward. This we most emphatically believe, but we do not allow all this to blind us to the fact that the coming *with* His saints is possible, because He first comes *for* them.

We also agree most fully that the glorious appearing is appealed to, in order that the life and service of the saints may be well pleasing to God. We are to keep every divine instruction "without spot, unrebukeable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Tim. 6. 14). But this does not mean that His coming for us, when we shall see His face, is not to exert a like influence over us. It is to do so, for we read, "We shall see Him as He is. And every man that hath *this hope* in Him purifieth himself, even as He is pure" (1 John 3. 2, 3).

One of Mr. Reese's concluding remarks is, "In the labyrinth of prophetic facts and theories I confidently recommend to the honest enquirer a shining clue that will not fail him: it is the resurrection of the saints: let him courageously and impartially examine the setting of Isaiah 25. 8; 26. 19; Dan. 12. 1—3, 13; Matt. 13. 43; . . . . and he will shed for ever the pleasing delusion that the saints are raised and raptured out of the world before the coming of Antichrist" (p. 294). Other scriptures are printed where we have inserted the dots, and every one of them we have considered. Having done so, we are confirmed in what we stated in our third paper, to the effect that Mr. Reese has begun at the wrong end: he has ignored the fact that *life and incorruptibility have come to light through the gospel*. His "shining clue" is not so shining as he

thinks, for he picked it up in Old Testament twilight. Had he started under the bright shining of the New Testament sun, he might have seen things differently.

The normal course of things for us of a certainty is that we hear the gospel, we believe it and come into its blessings, we are brought into the church of God and begin to learn its character, its privileges, its destiny. Then, when instructed in Christian truth, we are put into a position to appreciate and properly understand things that were made known in earlier ages. If this be done there is not much difficulty in seeing the point of view taken in the Gospel of Matthew, for instance, to which Mr. Reese makes so many references. The idea of it being "Jewish" he abominates, and we grant at once that things of an extreme sort have been written on those lines which go beyond what is right. When all allowance for this has been made however, the internal evidence is clear that it was written for Jewish believers, and that it specially exhibits the dispensational changes that were impending, while treating the disciples as being just what they then were, representatives of the believing remnant, though soon to be incorporated into the church. Hence the commission recorded in chapter 28 is one which shows the activities of the disciples going out beyond the boundaries of Israel to *all nations*; and yet is couched in such terms as would make it applicable also to the activities of a similar believing remnant after the church is gone. Hence also we do not see a rapture to heaven in verse 31 of chapter 24, but a gathering together of the elect upon earth by angelic power.

Mr. Reese obviously does not see

what we have just been saying, else he could not write as he does on p. 290—"The co-relative term of 'Jew' is not 'Christian,' but 'Gentile': that a man may be both Jew and Christian, and both Gentile and Christian: but not both Jew and Gentile. So that when we say of the 'colouring' in Matthew 24: 'It is all Jewish,' we ought to mean 'it belongs to the land of Israel: it cannot possibly apply to Maoriland, New York, or Timbaktu'." Our reply is: a man may be both Jew and Christian, if we are permitted to mean a Jew *nationally* and a Christian *spiritually*. He cannot be a Jew *spiritually* and a Christian. We refer to 1 Corinthians 10. 32, where we read of "the Jews . . . the Gentiles . . . the church of God." Mr. Reese's correlative terms, Jew and Gentile,

are all right for the Old Testament, and the very beginning of the New. But as the New progresses another factor comes into existence, a factor of an entirely spiritual nature. In these words of his, which we have just quoted, he clearly recognizes the *national* factor, and also certain *geographical* factors. We venture to submit that it is when we come to the *spiritual* factor that he goes astray.

If only our Author had some better and fuller understanding of the doctrine of the church, particularly as ministered through Paul; of that "dispensation" which has been made known "to fulfil [complete] the word of God" (Col. 1. 25), we believe that this book would never have been written.

## The Love of Christ.

### Ephesians 5.

The more one looks into the love of Christ the more there really is a deep sense of its perfectness. I see the perfect *love* that is the source of it all—infinite, unspeakable *love*, a *love* which expresses God's very nature, and being, and purpose about us.

When I look at the way it is accomplished, I see the perfectness of Christ's work, the absoluteness of giving Himself up entirely.

Christ "*loved* the church, and gave Himself for it:" that is the first thing. Now the effect is to put us into the *light*, as God is in the *light*—into the *light* that makes all things manifest.

A man takes care to do all for his wife as he would for himself; so does Christ to the church. He nourishes it and cherishes it.

And it is our privilege to go along with Christ, to be associated with Christ in caring for the church.

We can count upon Christ actively.

If I *love* the church and the saints rightly, I shall have the consciousness of Christ's *love* to them, and sympathy with Him in it. I grant *His love* will attract us.

J.N.D.

## YE SHALL FIND.

L. A. Anderson.

SOMETIMES when reading the Scriptures a verse, a sentence or even a word will arrest one's attention which starts a train of thought.

It was on one such occasion that I stopped short in my reading, and my eye seemed to see the three words heading this article — “Ye shall find” stand out boldly, and almost immediately several passages where these words occur came into my mind. I pass on some results of my meditation, if perchance they may stir up similar thoughts in the minds of others. Doubtless other passages than these referred to will be recalled by our readers.

1. “*Ye shall find*” (Luke 2. 12). There is no mistaking the meaning of these words, nor is there any uncertain ring—“ye SHALL find the Babe wrapped in swaddling clothes lying in a manger.”

This promise was made by the angelic host to *shepherds*. They were only ordinary eastern folk doing their ordinary duty of looking after their flocks; but it is to such that the Lord God speaks, whilst the great ones of the earth are often passed by.

David was tending the sheep when he was called for his anointing as king; and it is as we do our *everyday* job that God can often and does speak to those who belong to Him, and the Holy Spirit will guide our hearts to Christ, and make Him real to our faith and affections though our eyes do not see Him.

2. “*Ye shall find*” (Matt. 7. 7). It was the Lord who made this statement and as we come to the Father

who gives good things to those who ask Him, we shall find that promise is good, seek, and ye SHALL find, and it is a great strengthening of our faith if we realize this.

Yes, we shall find a *peace* that the world cannot give, a freshness of *joy* that the world cannot spoil, and the *comfort of God* which we can enjoy and pass on to others, and also many other things, too many to enumerate.

3. “*Ye shall find*” (Matt. 11. 29). In a troubled and turbulent world we find much that distracts the heart and mind. But Jesus said “Learn of Me . . . and ye SHALL find *rest*,” and amidst all that there is to unsettle and keep us “on edge” we can find rest to our souls in His presence.

There are difficulties in life's pathway, and we need often to remind ourselves that “there remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God,” but we may have something of it down here. Yes, the *rest* is promised if we will but take His yoke and learn to exhibit some of His meekness, Who “when He was reviled, reviled not again. . . ”

4. “*Ye shall find*” (John 21. 6). Seven of the disciples had been out fishing; nothing wrong about that you say. No, it was the ordinary occupation of most of them, *but* they had never gone to the Lord about that fishing expedition that night they had sallied forth.

They knew how and where to catch fish, of course they did. Had they not caught fish many times before? Well then they would do so again. BUT “*that night they caught*

nothing." They thought they knew all about fishing, and they had to discover they did not. Nothing for themselves, and worse than that, nothing for the Lord.

The lesson they learnt is a parable for us. We hardly like to admit it; but often we go forth in daily life, according to our own wisdom and fail. Proverbs 3. 5, 6 is a needed word. "Trust in the Lord at all times; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths."

We have gone forth in His service in our own strength too, not depending on Him, not seeking His direction.

When the fishermen heard His command and the promise — "Cast the net on the right side of the ship, and ye SHALL find" — they got all they needed.

Oh, that we might read and meditate on His word more, and the promise will still hold good "YE SHALL FIND."

## What should we preach?

WHEN we think of the state of the church and of Christendom, we naturally ask what is the best method of rousing and strengthening that which is languid and feeble, of bringing back those who have strayed, and of fortifying the tempted against the errors and the God-opposing spirit of the age. This is specially a solemn question for those who are teachers, stewards of the mystery of God, under-shepherds of the flock. Is it sufficient to preach the simple doctrine of the gospel, to declare fundamental truths of repentance and faith, limiting ourselves to what is absolutely essential to the commencement of Christian life, and simply reminding our hearers of the great salvation, that Jesus died because of our offences and was raised again because of our justification? Is such a method scriptural? and, viewing it from the lower point of expediency and experience, is it safe and effectual? Does not Scripture teach us that we should keep back nothing that is profitable, that we should not shun to declare the whole counsel of God, that the children of God should comprehend

with all saints what is the breadth and length, and depth, and height?

Do we not continually notice that scanty, elementary, and one-sided teaching does not even secure the true, living, and healthy knowledge of simple and fundamental truths? And with regard to those who are still strangers to the grace of God, is it not our duty to lay before them the divine message in all its fulness and beauty, in its comprehensiveness and depth, and by unfolding to them as far as man is able, the Scripture-teaching to counteract the unscriptural opinions which refer not merely to the central questions of personal salvation, but to the character of God, the origin of the world and man, the nature of sin, the history and the ultimate destiny of our race? Above all, is it not for us to preach Jesus Christ; Jesus, the Messiah promised to Israel, the Saviour of sinners, and the Head of the church; Jesus, the Son of God and Son of man; Jesus the High Priest in heaven and the coming Lord, who will be King over the whole earth?

## ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS

### Filled with the Spirit.

“What is it to be filled with the Spirit? Ephesians 5. 18? Is it the Holy Spirit that is meant in the passage, or the spirit of the believer, i.e., what we should call a right Christian spirit”?—WALSALL.

**I**F we have learnt in any measure the exalted place of blessing in which the grace of God has set us who have believed the gospel of our salvation, as it is revealed in this Epistle, we shall realise that the only state that could correspond with it is that of being filled with the Holy Spirit. How else could the position and blessings be enjoyed and an answer given to what God has made us in Christ? It is right that in all things we should manifest a Christian spirit, and to this we are exhorted in this Epistle more perhaps than in any other, but this also is impossible apart from being filled with the Holy Spirit.

Every believer has been sealed with the Holy Spirit, ch. 1. 13, but not all are filled with the Spirit, some have grieved Him, ch. 4. 30. Is there any state between the Holy Spirit being grieved and our being filled with the Spirit? That is a question that we might consider. And is not the spiritual stagnation that we deplore, and

the lack of spiritual energy and joy the result of our grieving instead of being filled with the Spirit?

It has been well said that in being filled with the Spirit does not mean that we have more of Him, but that He has more of us. He becomes the source and power within us of right thoughts and motives. He displaces self for Christ, and He does this by taking of the things of Christ and shewing them to us.

The exhortation is not an extraordinary one for special people and special occasions, it defines the normal life of the Christian. The Spirit dwells in him to be his Paraclete and power, his teacher and guide, by whom he draws near to God and bears witness to men, and if He is not grieved He will make Christ everything to him. His interests will be paramount, and thanksgiving and praise will flow forth continually to God the Father from his heart.

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### Living of the Gospel.

“Will you kindly explain 1 Corinthians 9. 13, 14. ‘Do ye not know that they which minister about holy things live of the things of the temple? and they which wait on the altar are partakers with the altar? Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel’.”—READING.

**I**N this chapter the Apostle is answering the accusations of the false teachers who were endeavouring to undermine his influence at Corinth. They were evidently insinuating that he was making a good

thing out of the gospel and taking advantage of the love and simple fervour of the saints. The charge was false, and specially so are regards Corinth, for there he laboured with his own hands so as not to be charge-

able to them (2 Epistle, ch. 11). Nevertheless he might have reaped their carnal things, since he sowed to them spiritual things, verse 11. There were many witnesses to the rightness of this—the law of Moses, verse 9; nature, verse 10; the Temple service, verse 13; finally, the Lord's own ordination, verse 14. It is a plain and

simple statement that those who devote their lives to the gospel should be supported in temporal needs by it. And since this is the Lord's ordination, those who are called to this service and sent by Him into it may trust Him about their needs. He does not send them forth at their own charges, verse 7.

## Laodicea.

“On reading an answer to a correspondent in a recent issue, and after some conversation on the point with brethren, I gather that there is a tendency to regard the condition of affairs after the rapture of the church as Laodicea, fully developed. However, I find that the only time Laodicea is mentioned (Rev. 3) it is accompanied by a definite exhortation to repentance and a promise to individuals, which involves the continued work of the Holy Spirit and the presence of believers—a pre-rapture condition. On what grounds can ‘Laodicea’ be applied otherwise? If one is to qualify Laodicea by inferring some further development of the state, ought not a different word to be used? And why single out Laodicea, and not Thyatira and Sardis, both of which had room for repentance and which continue on until the rapture also, as witness the word to each regarding the coming. It would seem to me that what would be left after the rapture would be merely Babylon, which ought hardly to be called by any of the names of the seven churches. I should welcome your advice on this point.”—D.

**B**ABYLON (Revelation 17) undoubtedly describes the last phase of Christendom; every evil principle and feature condemned in the Letters to the Churches will come into full development in it. But before it reaches this complete apostacy the Lord will have spued it out of His mouth, ch. 3. 16, i.e., it will have been utterly rejected by Him. This of course will take place at the catching up of His true church, when all that is mere profession will be left behind to pursue its way to judgment. Until then the door is open for any who may be involved in Laodicean lukewarmness to hear His

voice and repent, after that there will be no hope, the Lord will own it no more. This is the threat made to Laodicea.

Our point was that Laodicean conditions do not cover the whole church now. Philadelphian conditions are just as real and evident under the eye of the Lord, but the rapture of the true church will mean the rejection of all that is false, then Thyatira, Sardis and Laodicea will be joined in the rapid development of Babylon, which will really be Rome triumphant.

“There are powers in you latent somewhere; small they may be, but still these are there, and a little more devotedness to Christ would soon bring them out. . . . Well it is for each one to covet earnestly the best gifts but better still would it be if each one would seek to use to the full that which he has, and cast at the Lord's feet, in devotedness of heart that which is in his hand.”

## AROUND THE CROSS IN THE GOSPEL OF JOHN.

NO. 6. Chapter 19, continued.

J. T. Mawson.

*"It is finished."* The last insult had been offered to the Lord in answer to His cry "I thirst;" and by that insult the last of the Scriptures was fulfilled which foretold His sufferings at the hands of men; hence having received the vinegar He could say "It is finished."

*"It is finished."* Every element of evil had beset Him; the floods had rolled over Him, and no power from heaven had held them back; the assembly of the wicked had encompassed Him, and reproach had broken His heart; the thorns, the scourge, the spittle and the cross were there; the sword, the power of the dog, the ravening lion and the horns of the unicorns in that dread hour sought out His soul to destroy it. There was not a weapon in the vast armoury of evil that Satan and his hosts had been preparing throughout the ages for this very hour that was not used against Him then. The prince of men and devils was there himself, knowing well, that if he failed in this great fight his doom was sealed. He did fail. "The prince of this world cometh and hath nothing in Me." That solitary, suffering Man, without succour from above or sympathy from below had *gone forth* and met the hosts of darkness and had triumphed over them; their force was all spent, their power was broken; He was victor. *It is finished.*

*"It is finished."* He had come to do the work that God had given Him to do, and it is here in John's record that we learn that it was done. The Lamb of God had offered Himself up—the great sacrifice to take away

the sin of the world; He had drained the cup that His Father had given to Him; He had glorified God on the earth and maintained that glory on the cross; and now the suffering is behind Him, and e'er He yields up His Spirit He utters the triumphant word "It is finished." The infinite work was accomplished to stand for ever in its solitary grandeur, the wonder of eternity, and the unshakeable basis of God's glory and our salvation. We feebly enter into the meaning of this word, but as we meditate upon it we are in communion with our God about it, for in that finished work His attributes have been vindicated and His nature revealed and our redemption secured. "Mercy and truth have met together, righteousness and peace have kissed each other." *"It is finished."*

*"It is finished."* Here is the gospel indeed, and now it can be joyfully declared "By grace are ye saved, through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God. Not of works lest any man should boast" (Eph. 2). The work is done, and for us, by Him who doeth all things well. This alone gives us access to God in peace; here He can meet us with an eternal forgiveness and the kiss of "His great love wherewith He loved us." The worst, the weakest, the most worthless may rest here, and none will find rest either now or hereafter who does not only and altogether rest on this finished work. We cast away our choicest works, as "filthy rags"; we confess that it was when we were "without strength" that Jesus finished the work for us, and we praise Him.

"And when in the bright glory  
Our ransomed souls shall be,

From sin and all pollution  
 For ever, ever free;  
 We'll cast our crowns before Him  
 And loud His grace extol—  
 Thou hast Thyself redeemed us,  
 Yes, 'Thou hast done it all.'

*“And He bowed His head and gave up the ghost.”* To us who have believed this is the most staggering fact that divine history records; the incarnation of the Son, amazing as that is, seems to take a second place in our thoughts as we consider this. But a few days before, He had said to His enemies *“Before Abraham was I AM”* and now He hung dead upon a cross! He was the master of death; He had commanded death *and it had obeyed Him, when but a week ago He had called Lazarus from the grave, but now He had yielded to it.* His spirit had gone to the Father and His sacred body hung dead upon a felon's cross.

Of course His death was a miracle and a deep unfathomable mystery, yet it was a fact. Yet no man took His life from Him; how could they? He was the Word, the Creator and Upholder of all life. He yielded it up Himself, having received authority from His Father to do it. And yet He was the slain One. Jew and Gentile had joined hands to kill Him as surely as they killed the two thieves that hung one on either side of Him. They had *“destroyed this temple,”* which He was to build again in three days. It was a just charge that Stephen brought against the rulers of Israel when he cried against them saying, they had betrayed and murdered the Just One. Acts 7. There are the two sides to the stupendous drama, God's side and man's, and they do not clash, but whether we look at one side or the other, or consider them together, we have before us this wonder of the ages, the Prince of life was crucified, *“He was cut off*

*out of the land of the living”;* His head was bowed in death.

Death is the great foe, the foe of God as well as of men; it entered the world through sin, and enslaved the whole race—*“death reigned.”* It claimed all and struck at all with envenomed sting, *“the sting of death is sin.”* But when Jesus died it was no triumph for death, it was the triumph of the love of God and death's defeat—*“He death by dying slew.”* The dead body of the Only-begotten Son of God upon the cross of Golgotha was God's answer to the devil's lie in Eden. That lie was,—*“God loves you so little that He withholds from you the fruit of the one tree in the garden that will elevate and bless you”;* the death of God's Son replies, God loves you so well that He will give His best, His Only-begotten, for your redemption and blessing. When Jesus bowed His head and gave up the the ghost He put His seal upon His own words, recorded for us in chapter 3. 16 of this same Gospel. And *“God commendeth His love towards us in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.”* Romans 5. 8.

*“The Jews therefore.”* Again the Jew jostles his way to the front and breaks the sacred silence by his discordant religious demands. These base men who had bribed the traitor and wilfully murdered their Messiah must keep the Sabbath and eat the passover, and how could they do that while those three crosses overlooked their city? Their religious sensibilities would have been outraged and their land defiled if the sinless body of their Victim were not buried before sunset! So *“they besought Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away.”* It was the purpose of God, who

made, not their wrath only to praise Him, but their hateful and blatant hypocrisy also, and that the Scripture might be fulfilled. Let them go and wash their hands, and make clean the outside of the cup and platter while we abide still by the cross.

*“Then came the soldiers, and brake the legs of the first, and of the other which was crucified with Him. But when they came to Jesus, and saw that He was dead already, they brake not His legs: but one of the soldiers with a spear pierced His side, and forthwith came there out blood and water.”* We may be sure that the soldiers would just as readily have broken the legs of the Lord as of the thieves, but they could not, the restraining hand of God was there, for the Scripture had said, “A bone of Him shall not be broken. And another Scripture saith, They shall look upon Him whom they have pierced” and in fulfilment of this second word one of the soldiers stepped back apace and thrust his spear into the Lord’s side. It was the last stab

of the world’s hatred and it fulfilled the Scripture. It did more:

“The very spear that pierced His side  
Drew forth the blood to save.”

*“And forthwith came there out blood and water.”* We seek for no natural cause to account for this strange result of this piercing. It is said that the Lord died of a broken heart, and the blood and water were the proof of it. He did not die of a broken heart, He lived with a broken heart, but His death was unique. He yielded up His life, and the blood and water from His side was as unique as His death. “He came by water and blood.” And these two are symbols and bear witness to us that expiation for sins and purification for sin are an absolute necessity, and further they witness that in the death of Christ we have both. *“And he that saw it bear record, and his record is true: and he knoweth that he saith true, THAT YE MIGHT BELIEVE.”*

(To Continue).

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## The Word of God.

God alone and His Word bind the conscience. His servants may teach, but if they teach aright, it is the truth of God. They bring the Word of God to bear upon the conscience, therefore no man who understands the place of God’s servant would wish to create a divided allegiance by imposing his own thoughts and words. His proper function as servant is to maintain the supremacy of God’s Word, so that the conscience may be put under a positive and increasing obligation to obey it.

It is of all importance that our souls should hold fast and firm, that, whatever the help imparted through the vessels God employs, still it is God’s light, God’s truth; nothing else than God’s Word is authoritative. It is not teachers, nor godly men raised up, however helpful and precious they may be; nothing but the Scriptures can be a permanent standard of truth.

# "THINGS THAT ACCOMPANY SALVATION."

1 Corinthians 15.

James Scott.

**T**HIS is the resurrection chapter *par excellence*; it is therefore one of the pivotal chapters of the Bible, and the truth it enshrines is vital to Christianity. Let it go, and everything is lost; there is no gospel, and we have no Saviour from sin, and no hope beyond the tomb apart from this. "If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable."

If the saints at Corinth were in doubt about such a fundamental truth it was entirely their own fault. We learn from the Epistle that their moral state had become lowered, and this gave Satan an opportunity of troubling them in mind, and shaking them in faith, but his real objective was Christ; and this would appear to be a fixed principle in all his attacks. As regards the *Corinthians*, they were of comparatively small consequence, but he was hoping to use them as a sort of screen, under cover of which he might get in a stroke against the person of Christ. In this, however, he signally failed, and in one short sentence his artifice is detected and exposed: "But if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen" (verse 13).

Another principle emerges here. Great as he undoubtedly is in personality and power, Satan is neither omnipotent nor omniscient, and, in his blind rage against Christ, invariably overshoots the mark. Nowhere does this come out more clearly than at the cross which, so far as Satan had any hand in it, was an unparalleled and irretrievable blunder. It was checkmate just when success seemed to be achieved; it was a crushing and final defeat; it sounded

the death-knell of his power. But for God the cross was a mighty and decisive victory, the ultimate results of which no tongue may adequately declare. It is finely expressed in the well-known lines:

"Love, that on death's dark vale  
Its sweetest odours spread,  
Where sin o'er all seemed to prevail  
Redemption's glory shed."

While the fact of the resurrection is the pivot upon which the chapter turns, it contains much besides of collateral and complementary truth of the utmost value. Leaving the main argument therefore, it may not prove uninteresting to glance at four of these incidental statements which touch the Christian life in its past, present, and future; shedding divine light upon its origin, its activities, and its destiny. For the sake of clearness, and in the hope of fixing these things more firmly in the memory, we shall consider them under four headings, each consisting of one word either expressed or implied in the text. The first is in verse 2.

**SAVED.** This is our starting-point. It is also our goal, for salvation in its fulness will be known and enjoyed only when we have left this scene of faith and strife, and in glorified bodies like His own, dwell with our adorable Redeemer in the Father's house, the home beyond the shadows, for evermore. In the meantime we may know, and should be able to say that, by grace, we *are* saved. "But as many as received Him, to them gave He the right to be children of God, to those that believe on His name" (John 1. 12).

It must have been humbling for the cultured Corinthians, who came

behind in no gift, to be brought back to the elements of their faith, the gospel which had been preached to them at the first, which they had received, which gave them a righteous standing before a thrice-holy God, and which saved them from the darkness, the despair, and the degradation of heathendom. The Apostle had already reminded them that when he came among them, he came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, for he determined not to know anything among them save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified, that their faith should not stand in the wisdom of men but in the power of God.

If it was humbling to their pride, it was nevertheless wholesome and necessary that they should be recalled to the things which they were letting slip; and the warning is no less needful for us "upon whom the end of the ages are come," when scientific and theological speculation runs riot, and men are lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God.

It is indeed amazing that men professing Christianity should so readily, not to say greedily, take in the surmises and suppositions of infidel scientists, and the "assured results" of apostate theologians; but it only confirms the truth of God's word. In this age, as in the past, men love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil. Let us hold fast that which we have received, knowing that the wisdom of men is foolishness with God.

This is a simple gospel, yet it is infinitely full and far-reaching. "It is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth" (Rom. 1. 16). It has shallows where the little child may safely paddle; it has also depths unfathomed where the strong

swimmer may bathe and never touch the bottom. It is like the river of the Sanctuary in Ezekiel 47. The waters were (1) to the ankles, (2) to the knees, (3) to the loins, (4) waters to swim in. "Afterward he measured a thousand, and it was a river that I could not pass over; for the waters were risen, waters to swim in, a river that could not be passed over" (ver. 5). "And everything shall live whither the river cometh" (ver. 9). The river came from under the altar, and our salvation flows from Calvary.

There is good ground for believing that the first Epistle Paul wrote was to the Thessalonians, and it is interesting to see the answer it supplies to the question, Why did Christ die? It must have greatly comforted those young believers, while it profoundly moved them to be reminded of the Lord's death, and its gracious purpose in relation to themselves. "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" (1 Thess. 5. 9, 10). Beloved, do not our hearts feel strangely moved when we remember Calvary, and the One who suffered there, the Just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God? Yea, verily, and with gladsome mind we praise Him for the love stronger than death.

This gospel was specially revealed to Paul. He says: "For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ" (Gal. 1. 12). It rests upon two stupendous facts: (1) CHRIST DIED; (2) HE ROSE AGAIN.

"CHRIST DIED FOR OUR SINS." Let us never forget that it

was our sins that brought the Holy One to the hill of reproach, to the accursed tree with its suffering, shame, and loss. Yes, blessed be His holy name:—"He took them all and freed us from the accursed load."

Thanks be unto God, our sins are gone. They are blotted out for ever, and in virtue of Christ's atoning sacrifice they abide no more in the memory of God. Thus saith the Lord: "And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more."

But there is something more: "He rose again the third day." We must hold fast to that, for if Christ be not risen, we are yet in our sins. "To-day men are proclaiming a gospel without the supernatural. They are asking us to be content with a perfect, human Christ, with a Bethlehem where no miracle was wrought, with a Calvary which saw sublime self-sacrifice, but no atonement for sin, with a sepulchre from which no stone was rolled away." We have no use for such a gospel, and would refer its authors and propagators to the solemn words in Galatians 1. 9, "If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed."

Now we come to the second word, which is implied in verses 29—32. *SUFFERING*. After we are saved and become children of God, what is our experience going to be? It depends largely upon ourselves, though the grace to follow Christ must ever come from above. There are no "ifs" in redemption; salvation is unconditional; but we find them often in Christian experience,—“if ye keep in memory” (ver. 2), “if ye continue” (Col. 1. 23), and so on.

Our experience will be happy or otherwise as we seek to walk with the Lord, or follow afar off. A half-

hearted Christian can never hope to be a happy one; and as the shepherd uses his collie, so the Lord sometimes uses Satan to bring the erring one back to Himself.

We have peace with God, a priceless peace which Christ made through the blood of His cross, an immutable peace unaffected by the changes and chances of our earthly life; but do not let us confound this peace with the peace of God, which may be ours only upon certain conditions (Phil. 4. 7). Peace with God means conflict with Satan, and there is no truce in that war until we reach the other side, and lay our armour down at the Saviour's feet. We need not fear, however, for He who saves is able also to keep, and will keep us to the end.

It is helpful to notice that verses 20—28 are parenthetical. The argument is resumed in ver. 29; and in verses 29—32 the Apostle gives more than a hint of sufferings, of which we get detailed accounts elsewhere (See Acts 14—19; 19. 23-32; 2 Cor. 11. 24—33).

Suffering brings enlargement; it adds to our usefulness, broadens our sympathies, humbles our pride, and often keeps us from sin. "Before I was afflicted I went astray; but now have I kept Thy word" is the testimony of the Psalmist; and Jacob did not become Israel until God crippled him. "Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees;" wait upon the Lord and your strength will be renewed. Here are words of strength and comfort from one who knew something of suffering: "But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you" (1

Peter 5. 10).

**SUMMONED.** That is the next word which we easily gather from verses 51—57. The Lord is coming again; the Bible is full of the glorious news. It is found in every book of the New Testament except one or two, where the reason for the omission is obvious. Many Christians, however, appear to be ignorant of the mystery revealed in ver. 51, and mournfully resign themselves to the mistaken idea that we must needs all die. Then what is the mystery? Let the Scripture give the answer; "We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed." It was no mystery that Christ was coming, and that the dead would be raised, but here is something more which had not been previously made known. So complete is the victory of Christ over death that He can not only raise the dead, but those of us who are alive when He comes will be changed into His likeness, without having to pass through the humiliating experience of death at all. It is sweet to know that it is the Lord Himself who is coming for us. "The Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first" (see 1 Thess. 4. 16—17).

The last trump of verse 52 is an expression which would be quite familiar to people who were accustomed to the movements of the Roman legions. Polybius, the Greek historian, tells us that the Roman army used three trumpet calls in breaking camp. The first meant "Strike tents"; the second, "Form rank"; the third and last was the signal to march.

How suitably the section closes with thanks to God, who giveth us

the victory through out Lord Jesus Christ. Not long since I was looking at a copy of the famous picture which portrays the victory of Death over Love. It is a sad story only too familiar to us all, a dreary victory which we see repeated o'er and o'er; but there is another victory—of Love over Death. When Jesus died and rose again He got the victory over death, and ended its despotism. He came down into our death and has lit it up with the light of His never-dying love. For a little we see the ravages of sin and death all around; but the day is surely at hand when death shall be swallowed up and disappear for ever. "And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire" (Rev. 20. 14).

**SERVING.** We come now to the last verse of the chapter. Its first word throws us back over all that we have been considering, and it seems to ask: "What shall we render unto the Lord for all His benefits toward us? (Psalm 116. 13). It speaks of service, which is not only the privilege, but also the bounden duty of every saved soul, hence it is no longer "Christ," but "the Lord." So we have "the work of the Lord," and "labour . . . in the Lord."

The first and greatest qualification for service is love, and only one thing is able to produce it in our hearts; that is the knowledge and enjoyment of the love of Christ. There is no effort about it; it is spontaneous and irrepressible, and delights to serve. Then true service is not haphazard or intermittent, to be taken up and laid down just as we choose. We must be steadfast, unmovable, *always abounding*, or overflowing; and this we cannot be unless we are *always receiving* fresh supplies of grace; for we are not reservoirs, but channels only.

Will there be hindrances? Yes indeed; there never was a work of God that Satan did not try to stop or spoil. We may expect difficulties, but we must go on. "If thou faint in the day of adversity, thy strength is small" (Prov. 24: 10). It is lovely to see how Nehemiah stuck to his job till it was finished. His enemies tried in vain to stop him. They first tried ridicule, and ridicule is hard to bear, but he remained steadfast. When that failed they conspired to use force, but it was no use; Nehemiah found them out, and went on unmoved. Last of all, when contempt and conspiracy failed, his enemies had recourse to cunning. They asked him to meet them in one of the villages, not once but four times, and four times Nehemiah returned the same answer: "I am doing a great work, so that I cannot come down: why

should the work cease, whilst I leave it, and come down to you?" (Neh. 8. 3). Perhaps the greatest hindrance is Self. No one ever laboured like Paul, yet he took no credit to himself. He says in verse 10 "yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me."

It has been said of Moses that in his first forty years he was learning to be something—it was all sunshine; in the next forty years he was learning that he was nothing—it was all solitude; and in the last forty years he recognised that God was everything, and only then could he render acceptable service.

Finally there is the reward. We do not work for reward, but the Lord is not going to forget the least thing done for His sake; it will not be in vain in the Lord.

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## Misrepresenting Christ.

Take an instance. The disciples once came to Him and said, "Master, applaud us. we have done well to-day." "What have you done?" "We saw one casting out devils in Thy name and we shut him up. We forbade him because he followeth not with US. Oh, to see the little disciples then! How they all stood at their fullest stature! There now! Jesus said—oh, hear His voice after the boastful tones of these sectarians—"Forbid him not. He that is not against us is of our part" and "Ye know not of what spirit ye are." The Master would have encouraged the man, He would have spoken with approval, but the disciples liked to play the part of special constables and take somebody up. How can a constable go home at night if he has taken nobody up. Do we know what spirit we are of? Others will know by the way we act. (Adapted).

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*"The servant of the Lord must not strive"* (2 Timothy 2. 24). "I never cared to meddle with things that were controverted and in dispute among saints, especially things of the lowest nature; yet it pleased one much to contend with great earnestness for the word of faith, and the remission of sins by the death and sufferings of Jesus: but I say, as to other things, I should let them alone, because I saw they engendered strife; and because that they neither in doing, nor in leaving undone did commend us to God to be His: besides, I saw my work before me did run in another channel, even to carry an awakening word; to that therefore did I stick and adhere." Bunyan.

# “THIS DO IN REMEMBRANCE OF ME.”

Luke 22. 19, 20.

R. C. Westcott.

Thine, Lord, the bidding that we thus would answer,  
 Thine the desire “this do” remember Me,  
 Thine Lord and ours the joy by this afforded,  
 Ours in Thy Presence, Thine with us to be.

We do recall Thee, blessed Lord and Saviour,  
 In those great depths to which Thy love has been,  
 And marvel as in grace Thy Spirit teaches  
 What all those depths of shame and suffering mean.

Thou, Lord, the Fulness of eternal glory,  
 Upholding all things, for Whom all were made,  
 Didst leave Thy Home of love and untold splendour  
 To dwell on earth, yea with its dead be laid!

The Cross with all its bitter woe and anguish  
 Speaks to us now of love no mind can grasp;  
 Those hours of darkness when e’en God forsook Thee  
 Reveal the love that holds us in its clasp.

Lord Jesus, though these ransomed hearts adore Thee  
 Our words all fail their feelings to express?  
 What tongue can tell the tale of love unfathomed?  
 What heart can fully know its blessedness?

Yet here in love Thou dost delight to have us  
 Learning the joys Eternity will bring,  
 Yielding to Thee e’en now our adoration,  
 Learning on earth the songs of Heaven to sing.

Whilst, Lord, by faith with upward look we see Thee  
 Crowned now with glory—Heaven’s eternal seal,  
 That Thou, the Lamb once slain, alone art worthy  
 Who didst in love the Father’s heart reveal.

The whole vast scene of bright celestial glory  
 Filled with a light no mortal eye can see  
 Finds blessed Lord its rich untold effulgence,  
 Its everlasting character, in Thee.

And to this place Thy love, O God, doth bring us  
 Through Him, its Centre and eternal joy,  
 Now to explore the wonders of Thy favour  
 The while His praise redeemed hearts employ.

## THE UNITING SYLLABLE.

Inglis Fleming.

**T**HE syllable *com* at the beginning of words frequently means *with* and designates association and identification. Some of these words having reference to our Christian life and course come before me and I pass them on to others.

First of all

### COMMIT

As sinners without righteousness, without strength and without hope of saving ourselves we may commit ourselves to Christ for salvation. The shipwrecked mariner leaves the wreck and trusts himself to the lifeboat. So the believer of the gospel sees Christ as the true Lifeboat and gives up all confidence in self and confides in Christ. He who does this "he that believeth on the Son" commits himself to Him "*hath everlasting life*" (John 3. 36). Christ never fails. We may trust Him fully. So the Apostle Paul could say, "I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have *committed* unto Him against that day" (2 Timothy 1. 12). Paul had placed all his soul's well-being—all his interests for time and for eternity in the Lord's hands and was assured of their security.

The Psalmist could cry "Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in Him; and He shall bring to pass" (Psalm 37. 5). (We should omit the preposition *it*, as supplied in the Authorised Version). Leaving ourselves as to our whole course in the hands of infinite goodness and wisdom and love, trusting in Him altogether we may know that "He will bring to pass"—He will act in His own ways on our behalf for our true and lasting benefit.

Being assured of our salvation and blessing we should

### COMPANY

with our Saviour. When He chose the twelve apostles it was first of all "that they should be with Him" (Mark 3. 14). He desired their company. This was at the beginning of His ministry. At its close He could commend the apostles as those who had "continued with" Him during His time of trial here and for this He promised reward of high degree (Luke 22. 28-30). He calls us in our measure to-day to this companionship in spirit. As Enoch of old "walked with God" and pleased God," so it is ours to-day to walk so as to please God (1 Thess. 4). If we do this any service He may have entrusted to us will be coloured by our being much in His presence. There we shall catch His spirit and be moulded and fashioned aright for our ministry. In His company we are privileged to

### COMMUNE

with Him. He speaks to us in His Word, the Scriptures, and we speak to Him in prayer.

It is said of an old servant of God that on one occasion when reading the Bible he was overheard to say "I think Thy thoughts after Thee, O God." Communion, or fellowship, with the Father and with the Son by the Holy Spirit is our highest privilege, as the children of God. To have thoughts in common with the Father about the Son and His interests, and to have thoughts in common with the Son about the Father and His interests—this is high honour indeed.

And amid all the breakdown in the Church as set up in responsibility

here, — this communion is available for us. In Laodicean days of lukewarmness and of indifference as to Christ, we may hear His voice as He knocks in grace at the door. Then opening to Him and He will come in and sup with us and we with Him. He will enter into our need and meet us where we are, and then conduct us into the realm of His own delights where need is unknown.

Following this it is ours to

### COMMUNICATE

to others of that which we have received. And as we do this we shall find enlargement for ourselves and enjoy in a new way that which we minister to others.

It has been said that we can "only really claim that which we proclaim." Certain it is that blessing for our-

selves is wrapped up in our seeking the blessing of our fellow Christians and in the gospel-presentation to the sinful and sorrowing in a stricken world. "For we must give if we would have [Such is the law of love]."

I remember that on one occasion when I was feeling the need of comfort. The word came to my mind "Comfort ye, comfort ye, My people, saith your God." Others needed more comfort than I and in seeking to comfort them I was comforted.

So it will always be. Watering others we shall be watered ourselves.

May each of these "coms" be known by us all. So shall we be blessed and made a blessing to others.

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## "Be filled with the Spirit."

What was the most important result in you when you were sealed by the Holy Spirit? Was it not that the Lord Jesus Christ got a place in your thoughts and heart that He never had before? So if you are fitted with the Spirit Christ will be everything to you, He will be your one object, His word your delight, His will your law. The love of God was shed abroad in your heart when first He sealed you as belonging to God, if filled with the Spirit that love will fill every crevice of your being with its healthy glow, you will joy in God, and you will overflow in service to others.

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"Unto the upright there ariseth light in the darkness." Clearness of vision goes along with integrity of purpose.

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Look well to your integrity, and leave your prosperity with God.

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If we are clear upon the fact that good works are not the cause or means of salvation, let us be equally clear upon the truth that they are the necessary fruit of it.

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Do not imagine that the choicest blessings are placed upon some high shelf, so that you will have to grow tall or climb high to reach them; they are placed within the reach of the lowly, and if you would have them you must stoop.

## CORRESPONDENCE

### Why so few definite, out and out, clean cut Conversions?

The following questions have been sent to us, "1. Why is it that the Gospel even when faithfully preached, does not produce the deep conviction of sin that we used to see? 2. How do you account for the fact that men seem to have entirely lost the fear of God? 3. We can understand modernistic preaching hardening the conscience and making men indifferent to God's claims, but why should apparently faithful preaching be so ineffectual?"

**M**AY not one reason why there is so little depth of conviction even through the clear preaching of the gospel be that the individual note is missing. It seems to me that we need men like Nathan the prophet who can bluntly say, "Thou art the man." By that word David was brought into God's presence and it is only there that deep conviction occurs. But Nathan was a prophet; he came from God.

That faithful preaching should have so little effect should humble us all who preach the gospel. As we acknowledge how true it is, surely the Lord's own words come home to us with great force—"this kind can come forth by nothing but by prayer and fasting." Don't you think that to be effective in our preaching we must be first affected by the great truths we preach? If we are living in the power of what we preach others are sure to be affected.

A. Dockerty.

If the preacher is not subject to the Lord himself in word and deed, how can he powerfully press the claims of the Lord upon others? If the preacher is worldly in his thinking and outlook, how can he shew the evil and hollowness of the world to others? If the preacher is not satisfied with Christ himself how can he proclaim His all-sufficiency to others with any conviction? If the blessedness of the knowledge of the Lord is not seen in the preacher's life, need we be surprised that his words seem like idle tales to others?

Dear Mr. Editor,

The questions raised must exercise the minds of all who in any way seek to serve the Lord.

To deal with the second query first, the obvious answer is "There is no fear of God before their eyes" (Romans 3. 18). The fact that there is that lack of reverence is one evidence of the last days, and calls for a more faithful witness. In this respect, history seems to repeat itself. (Compare Job 21. 7—15; 22. 15—17; and 2 Timothy 3. 1—4).

Questions one and three may be taken together, and might be considered under two heads: viz, the preacher, and the preaching.

(1) **The Preacher.** Do we realise not only the very great privilege but the tremendous responsibility of being preachers of the gospel? Are we conscious of the fact that we carry the message of the one and only remedy for man in his lost condition, and that eternal issues are at stake? Do we preach with absolute conviction? (2 Corinthians 4. 13). Is our preaching saturated with prayer? Some years ago the writer met a dear old Presbyterian minister who said that in his early days he used to go about conducting evangelistic missions with most encouraging results. On being asked how he accounted for the change in later years his reply was significant. He said:—

"The heart of man has not changed, it is the same to-day as

when he crucified the Lord Jesus Christ. But I have changed. I used to pray at all times and in all sorts of places. I have to confess that I do not do that now."

Was his a solitary experience, or have some of us to plead guilty to a similar lapse?

(2) The Preaching. What do we preach? Is it ethics or Christ? Is it a well-arranged address calculated to please the Christians who may form the bulk of our audience, and which will cause them to say "What a splendid word!" or is it for the perhaps only one unsaved person in the meeting? Do we present the facts of sin and the blood; of death and judgment; of heaven and hell? We cannot improve on the preaching recorded in the Acts of the Apostles. Paul preached "repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ" (Acts 20. 21). To Felix "he reasoned of righteousness, temperance and judgment to come" and his hearer "trembled" (Acts 24. 25). In the synagogue at Antioch he preached the forgiveness of sins, and did not finish without a solemn warning (Acts 13, 38—41). Do we do that, or are we afraid we might hurt the feelings of our hearers?

One thing more to be considered is the way in which some Christian hearers comport themselves in a gospel meeting, and afterwards. On the part of some, a listless almost bored attitude during the preaching; and after the preaching, forming into groups in the hall, talking and laughing as if the object of the meeting were a matter of no concern. In this connection the writer was much impressed years ago by reading a gospel booklet entitled "Minnie Gray, or Lost and Found," by X, published at one penny, and to be obtained at

the office of "Scripture Truth," and which shows how a young lady was "almost persuaded," but failed to decide because the enemy called her attention to the audience. She saw some yawning, others looking at their watches, etc., and apparently unmoved by a stirring appeal that had so mightily impressed her. He would commend this booklet to all his readers.

We are indebted to you for calling attention to this most important matter. May it result in much exercise; in deep heart searching; and in a fervent desire to proclaim the gospel indoors and out-of-doors, without any frills or human accessories, but in simplicity; in sincerity; in divine power; assured that "the gospel is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth (Romans 1. 16).

W. Bramwell Dick.

I would quote from the sayings of a wise old preacher. "The wind is blowing cold on this wintry night, come and warm yourself at this fire grate. You answer, I am cold, but I can't warm myself there? Why can't you. Here is the grate and in it the paper, the wood and the coal. Why can't you warm yourself? You answer: "The essential thing is lacking. *There is no fire.* Strike a match, set the fire going, and then I'll delight in its warm glow." That is it, there seems to be plenty of fuel; plenty of sound preachers, able theologians, clear sermons and everything orderly, but the one essential thing is lacking; there is no fire; the heavenly spark that would set the whole thing ablaze is not there.

That is it, and let every Christian take it to heart. Let the preacher first of all search his heart; is he like

a dead gramophone record giving out what is true, but with no zeal of love and life behind it; just wound up for the occasion and no more? Is that the way you preach? "They so spake that many believed" was said of men of old, the fire was there, the unction and the results.

And let the Christians take it to heart; are the hymns at the gospel preachings sung in a cold and listless way; is the fire lacking in the way they unite in singing glorious gospel words? and do they sit to be faintly interested in a coldly correct address, to be coldly criticised by them at supper table? How many of their acquaintances do these meeting goers endeavour to interest in the gospel during the six days of the working week? One thing is certain, this fire cannot be suddenly lit up for one day in the week only, if the zeal is not there during the week it won't be there in the Sunday evening Gospel meeting.

"Stir up the gift of God which is in thee," said the aged Apostle to young Timothy. The word is "re-ignite." It looks as though Timothy had allowed the flame to die down to an ember, and Paul's word was peremptory. We need it. Reignite! Reignite! Nothing will meet the present conditions but a re-igniting of holy zeal and the tongue of fire.

But from whence comes this living spark and how can the flame be re-ignited in our souls? Well, let us be careful how we interpret "fire" as it is presented in Scripture. There it is chiefly the symbol of judgment, the burning holiness of God against all that is evil. We do need to know somewhat of that side of the fire, if the fire of which we speak here is to operate. The fire of true zeal for God and souls will not burn brightly

and steadily if the heart is choked with rubbish, the rubbish must be consumed first, and every man should know just what the rubbish is that chokes his zeal. And then—"My heart was hot within me, while I was *musings* the fire burned: then spake I with my tongue," said David. He was musing on the wickedness of men, on the brevity of life here below, and on the vanity and emptiness of the lives that men lived, and these are themes well calculated to make the fire burn within the heart, but they are not enough to make the preaching effective.

We must move on from Psalm 39 to Psalm 45 and hear what a son of Korah sang there. "My heart is inditing a good matter (literally, "My heart is bubbling up," and there can be no bubbling up without fire) I will speak of the things that I have made touching the King: my tongue is the pen of a ready writer." "Did not our hearts burn within us, while He talked with us by the way, and while He opened to us the Scriptures?" said those two disciples whose faith was almost extinguished by an overwhelming sorrow, after their walk with the Lord and His talk with them "concerning Himself." This is the one divine way by which our failing zeal may be re-ignited. The preacher who neglects this musing on the Lord and what He has wrought will most surely become cold and ineffective, and an hindrance to the work of the Lord instead of a help.

It was this musing that moved Isaac Watts to write:

"When I survey the wondrous cross  
On which the Lord of Glory died,  
My richest gain I count but loss,  
And pour contempt on all my pride."

It was this that sent John Wesley forth to be the man he was for God and His gospel and the souls of men.

Consider his account of what happened to him in a humble Meeting house in Aldersgate Street, London, on the night of May 24th, two hundred years ago. He entered that meeting a cold, austere religionist, yet with a great longing in his heart, and as he listened to the Word and mused upon it, he said, "*I felt my heart strangely warmed.* I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone for salvation; and an assurance was given me that He had taken away my sins, *even mine*, and saved me from the law of sin and death."

The sons of Korah had been delivered from a great death and destruction, and as they considered the

King who had done it their hearts were "strangely warmed" and bubbled up into words of praise and testimony; their tongues were loosed to sing their great Redeemer's praise. The two disciples who had hearkened to the voice of their Lord, could not sleep, they had to rise up the same hour of the night and go forth and tell the news that burned like a fire in their hearts. As Isaac Watts and John Wesley mused upon the sufferings of Christ and His saving grace they could not refrain from giving a fervent response in song and service to "love so amazing, so divine." And we . . . . ?

(To be Continued).

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## Traditions of Men.

How is it that there is a continual tendency in the heart of man, and specially of those that take the place of guides of God's people, no matter when or where you look at it, *to supplant His Word* by their tradition? It is because tradition gives importance to man, it leaves room for superiority to self.

Everything that intercepts the direct application of the Scripture from God Himself to His children is the most positive injury. It is man stepping between God and His own. His word is the means of dealing with sinners and of building up His children. The traditions of men make it of none effect.

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## The Hindrance to Understanding.

Why is it that divine truth is often so difficult to apprehend. Our obstacle lies not in the head chiefly but in the heart. It is not the bright and powerful intellect that understands the word of God best; it is the man whose purpose of heart is to serve the Lord. Wherever there is the simple-hearted *desire* to do His will, "he shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God." It is not, If thy eye be keen and far-seeing; but "If thine eye be single." What a comfort to one who is consciously weak, ignorant, and foolish. Such an one may have the single eye, and with a heart unreservedly toward the Lord, see further, and clearer, and understand spiritually that which another cannot grasp at all.

# THE FAME OF JESUS.

James McBroom.

The Gospel of Matthew. Continued. Chapter 17.

CHAPTER 17 opens with the record of the Transfiguration of the Lord on the holy mount. There He shone in His own proper glory. He was the Man of Sorrows, but here we have a glimpse of Him as the Man of Glory. "His face did shine as the sun, and His raiment was white as the light." The presence of Moses and Elijah shew that the material for this display was all bound up with the nation of Israel that had refused Him and was about to crucify Him; their blindness and enmity would not rob Him of His glory. Here is an anticipation of the glory of the kingdom that will yet fill heaven and earth. It is a scene of holy splendour based upon redemption in which both heaven and earth unite in His praise. The two heavenly visitors had been pillars in the nation which had been the scene of God's operations. Here they are communing with their Lord and the subject of their communion, as Luke tells us, is His decease—His exodus which He would accomplish at Jerusalem. Upon that everything depended. The wise and prudent of earth could not understand either the meaning or the necessity of His death, the cross is foolishness to them, even His disciples could not in that day grasp it as Peter shewed in chapter 16, but it was the theme of heaven; it was known to Moses and Elijah. They could not have been with Him in that glory except as the fruit of His work on the cross, although all its ignominy and shame and sorrow still lay ahead of Him.

Moses and Elijah picture to us that vast host that will fill the heavens, some having passed through death and others to be called up to

meet the Lord in the air at His coming (1 Thess. 4), while the disciples set forth the nation of Israel set up in richest blessing upon the earth and those at the foot of the mountain, the nations that will yet come into millennial blessedness under His glorious sway, when He appears to undo all the works of the devil. In that way we may think of Him as Son of God in relation to the Church, Son of David in relation to Israel, and Son of Man in relation to the Gentile. But there is still something of His glory that carries us inside beyond it all. He is the Father's beloved Son. The saints of to-day, those who form His assembly, His body, and His bride, will see Him in His relation to Israel as the Messiah and in relation to the nations as the glorious Son of Man, but it is theirs to behold Him, in the inner intimacy of sons, as the Father's well-beloved Son. How wonderful is His prayer for them, "Father I will that they whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory which Thou hast given Me: for Thou lovedst Me before the foundation of the world" (John 17).

Two great lines of truth run right through the Bible and meet in the Person of our Lord. First, God glorified in the Son of Man and the Son of Man glorified in God. Second, the revelation of the Father in the Son and the Son with the Father in the circle of divine affections which in its own innate excellence reaches to that which is beyond display. Both are here, the former prefigured in full regal splendour, the latter embodied in the Shekinah cloud and

the voice of the Father.

The Transfiguration was clearly an answer given to the Lord by the Father with regard to His service. From that landmark in His pathway the Lord descended right down to the Cross. The glory of the Kingdom and indeed every part of the glory of Godhead right through to eternity must be secured there. The three who were with Him were told to tell it to no man till after He was risen. Matthew, Mark and Luke record it and Peter as the only one of the three present speaks of it in his second Epistle. "We . . . were eyewitnesses of His majesty. For He received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came a voice to Him from the excellent glory, This is My beloved Son in Whom I am well pleased." Peter's language about building three tabernacles has often been spoken of as an attempt however well meaning to lower the Lord. We may say that it showed how little he had understood the revelation of the Father to him in the previous chapter, and yet it could not be otherwise, for until the Spirit came neither he nor any of them could enter into the meaning of the wonderful favour which had been theirs as being the companions of the Man who is God the Son.

His death was before the Lord. Of it He talked with Moses and Elijah. On coming down the mountain He spoke of it again, and later to them all (see verses 12. 22, 23). But the incident at the foot of the mountain was a trial to His spirit and drew forth a peculiarly solemn word to His disciples. "O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you? how long shall I suffer you." He connects the close of His testimony among them with want of

ability on their part to avail themselves of all that He had put at their disposal. It is indeed solemn to see the close of the Lord's service here linked with the want of faith and power of His own to make good what he had brought to them. But blessed be His name, no failure on our part can lessen His love or interfere with the wealth of blessing He has brought us into. This is surely made abundantly clear in the incident at the end of the chapter.

The moral perfection of our Lord in relation to His transfiguration must not be missed. It has power to fill our souls with praise and worship. The Man Christ Jesus is here seen as the Ante-type of the Hebrew Slave. "And if the servant shall plainly say I love my master, my wife, and my children; I will not go out free: then his master shall bring him . . . unto the door post; and his master shall bore his ear through with an aul; and he shall be His servant for ever" (Exodus 21. 5, 6). It was at this point that the Lord acted in the spirit of this passage and declared in an unmistakable way that He would not go out free. He stedfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem. This was for Him the valley of humiliation right down to the Cross. His personal fitness as well as His right to go up at that moment none would deny. But had He done so He must have remained alone, a Man in heaven for evermore. He had left heaven to die, and had said the Son of Man must be lifted up, and "It was a necessity." The glory of God, the fulfilment of Scripture and the blessing of every creature hung upon His death, but while giving full place to all this we bow with adoration as we discern the moral beauty of the Man Christ Jesus who would not go out free. The Hebrew servant was to have his

ear bored with an aul and become his master's servant for ever, setting forth the cross and a token of the condescension of Him who by that cross has become a Servant for ever.

All this is richly amplified in the closing incident of the chapter: the incident of the tribute money. Peter with his best intentions is again at fault. Nothing could more conclusively prove the hopelessness of man in nature to understand the things of God, they can only be known by the Spirit of God (1 Cor. 2). It was not flesh in an evil way. Peter was doing his utmost to shew his appreciation of his Master but was unconsciously lowering Him. Of course my Master pays the tribute: He could not be behind in anything and particularly in that which concerns the House of God. Yet his previous confession put the Lord infinitely beyond both the temple and the tax. The question the Lord puts to Peter puts the whole thing in order. "Of whom do the kings of the earth take custom or tribute? of their own children or of strangers?" "Of strangers," said Peter. The point was simplicity itself. "Then are the sons free," said the Lord. In another place the Lord said, "If the Son shall make you free ye shall be free indeed." The point here however is the way He connects Peter with Himself. He, the Son of God, stood beyond these claims, but in grace He would come down to it and pay the tribute. Peter is sent to the sea to get that which would meet and pay the tribute both for his Master and himself.

The way the moral beauty of manhood combines with Godhead in this act fills our souls with deep delight. Could any manifestation of Godhead

power impress us more than what is here? He not only sent Peter but controlled the fish. All creation is His and all is under His control not only on the land but whatsoever passes through the paths of the deep!

In its figurative bearing we touch the deeper depth of the heart of the Son of God. It speaks to our hearts of that which can never be forgotten, which will cause the hallelujahs of countless hosts of redeemed throughout eternity's golden days. Death lay upon all at that moment but He, the Man Christ Jesus stood outside its claims. As we have seen He could have gone out free but how then was the "mighty debt" to be paid? He who is free from the claims of death endures the death due to us that He might have us with Himself. He made our sins His, our judgment His judgment and paid the debt we owed. Blessed precious holy Lord we adore, and as we adore THEE our souls are led into the deeper depth of Thy holy perfections as the Son. The depth of Thy humiliation can be measured only by the height of Thy glory and both are beyond our comprehension for ever. We see them in combination at Calvary where the heart of God was revealed and thereby each of us learns the meaning of the words "For Me and thee." The Bridge that spans the gulf of death none could cross without paying toll; that which meant eternal condemnation. In love surpassing all thought the Lord of glory paid all that was our due and having met every claim takes us in His own acceptance as those given to Him by the Father into that scene of heavenly bliss to share with Himself all that He inherits and has acquired as our Redeemer and Lord.

# THE PERSON OF THE CHRIST.

A. J. Pollock.

## No. 1: Intimations of the coming Christ in the Old Testament.

IT has often been said that the New Testament is latent, or hidden, in the Old Testament; the Old Testament is patent, or revealed, in the New Testament. So in our present enquiry we have the advantage of all the light of the New Testament shining on the Old Testament page. The first passage to be noted in the first verse of the Bible: "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth" (Genesis 1. 1).

In the light of the revelation of the Holy Trinity in the Scriptures, three Persons in the Godhead — Father, Son and Spirit—yet one God, we are able to understand why the word God in Genesis 1. 1 should be in the plural. There are three numbers in the Hebrew language. It possesses a dual number in addition to our singular and plural. The dual number means two of persons or things, so that necessitates that the plural shall embrace three *at least*.

Since the New Testament teaches there are three Persons in the Godhead, we are not surprised to find the word God in the plural number in the Hebrew language. And further, the verb, *created*, following the plural noun, God, is in the singular. This teaches at once that though there are three Persons in the Godhead, yet there is but *one* God—Three in One and One in Three. We are thus assured that the hand of direct inspiration is at work most unmistakably in this Scripture.

Nay further, the word God (Elohim) is in the plural over 2,500 times through the Old Testament, and only a little over 300 times in the singular. One passage in particular

brings the singular and plural together. We refer to Deuteronomy 6. 4:—

"Hear, O Israel: The Lord [*Jehovah*, singular] our God [*Elohim*, plural] is one Lord [*Jehovah*, singular]."

Here in the very affirmation of the Unity of the Godhead, the truth of the Trinity of Divine Persons is carefully guarded.

We read in Romans 5. 14, that

"Adam . . . is the figure of Him that was to come."

This brings us to the second chapter of Genesis. Why should Eve be created, or made, in the way she was? Why was she not created as Adam was, out of the dust of the earth? Why was Adam put into a deep sleep by the Lord God, and a rib (literally, *side*) taken from Adam, and a woman built therefrom, and given to Adam as a "help meet"?

In Ephesians 5 we have this applied. The Apostle Paul is giving instructions as to the conduct of wives towards their husbands, and husbands towards their wives. Adam exclaimed when he beheld his wife,

"This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh" (Genesis 2. 23).

In Ephesians 5. 30, Paul, speaking not of an earthly husband, but of our Lord, says,

"We are members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones." He then proceeds,

"For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and

shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh.

This is a great mystery, BUT I SPEAK CONCERNING CHRIST AND THE CHURCH" (Ephesians 5. 31, 32).

Here the light of the New Testament is thrown upon the Old Testament page. We get a beautiful figure of Christ and the Church. Adam fell into a deep sleep. Our Lord went into the sleep of death. As a result of Adam falling into a deep sleep, he had the joy of receiving his bride. Christ loved the church, gave Himself for her, and will have the joy of presenting her, His Bride, to Himself in the coming day of glory.

Could Moses have had any idea how beautifully the story of Eve's entrance into the world would fit in with a story that was as yet in his day lying many centuries ahead?

We gather that the marriage estate is not merely a convenient illustration of Christ and the church, but rather that it is formed on the model of Christ and the church.

Genesis 3. 15 gives us the first definite intimation of the coming Christ. We read,

"And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and HER SEED: it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel."

God Himself is the Speaker, who knows all things from the beginning, and He did not announce the seed of the man, but of the woman. If Moses had been left to Himself to record this announcement would he have made this blunder, as men would say? But did he make a blunder? He did not. Again we see Who guided his pen. It was the first inti-

mation of the virgin-birth of our Lord.

We trace the enmity all down the ages between the Satanic seed and the promised seed. And we see how this came to a head in the life of our Lord. It appeared as though Satan had gained a victory at last when Christ hung dead on a gibbet of shame. How aptly does Moses phrase it when he speaks of the bruising of the heel. How short-lived was Satan's exultation when our Lord rose from the dead on the third day. Instead of Satan's victory, it was Christ's. His very death was the weapon that gained the victory. Satan's head was bruised there. His power was annulled. His doom is certain.

We often sing with triumph of our Lord,

"He Satan's power laid low;  
Made sin, sin's reign o'erthrew;  
Bow'd to the grave, destroyed it so,  
AND DEATH BY DYING SLEW."

So in this striking prophecy we have the first intimation of the Virgin Birth of our Lord.

We cannot comment on every intimation of the coming of Christ in the Old Testament, but must content ourselves with a mere handful of them, but sufficient for our purpose. We pass on over 3,000 years, and we find a very distinct prophecy as to the Virgin Birth. We read:—

"The Lord Himself shall give you a sign: Behold a virgin [*literally* THE virgin] shall conceive, and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel [*GOD with us*]" (Isaiah 7. 14).

We find what was in germ in the prophecy of Genesis 3. 15 is now stated in plain terms. We are told it is a

sign. The ONLY Person to be so born was marked out as Immanuel (God with us), God walking as a lowly Man on earth.

We must not expatiate on this lovely scene. Read the delicate and restrained accounts of the Virgin Birth in Matthew 1. 18—25, and Luke 2. 1—7, the former Gospel giving the account of the birth of Christ from the standpoint of Joseph; the latter, from the mother's.

We are told distinctly that this is given to us as a SIGN. We need to insist upon it these days. We heard of a score of ministers, who were gathered together lately. They discussed the matter of the Virgin Birth. All but one declared they did not believe in the miraculous birth of our Lord. The one, who did affirm his belief in this sign, was scoffed at for his pains. To disbelieve the Virgin Birth of our Lord is to deny the Divine inspiration of the Scriptures and to reject the God-sent Saviour.

But God would by this means draw attention to THE Saviour of mankind. He stands a figure all by Himself. In the words of Thomas of old, we can say to Him, "My Lord and my GOD" (John 20. 28).

The same prophet Isaiah, often called the royal prophet, in foretelling the coming Christ, clearly indicates His Godhead and His Manhood.

"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" (Isaiah 9. 6).

What but Divine inspiration would dare to set in the same verse a child born into this world and yet call the Child "the Father of eternity?" And when heaven gives a name, it is a true name, and gives an accurate description of the person. How the readers of the Scriptures in Old Testament times must have puzzled over this text. Yet the solution is plain enough in the light of the New Testament, that Christ was the Son of God from all eternity, and became a Man in this world. When as a Babe He lay in the arms of His virgin mother, His name was "The Father of eternity."

It is very significant that Scripture tells us *a CHILD is born* but not that a *SON is born*. Those who are teaching that the Lord only became the Son of God in incarnation, would have fastened on that text as the vindication of their false teaching, if it had been so rendered. But it tells us, "A Son *is GIVEN*." The well-known gospel verse, John 3. 16, agrees with this:

"God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son."

The Son is given, *NOT born* in order to be the Son born, but when He took Manhood in lowly grace, He was still *AS EVER* the Son.

The first name given prophetically to the Child born is *Wonderful*. That seems to carry the meaning that the Incarnation is a mystery to human minds. That is borne out by the reply of the angel to Manoah, the father of Samson, the child to be born. Manoah asked for the name of the angel that he might do him honour. The angel replied:—

"Why askest thou after My name, seeing it is *secret*" (Judges 13. 18).

The word, *secret*, is the same word rendered *wonderful*.

This answers to the New Testament, when our Lord said,

“No man knoweth the Son but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father but the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal Him” (Matthew 11. 27).

There are two steps in the knowledge of the Father, (1) as revealed by the Son and (2) then by those to whom the Son reveals the Father. But in the case of the Son there is but one step, that is, He is known in the meaning of that verse only by the Father, and that is true for ever.

But the reader may say, But I know the Lord Jesus.

Yes, that is blessedly true of all believers, but none but the Father can understand the mystery of the Eternal Word becoming flesh, how Deity and manhood can combine in one blessed Person. No one will ever fathom the secret of that wonderful union of Godhead with manhood, so that God Himself may be revealed to men and an atoning death take place whereby sinful men may be blessed and saved, and have Divine life.

Another name is that of “Mighty God.” This falls into line with John 1. 1,

“The Word was with God, and the Word was GOD.”

We can well sing,

“Thou art the everlasting Word,  
The Father’s only Son,  
God manifest, God seen and heard,  
The Heaven’s belov’d One,  
Worthy, O Lamb of God art Thou,  
That every knee to Thee should bow.”

There is a third very striking statement in Isaiah. In it is indi-

cated more fully than anywhere else in the Old Testament the truth of the Holy Trinity. We read,

“Come ye near unto Me, hear ye this: I have not spoken in secret from the beginning for the time that it was, there AM I: and now the (1) Lord God and (2) His Spirit, hath sent (3) ME” (Isaiah 48. 16).

Here we have three Persons—(1) The Lord (*Adonai*, plural) *God* (*Jehovah*, singular), (2) His Spirit and (3) ME. The One, who speaks of Himself as ME, is evidently Divine for He says, “From the beginning, from the time that it WAS, there am I.” We are reminded of the Lord’s own words to the Jews,

“Before Abraham WAS, I am.” (John 8. 58).

We are familiar with the thought of the Son sending the Spirit, as was witnessed on the Day of Pentecost, but here we get the Spirit sending the Son. The passage says “Has SENT Me.” All through the Gospel of John we get the Lord again and again affirming that He is the sent One.

“The Father hath SENT Me” John 5. 36).

“And the Father Himself which has SENT Me, hath borne witness of Me” (John 6. 37).

“As the living Father hath SENT Me” (John 6. 47).

These are but three passages out of many that sprinkle plentifully John’s Gospel.

Our Lord opened the eyes of a blind man. He anointed the man’s eyes with clay made from His spittle, and sent him to wash in the pool of

Siloam, which is by interpretation, "SENT." Our Lord was under no necessity to put clay on the man's eyes. In other cases His word of power sufficed for the miracle. He had evidently a meaning to teach by His action, possibly not so much for the blind man as for ourselves.

Surely the teaching our Lord would have us learn is that His incarnation would only make it more difficult to understand that He was GOD. How could men know that He was God as He walked a Man amongst men? To put clay upon a blind man's eyes, only made it still more difficult for him to see. The moment he washed in the pool of Siloam (by interpretation SENT) his sight was restored. The moment a soul learns that the lowly Jesus, who went about doing good in this world, was the SENT of the Father, His only begotten, eternally-existing Son,

equal with the Father in the Godhead, then everything becomes plain. We must work, as it were, from His Godhead to His Manhood, and then all is understandable. If we seek to work from His Manhood to His Godhead, we shall ever be in confusion, like clay put upon blind eyes. To work from His Godhead to His Manhood is the way Scripture puts it, as for instance,

"Christ Jesus . . . being (1) in the form of God . . . took upon Himself (2) the form of a servant (*literally* bondsman) and was made in the likeness of men" (Philippians 2. 5—7).

It is a wonderful moment in our history when we learn that the lowly Jesus was the SENT of the Father, His only begotten Son, from all eternity. "The works that I do bear witness of Me, that the Father hath sent Me" (John 5. 36).

## Things in which the Christian delights.

Let us remark how various the joy of the Christian is even now.

He delights in the nature of God revealed in Jesus. Romans 5. 11.

He delights in his intimacy with the Father by the Holy Spirit. Romans 8. 15.

He delights in the blessedness of being with and in the Son before the Father. John 17.

He delights in the fact that the Son became a man, with Whom and in Whom He is, yet one divinely perfect. John 17. 22.

He delights in God and the Lamb—the blessed and glorious display of redeeming counsels and divine glory. Revelation 22. 1.

He delights in the hope of being like Christ. 1 John 3. 2.

He delights in the knowledge that all the saints will be like Him, conformed to His image. Romans 8. 29.

He delights that Christ will be glorified in them. John 17.

He delights in the hope of an adequate service, in a full and perfect witness, in a fit and heavenly worship. Revelation 22. 3, 4.

## God's Way.

There is something wonderfully gracious in the way the Lord waits upon His people to instruct them: it is calculated to draw out the affections and minds of believers in love and gratitude.

God is blessing them *all* the way, and His mercy is exercised even in their wants.

The way in which He leads us, the particular circumstances in which we are placed, the situations we are in, are all so many methods and means of divine instruction planned by a God of love.

The believer longs for rest from all that now offends, but God leaves him here to teach him many lessons. This world, constituted as it is at present, is a *means* by which God teaches us what we could not learn in a world of glory.

The believer is instructed in the long-suffering, patience, and love of God, in a way which he never could have known elsewhere; his wants, his weakness, his barrenness, his deadness, display most touchingly the wonderful patience of God.

And here, too, he learns the astonishing proofs of God's love in Christ; learning what God is in the person of Jesus Christ, through all the particular circumstances in which they are placed, notwithstanding all our weakness, shortcomings, and misdeeds.

There is no feeling of hostility in God's mind toward us—not even an impatient word or look; all is love.

It is in the weakness and wants of His children that God's manner of love is even more drawn out.

The Lord, amidst our weakness and infantine helplessness, guards over us; and thus we come to learn the *manner* of God's love.

If the believer is insensible to this, he is in a sadly low state; to be insensible to the manner of God's love to us, and not to be sensible that we are nearer to God than we are even to the circumstances in which we are placed.

The apostle Paul himself besought the Lord that the thorn in the flesh should be taken away. But the moment he got the clue of divine *love* working in it, he said, I would not have it gone for the world. He glories in his infirmities, that the *power of Christ* might rest upon him. (2 Cor. 12. 9).

Christ's every-day care over us, and the exercise of His *love*, reveal that *love*, and bring the heart back to it.

J.N.D.

## AROUND THE CROSS IN THE GOSPEL OF JOHN.

NO. 7. Chapter 19, continued.

J. T. Mawson.

“And he that saw it bear record, and his record is true: and he knoweth that he saith true. **THAT YE MIGHT BELIEVE,**” verse 35.

**W**E were not there to see that great sight, but God, in His infinite mercy to us, ordained and ordered that one should be there who by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit should bear witness to what he saw and record it for us. The disciple whom Jesus loved was not more courageous than his brother James or Simon or Thomas, and he would have fled with them from the scene of his Master's shame and apparent defeat, if he had not been held there by the power of God. God kept him standing by the cross when his brethren fled that he might record what he saw for the sake of multitudes yet to come; and for our sakes, *that we might believe.*

What did he see? He saw His Lord and Master, the One whom he trusted would have redeemed Israel, hanging upon a felon's cross, with thorn-crowned head bowed in death, and blood and water flowing from His spear-ripped side. That was a sight that had shattered the faith of many and destroyed their hopes, yet John tells us that he bears record of it, *that ye might believe.* What is there in that sight to command our faith? It looked as though the cause of the Lord was lost. His foes exulted in what they considered was His extinction, His disciples with the women that followed Him thought that He had been utterly defeated, and they mourned and wept thereat in a hopeless sorrow. But the conclusion of foes and friends were wrong; it was not defeat but victory, as John had learnt when he wrote his record, that we might believe. But

what are we to believe? That God's love is greater than man's hatred, and that there and then when man's hatred of God broke all bounds and rose up to murder His Son and drive Him out of the inheritance that they claimed as their own His love triumphed, and that in the death of His Son He would find the righteous basis upon which He could give eternal life to whosoever believeth in Him. “Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins” 1 John 4.

Herein is love indeed. How shall we describe it? What word 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 the words that we can command, or their equivalent in the language in which Paul wrote must have been considered by him when he desired to describe this love and the gift that it gave, but he discarded them all and declared the gift of God's Son to be “*God's unspeakable gift.*” That which surpasses all human comprehension cannot be described in human language. We shall have a new language when we reach heaven, and shall be able to speak in heavenly superlatives, but even then and there shall we find words to describe the meaning of what John saw? I doubt it. It will be for ever unspeakable love, the unspeakable gift.

We stand in thought with John,

and with his eyes we see it all. We gaze upon a dead Christ upon the cross, where He was made sin for us, and there we learn the necessity for it, for without the shedding of blood is no remission of sins. But not the blood of bulls and goats could avail for this, nor the blood of any other man, for every man's life was forfeited because of his own sins, and none could give a ransom for his brother, but this blood, the blood of Christ, who through the Eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, purges our conscience from dead works, and cleanseth from all sin. The judgment could not spare Him when He was lifted up as our Substitute; His life was poured out as a sacrifice for our sins, infinite and efficacious; it has met the demands of justice against us and because of it God rejoices in giving eternal life to all that believe.

But John saw *water* as well as blood flow forth from the side of his Lord, and though he could not have understood the significance of this at the time, he had learnt its meaning afterwards when he wrote of it in his Epistle.

John saw the evil of the human heart fully exposed in its bitter hatred of his Lord. And let everyone of us say as we behold it through John's eyes, "There go I, but for the grace of God"; for there is no difference, not only because all have sinned, but because the nature that

does the sins is alike in all men. But the evil in man's heart brought out the good that is in God's, and Jesus died, not for what we had done only, but for what we were. We can face it all now, not the sins only, but the evil spring of all within us. The blood was there to expiate the sins; the water was there also, evidence that the judgment of death which God had pronounced upon Adam's sinful race had been borne by our representative and substitute. It was the judicial end before God of the man who had sinned the sins. As we take it to ourselves and say with Paul, "I am crucified with Christ" we are morally cleansed from that inner evil, we reckon ourselves to be dead indeed unto sin. "There are three that bear witness on earth, the Spirit, and the water and the blood: and these 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 our evil nature or its outcome, whether it be the root or the fruit, He has dealt with it according to His own wisdom, that nothing might stand in the way of His pleasure in us and our joy in Him. He has so dealt with it that He gives eternal life to all who believe.

Have you believed? Has the great sight that John saw and recorded moved and melted you and brought you in adoring faith to the feet of the Lamb that was slain? To this end the record was made, may it have its full force and effect with us.

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A Pharisee is a man with plenty of light in his head, but little love in his heart. These defects make him a first rate critic of his brethren.

He that makes the creature his trust shall fall with the falling; he that cleaves to the Lord shall stand fast for ever.

## THE CLOSED ROAD.

A. M. Chambers.

*He led them forth by the right way—Psalm 107. 7.*

Is the road closed

That thou hadst longed to tread,

Thine eyes had followed

With wistful gaze?

So fair it looked to thee

Stretching invitingly

By pleasant ways.

Now it is closed,

Stopped are thy hasting feet;

Forces thou canst not meet

Do thee withstand.

Beat not, importunate,

Upon the fast-shut gate

With urgent hand,—

God closed that road;

He saw the precipice

Ahead, the deep abyss

Thou couldst not see,

And in His mercy rare

Stayed thee from entering there,

Closed it to thee.

In His good time

Shall be made plain to thee

What now thou dost not see;

Hope thou in God,

Some day thy heart shall raise

A song of thankful praise

For that closed road.

## To Sleep and Awake.

The last words of the dying Christian who had often been in conflict for the truth were of peace. The peace of the presence of the Lord to whom he was going was stealing over his soul, and of it he spoke. "I will both lay me down *in peace, and sleep*: for Thou, Lord, only makest me to dwell in safety," Psalm 4. 8. Yes, whether here or there, held in the hand that smote the power of death, His saints are safe, and He keeps them in perfect peace. But for all who sleep through Jesus there is to be a glorious awakening, "As for me," everyone of them can say, "As for me, I will behold Thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, *when I awake* in Thy likeness," Psalm 17. 15. This is the grand consummation of our hope, and this is the fulfilment of God's purpose and promise "conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren," Romans 8. 29.

## CORRESPONDENCE—continued.

### Why so few definite, out and out, clean cut Conversions?

The following questions have been sent to us. "1. Why is it that the Gospel even when faithfully preached, does not produce the deep conviction of sin that we used to see? 2. How do you account for the fact that men seem to have entirely lost the fear of God? 3. We can understand modernistic preaching hardening the conscience and making men indifferent to God's claims, but why should apparently faithful preaching be so ineffectual?"

THE questions are only truly answerable when we realise that they are inseparably united, and are rather to be regarded as three different aspects of one great problem, than treated as three distinct questions which might arise from various causes.

The one answer common to all three questions may be given in five words:—*the spirit of the age.*

If we see the effect which this is exerting upon the world and the assemblies, then it should not be difficult to find a reasonable solution to the above queries.

The world to-day has arrived at a transitional stage which might almost be described as the death throes of the old era, and the birth-pangs of the new.

#### 1. *The effect on the world.*

The Devil has changed his role. He is not seen to-day in the character of a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour, but rather as an angel of light seeking whom he may deceive.

#### *In the Material Sphere:—*

During the past twenty years, man has made remarkable progress in scientific discoveries. The element of mystery which is an essential part of the human make-up, and which, to the natural man, has ever begotten within him a reverence and fear of the great Unknown, has to a very large extent been dissipated by the

"enlightening" scientific explanations regarding God and His Universe. All phenomena are easily accounted for these days by the intellectus!

In schools, in universities, and in the vast field of modern literature, the scientist, the anthropologist, and the geologist have added their quota, with the result that the average person, hungering for truth and knowledge, inflates his mind with erroneous teachings of men, which undermine his God-given sensibilities.

As the Word of God goes contrary to the natural man (1 Cor. 2. 4), he comes to regard the Scriptures as outworn creeds and dogmas and unworthy of serious consideration; choosing rather to view them as having served their purpose in past generations in the march towards knowledge and light, but no longer serviceable in the present day of progress.

Add to this the million and one amusements which Satan has devised for man's distraction, and we need not be surprised that a pleasure-crazed world finds little appeal in the claims of Christ in a scene where men have become lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God (2 Tim. 3. 1—5).

#### *In the Spiritual Sphere:—*

It is positively amazing to behold the number of religious cults which have advanced since the Great War: Christian Science, Spiritualism,

Theosophy, and a host of others spend millions of pounds annually in catering for the moral needs of hungry souls. Need we remind ourselves here of the solemn fact that had the church faithfully fulfilled the purpose for which she was called into being then people would never have needed to recourse to these cults in an endeavour to find peace and satisfaction in the degree which they have.

Satan is never slow to grasp the opportunities given him.

Christian Science claims there is no such thing as sin, only wrong thinking is responsible for the present condition of the world. A course of "right thinking" will rectify mankind and bring harmony on earth.

Spiritualism sends messages through its mediums from the spirit world to the effect that there is no hell hereafter for anyone. Death is but the door opening into eternal progression and happiness.

All this has wrought havoc with enquiring minds.

It will thus be seen that what is taking place in the material and spiritual spheres is all contributing to the fact that we are in the last days of this era of grace.

The present purposes of life down here, and the future life are explained away in a manner which is very pleasing to the natural man, and which panders to his pride; therefore there is no sense of sin, no need of a Saviour, and consequently no fear of God before their eyes.

## 2. *The Effect on the Assembly.*

The day of grace is far spent and the spirit of the age with all its attendant evils of spiritual apathy and Laodicean tendencies is upon us.

Many of the Lord's people it is true have steadfastly refused to allow themselves to be caught up and borne along in its insidious current, but alas! there are also many who, though not *outwardly* worldly have consciously, or unconsciously drifted into a state of luke-warmness and indifference. They are content to accept the days in which we live as the inevitable fulfilment of the Word;—but are their hearts exercised about it? It is to be feared that the spirit of worldliness has encroached far into the ranks of the Assembly with devastating results.

We cry for revival (or do we?) but if the Lord, apparently hindered as He is by the paralysis of His earthly instrument—the Assembly, were to act sovereignly, and send a mighty time of blessing amongst the unsaved—would His people be found in a moral condition to deal with the situation. It is very doubtful. This may be one reason why the Lord stays His hand.

An emptiness and superficiality has taken the place of that which once marked the mighty fulness of the Spirit's operation in the midst of God's people.

There is a tremendous mental comprehension of objective truth regarding what the Lord Jesus has accomplished *for* us, but comparatively little spiritual apprehension of what He desires to accomplish *in* us by His Holy Spirit, and of course, there is a corresponding lack of exercise in the life.

We require a balanced appreciation of both sides of truth. This very lack may account for the fact that Bible-readings and lectures are so largely and regularly attended and the prayer-meeting so often neglected. The former is a pouring in,

but the latter is a pouring out, and requires deep spiritual impetus.

### 3. *The Effect on the Preacher.*

Without the corporate backing of a powerful assembly life no preacher, however zealous and earnest he may be himself, can hope to achieve conviction amongst his hearers, much less conversion.

The preacher is too often regarded as an isolated unit, whereas nothing could be further from the truth. He is merely being used by the Holy Spirit to express what should be at that time the particular burden of the whole assembly.

It is interesting to note in this connection that Peter on the Day of Pentecost, stood up as representative of the other Apostles in proclaiming the Word.

The Scripture does not say "Peter, standing up *by himself*" proclaimed, but "Peter, standing up *with the eleven.*" There was the collective testimony of the eleven in full *harmony* and *sympathy*. Peter was used by the Holy Spirit to express that message with which the Lord had so obviously burdened the others also, and which they shared. Hence the great harvest of souls.

The Lord is only waiting for His people to fulfil the necessary conditions, and we should see the same blessed operation of God again to-day as on any past occasion.

*He is willing,—but, are we?*

"Channels only, blessed Master,  
Yet with all Thy quickening power  
Flowing through us Thou canst use us  
Every day and every hour."

Sydney S. Munro.

## Conditions necessary for Power.

**A**MONG these conditions I notice, first, a *simplicity of heart*. The Lord pours most into those who are most empty of self. Those who have least of their own shall have most of God's. The Lord cares little what the vessel is, whether golden or earthen, so long as it is clean, and disengaged from other uses. Only then is the cup prepared to receive the living water. If there was something in it before, it would at least, occupy some of the room which the Lord seeks for His own grace.

The Lord therefore empties us, that we may be clear from prejudice, self-sufficiency, and foregone conclusions as to what His truth ought to be. He would have us like children, who believe what their father tells them.

We must lay aside all pretence of wisdom. Some men are too self-sufficient for God to use. If God were to bless them largely they would talk in Wolsey's style of "Ego et rex meus" (I and my king); but the Lord will have none of it. That straight-backed upstart letter "I" must bow itself down into its lower-case shape, and just look like a little pot hook (*i*) of a thing, and be nothing more.

We need, and may the Lord give to us, great humility of mind! It ought not to be an extraordinary thing for us to accept what God says. It ought not to take much humility for such poor creatures as we are to sit at the feet of Jesus. We ought to look upon it as an elevation of mind for our spirit to lie prostrate before infinite wisdom. Assuredly this is needful to the reception of power from God.

## THE MIND THAT WAS IN CHRIST JESUS.

THE apostles had seen Jesus weep over Jerusalem; they had seen His tears and heard His groans at the grave of Lazarus. But there was something so overwhelming in the agony of Gethsemane, that the evangelists struggle with the inadequacy of language to describe the impression left on the minds of the apostles who were witnesses of that awful hour. So heavy was this weight on His soul, that in most touching words He seeks the sympathy of His disciples' presence. "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death: tarry ye here, and watch with Me." He knelt down; He fell on His face; so great was His conflict that, as Luke the beloved physician notices, His sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling to the ground.

What a contrast to the calm strength and peaceful joy with which immediately before He had comforted His sorrowing disciples, whose hearts were troubled and full of fear and sadness! (John 14—17). He had spoken to them of His glory, of His going to the Father and sending to them the Spirit, of His joy being perfected in them, and of their abiding with Him for evermore. He had sung a hymn of praise with them. In the prayer which He had offered them unto the Father there was no tone of sadness, there was nothing but peace and calm assurance of victory.

But now, though never swerving from implicit submission to His Father, He is well-nigh overwhelmed by the prospect of death before Him. We know the reason. It was not the prospect of physical pain, excruciating as it was, and sensitive as was

His pure and sinless body. It was not the anticipation of the external manifestations of Israel's ingratitude and hatred, deep as was His love to Jerusalem. It was not the shadow of the valley of death; for David and many saints are able to say, "Then will I fear no evil." No: Jesus, who is the adoration and strength of rejoicing martyrs, died not the martyr's death, *He died the Just for the unjust.*

That which men ordinarily mean when they speak of death had no terror for the Lord Jesus. "Our friend Lazarus sleepeth," He said to His disciples, and, comforting them on that last evening, He spoke of His death as simply going to the Father, and exhorted them to rejoice because He went to His Father's house and throne. And with perfect calmness He finally committed His spirit into the Father's hand. The enmity and opposition, the malice and contempt of His nation with its rulers, keenly as His loving heart left it, had been known by Him for years, and He had borne it patiently and calmly, and with undisturbed hope and courage, knowing that by meekness He would conquer, and that the Father would cause His work to prosper. Fearlessness, such as must accompany perfect faith in God, had always characterised Him. He never feared man. As He exhorted His disciples not to fear them that can kill only the body, so He Himself met all danger and opposition with the most peaceful calmness and collectedness of implicit faith in God.

Whence the sorrow, the anguish, the overwhelming agony in the garden of Gethsemane? He knew that on the cross, as our substitute, He

would be left to suffer in connection with the judgment of sin; that His soul would be left without the light of the countenance of God; and that which was His sole joy and strength, the very life of His life, would be taken from Him. He tasted that death of which sin is the sting and the law the strength. When He saw what was before Him—*death in its organic connection with Divine wrath*—He trembled and was in agony.

Here we see, as no where else, how abhorrent He was of the iniquity which was about to be laid on Him, and how wonderful was His love to God and to us. The Lord Jesus, because He was the Son of God, and perfect, holy man, could not but shrink from that cup, God hiding His face from Him. He prayed with strong crying and tears. We behold Him as the Son of man. He felt that this was the hour and the power of darkness. Satan doubtless used the fear of death, and presented it to the Lord's mind to throw anguish into His heart. The anticipation of His agony of the cross overwhelms Him. Yet He remains faithful. He cries unto God. His tears betoken the earnestness of His prayer; His prayer reveals the holy, submissive character of His tears.

Who can fathom the depth of Christ's prayer, or understand the full import of His tears and cries? Even in our infirmities the Spirit helpeth us, making intercession for us with groans which cannot be uttered. What must have been the petitions and the cries of the Lord Jesus when He offered Himself unto God! He sanctified the Lord His God in His heart, He hallowed His name, He magnified His holy justice, while He beheld His infinite love! He

submitted Himself to His counsel, He surrendered Himself to suffer the most agonizing pain, and yet He trusted in His almighty and faithful deliverance! Here was the most wonderful combination in the human soul and spirit of Christ, that He most fully acknowledged and adored the holiness and the justice of God, while with perfect love He continued to identify Himself with guilty and lost sinners, and with unshaken confidence He trusted in the faithfulness of God, who would crown Him with glory, and give Him an innumerable multitude for His reward.

He cried unto God, and because of His filial devotedness which made the Father's will His own, He was heard. The Father sent an angel to strengthen Him. The anguish that well-nigh overcame Him was conquered. He rose, and set His face steadfastly to the work before Him. With meekness He bore the kiss of Judas; He went forth with calm majesty to meet the soldiers who were sent to take Him captive; He restrained the false zeal of Peter, as afterwards He remembered him, and looked upon him with forgiving and tender love; He witnessed a good confession before Pilate and the high priest; He called Jerusalem's daughters to repentance; He prayed for Israel's forgiveness; He heard the petition of the dying thief, commended Mary His mother to the care of the beloved disciple, and then entered into the mysterious darkness of His expiatory suffering.

With strong crying and tears the Son of God offered up prayers and supplications unto Him that was able to save Him from death. In the depth of His weakness and anguish He looked unto the Father's power.

He poured out all His heart before Him. He prayed not to be spared the suffering of death; He asked not for twelve legions of angels to deliver Him. He had made the will of God His own, and because of this perfect surrender of Himself to that death, which appeared to Him so awful, He was heard. The answer to Christ's prayer was fully given when God brought again from the dead that great Shepherd of the sheep through the blood of the everlasting covenant. "Thou hast heard me" is in the twenty-second Psalm, the connecting link between the beloved One forsaken and the beloved One exalted, declaring the Name of God to His brethren.

Thus He learned the obedience through the things which He suffered. The mind which was in Christ from the beginning was the mind of perfect filial submission and obedience. He brought this mind with Him into the world, into His prophetic ministry, into the garden of Gethsemane, and to the cross of Golgotha. But in His sufferings this mind was tested, manifested, perfected. And now that He has offered *the* obedience, by which many are made righteous, and the Father, in answer to His prayer, has raised and exalted Him, He is fully fitted for and consecrated unto His High Priestly life. God now addresses Him as High Priest after the order of Melchizedek. (*Saphir*).

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## The Dignity of the Gospel.

WHAT constitutes the dignity of gospel? Is it human or divine, earthly or heavenly? It was a most undignified thing from a human standpoint to die on a cross between two thieves. That was the most undignified thing ever done in this world, and yet it was the grandest spectacle that ever heaven or earth gazed upon. With what adoration must the hosts of heaven have gazed upon the illustrious Sufferer as He bowed His head in death. The Pharisees spat in the face of that humbled Man, they wagged their heads in derision and cried, "He saved others, Himself He cannot save."

Ah! but He was intent on saving others. On that cross we see the dignity of almighty Strength, the dignity of eternal Wisdom, the dignity of everlasting, unquenchable Love, baring its bosom to suffer in the stead of its rebellious creature—man. It was the incarnate God standing in the place of condemned and guilty man—that was the *dignity of Love*.

Oh, precious Saviour, save us from maligning thy gospel and Thy name by our paltry notions of earthly dignity and forgetting the dignity that clothed Thy sacred brow, as, crowned with thorns, Thou didst hang upon the cross!

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So entirely redeemed are we that not a hair of our heads is omitted from the inventory of the possession which He has purchased in purchasing us.

There is nothing that the hearts of God's children should more sedulously cultivate than the thought that we have to do with *God*. Christ hath "once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God."

## SERVICE.

Extracts from Letters.

“I HAVE been reading the first half of the Acts of the Apostles lately, and have been much struck by the simplicity and diversity of the actings of the Holy Ghost. What a complete absence of form or system! Jerusalem, Samaria, the desert, Damascus, Lydda, Joppa, Caesarea, etc., each successively bring out some new feature or some varied display of the mighty power of the unseen Person who had come down to testify of Christ. Yet every acting is perfect in its place, and in divine beauty and order. The very contemplation of it has made one long with increased desire to be more in the power and current of the blessed Spirit, for *His* actings are as perfect to-day as in the days of old.”

“Be much with God, so that your service may be toned and matured by the secret intercourse of your soul with Him. I think this is where we most lamentably fail. The evangelists of a century ago had to face intense opposition wherever they went, and were often entirely without human support or the fellowship of saints. But their very circumstances of isolation cast them upon God. They were men who knew what it was to travail in birth for souls. The midnight hour and the grey dawn often found them on their faces in an agony of prayer. They had power first with God, and, as a consequence, with the people. They learnt the value of souls, and estimated the real worth of the world in the secret of the sanctuary, and when they came forth to preach they awed their listeners as they spoke out in burning words and with loving hearts the message of God. The divine truths they knew were tremendous realities

to them, and they spoke of them as such to sinners.”

“I fear it is true of most of us that we are more familiar with the presence of men than with the presence of God. Oh! to have the Apostolic spirit — ‘we will *give ourselves* to prayer and the ministry of the Word.’ Blessed self-surrender! To be altogether occupied in speaking *to God* and in speaking *for Him*! This is the *servant’s* business. As *saints* also we need to listen to His word and feed on it for ourselves.”

“One of the first converts in Europe was found in a prison (Acts 15), and was, possibly, addressed afterwards by the apostle Paul as a ‘true yoke-fellow’ (Phil. 4. 3). Alas! our poor cold hearts have very little idea of the depth to which grace stoops to find its objects, or the height of blessing to which it brings them. Yet, we might well know something of this when we think of *ourselves*—what *we were* in the flesh and what *we are*, through grace, *in Christ* and by the Holy Ghost.”

“It is good to have our hearts drawn out in prayer for others. How wretched *self* clings to us! How soon we find our hearts narrowed up from the wide and blessed circle of Christ’s service and glory, to the contracted circle of *our* service and *our* success! Oh! for hearts expanded by divine affections to burn with ardent desire for *His* glory, while we ourselves are willing to be anything or nothing at His pleasure! This is the secret of joy, and liberty, and power in service. For when Christ alone is before the heart, and we have no thought of self, we are

morally suited to be vessels of the power of the Holy Ghost. *He* is here for Christ, and if Christ is simply before us, we are in touch with all the blessed purposes in and for which the Holy Ghost is now on earth."

. . . . .

"I am more and more cheered by the thought that *every* bit of true service—that is, service in the power of the Holy Ghost—will be productive of eternal results. It is not given us to know all the results of our work, but we may be quite sure that so much of it as was God's work and in the power of His Spirit will be for eternity: '*Whatsoever God doeth it shall be for ever.*' This casts us

wholly upon God, inasmuch that everything that we contribute is valueless, and it is only as 'our sufficiency is *of God*' that we really succeed. It should therefore be our great object to have 'the power of God' (2 Cor. 6. 7) with us in service. Results may not always be manifest, but if God has wrought, something has been effected for eternity, and must be manifested sooner or later. Oh! to be more self-emptied, Christ-filled, and Holy Ghost possessed—earthen vessels, carrying the excellency of the power of God! It is no small thing to sink out of our own sight, to have the heart's vision clear upon Christ, and to be sustained in every bit of service by the power of God."

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## The Evangelist.

**T**HERE are vacancies in the heart of Christ, and the evangelist is gifted to go out and seek the lost ones to fill these vacancies. He starts from that heart, knowing what a shelter it is. He knows how it loves and cares for them, and so he goes out to seek the lost and bring them there. He is like his Master who came to seek and save the lost, and he knows the delight of heaven over one repentant soul.

A happy and blessed path is his. Himself a gift from the Lord to men, he must be qualified by the Holy Ghost for his work. As God's herald he takes his stand in the world, and announces the good news of salvation to sinners, for *all* who will receive it.

It is not a partial amnesty that he is commissioned to promulgate, nor is it a mere pardon, however graciously conceded, that he is sent to declare. He speaks of pardon, but of justification also. He speaks of deliverance from wrath, but he speaks of everlasting blessedness likewise. The threshold of hell shall never be crossed by those who give heed to, and rest in what he proclaims; and he is empowered to tell that the door of heaven has been opened to receive all who believe. The wrath of God is averted, because His Son has endured it for sinners; and the favour of God can be enjoyed, because those who believe are now accepted in the Beloved.

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No one can honour Christ in his walk and at the same time walk with those that dishonour Him.

# THE FAME OF JESUS.

James McBroom.

Matthew's Gospel. Chapter 18.

THE term "Kingdom of Heaven" is peculiar to this Gospel and denotes a sphere on earth under the control of a King now enthroned in heaven, centre of power and authority. In this chapter the Lord is instructing His disciples in its laws and ways. None can enter into it save by the door of repentance and the becoming as a little child, and to be great in it, this condition of heart must be maintained. This is moral greatness, and evidently the kingdom of heaven is the exact opposite in principles and character to the kingdoms of this world. It is here composed of true believers, those who have been born again, for only such have the "little child" character; and we have a different view of it to that given in chapter 13, where wheat and tares grow together. While sin and death reign in the world and its kingdoms, grace reigns through righteousness unto eternal life in this kingdom.

True greatness consists in being servant of all, the power for which is in the Lord Jesus Himself, who as in all else was the perfect example of it in a life of service to others. "Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them; but it shall not be so among you, but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your servant. *Even as the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto but to minister, to give His life a ransom for many,*" Matthew 20. 25-28.

The kingdom of heaven was set up at Pentecost, and worldly rank, wealth and education had no place in it. For nineteen centuries the power of evil has been at work

against it, yet it stands to-day in its own distinctive character, as the sphere where the moral rule of God is maintained, the Lordship of Christ is owned, and salvation for man is enjoyed. The administration of the kingdom was committed to the Apostles and as this was carried out under the control of the Spirit it was endorsed in heaven, and in this chapter the promise of the same goes out to all who are obedient to its laws, verses 18, 20.

This kingdom as it exists to-day is in mystery, i.e., it is not publicly displayed as it will be when the Lord takes His great power and reigns, now it carries on its gracious work in the hearts of men, and is in moral power. The King is in heaven and His subjects are on earth, therefore all is on the principle of faith. It is prophetically described in the Old Testament, but never in the form described here. There it is the power and splendour of the King, who is the Prince of peace and who ensures a state of society never dreamt of in the kingdoms of men; who will cause the desert to blossom as the rose and fill the earth with the knowledge of God as the waters cover the sea. The more we consider the glowing descriptions of His reign yet to be the more our souls are amazed at the character of His kingdom as it exists to-day. It was offered to Israel as the prophets had spoken of it at His first coming but His chosen people refused it, and, as to the outward glory of it, it was postponed, and set up instead in mystery.

The rejection of Christ created the position for the display of the resources of the King, for nothing that

evil powers could do could defeat Him. In result all that the Kingdom will bring in for man in a *public way* is available *to faith* to-day. The coming day of glory will reveal salvation and eternal life for man in a public way, and indeed all the blessings of the heart of God for men, but these blessings are now enjoyed in the Spirit's power and on the principle of faith by those who have accepted the gospel and have been brought into the Kingdom of the Son of God's love.

The first feature of the subjects of the Kingdom is that of a little child; simple, confiding and unsophisticated. This strikes at the root of self-importance and a vindictive spirit so that one can be calm and quiet when wronged and leave room for the Lord to take up his case in righteousness. But the Lord speaks of the children as such, saying:—"See that ye do not despise one of these little ones; for I say unto you that their angels in the heavens continually behold the face of My Father who is in the heavens. For the Son of Man has come to save that which was lost." There is something exceedingly blessed here: His coming and the Father's favour shewn to children. Not, to *seek* and save as in another passage, but to save, tells that though not having wandered away they have inherited fallen nature and must be saved. They have a place of special favour with the Father: their salvation brought Him, the Son of Man here.

We have seen already the connection between the Assembly and the Kingdom. Here it is the working out of the truth locally. In His providential wisdom God has placed His people in relation to one another in a way suited for the furtherance of

mutual profit in their daily life. This works out in true Christian fellowship in the enemy's world and is one of the richest favours divine love bestows, but it supposes the blessedness of daily going on with the Lord. If not, the very best thing may work towards sorrow. How often alas, sleepless nights through "local troubles" and "Assembly matters" have to be passed through because grace spoken of here is wanting. "But if thy brother sin against thee, go, reprove him between thee and him alone." This indeed would avert many sorrows. But more may be needed, hence the witnesses. But even this may not be enough. What then? Tell it to the Assembly. This was to be the believer's only court of appeal. If still the offender remained obdurate, what then? Leave him alone. "Let him be to thee as one of the nations and a tax gatherer."

Binding and loosing on earth and in heaven are spoken of in the next verse. It surely conveys the meaning that whatever was done under the Spirit's control would be endorsed above. This we have seen committed to Peter and in some way carried out. Here it is continued in the Assembly and under the Apostolic advice seems to have been carried out at Corinth. (See 1 Cor. 5; 2 Cor. 6. 11).

What follows in verses 19 and 20 connects closely with the gathering together of saints in these last days, linking up also with the Philadelphian Epistle of Revelation 3. 7—13. "Again I say unto you that if two of you shall agree on the earth concerning any matter, whatsoever it may be that they shall ask, it shall come to them from My Father who is in the heavens. For where two or three are gathered together in My Name, there am I in the midst of them." Here is

a state produced by the Spirit to which the Lord can attach Himself and the Father can take account of it and grant an answer to the prayers.

Although the Holy Spirit is not mentioned, the Holy Trinity is seen at work. What is here has been the resource of faith in a day of confusion and general breakup. It would be the link with the revival above referred to by which saints have been recalled to own the Spirit's presence in the Assembly and thereby get the gain of the full truth of the revelation committed to the Assembly at the beginning. It should be remembered that there is no warrant for organisation or ecclesiasticism, but simply a spiritual state which owns the ruin and its own utter helplessness, cleaving in faith to the promise and in this way gets the gain of the Lord's presence and the sense of the approval of the Father. The attempt to go beyond this can only bring sorrow, and alas, we have all to own the sorrowful condition of things so much in evidence to-day, the result of spiritual pride and the opposite to the child-spirit.

Two important things may be noted here. First the full light and blessing committed to the Assembly in the gift of the Spirit. Secondly, we are come to that which no failure, breakdown, or ruin can touch. The presence of Christ in the midst is what distinguished the Assembly at the beginning: it was His first thought if we may reverently say so on rising from the dead (See Psalm 22. 21—22). The prophetic intima-

tion in the Psalm we see carried out in John 20 and after the Assembly was formed the truth of it described in Hebrews 2. 11, 12.

“And when the Queen of Sheba had seen the wisdom of Solomon, and the house he had built, and the meat of his table, and the sitting of his servants, and their apparel; his cupbearers also, and their apparel; and his ascent by which he went up into the house of the Lord; there was no more spirit in her.” Is there not some faint likeness here of the glorified Man in the midst of His own, those He is not ashamed to call His brethren? What a blessed favour it is to be permitted to meet the Lord in His own circle as risen from the dead. All this in its deep blessedness is available to-day in being gathered to His Name: a Name which gathers up in itself all that He is now in redemption glory, as He Himself has said “My new Name.” All this and much more may be said for there is no end to the blessing of companying with the risen Lord in His own circle, but it must be emphasised and more especially in view of the misuse of Matthew 18. 20, that it cannot be touched but in the Spirit. For the Lord to attach Himself to anything else, or the Father grant the petitions or heaven to endorse the actions of anything else, no Spirit-taught soul would ever assert. There is an atmosphere of grace and forgiveness in these verses which is of great value in the sight of heaven and which excludes by its spiritual power the very idea of ecclesiastical claims.

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The great guardian principle of all conduct in the church of God is personal responsibility to the Lord. No guidance of another can ever come in between the individual's conscience and God. In popery this individual conscience is taken away.

## “WE OUGHT TO OBEY GOD.”

T. Oliver.

“Uzzah put forth his hand to the Ark of God and took hold of it, for the oxen shook it, and the anger of the Lord was kindled against Uzzah and God smote him there for his error (rashness), and there he died” (2 Samuel 6. 6—7).

THAT solemn incident is fraught with instruction for us, in spite of the passage of three thousand years. The principle which is emphasised is that the work of the Lord must be done in His way, and not according to what we think is best. It seemed a quite justifiable procedure, that if the ark appeared in danger of being thrown off the cart, then surely that undesirable contingency should have been prevented.

That David should have conceived the idea of bringing the Ark of God into the midst of Israel after a century's absence was quite proper, but he ignored the scriptural injunction that the Ark was to be borne on the shoulders of the Levites and by no other means. His arrangement of a new cart might have seemed an improvement, but it was not the Lord's way, consequently one wrong step led to another. If the Ark had been borne in God's appointed way on the shoulders of the Levites, there would have been no necessity for anyone being apprehensive as to its safety. But God's people and their leader had to learn that the Lord could look after His own interests.

Over one thousand years later, when the Lord was asleep in the little ship in the storm on the sea of Galilee the disciples failed to realise that no untoward incident could happen to them in the Lord's company. He

was perfectly able to look after His own interests, and their interests were indissolubly bound up with His. They must have felt that when He arose and stilled the tempest!

How frequently we are tempted to interfere in the Lord's work as guided by our own reason. We may not have been greatly exercised as to whether or not our action would be approved of the Lord. If it is not according to His mind, He may not execute such summary judgment upon us as fell upon Uzzah, nevertheless our action may be just as displeasing to the Lord as that of the latter, and will receive similar condemnation at His Judgment Seat.

Hence the injunction “Study to show thyself approved unto God” (2 Tim. 2. 15). Nothing else will be worth while. “Take heed unto thyself and to the doctrine” (1 Tim. 4. 10), i.e., take stock of ourselves in relation to the doctrine.

We may be able to explain our courses of action quite favourably in relation to secular considerations, but it will be altogether futile, if these courses of action are not according to the doctrine. In other words, the faith once delivered to the saints is not rendered inapplicable because of the lapse of time, since it is the work of Him with Whom there is no variableness nor shadow of turning.

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When the Holy Ghost brings home the truth in power to the soul, there is no uncertainty about it.

# THE PERSON OF THE CHRIST.

A. J. Pollock.

No. 1: Intimations of the coming Christ in the Old Testament.

*Continued from page 167.*

Psalm 2 has two wonderful intimations of the coming Christ.

“Thou art My Son; this day have I begotten Thee” (verse 7).

. . . . .

“Kiss the Son, lest He be angry, and ye perish from the way, when His wrath is kindled but a little” (verse 12).

The first passage has been the subject of much controversy. Two ways of looking at it may occur to the mind. One is that the Lord became the Son by incarnation. The other is that He was ever the Son, and when the Son came into altered circumstances, and was found as a Man among men, He was greeted from Heaven as the Son, the altered circumstances, not altering nor impairing His eternal relationship with His Father.

The Eternal Sonship of our Lord is a truth running all through Scripture. Different writers touch upon it from various points of view. Yet Scripture being inspired, these writers do not contradict but support each other. If then a passage is capable of two ways of looking at it, and one way would throw the passage into contradiction with the general teaching of Scripture on the subject, it is plain that that explanation is not the right one. To say this passage teaches that the Lord only became the SON when born into the world, is to throw the rest of Scripture into confusion. If persisted in, it means the twisting of Scripture to bolster up a false exegesis, besides doing grave dishonour to our Lord Jesus Christ.

The explanation surely is this. The Lord said, “Thou art My Son” — *EVER* the Son—“this day have I begotten Thee”—the altered circumstance of lowly Manhood has left unimpaired in the slightest degree the relationship between Father and Son from all eternity. This explanation is supported by the general teaching of Scripture on this vital subject, and runs completely in harmony with it.

“Kiss the Son, lest He be angry,” is an eastern way of calling for universal subjection. To kiss the hand of a monarch is a well-known custom when a subject bows to his Sovereign. Philippians 2. 10, 11, tells us the day is coming when all shall bow. Psalm 2. 12 urges the *voluntary* doing it, which submission brings blessing. “Blessed are all they that put their trust in Him” (Psalm 2. 12).

. . . . .

Another striking intimation is Proverbs 30. 4,

“Who hath ascended up into heaven, or descended? Who hath gathered the wind in His fists? Who hath bound the waters in a garment? Who hath established all the ends of the earth? What is His name, and what is His SON’S name, if thou canst tell.”

This is a most remarkable intimation. It must have struck the pious students of the Old Testament Scriptures with amazement. Who could tell? The incarnation of the Son of God was yet in the womb of the future. In the light of the New Testament how understandable the passage becomes.

. . . . .

A still more striking intimation of the coming Christ is seen in Proverbs 8. As we all know the Proverbs is largely taken up with the praise of wisdom, and the warnings against folly. Solomon, the author of the Proverbs, was the wisest man that ever lived. God addressed these words to the youthful king,

“Lo I have given thee a wise and understanding heart: so that there was none like thee before thee, neither after thee shall any arise like unto thee” (1 Kings 3. 12).

Yet he stands as a monument of folly and sin at the end of his days, showing that the *head*, gigantic intellect, power to weigh the wisdom of one's actions, were not sufficient to preserve him from folly. His head was all right, but “his *heart* was not perfect with the Lord his God.” He went after strange wives, and heathen gods, and wrecked his kingdom. Not for his sake, but for the sake of his father, David, the cleavage between Judah and Israel did not take place till the reign of his foolish and wicked son, Rehoboam.

How fitting that this book, which shows that the wisest man, even its author, fails, should present to us One who never fails. Under the name of Wisdom, the Son of God is presented to us. Wisdom is here not a quality, but the Spirit here speaks of a glorious Person. We have here a wonderful intimation of the coming Christ. We read,

“I love them that love Me”  
(verse 17).

An abstract quality cannot love. A blessed Person with a heart can love,—this Person loves them that love Him.

Further down the chapter we learn

there were two Persons before the foundation of the world, who formed a Divine Society. Love and rejoicing ever flowed between them. We read,

“Then I was by Him, as One brought up with Him: and I was daily His delight, rejoicing alway before Him” (verse 30).

Was not the Son ever the delight of the Father? Did not the Son ever rejoice before the Father?

Then we read that

Wisdom was “rejoicing in the habitable part of His earth; and My delights were with the sons of men” (verse 31).

*HIS* earth! Whose? Evidently the One, who speaks. Who can call the earth *HIS* earth, but the Creator Himself? And who has shown His delight in the sons of men but the Lord Jesus? Who has died that men might live? Christ! So we read,

“Of Him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us WISDOM, and righteousness, and sanctification and redemption” (1 Corinthians 1. 30).

The Old Testament answers to the New Testament as the face answers to the mirror, as the obverse answers to the reverse in the seal.

A striking prediction is found in the little prophecy of Micah:—

“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 going forth have been from of old, from everlasting” (chapter 5. 2).

Here the Deity and Manhood of the Lord are indicated, the Deity from everlasting, the Manhood in time,

the place of His entrance into the world—Bethlehem.

“Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judæa in the days of Herod the king” (Matthew 2. 1).

Zechariah 8. 8 gives yet another striking intimation of the coming Christ:—

“Awake, O sword, against My Shepherd, and against the man that is My Fellow, saith the Lord of Hosts: smite the Shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered, and I will turn Mine hand upon the little ones.”

Who could be the Fellow of God, but

God; who could be smitten but the Man, Christ Jesus, the Shepherd of the Sheep? Did not our Lord call Himself the Good Shepherd that laid down His life for the sheep? He was God’s Fellow. He was the Shepherd. He died for us.

We have touched very briefly on very few and comparatively well-known Scriptures, showing the Old Testament intimations of the coming Christ. How we can thank God for this wealth of allusion, that is by no means exhausted in this short article. How we can worship the Father and the Son — the Sender and the Sent. Hallelujah!

## “The Lord’s Death.”

We are not surprised at the association of any mere man’s name with death. Adam’s death, the death of Moses, or of David, of Nebuchadnezzar, of Nero, or of Napoleon fall without abruptness into ordinary language and cause no comment. Since Adam’s transgression men have been born to die, for death has passed upon all. None can resist death, he is the master of dictators and kings as well as of ordinary mortals. Enoch and Elijah, the exceptions to this rule are the surprises, of which we should not have known if their translations to heaven without dying had not been recorded for us in the Word.

But the *Lord’s death* is different, there is no affinity, no congruity, between the words; and the more we think of them “the Lord” and “death” the more we feel the gulf that lies naturally between the two. The Lord, He is “the King of glory,” Psalm 24, He is “the Lord of glory,” 1 Cor. 2. He is the prince of life; “the Christ, the holy One of God,” John 6. 69. And 1 Corinthians 15 tells us that death is corruption, dishonour, weakness, we know that it is the wreck of a man’s hopes, the shattering of his ambitions and the end of his glory—“the dust of death,” is no mere figure of speech. And yet the Lord died. He rose again from among the dead on the third day, that we know, it is our testimony and boast; but there was a time in His history, when He hung *dead* upon a cross. It is an overwhelming fact. What made the Lord submit Himself to death? It was love, “The Son of God loved me and gave Himself for me.”

“Love so amazing, so divine  
Demands my soul, my life, my all.”

## IN THE MIDST.

J. R. Jameson.

**K**ING Saul, Israel's first king proved to be a failure and therefore God rejected him and chose Him a king from the sons of Jesse the Bethlehemite. And herein is illustrated God's changeless principle of setting aside the first man (figure of man in his natural state) and finding His delight in the second (a figure of Christ). Three examples of this come readily to the mind. Abel for Cain. Jacob for Esau, Isaac for Ishmael, and now David for Saul.

Samuel is commanded to go and anoint David, and Jesse makes his sons pass before Samuel but of each one he has to say, "Neither hath the Lord chosen this." There remained the youngest, the shepherd lad. Samuel says, "Send and fetch him, for we will not sit down till he come hither." When David appears God says to Samuel "Arise anoint him, for this is he." "Then Samuel took the horn of oil and *anointed him in the midst of his brethren*, and the Spirit of the Lord came upon him." Turn from the type to the antitype: of the Lord Jesus we read, "God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good for God was with Him" Acts 10. 38. David was given a place above all his brethren, but in chap. 17 he comes forth from his father's house to serve his brethren. He looks after their welfare, but how infinitely his greater Son surpassed him in this. He came not to be ministered unto but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many. The record of this is in the Gospels. The life of service that He lived culminated at the cross. If men were to be fed with living bread, as the brethren of David were fed with parched corn, Jesus must

die, for He said, "I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if a man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is My flesh, which I will give for the life of the world."

Let us read of the cross. John 19 is the scripture that tells us, "They crucified Him, and *two others with him, on either side one, and Jesus in the midst.*" Yes in the midst of two thieves, that is what men thought of Him; but we look to that cross and we see it stands in the midst of two eternities, and it fills them both with the glory of God. In spite of man's hatred against God, in spite of the fact that they cast out the One who came to bless them, God's love has triumphed for His own glory and for our blessing.

And Jesus cried with a loud voice and the veil of the temple was rent *in the midst* from the top to the bottom. This veil was the barrier through which none but the high priest could pass, and that only once a year, and then not without blood which he offered for himself and the people. The rending of this veil in the midst signified the setting aside by God and the end of that sacramental order of worship which He himself had established under the hand of Moses and Aaron; it was the death blow to all religious forms and ceremonies for blessing. We may also see in it the fact revealed that we have now access into the very presence of God by the new and living way spoken of in the Hebrew Epistle. Are we living in the full enjoyment of this glorious liberty of entrance to God's presence?

The incident of the two disciples going to Emmaus (Luke 24) is well known. When they knew Him He vanished out of their sight, and they rose up the same hour and returned to Jerusalem and found the eleven gathered together—saying the Lord is risen indeed — and as they thus spake *Jesus Himself stood in the midst of them* and saith unto them, Peace be unto you, Luke 24. What joy and wonder must have filled every heart as the fact of His resurrection opened out before them. Yes, but what joy must have filled the Lord's heart as He took His place in the midst of His own, bought with His own blood. The Lord delights to meet with His saints whenever they gather together, for His joy in them has not diminished; and His word holds true to this day, "Where two or three are gathered together unto My Name, there am I in the midst of them," Matthew 18. 20.

Hebrews 2. 12 comes in this connection, "I will declare Thy name unto my brethren, *in the midst of the Church* will I sing praise unto thee." Note the two "I wills," "I will declare" "I will sing." There must be the declaration before there can be response. Who is this who is to make the declaration? It is the Risen Lord Himself. What is He to declare? The Father's name. Who are the favoured listeners? Those He calls "My brethren." And who are these? Those whom He has redeemed by His blood and sealed by His Spirit. They are born of God and can cry, Abba, Father. They listen to the voice of the Lord, and join in praising the Father, for He loves them as He loves His Son. John 17.

If you notice the verse preceding Matthew 18. 20, "Where two or three are gathered together in My name

there am I in the midst of them," you will see that it is in connection with prayer. What a comfort it is to know that the Lord gives His presence to even two or three who may meet to pray to the Father in some out of the way corner. This scripture was brought forcibly before me one Saturday morning as I was collecting some overdue accounts for my employer. A Jew was pacing up and down outside a synagogue in a most agitated state of mind; knowing him, and enquiring the reason, the following explanation was given. He was looking for his son who was late, it now being long past the time for the service to commence. Asking him why they could not begin without his son, his answer was interesting, "We cannot start until we number ten men to form the congregation, if we have not ten men we just have to go home as we can do nothing without that number." Wishing him good morning I went on my way, deeply grateful to God for Matthew 18. 20, "Where two or three are gathered together in My name there am I *in the midst* of them." Oh that we estimated this at its true value. Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in My name He will give it you, John 16. 23.

Another scripture is well known to us, Revelation 4 tells us all about the Throne, of the One on the throne, those round about the throne, what proceeds out of the throne, and what there is before the throne. In chapter 5 we read and I beheld and lo *in the midst* of the Throne—stood a Lamb as it had been slain. Once on a cross between two thieves but now behold Him,

"Jesus God's Lamb, in the midst  
Of the throne Thou art crown'd  
Thou once on Calvary suff'rest  
Of man the disowned,  
Worthy art Thou

Glory encircles Thy brow  
Son of the Father enthroned."

John wept much because none was found worthy to open the book neither to look thereon, but one cries, Weep not, the Lion of the Tribe of Judah, the Root of David hath prevailed.

See Him thus *in the midst of the Throne* and hearken to the outburst of this redeemed company which no man can number, out of every kindred and tongue and people and nation, then notice the circle widens out until every creature which is in heaven and on the earth, and under the earth and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them heard I saying, Blessing and honour and glory and power be unto Him that sitteth upon the Throne and unto the Lamb for ever and ever. There seems to be a difference between the singing, verse 9, and the saying, verses 12 and 13.

Now one more scripture, Psalm 110, The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit Thou at my right hand until I make Thine enemies Thy footstool—rule Thou *in the midst of Thine enemies*. Thy people shall be willing

in the day of Thy power. This is the Millennium, and goes on to show that the One who is to rule will do so as a King and Priest upon His throne according to Zechariah 6. 13. Never until that day will there be any peace in this world.

How it delights the heart thus to trace the ways of the Son of God as seen in these few scriptures. Christ the one anointed God, but seen crucified in the midst of the thieves on the Cross, and as a result the veil rent in the midst and a way opened into the holiest. Then view who they are who have access into the holiest. Jesus Himself stood in the midst of His disciples and said unto them, Peace be unto you. Being in their midst He declares the Father's Name, and sings praise unto God. Then behold Him in the midst of the Throne. How worthy of that place of exaltation, and how competent to rule in the midst of His enemies. One verse about the Shepherd Lamb. Rev. 7. 17, "For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them and lead them unto living fountains of water, and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes."

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A grateful heart is the mainspring of obedience.

God's commands are God's enablings.

The only path of safety and happiness is prompt unquestioning obedience to the commandments of the Lord.

It is good to bear in mind that whatever our circumstances, it cannot be necessary to disobey God.

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"The sternest things that have ever been said as regards sin's penalty in the future, first passed the tenderest lips that ever proclaimed God's love to man."

## WHAT IS DEATH?

J.N.D.

FOR the unbeliever nothing can be more terrible than *death*. It is justly and scripturally called the "king of terrors." It is the judicial close of the being of the first Adam. What is beyond?

It is not merely so for the animal nature, though that be true, but the more it is considered in connection with man's moral nature, the more terrible does it become.

Everything in which man has his home, his thoughts, his whole being employed, is closed and perishes for ever: "When his breath goeth forth, all his thoughts perish." Man finds in it an end to every hope, every project, to all his thoughts and plans. The spring of them all is broken.

The being in which he moved is gone: he can count upon nothing more. The busy scene in which his whole life has been, knows him no more. He himself fails and is extinct. None have to do with him any more as belonging to it. His nature has given way, powerless to resist this master to which it belongs, and who now asserts his dreadful rights. But this is far from being all.

Man indeed, as alive in this world, sinks down into nothing. But why? Sin has come in; with sin, conscience; with sin, Satan's power: still more, with sin, God's judgment. *Death* is the expression and witness of all this. It is the wages of sin, terror to the conscience, Satan's power over us, for he has the power of *death*. Can God help there? Alas! it is His own judgment on sin.

*Death* seems but as the proof that sin does not pass unnoticed, and it is the terror and plague of the conscience as witness of God's judg-

ment. The officer of justice to the criminal, and the proof of his guilt, is the presence of coming judgment. How can it but be terrible?

But Christ has come in. He has come into *death*—O wondrous truth—The Prince of life! What is *death* now for the believer? It has, as a terror to the soul, in every sense, wholly lost its power for the believer. The physical fact may take place; but so wholly has Christ put away its power that that is not necessarily the case. We shall not all sleep, though we shall all be changed. Desiring, says the apostle, not to "be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality may be swallowed up of life," such is the power of life in Christ.

But *death* has much more than passed away. *Death* is ours, says the apostle, as all things are. By the blessed Lord's entering into it for me, *death*, and judgment too, is become my salvation.

*Death* is not terror to my soul; it is not the sign of anger, but the blessedest and fullest proof of love, because Christ came into it.

*Death* has freed me for ever from everything that belonged to, and awaited, the old man, as alive.

Condemnation and judgment are entirely over as a question of the soul's acceptance.

It is never said that we are to die to sin. The old man does not and would not; the new man has no sin to die to. We are said to be *dead* and *commanded* to reckon ourselves *dead*. (Rom. 6. 11; Col. 3. 3).

What a gain *death* is to me in this respect, if really the desires of the new man are in me! Yea, what deliverance and power!

For faith, we are *dead*, not alive, in the world. Hence, also, everything which practically makes us realize this—trial, suffering, sorrow—is gain.

If *death* comes in fact, the *death* of what? Of what is mortal, of the old man. Does the new risen life die? It has passed through death in Christ, and this has been realized in us. It cannot die. It is Christ. It quits what is mortal.

It was previously outwardly connected with what is mortal; it is no longer so. We are absent from the body, present with the Lord. We depart and are with Christ.

Meanwhile death itself is always deliverance, because, having a new life, it is our being disencumbered from the old man which hinders and hems our way. It is our being with Christ. How sweet and refreshing is the thought! No doubt, God's time

is best, because He alone knows what is needed in the way of discipline and exercise to form our souls for Himself.

But if death is the ceasing of the old man, it is but the ceasing of sin, hindrance, and trouble.

As actual mortality, it is deliverance from it to be with Christ in the new man which enjoys Him. Who as to the proper gain of it would not die?

If we live to serve Christ, the sorrow of this world is worth while; but it is not the less sorrow in itself, whatever blessing may cheer us through it. To us to live, is Christ; to die, gain.

It is but the old man that dies; our misery first, our enemy afterwards. Of course, this supposes divine life, and in practice the heart to be elsewhere than in the things the old man lives in.

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## The Power of the Gospel.

“What a change comes over a man when Christ has truly conquered his heart. He will answer insult and abuse with magnanimity, patience, fortitude and gentleness. It is here that he has the advantage over the infidel; the infidel may be smarter in argument, he may have read more books, he may be more fluent in speech, he may be more audacious, impertinent, defiant; but when it comes to the real stress and tug of life the Christian has the advantage. When he is smitten on the cheek he can turn the other also, and

that is an argument that has never been answered. When he is mocked and reviled, he will not revile again; and that is a piece of theology that has never been written down by any of the Philistines who have sought to destroy and defile the heritage of God. By your holiness of life, sweetness of temper, love, meekness and humility you can magnify the gospel, and make men say ‘Well, after all, the gospel, come whence it may, that made that man what he is, is the true gospel.’”

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“The Apostles appear to represent prayer not so much as the practice of Christian life as its very breath and instinctive movement.”

## ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS:

### Judging Angels.

"Will you explain how we shall judge angels, 1 Corinthians 6. 3? Are these fallen angels? Surely angels in heaven will be above our judgment?"—CORK.

THE difficulty disappears when it is seen that the saints of this church period are to be associated with Christ in His Kingdom administration; when not the world only, but all things, including angels, shall be put under Him. They will come forth with Him when He comes to judge and make war and have part with Him in that war, Revelation 19. 11—14. But we suggest that the passage in question has in view more especially the administration of His universal kingdom—"He will judge the world in righteousness" Acts 17. His mind and wisdom will be in the

saints then as in association with Him they deal with matters that will affect the world and even angels, and with such a destiny in view they ought to have been able to settle their own differences. Being united to Him now they ought to have had His mind and His wisdom for these matters. It was a disgrace to them when they submitted their affairs to worldly tribunals, the very least esteemed among them, being united to Christ, should have had greater wisdom for such matters than the wisest of worldly judges.

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### THE CROSS.

A. H. Lycett

**O** SON of man, O Son of God  
 Alone on Calvary—  
 Thou who earth's path so meekly  
 trod,  
 In love to man, in love to God—  
 In shame and agony.  
 'Tis there I learn the depth of sin,  
 Thy love my once cold heart doth  
 win.

What untold weight of sin and guilt  
 Press on His sacred Head !  
 For sinners lost the blood is spilt  
 That doth atone for sin and guilt,  
 How ever great and dread:  
 My soul! His precious name adore  
 Who *loved* thee—*loves* thee ever-  
 more !

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### The Goodness of God.

A.M.C.

Father, we acknowledge  
 All Thy love and care,  
 For Thy tender mercies  
 Greet us everywhere !  
 Health, and strength and sunshine,  
 Happy, youthful days—  
 May we ever use them  
 Gladly for Thy praise !

Shield us now from danger,  
 As we homeward go:  
 Over us the mantle  
 Of Thy mercy throw.  
 May Thy love protect us  
 Guarding all our ways,  
 Till we praise Thy goodness  
 Through eternal days.

*To be sung at the close of a children's summer outing.*

*Tune—G. Bells 605. No. 2.*

# AROUND THE CROSS IN THE GOSPEL OF JOHN.

NO. 8. Chapter 19, continued.

J. T. Mawson.

“**A**ND [men] appointed His grave with the wicked, but He was with the rich in His death,” Isaiah 53. 9. New Trans. The soldiers who had charge of the crucifixion were anxious to be done with their brutal work and probably had dug a rough hole not far from the crosses into which they intended to fling the three corpses, for “They appointed His grave with the wicked.” He was no more to them than the poor wretches who had hung on either side of Him, and why should they give Him a separate grave? But God stepped in and cried *Halt*, to the will and purpose of men. The great work was finished; the last Scripture that spoke of men’s hatred of Him was fulfilled and God would not permit His beloved Son who had always honoured Him to suffer any further dishonour. His enemies were thrust aside and from this point onwards He was honoured and revered by those who loved Him.

God had held His man in reserve, and we read, “*After this came Joseph of Arimathea, being a disciple of Jesus, but secretly for fear of the Jews, besought Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus: and Pilate gave him leave. He came therefore, and took the body of Jesus,*” verse 38. It was a great and noble act; the timorous and secret disciple came forth as bold as a lion and in the face of a hostile world took his stand by the cross of his crucified Lord. It was an unheard of thing. Whoever before had set any value upon the body of a crucified criminal? That a ruler of the Jews should do it must have caused a sensation. The world would scoff but

the sight of that solitary man, separated from his fellows, regardless of all consequences, standing beside that cross, must have thrilled heaven! It was as though he said, “O Jews, ye have spurned Him but I embrace Him. O world, ye have despised and crucified Him, but I love Him. Christ for me. I share in His shame, and will bear His reproach. Ye are on that side, I am on this.” This is the stand that Paul took in later years when he said, “God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world is crucified to me, and I to the world.”

“*And there came also Nicodemus.*” It is good to see that Joseph was not left to bear the reproach of Christ alone. It may be that his faithfulness and courage inspired Nicodemus to join his company; but this Pharisee also loved the Lord, and he could not hold back, though as far as we know he had only once been in His company, and that by night. And he “*brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes about a hundred pounds weight.*” The women also would be there, for they were never wanting when needed, though John says nothing of them at this point. And “*they took the body of Jesus and wound it in linen clothes with the spices, as the manner of the Jews was to bury.*” “He was with the rich in His death.” His kingly rights had been refused Him by His people, but these, His hitherto secret followers, would own Him, the highest honour that they could pay to Him should be His. The linen, the spices and the new tomb were their tribute to His worth, but the love that moved them

in that day of sorrow! Ah, that went up with a fragrance to heaven that shall never be forgotten. Those two men would be cut and ostracised by their fellows from that day onward, but what of that, the Father loved them, for "the Father Himself loveth you *because ye have loved Me.*"

Look at those "two or three" as they tend the sacred body of their Lord, wrapping it in the linen clothes with the spices and bearing it away to the new sepulchre. They were in the fellowship of the Lord's death—Christian fellowship indeed! They were heedless of the praise or blame of the world; they had one object, their hearts were absorbed with Christ, and they were acting according to the mind of heaven and with the approval of God. Do we know the meaning of those words "As oft as ye eat of this bread and drink of this cup, *ye do shew the Lord's death till He come*"? That little group of the Lord's lovers were shewing His death; they were identified with His death, they stood together in faithfulness and love to the One whom the world had rejected and still rejects — that is Christian fellowship.

"*Now in the place where He was crucified there was a garden; and in the garden a new sepulchre, wherein was never man laid. There laid they Jesus.*" John is the only writer in the New Testament who tells us of a garden. He is always great on environment, and writes as an eye witness, which indeed he was. So he speaks of a garden, and with the garden he shews us a traitor, a cross, and a tomb. All for the Son of God. It is a startling fact, and I believe that the Spirit of God would have us to be startled and impressed by it. The Lord of glory was betrayed in-

to the hands of His foes in a garden, and there He was crucified. Not in the bleak wilderness where He had hungered for forty days, but in a garden, a spot that had been tamed and cultivated by man's labour. Thither He had resorted with His disciples for prayer, and it was there that His quietude—for the agony was past—was rudely broken by the advent of the soldiers led by the traitor.

The garden of the betrayal may not have been the garden of the cross, but this we know, for John tells us, "in the place where He was crucified there was a garden"; and in the garden a new sepulchre, wherein was never man laid. There they laid Jesus. Of course everyone loves a garden, and an oft-quoted poet has declared that he was "nearer to God in a garden than anywhere else on earth"; but John tells us that the Son of God was betrayed in a garden; "where He was crucified there was a garden," and He was buried in a garden. Why? We are not drawing on our imagination when we say, It was not in the habitations of cruelty where the naked savage lived his ignorant and degraded life that

"Man meted to the sinless One  
The cross, the grave."

"*The princes of this world crucified the Lord of glory.*" It was where the cultivation of man had reached its highest results. Religion, philosophy, statescraft all were there. What man since time began had been under better cultivation than Iscariot? And the Jews had the oracles of God and boasted in Moses and the perfection of their ordinances and priestly caste; they had been under divine culture for centuries. Yet Judas betrayed the Lord into the hands of the Jews and they crucified Him.

Pilate also had been trained and educated to administer Roman justice and would be well versed in Greek philosophy; but he was as clay in the hands of the fanatical religionists, and shared their guilt when he condemned Him to crucifixion, and in Hebrew, and Greek, and Latin he wrote the accusation and put it on the cross. It was when art and philosophy and religion and military and political power had been brought to perfection that the Son of God, full of grace and truth, came into the world, and He was betrayed with a kiss, crucified as a felon, and buried out of sight, though this last was done by kindly hands. *"because of the Jew's preparation day: for the sepulchre was night at hand."* Who that weighs these solemn facts can question the absolute necessity — *"Ye must be born again."*

*"And in the garden a new sepulchre, wherein was never man laid, there they laid Jesus."* We linger here with those friends of Jesus; they stood apart from the world that had

hated and murdered Him and we stand with them. They would have given Him a throne, indeed they had enthroned Him in their hearts, but now the new tomb is all that they could give Him, and in giving Him that they fulfilled the Scripture. It was a new sepulchre in more senses than one. It was new in the sense that never before had the grave received a sinless occupant. There had always been a natural affinity between the grave and the dead, for God had said, "Dust thou art and to dust thou shalt return," but there was no affinity between the body of Jesus and the grave; for the first time in the history of mankind the grave had received an incorruptible body, because a sinless one. Yet His burial was as real as His death, and herein is the gospel, "Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures; and was buried," and we cannot stop there, "He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures," but His resurrection belongs to another chapter.

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## "An Evil Unity."

One of the most deplorable features of modern profession is the way in which the Word of God is refused. It is no longer the platform upon which all who claim to be Christians stand together, for multitudes have substituted for it "the good of humanity," a platform broad enough to include the Unitarian and the Atheist, anyone, in fact, no matter what his thoughts of Christ may be, so long as he will work in the common cause—the glorification of man. This is a unity indeed, but it is a unity of the world that crucified the Lord of glory, a fellowship behind which the devil is, and none who are subject to the Lord would be associated with it for the sixtieth part of an hour. "IF ANY MAN LOVE NOT THE LORD JESUS CHRIST, LET HIM BE ANATHEMA" (1 Cor. 16. 22), is the solemn declaration at the close of the Epistle, which largely treats on Christian fellowship, and can any who do love Him work in harmony with those who are under God's anathema?

# THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW.

James McBroom.

## Chapter 18. *Continued.*

**F**ORGIVENESS, verses 21—35. Peter's question as to how often he should forgive his brother went far beyond what we should be prepared to go naturally, but the Lord's answer shews that there must be no limit to forgiveness, "Be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God also for Christ's sake hath forgiven you," Ephesians 4. 32. The parable of the unmerciful servant that follows calls for careful consideration. It may be that it has a dispensational bearing and depicts the state of unbelieving Israel among whom the Lord had ministered with such grace, not imputing their transgressions unto them, but it also exposes what human nature is, and by Him who knows the heart, and the soul that is taught of God will feel the need of continually cleaving to the Lord to be preserved from a vindictive spirit and to be like his Master carrying forgiveness to all.

A debt of ten thousand talents means limitless guilt, but forgiveness is also limitless as the seventy times seven indicates. What believing soul would not bow before God in the light of this sovereign goodness and infinite grace that has forgiven him and relieved him of a load of guilt that merited eternal condemnation! In this connection I have thought how blessed and fitting it is that numbers of departing saints and servants of the Lord, even those far advanced in ministering the unsearchable riches of Christ, should fall back in faith upon the precious blood of Christ and the joy that the knowledge of full forgiveness gives. We remember the prayer of the Lord to His Father for the forgiveness of His

foes when suffering on the cross; nothing could equal the grace and pathos of that prayer; it melts the soul into adoration before Him and covers us with shame at our lack of grace and narrowness of soul and self-importance in sometimes demanding apologies for wrongs done, instead of overcoming the evil by a greater good.

Dispensationally the Jew owed ten thousand talents but viewed nationally they did not repent, they would not have the grace so freely offered to them and they forbid the Apostles to preach it to others. 1 Thess. 2. 15, 16. But Christendom living long in the full light of the goodness of God is no better than the Jew and a day of solemn reckoning is at hand. Knowing the terror of the Lord and the just doom that awaits a grace-despising Christendom we may well use our time in seeking to arouse men and implore them to turn to the Lord who is rich in mercy and ready to forgive.

*Marriage.* Chapter 19. His ministry finished in Galilee the Lord departs to beyond Jordan to where a great part of His labour was wrought according to St. Luke. The Pharisees came tempting Him, asking, is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause? This gave occasion for Him to put His perfect touch on the Divine ordinance of marriage with an allusion to certain exceptions which are of a special nature. It is well known that divorce was common among the Jews at that time; women were put away by their husbands for mere trifles as indeed the form of the question implies. "Therefore take heed to your spirit,

and let none deal treacherously against the wife of his youth. For the Lord God of Israel, saith that He hateth putting away" (Mal. 2. 15, 16).

The Lord goes back beyond the Law to shew that at the beginning God instituted this relationship and that it takes precedence of every other. God made them male and female, and said, for this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh? . . . What therefore God hath joined together, let no man put asunder. They say unto Him, why did Moses then command to give a writing of divorcement, and to put her away? Jehovah in the Law through Moses had permitted divorce in a certain exceptional case (see Deut. 24. 1); not commanded it as they said, and it was because of the hardness of their hearts. This word is the key to the whole passage. Had these men ever entered into the finer feelings of the human soul in relation to the ordering of God for His creature they never could have quibbled about divorce. It is to these same feelings Jehovah appeals when He applies the figure of marriage to the relationship in which Israel stood with Himself and when He pours forth His plaint over their unfaithfulness (see Isaiah 50; Hosea 2). Well might the Lord say unto them "Have ye not read." Had they but entered into the meaning of their own position nationally at that moment it would have led them to think more seriously about the sacred bond of marriage. The light way it is treated to-day in Christendom shews the terrible departure from the doctrine and the will of God.

We ought to be greatly impressed by the beauty of God's order in marriage, and the way the Holy Spirit

takes up this relationship between man and woman to illustrate the holy place of intimacy the Church is put into with the Lord Jesus Christ. "He that hath the Bride is the Bridegroom," and the Spirit goes so far as to shew the Church as the complement of Christ in answer to the shadowing forth of the same in Adam and Eve. Marriage was instituted at creation, for an exceptional case divorce was permitted by the law, but now in grace the woman is recovered from deep debasement to her honoured position in life as created by God. The awful departure from it in these last days is working dreadful havoc in society and causing suffering, sorrow and death. Does not this shew that an outrage upon marriage is an attack upon the soul in its most inmost and mysterious depth.

The Lord next shews three exceptions to marriage. Two of these are connected with nature from different angles of which we need not speak, but the third is of some import and calls for a few words. "Made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake." First let it be noted that we are here far from the shocking thought of enforced celibacy. If we have looked at marriage as the richest blessing in nature: here we have a power introduced by grace which carries one above nature altogether. There is nothing legal, stoical or ecclesiastical about this; perhaps it may be best explained by the well-known phrase:—"The expulsive power of a new affection." It is indeed the blessed power of the grace of heaven working in the heart and so shaping the life that a person is so controlled by the interests of Christ as to forego what is his proper portion as a man here on earth. Everything that could distinguish the

Apostle Paul as a man on earth was given up that he might be free to serve the One he once persecuted. In him we see as doubtless in many others a power working which carried him definitely above nature at her highest and best. This again connects with verses 16—22 of our chapter by contrast but before that there is the incident of the little children being brought to the Lord.

*Children.* Here again the disciples are at fault much in the same way though perhaps in a lesser degree than the Pharisees, and here again the moral beauty and holy refinement of the Man Christ Jesus shines out. Children are an inheritance from Jehovah (Psalm 127). This is indeed a touching scene; the stern disciples like many others to-day seemed to

have no room for the little ones, but they did not know the heart of their Master. Are we not all children? Surely we would admit that the distance between the child and the man is small compared to the infinite distance between man and the Lord Jesus. He took them up in His arms as He had done before, and said "Suffer little children, and forbid them not to come unto Me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven." (Cmp. Mark 9. 36; 10. 16). Still later when the priests and scribes were offended at the children voicing His praise He referred them to Psalm 8 by saying out of the mouths of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise. We little understand how the Lord Jesus could appreciate human nature in its uncorrupted state.

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### "Thou art my God."

There are times in every life when everything seems tottering to its fall. Nothing is fixed, nothing sure; and every new thought brings only another possibility of ill. Times of national crisis, and of commercial panic; times of overwhelming grief. Hopes are all gone. . . . The sick, faint heart sees only desolation everywhere, past all avoidance, past all remedy. Then blessed is the man who knows what it is to hide himself in God: to come out of the toss of the storm, and to rest in this: "*Thou art; Thou art God; Thou art my God.*" For then can he say, "Though an host should encamp against me, my heart shall not fear . . . For in the time of trouble shall He hide me in His pavilion. . . therefore will I sing unto the Lord."

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Coming from God and conscious of nothing but God's truth, this Bible of ours awaits the progress of all knowledge with calm security. It watches the antiquary ransacking among classic ruins, and rejoices in every medal he discovers, and in every inscription he deciphers; for from that rusty coin, or corroded marble, it expects nothing but confirmations of its own veracity. It is not light but darkness which the Bible deprecates. It seeks above all things to be tested; for it can stand every test. The devout believer, however, needs not confirmation that the excavator's spade is constantly bringing to light as to the truth of the historical parts of the Word, he has tried and proved for himself the blessedness of that which it reveals, and he can say, "There hath not failed one word of all His good promise."

## A FORM OF SATAN'S WORKING.

J.N.D.

**I**N this, orthodox truth is in general maintained. Any pretension to the possession of spiritual power is based on church position, not on any particular manifestation of power, and thus seems to honour the institution of the church and Christ in it. God is alleged to have set there, in that institution, the seat of blessing, and this also is an acknowledged truth, and the unity of the body of Christ is thereon connected with the institution. But the sovereign operation of the Spirit of God is set aside, and that which acts outside the actually formed institution is condemned as denying the authority of God's institution and schismatical sin.

Thus the actual possessors of the power of the institution in its then state, really take the place of God. His power is vested in them as far as it acts on earth. Divine condemnation attaches to all who act independently of them. Direct dependence upon God is unallowable. And thus whatever puts individual faith to the test (for going with the crowd under authority does not) is condemned as self-will and presumption.

The system which so judges is alleged to maintain the unity of the church. This may exist in different degrees, and in different circumstances; but it always attaches divine authority more or less to official position, and thus puts man in the place of God by attaching His name to man. It is not spiritual energy in man putting souls through Christ in direct relation with God, with the Father; there spiritual affections are happy and blessed. It is man eclipsing God, getting between Him and

the soul. Not man revealing God but the authority of God attached to man. Hence full love and grace will never be known. The Spirit of adoption and blessed assurance of salvation in the knowledge of Him will never be. It may survive such a system for a time, but it cannot be identified with such a system when matured. To be with God, while always rendering the soul submissive, must render it independent of man; that is, it asserts no rights, but when the need is, it says, "we ought to obey God rather than man."

The first sign of weakness is the gathering itself becoming the object of attention, instead of their being a people enjoying the blessedness of their position by the relationship and fellowship it gave them with Christ, who had become and was their abiding object, revealing withal God the Father. But I would speak with more detail, for this is rather the occasion of Satan's power than the fruit of it as a positive word. Where this last is you will find holy spiritual affections broken and set aside to give place to the claim of the institution. And so are even natural affections, whilst the latter are given all their natural force and weight in practice to hold persons in the institution, and even largely used for this purpose. In the same manner people are won and brought under the influence that acts there by them. The activity and zeal will be for the system. It will be to make proselytes, and establish them in what will keep them there not to save souls or lead them to Christ. There will generally be a good deal of acting against, or depreciation of others who even hold the faith of Christ.

# THE CHRISTIAN'S HISTORY.

Inglis Fleming.

**A** CHRISTIAN'S history is an interesting study for every believer. To trace the ways of God with the soul must ever result in the thanksgiving and praise to "Him who has "called us out of darkness into His marvellous light."

And "in that day," when we know as we are known, and when we see everything as God Himself views it, our acclamations of adoration will be louder and fuller still.

"When Thy blood bought bride, Lord Jesus,  
Is complete;  
When each soul is safely landed,  
At Thy feet;  
What a story in the glory,  
She'll repeat."

Let us consider for a little our history as Christians as presented in the Epistle of Peter, which has been called "The Glory and Suffering Epistle." First of all then our *Ancient History*. There are those who boast that they can trace their genealogy back to the times of William the Conqueror or to even earlier times. But such dates are but recent ones when the Christian's ancient history is under consideration.

It was "before the ages of time" that the Christian's history began. In the thoughts of "the God of all grace" we were "elect according to the fore-knowledge of God," yes, we were "chosen in Christ, before the foundation of the world." If we allow our minds to go back as far as it is possible in that vast eternity before time began to be we were

## PREDESTINATED,

that is we were "marked out beforehand" to be conformed to the image of the Son of God (Rom. 8. 29).

Then it was the "Lamb . . . was fore-ordained" to suffer (1 Peter 1. 19) in order that in righteousness we might be brought to God now and to glory soon.

It is good for us to entertain such thoughts as these. They render the things of the world and of sense small by comparison, and enable us to have a wider horizon than is usual if only matters connected with this passing age engage our attention.

The question, "How long have you known the Lord?" is asked oftentimes, and many are the answers given. But if we enquire, "How long has the Lord known you? One answer suffices, "Before the ages of time altogether."

But coming to our modern history, we read through sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience and the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ. Having been born into the world and lived his sinful life, each believer has been the subject of the action of the Spirit of God.

Just as of old the Holy Ghost brooded over the chaotic darkness of the waters when the earth was to be formed for man's occupation and as the theatre for the display of the grace of God, so truly He has wrought with each Christian and each has been born anew by His operation. Thus we are sanctified to God for His service and pleasure, to obey after the pattern of Christ's obedience, delighting to do the will of God. The sprinkling of the blood of Christ has set us apart for the service of God.

The believer is

**PURGED**

in his conscience so can now serve the living God. If he had guilt upon his conscience he could not be happily in the presence of God, but in infinite grace "Christ has once suffered for sins the just for the unjust that He might bring us to God" (1 Peter 3, 18).

As cleared entirely from every stain of guilt and from every charge before the Throne of God, Christians can be happy as having been made

**PRIESTS.**

They are part of the "holy priesthood" to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God, by Christ Jesus," and part of the royal priesthood to "show forth the excellencies" of God. High honour is this! An honour that is eternal. When all need of ministry to others as known now is a thing of the past we shall join in our song of praise to the "Lamb as it had been slain" saying "Thou art worthy for Thou wast slain and hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood . . . and hast made us kings and priests unto God and we shall reign on (over) the earth."

Well may we exclaim as we consider our privilege, "Unto Him that loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood and has made us kings and priests unto God and His Father; to Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen" (Rev. 1, 5, 6).

As being in the world, but chosen out of the world, and though not of the world sent into the world (John 17, 18) we are but "strangers and pilgrims" on earth. Thus we are exhorted to "abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul," to re-

fuse all that which would hinder our true and full entrance into the thought of God for us while here.

Our journey at best is but short. We are

**PILGRIMS**

as passing through and not dwellers in this world. We are journeying to our country and our home. As strangers here we are absent from the land to which we belong. We are away from our home. "I am a stranger with Thee and a sojourn as all my fathers were," cried David, Psalm 39, 12, and others confessed plainly that they sought a country and were but strangers and pilgrims in the place where they were found. Thus it was that God was "not ashamed to be called their God" (Hebrews 11 13—16).

Turning now to the future history of the Christian we think of the eternal glory to which "the God of all grace has called us" (1 Peter 5, 10). The sufferings of the present period are but temporal—the glory to which we go and for which we wait is eternal. In that eternity of joy and privilege there will be forms of service of which we can have but little apprehension now. But we know that "His servants shall serve Him, and His name shall be upon the foreheads" (Rev. 22, 3, 4).

**PARTAKERS**

of the glory we are to be, owing all to the grace of God, and to the atoning death of His beloved Son.

Then

"For ever our still wondering eyes,  
Shall o'er His beauties rove;  
To endless ages we'll adore,  
The riches of His love."

## “I WILL COME.”

W. Bramwell Dick.

THE fourteenth chapter of the Gospel according to John has been the comfort of the saints of God at all times. We will read verses one to three, also verses eighteen and twenty-seven. It will be observed that we begin and finish with the comforting words, “Let not your heart be troubled,” while between the two we have the Lord’s all sufficient provision for our needs during His absence. Let us consider the circumstances. It was the night in which the Lord Jesus was betrayed. Outside that upper room His enemies were plotting for His death. Inside He was spending with His loved disciples His last hours before His betrayal and death. He Himself was troubled (13. 21), but such was His self-sacrificing, self-forgetting love that He thought not of His sorrow but of that of His disciples, hence His Word, “Let not your heart be troubled.” It may be these lines are being read by someone who is sorely troubled. “Jesus Christ (is) the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever” (Hebrews 13. 8); and to you He says to-day “Let not *your* heart be troubled,” so that you may lay your weary head upon His bosom and find rest and comfort there. Note further, He was speaking to eleven men (Judas had already gone out) and He said “Let not your *heart* be troubled.” He took account of them as one. One in their devotedness to their Lord, one in their grief at the prospect of His death; and did He not see in them the nucleus of that mighty company which should be the result of His death, resurrection, ascension, and the coming of the Holy Spirit: The one body, one heart beating true to Christ the living Head.

Then He told them of the Father’s

house. In other words He seemed to say, “I am going home.” He had left home to do the Father’s will (6. 38), and by His death to make it possible for that will to be carried out. Now He was about to return home. Next comes the great announcement, made for the first time, and which in effect was: “I will come again to take you home.” Only a divine Person could say “*I will*,” and He who uttered the seven I wills recorded in Exodus 6. 6—8, said “*I will*” on this memorable occasion. Here we have, as we have remarked, the first intimation of His coming for “His own.” Does it not thrill our hearts? He is coming! He is coming Himself: He is coming for us: He is coming to take us to be with Himself; and where He is we shall be with Him and that for ever. Hallelujah!

Be of good cheer troubled heart. It may be to-day we shall see the face of our precious Lord Jesus. We think, however, we can understand those sorrowing disciples saying: “Lord it is a great joy to us to know that Thou art coming for us, but what of the now and here? We are going to be left in a world that hates Thee so much that in a few hours Thou wilt be crucified. We will be hated, and we will not have Thee to protect us. Thou hast cared for us; Thou hast provided for us; Thou hast stood between us and the foe; now Thou art about to leave us; What shall we do?” Verse 18 gives us the answer. “I will not leave you orphans, *I will* come to you” (margin) “I have told you that I WILL COME FOR YOU.” In the meanwhile I WILL COME TO YOU.” Let us consider this no less precious promise. We suggest three ways in which He comes to us. (1) When we

are gathered together in Assembly. It is the privilege of all who belong to Him and who desire to give Him pleasure to keep tryst with Him, and on the morning of the Lord's Day in particular to be gathered together to His Name to remember Him (1 Cor. 11. 23-26), and His own Word is: "For where two or three are gathered together unto My Name, there am I in the midst of them" (Matthew 18. 20). In other words He says "*I will come to you.*" Do we realise when we are thus gathered that we have not simply come to a meeting, but that the Lord of Glory has invited us to meet Him, and that with the eyes of our heart we may see Him, as with spiritual ear we hear His voice, and as a result we prostrate ourselves in His presence. This is not something fanciful, it is real. As we apprehend it we will be careful not to be behind time on that occasion. It will guard our thoughts and govern our conversation as we go to meet Him, and we will later carry away with us the fragrance of His presence.

(2) He comes to us in our service. Oftentimes we are disheartened. The Sunday School teacher feels on the point of giving up; the Christian visitor asks, "Is it worth while?" The gospel preacher feels himself to be a dismal failure. Those who minister to their fellow believers get depressed. But who of all these, and others besides, has not, just at such times, proved the sweetness of His Word "*I will come to you*"? How beautifully this was experienced by the Apostle Paul, that valiant servant of the Lord. His activities had been suddenly brought to an end for a time. He had been arrested, and had been roughly handled, and he might be asking "What does it mean?" Just then, "the Lord stood

by him, and said, 'Be of good cheer, Paul'" (Acts 28. 11). We feel sure he understood in a special way that night the meaning of the Lord's word "*I will come to you.*" Beloved, wearied fellow-worker, let us hear His voice; be encouraged by His word; and be assured that He will come to us. (3) He comes to us in our individual circumstances. Thus He came to Mary of Bethany. There were three loving hearts there and "Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus" (John 11. 5). On the occasion of His first visit, recorded in Luke 10. 38—42, Mary seemed to be specially attracted to Him, and regarding her it is said she "sat at Jesus' feet, and heard His Word" (verse 39). It would seem as if Mary felt that the Lord had come to her, and, laying aside everything else, she gave herself to the luxury of hearing His word. What those divine communications were we are not told, but they had a marked effect upon the course of Mary's after-life as we shall see. Do we know the joy, the reality of the Lord Jesus coming to us and making divine communications to us? Do not let us be misunderstood, we do not mean revelation, we have that in the written Word and that is complete; nor do we mean new teaching, of which we hear much in these days, for there is no such thing. The Lord Jesus does love to come to us however and tell us more of Himself, His love; of the Father and of His love; and thus set our heart aglow as in the joy of communion we are led more and more into the knowledge and appreciation of Himself, and there is produced a response to Himself. Hence we sing:—

"O tell us often of Thy love,  
Of all Thy grief and pain;  
And let our hearts with joy confess  
That thence comes all our gain."

The result with Mary was that in her hour of sorrow she "*sat still in the house,*" till Martha called her, saying, "The Master is come and calleth for thee" (John 11. 28). Then at His feet in her anguish of spirit, she learned His sympathy; presently she saw His tears; and later she witnessed His power; and doubtless she found that He had come to her, just at the right moment, and what an experience was hers. It resulted in her being found yet again at His feet, this time as a worshipper (John 12).

Let us cite one more instance of how the Lord comes to us in our circumstances. This time we will read Mark 6. 46—51. The Lord Jesus had fed and dismissed the multitude, and having "constrained His disciples to get into the ship, and to go to the other side, He departed into a mountain to pray" (verses 45, 46). The storm rose; the wind was contrary; they were toiling in rowing; and He was not there. He was on the mountain top; He saw them; He was praying, and, surely, praying for them; then, just when the night was at its darkest; the storm at its worst; and all hoped seemed to have gone; "He cometh unto them," and His voice was heard saying: "Be of good cheer; it is I; be not afraid"; and "the wind ceased." "*I will come to you,*" and He came just at the right moment, for,

"God never is before His time  
And never is behind."

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What you fill the vessel with, that you must expect to draw from it; if you put in water, you cannot bring out wine. What dost thou fill thy heart with all the day? Is it the earth? Then how canst thou expect to find heaven there at night?

It was a sweet speech of a dying saint, that he was going to change his place, but not his company; for he had always been living in communion with God.

We are told in Matthew 14. 33, the result was they "worshipped Him, saying, Of a truth Thou art the Son of God." O that we might know increasingly that circumstances that may seem trying, yea, heartbreaking, are but the occasion that He may come to us; that we may know Him, and that we may worship at His feet. Lastly, we see that having procured peace for us by His precious blood; He gives the priceless legacy of what He calls "*My peace.*" It was on "that night of deepest woe" that He spoke of "*My peace,*" and "*My Joy*" (John 14. 27; 16. 11). Peace and joy that nothing could disturb were His, these He has bequeathed to us, so that once again He says: "Let not your heart be troubled," and He so tenderly adds, "Neither let it be afraid."

We have therefore His assurance that whether in assembly, in service, or in the many and varied circumstances of life we have His promise

*"I WILL COME TO YOU."*

May that be known, experienced and enjoyed by every Christian reader; leading to a better apprehension and a greater appreciation of Himself, until that moment of supreme joy when His other promise will be fulfilled:

*"I WILL COME FOR YOU."*

And in His presence, in His likeness; in the Father's House, we worship at His feet for ever and ever.

## SERVICE.

If we do not live *beyond* time, we are not fit to serve *in* time.

Look not to the quantity but to the quality of your service, whatsoever that service may be. If it be preaching, preaching is not the first thing; *the heart must be kept*; then two or three words spoken in the power of the Spirit may avail more than many a long discourse.

The conversion of sinners, the prosperity of saints—these are precious things, but not *the* object of the soul: that should be to please God.

We are not the most useful when the most wordy, but when the most prayerful.

The joy and triumph of faith are only to be found in the way of unre-served consecration of ourselves to God, and of diligent service to Christ.

The work of the servant of the Lord demands entire self-denial. Even Christ pleased not Himself (Romans 15. 3). He must be the servant of all men for Jesus' sake, the foremost to suffer; the most laborious in service; ever caring for others, ever forgetting himself.—(From "Choice Sayings").

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## Do you tremble at God's Word?

God imparts His message to those who are in a complete subordination to Him. It is evident that many have renounced that holy reverence for Scripture which is indicated by such an expression as "trembleth at My Word." They rather trifle than tremble. The Word is not their teacher, but they are its critics. With many, the Word of the Lord is no longer enthroned in the place of honour, but is treated as a football, to be kicked about as they please; and the apostles especially, are treated as if Paul, James, and John were men with whom modern wise men are on terms of something more than equality. They pass the books of Scripture under their rod, and judge the Spirit of God Himself. The Lord cannot work by a creature that is in revolt against Him. We must manifest the spirit of reverence, or we shall not be as little children, nor enter the kingdom of heaven.

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Nothing marks a true servant, and one really taught of God, more than the pliancy and readiness with which he can pass from one service to another. It is always a mark of an indifferent servant, when he excuses himself from answering a call for help by saying it is not his line; or that it is not part of his work: he rightly may not obtrude his service when he has not power to serve, but it is quite another thing to escape from service on the plea that it is not his work. The simple question is whether the Lord has called me to it or not.

J.B.S.

# MAN.

T. Oliver.

**A**NTHROPOLOGY or the science of man has always been a fascinating study; but we shall not seek to occupy attention with features generally demonstrated therein. The common word for "man" in the Old Testament is Adam (literally meaning "red earth"), emphasising his origin rather than his constitution or destiny. There is no thought in the word that man was destined to return to earth or dust. The analogous term "Son of Man" shows that the One to whom the term is applied was a true man in descent and inheritance. These names denote mankind in general as distinct from the "sons of Ish" (the men of high degree or princely position).

The grandson of Adam received the name Enosh which signifies frail, friable, failing man, who is subject to all the ills in soul and body and to death as an inevitable sequel. It is also highly significant that the immediate descendants of Adam realised in some measure the tremendous hiatus which had come in between their state and the state of innocency forfeited in Eden. In consequence they began to call on the name of the Lord. They felt that their resources were hopelessly inadequate, and that they were dependent on the mercy of God.

Ezekiel was addressed 93 times as "son of man." He lived in a day when affairs had become very broken down in Israel. Ezekiel was selected to be the judge of the condition of the people, as representative of God Himself. He testified to their stubborn apostasy from the Lord, After which the glory of the Lord could not continue with them. Albeit that glory departed with reluctance, but the

prophetic vision did not close without offering evidence that the glory and blessing of the Lord would be restored to Jerusalem consequent upon the people being cleansed from their sins by divine power and grace.

Well might the Psalmist exclaim "What is man (Enosh) that thou art mindful of him, or the son of man (Adam) that thou visitest him" (Psalm 8. 4). The proposition seemed to be an insoluble riddle. But when we turn to the Epistle to the Hebrews we find the writer supplying that solution in Christ who came as a true man in descent and heritage of Adam, "made in all things like unto His brethren" (Heb. 2. 17). Yet he was apart from failing man (Enosh) and his deeds as from the sons of Ish who claimed the earth in princely right, e.g. Caesar, Herod, Caiaphas and such like. However, those intimately associated with Him could say that they beheld His unique glory, full of grace and truth.

In the Gospels the Lord describes Himself sixty-five times as Son of Man, so putting emphasis on his derived humanity. He was no mere emanation of radio-activity from the Godhead in human form. He was a real man, but apart from sin therefore not subject to death, yet capable of suffering death for the fulfilment of the grace of God, and so to end the frail fallen Enosh condition of mankind in due course.

But the Lord's constant use of the term implies much more than the Old Testament meaning. He was Son of Man in a specific way which marked Him off from every other man. He was the only one who was exempt from the consequences of Adam's disobedient act. Hence He was the

only one who could fulfil the promise of man's first creation, and bring in a new promise to man of a new creation in Himself. For that reason this Son of Man must suffer death by being lifted up on the Cross, just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness.

But there is another relation in which the Lord adduces the name Son of Man, which connects itself with the only usage in the Book of Daniel. That is in the matter of all judgment being committed into the hand of the Son of Man, as the one who is fitted with perfect knowledge of mankind yet with absolute tenderness. He is representative of God, and he is entrusted with everything and every person to settle all in accordance with every attribute of the throne of God being vindicated.

In the New Testament even as the term the "Son of Man" certified the continuity of humanity in Christ, so the "Second Man" (1 Cor. 15). indicates His unique character. We do well to seek to apprehend something of the stupendous accession to man which was gained in the person of the Man Christ Jesus. "The first man is of the earth (in origin) earthy or dusty, literally chalky (in constitution)" (1 Cor. 15. 47). Chalk is notorious for its friability. Whereas greywacke can withstand the erosion of centuries, chalk breaks down into powder very quickly. How fitting is such a description of man! It would be futile to found conclusions on the consistency of the best kind of man. Only God is faithful, with Whom

there is neither variability nor retraction.

What a change is introduced in the second part of the verse "the Second Man is the Lord from heaven." God's thought from the beginning is fulfilled in the Second Man who is in contrast not merely with the failing man of the order denoted by the name Enosh, but also with the first man Adam, before he failed at all.

In 1 Corinthians 15. 45, we are introduced to a new relationship. "The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam is a life-giving spirit." The first Adam was the federal head of a race the members of which have borne his image and characteristics. His descendants have simply evidenced a repetition of his features; so it is with the last Adam. He is the last not the second Adam for the simple reason that Scripture is emphatic in stating that there is no super race to come. In the last Adam we have reached finality. He is the federal head of a new race. The members of which in His life evidence His features. Each member of the race has borne the image of the first Adam, but is now a partaker of the life of the last Adam who is from heaven. They will bear the image of the heavenly in a future day which is not far distant. To be "in Christ" suffices to appertain to the New Creation and to be under the new Headship. The last Adam became such after His work of obedience unto death was accomplished, His resurrection and ascension. So the relation is based on redemption accomplished. He could not communicate "spirit" otherwise!

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If Christ is in us now the hope of glory, He will be in us then the display of glory.

# THE PERSON OF THE CHRIST.

A. J. Pollock.

## No. 2. *The Word in eternity and made flesh.*

THE Gospel of Matthew gives the descent of our Lord from Abraham, the fountain head of God's promises; and David, the head of the kingly race of Israel. The Gospel of Luke gives us the ascent of our Lord to Adam, "which was . . . of God." But in the Gospel of John we have no descent or ascent of earthly genealogy, nothing is said of the Virgin birth, no account of our Lord's entrance into the world in detail as to earthly circumstances. Our Lord is presented here as the Eternal Word. As such He had no beginning. The Word was God, and God has no beginning.

There is nothing more profound in the whole of the Scriptures than the opening of the Gospel of John. Like all presentations of Divine truth, the language is of the simplest nature, so that a child can understand its import. Yet the greatest philosopher, the most mature Christian that ever lived, can never fathom the mighty depths of its meaning. One feels like a child on the golden strand looking with amazement and bewilderment at the mighty ocean.

The opening words of John's Gospel are truly majestic:—

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

The same was in the beginning with God.

All things were made by Him; and without Him was not anything made that was made" (John 1. 1—3).

The first chapter of John's Gospel speaks of our Lord under more de-

signations than any other chapter in the Bible. We may be familiar with most of them, but what does the Spirit of God intend to convey to us by the term, WORD? There are two designations for "WORD" in the Greek language, both of which are employed in the Holy Scriptures. *Rhema*, which is the word employed to denote actual speech manipulated by the organs of the mouth. *Logos*, which is used to convey the idea of THOUGHT *expressed in speech*; in other words, the word by which the inward thought is expressed.

Both words were in common usage in the Greek language.

*Logos* was the word that was used by the philosopher, Heraclitis (500 B.C.) in his search after God. He saw everything in nature in a state of flux, change, disintegration in everything. Spring always followed by autumn, the budding leaf by the falling leaf, maturity followed by decay, whether in trees, or with men, or even, as we know, with the vast sun itself in the heavens. It may shine for millions of years, but it is burning itself out. Heraclitis observing this flux in nature decided in his mind there must be some permanent force, some fixed source from whence all flowed. This principle he frequently called *Logos*, twice at least he used the word, GOD.

The Stoics, a school of philosophy, founded by Zeno of Citium about B.C. 280, coined a word in their search after this universal principle from which everything in nature flows. They used the two words, "*logos spermatikos*," to express their meaning, that there was some prin-

ciple with the power of life and universal begetting. But it remained for the fisherman John, the beloved Apostle of the Lord, *by the INSPIRATION of the Holy Spirit*, not by his own searching, to take up the designation of the word, *Logos*, and apply it to our Lord. The word may have been, and was, in common and ordinary usage among the Greeks, but the Spirit of God used it in an authoritative way as applied to our Lord. What was the meaning of this choice? The Spirit of God did not employ the word, *rhema*, the word for speech without connecting thought, but the word *Logos*, setting forth the idea of thought expressed in speech.

Perhaps a simple line of thought, which has helped the writer, may assist at this juncture. Speech is the expression of thought. It is the distinguishing feature of man in contrast to the beasts. They have cries, the birds have songs of a limited and fixed nature, insects have their sounds, but the lower creation lacks speech. So they remain static in their condition ever since creation's day. Man has powers of advance in many ways through thought and speech.

Suppose I become the tenant of a house. It has a garden, protected by an unusually high wall, which shuts out any possible view of the next garden.

I am informed there is a next-door neighbour, a gentleman, who has never been seen out-of-doors. The only exercise out of his house he takes is walking in his garden. He is a mystery. His appearance is a matter of conjecture. I know nothing of him, save what I have just said.

One day walking in my garden my

neighbour speaks to me. I am all attention. A few words and he passes on. I have got to know him just a little. How? By his *word*. His voice was kind and sympathetic, what he said was neighbourly. I look for further talks, and day after day my neighbour speaks to me. As he utters his THOUGHTS expressed in WORDS, I begin to know what my neighbour is like. I discover him to be talented, high-souled, noble in his feelings and thoughts. How do I know so much? By his WORD.

This is but a feeble illustration of a stupendous truth. We are told in Scripture of

God "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" (1 Timothy 6. 16).

Just as I could never see my neighbour, so in a far higher sense we can never see God absolute. This was the case when the Scripture was written. It is equally true to-day and for all eternity. This must be so in the very nature of the Supreme Being.

How did I get to know so much of my neighbour? By his *word*, by his speech. How do I get to know God? After all that is the biggest question that can ever be asked by mortal man. I get to know God, not by a spoken word, *but by THE LIVING WORD*, a glorious Person, equal to the task, for He was God as we read in John 1. 1. Who could reveal God, the Infinite, but the Word, who is God, the Infinite, who took upon Himself manhood that He might be seen of men? This is the amazing thing. This is what makes the four Gospels, especially the fourth Gospel, so inexpressibly precious. This

goes beyond spoken speech, infinitely beyond the *logos* of the ancients in their vain search of the Unsearchable. No wonder Zophar of old asked the question,

“Canst thou by searching find out God? canst thou find out the Almighty to perfection?”

It is as high as heaven; what canst thou do? deeper than hell; what canst thou know?” (Job 11. 7, 8).

The first thing that is predicated of the Word was that He made everything. He was the Creator. If, the Word created everything, then He existed before the creation. Who existed before creation? God. “The Word was God.” The Word is the *eternal Word*. Of that Scripture leaves us in no doubt.

What was the first expression of the Word that we can have an understanding of? Creation! It declared God’s “eternal power and Godhead” (Romans 1. 20), so that even the heathen with no Bible or knowledge of Christ are left “without excuse.”

As David looked up into the night heavens and saw the moon and the stars, those unnumbered orbs of light that stud the sky, he saw “the work of God’s *fingers*” (Psalm 8. 3). But this did not reveal God’s *heart*. It showed the skill of His fingers whether seen when He flung off from His potter’s wheel that monster sun, Sirius, which apparently exceeds in lustre 5,000 times our sun; or fashioned a midge, that can be crushed between finger and thumb, whose whole life is bounded between the sunrise and sunset of one day, complete with all its infinitesimally minute organs, functioning in life. Nay it was His bare word that

brought all things into existence. So we read,

“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 11. 3).

“The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth His handywork” (Psalm 19. 1).

We marvel at God’s fingers. We stand in silent awe at the wonders of creation. Man laboriously perfects his inventions by slow steps. God created things that were perfect from the first moment of creation. Man corrects his mistakes. God makes none.

The Word had only to speak, and everything sprang into existence. The *thought* was in His mind, and the *word*—the creatorial word—brought everything into existence. We stand amazed in contemplation of such wonders that surpass our powers to understand. Thus creation is *to us* the first expression of the activity of THE ETERNAL WORD.

But now another affirmation is made of the Word:—

“In Him was life; and the life was the light of men” (John 1. 4).

“In Him was life,” that is life uncommunicated, life inherent, life without a beginning.

“This is the true God, and ETERNAL LIFE” (1 John 5. 20).

He is the Fountain of life. He is the Source of life.

But wonders of wonders. The time had come when that life was to be

manifested, when men should be invited to see that life, which declared God's glory and good pleasure in men. The One who created all things came into the world His hands had made. He came not with outward pomp and glory, but in humility and graciousness, born of a peasant virgin mother, though of royal lineage, born in a stable and cradled in a manger.

He gathered disciples round Him, lowly men, men of no culture, He did not go to the Temple at Jerusalem, and pick out the leaders of the nation, or the scholars of His age, the young men of culture and personality and attainments. He called His disciples in the main from the fishing nets of Galilee. And their testimony was this when they saw His life and heard His words:—

“The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father), full of grace and truth . . . 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. 14, 18).

“For the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and shew unto you that Eternal Life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us” (1 John 1. 2).

These disciples companied with the Lord for three-and-a-half years of His public ministry. What a privilege! What an education! To see His movements, to mark His humility, to behold His miracles, shewing forth the power of the kingdom of God, to hear His words as He told them of His Father, was a privilege past telling.

His disciples beheld His glory as of an only begotten of a Father. That was the great impression He left on their wondering minds. Did He not say concerning His disciples, in that memorable prayer to His Father just before He went to the cross,

“I have given unto them the words which Thou gavest Me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from Thee, and they have believed that Thou didst send Me?” (John 17. 8).

How intimate was this relationship between the Father and the Son, so intimate that it coloured every moment of His life, and influenced every one of His words and works, so He says,

“Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me? the WORDS that I speak unto you I speak not of Myself: but the Father that dwelleth in Me, He doeth the WORKS” (John 14. 10).

Again and again He gives utterance to these wonderful thoughts. He was in the Father, the Father was in Him. His WORDS were the Father's words; His WORKS were the Father's works. The relationship was unique, and He came to reveal God as God and as Father, and He alone was competent to do this.

He came “full of grace and truth.” Grace and truth are two nouns which should in the ordinary way be followed by a plural verb. But in this case they are followed by a verb in the singular. Why? To shew evidently that you cannot divorce the one from the other. They are like two flowers on one stem. And yet it is significant that “grace” is first in order. Truth with men may be hard

and brutal, but truth in revealing the nature of the blessed God must exhibit Him as a God of LOVE, a God who is *gracious*, and yet withal a God of inflexible holiness and righteousness.

This leads us to the cross. It is there we see the Word shining out the very picture of the God He came to reveal. God's *grace* was seen in the gift of His Son. His *truth* in that He abated nothing of the judgment due to sin, when He the Holy Sin-bearer stepped into the breach, and took the sinner's place.

"GOD WAS IN CHRIST, reconciling the world unto Himself" (2 Corinthians 5. 19).

Is there anything to touch this for grandeur and beauty in all the reli-

gions of the world other than Christianity? The gods of the heathen are monsters of cruelty and lust. God is love. God is light. God is *in* the light. He is revealed. No longer does He "make darkness His secret place" (Psalm 18. 11). God has been revealed. The Father has been made known. Guilty man has been brought into blessing, far beyond his bare needs, but brought into acceptance in the Beloved, "blessed with all spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ (Ephesians 1. 3).

We may indeed thank God profoundly for such a wealth of revelation brought to us by the Eternal Word, the Eternal Son, our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Worthy is He of praise and worship for ever and ever.

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## The Power of the Saviour's Love.

Early in the seventh century the good King Oswald of Northumbria requested the Scots to send a missionary to his people. The brethren of Iona sent them an austere, though well-meaning man named Cormac. He soon returned dispirited, saying the people were too obstinate to be converted.

"Ah," said Aidan, standing by, "had Thy love been offered to this people, O my Saviour, many hearts would have been touched. I will go and make Thee known—Thee, who breakest not the bruised reed:" He went and told the Anglo-Saxons of the Saviour's love. Wondering multitudes listened, wept and were won.

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## "Behold He Cometh."

How His appearing will darken all the glory of the world, and make it disappear, as the stars at the rising of the sun! . . . O how little does the believer think of the world, when this greatest of all coming events shines before **his** soul! "*Behold He cometh;*" and earthly crowns, kingdoms, thrones and sceptres are but little despicable toys. Here—here is an object worth the beholding. Let mine eyes be ever turned away from beholding vanities: "Behold He cometh."

## CHRIST AND ONENESS.

H.J.V.

Let us consider the way that the Lord takes to gather His well-loved flock, His favoured family, these sheep of God's pasture, the children of God. First His death was necessary, for only so could He "*gather together in one the children of God who were scattered abroad*" (John 11. 52). He died to bring about this oneness. He prayed also for it, when He said to the Father: "That they all may be ONE; as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that *they* also may be ONE IN US" (John 17. 21). Terribly backslidden must be the state of any who are marked by cold indifference to this for which the Son of God both died and prayed!

If we love Him, we must love *all* who are His. "He that loves not his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen." "Every one that loves Him that has begotten loves also him that is begotten of Him" (1 John 5. 1). Christ loves the assembly, the whole assembly, and the heart which knows this will love that which He loves.

To the facts that Christ died and prayed for this oneness, we must add *He lives* for it. Because He lives we live also; and John 17 gives us the character of His present living intercession that we may be one. Again, all the members of His body are ministered to from Him, the living Head, and united together in consequence. Do not let our slackness and indifference to this be excused by the plea, "There can be no failure in re-

gard to the body." For we are warned in Colossians 2. 19 against "not holding fast the Head." Laxity on our side as to this leads to utter failure.

Oneness is in view also in connection with *the Lord's coming again*. He said to the Father as to that longed-for day: "The glory which Thou hast given Me I have given them, that they may be one, as We are one; I in them and Thou in Me, that they may be perfected into one" (John 17. 22, 23). What surpassing greatness! What divine grace and glory shine here! But to what end? "THAT THEY ALL MAY BE ONE." May such thoughts and purposes of love stir our hearts, in the deepest depths of their divinely begotten affections. The oneness here spoken of is as sure as Christ's glory is. Nothing can mar it, thank God. It is established in the same glory and in the same love that Christ knows. "Thou hast loved them," He says to the Father, "as Thou hast loved Me."

How can we be indifferent to that for which He went into death, and for which He interceded before the Father, and for which He lives at the right hand of God, and for which He will *come* again that it may be absolute and unbroken for ever for His joy and glory? May we respond to His great grace and love now by seeking after it even here with true purpose of heart.

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## The Sphere of Service.

The true homeland of the Church is "in Christ Jesus," and all who know Him not, whether at home or abroad, are 'the one great outland,' which is the field of gospel work. We must preach Christ to all, for to their need of Him there is no exception, and to His power to save there is no limit.

# CHRIST IN THE PSALMS.

J. W. H. Nichols.

Thoughts on Psalm 18.

**T**HE title of this most comprehensive psalm gives us the circumstances under which it was written: and while it doubtless was the expression of what the soul of David felt — which the last verse clearly shews—it unquestionably in its fullness applies to our blessed Lord.

It is a song of celebration. Jehovah is Himself the Deliverer, and the writer in the first three verses (which forms the thesis of the entire psalm) expatiates upon His glorious power and declares his trust in Him. In the remainder of the Psalm—as is usually the case—the circumstances are dwelt upon which gave rise to the sentiments expressed in the thesis. Psalms 16, 17 and 18 are more complete as to the spirit of Christ. In sixteen, His thoughts are of Jehovah and the saints, having taken the place of dependence as man, perfect in His trust, Jehovah His delight. In seventeen, He is seen in the midst of evil, but perfectly righteous, the world and Satan overcome, and finally looking on to resurrection—glory. Psalm 18, Messiah is seen the centre of all God's ways, His sufferings are the groundwork of all the ways of God from Egypt to the bringing in of the glory, the final victory of Christ as Son of David.

That David wrote the Psalm is unquestioned. 2 Samuel 22 makes this clear, but in its entirety it could only be true of David's Son, the Anointed of Jehovah. In David's distress, we see a foreshadowing of those deeper distresses and sufferings through which our Lord passed as in Gethsemane. This is the groundwork of all the remainder. "In all their afflictions He was afflicted, and the

angel of His presence saved them; in His love and in His pity He redeemed them and carried them all the days of old (Isaiah 63. 9). As is usual in the Psalms, the Lord in spirit here takes the place of the godly remnant of Israel, and goes down into the deepest sorrows, not as a vicarious sufferer under the judgment of God, we must go to other Scriptures for that, but crying out to God under the sorrows of death (verses 5 and 6). The Sufferer crying out to God in distress, has the consciousness of being heard, "He did hear my voice out of His temple and my cry did enter into His ears." This is a contrast to Psalm 22 where the Sufferer finds no response to His agonizing cry.

The weight of death is upon the spirit in this psalm, as in Gethsemane, "The floods of ungodly men made me afraid." Actual death does not take place, in this contemplation. He endures its sorrows, He having voluntarily associated Himself with Israel, all the power of darkness waging war against Him, as will be the case with the godly remnant in the last days.

Verses 7 to 16, we have—in principle—Israel's complete deliverance from Egypt by the mighty power of the Saviour God. These, however, were not all the sorrows of Israel, but all that they have passed through and will yet have to meet, has been anticipated and entered into fully by their Deliverer.

From verses 19 to 26, we find the righteous One before God, taking the place of Israel and therefore all the value of His perfectness is before God for them.

It is necessary, however, to keep in mind that we have the state of the remnant personified in David here, hence the words, "I kept myself from mine iniquity." We are again reminded how important it is, in reading the Psalms, to discern where the spirit of Christ, as having voluntarily associated Himself with Israel, speaks. Intrinsically perfect, He could not say *personally* "mine iniquity," for He had none.

Another has pointed out that it is the government of God which we have distinctly before us in verses 25 and 26. In the following verse, we find another side of that government. God, in unfailing kindness and mercy saves the afflicted people, and humbles the pride of men. "To the righteous there ariseth light in the darkness. (Psalm 112. 4).

In the remaining part of the Psalm, another scene is presented. The One who had in fullest grace associated Himself with His people's sorrows, now associates them with Himself in victorious power. The power and glory is His. "Great deliverance giveth He to His King and sheweth mercy to His anointed, to David and to His seed for ever-

more." Resistless victory marks the latter part of the Psalm. Verse 43 is worthy of careful meditation! Three classes are before us, the people, the heathen, and a people not known before.

"Thou hast delivered me from the strivings of the people and thou hast made me head of the heathen; a people whom I have not known shall serve me."

Messiah finds deliverance in God from the strivings of ungodly Jews, and is made Head of the heathen. An unknown people are brought under His sway and this evidently in the Millenium. "The Lord liveth," is the glad exclamation of faith.

"Let the God of my salvation be exalted." It has been questioned whether Antichrist is alluded to at the end of verse 48 as "the violent man," or whether an enemy from without. The latter seems more probable as — were it Antichrist, the praises would be Jewish, but the speaker in verse 49 says, "Therefore I will give thanks unto Thee, O Lord, *among the heathen*, and will sing praise unto Thy name."

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## This is my Beloved.

(Song of Solomon 5. 16)

None like Him of the sons of men,  
Of all that noble be,  
Among ten thousand of the fair  
The fairest He!  
Yea, altogether lovely He;  
All perfect, like Him none;  
Of excellent the chiefest He  
The Spotless One!

His is the name of names in heaven,  
The name of names on earth;  
I glory in that glorious name  
Of matchless worth.  
This my Beloved is, my Friend,  
Saviour and Bridegroom rare,  
O daughters of Jerusalem  
Is He not fair?

## Love's Mystery.

"The Son of God . . . loved *me*, and gave Himself for *me*" (Gal. 2. 20).

LOVE—uncaused, loving *me*!  
From far Eternity,  
In sovereign mystery  
Of Thine election!  
Low in subjection  
Worship I Thee!

GRACE—lavished still on *me*!  
All worthless though I be,  
In daily mystery  
Of Thy heart's kindness  
Through all my blindness!—  
Praise be to Thee!

BLOOD—poured out full for *me*!  
On dark Golgotha's tree,  
In awful mystery  
Of Thy salvation.  
Faith's adoration  
Bring I to Thee!

HEAVEN—opened wide for *me*!  
For all Eternity!—  
Love's last, long mystery!  
O consummation  
Of God's redemption,  
Wait I for thee!

## The Wound.

Did you ever hear Laura Richard's parable?

"Brother, what is that scar above your heart?"

"Brother, the mark of a sword."

"Of whose sword?"

"Brother, of yours."

"Nay!"

"Even so!"

"Brother of my heart, could I wound you so, and still forget?"

"Yes, since you bear no scar."

"Brother, could I wound you thus, and go my self unscarred?"

"Verily, yes; since it is not the hilt that wounds."

## Roots and Fruit.

Are we satisfied, any of us, with knowing that the Lord has saved us, and that we are going to heaven presently? There are such Christians, the root of the matter is in them, but they are all root, and something else is wanted besides root. Our Lord Jesus said to His disciples, "I have chosen you and ordained you, that ye should GO AND BRING FORTH FRUIT." Now there can be no fruit without the root; but who would care to have a garden full of roots that brought forth neither flowers nor fruit! Let us beware, earnestly and continually, that we do not mar "God's husbandry" by being roots of that kind. "Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit." So spake our Lord and Master. May His words affect our souls.

# THE WRITTEN WORD. THE LIVING WORD.

## THE COMPANIONS OF CHRIST. A. E. Booth.

Scripture read: Hebrews 1.  
*Sunday afternoon, July 24th.*

**I** PURPOSE at this time to take up three of the leading lessons of this chapter, only three. For the whole chapter of thirteen verses has a vast mine of wealth and if studied with a prayerful spirit will yield a store of royal dainties, and especially the seven quotations from the Old Testament Hebrew Scriptures. All Hebrew Christians to whom this epistle was written would observe in these quotations marvellous things regarding Christ their predicted Messiah. Things that to us are now readily discerned, as the further light of the New Testament falls upon the pages of the Old. We shall now look in the beginning at verse one and two and see their proper setting, and the very great contrast that the apostle gives us. "God who in many parts and in many ways spake in times past unto the fathers by the prophets hath in the last of these days spoken unto us in His Son" (New Trans.).

In reading these verses place a line under three words "*God hath spoken.*" In those verses you will find a key that opens up a mine of wealth that we possess as believers. For in the entire Scriptures from first to last we observe that "God hath spoken" and when we begin keeping this important fact in mind we see the entire book is the Word of God, thus verbally inspired, and all pious sons of Israel who were conversant with their Hebrew Scriptures would see that the apostle's words in this chapter were also enshrined in their Hebrew Scriptures, for they had again and again reiterated the same words. Thus familiarity with their

Hebrew Bible would prepare them for the teaching of the New Testament.

At this juncture I will furnish you with a few passages that confirm this teaching:—

Psalm 50. 1; 60. 6; 108. 7; Isaiah 21. 17; 22. 25; 24. 3; 40. 5; 58. 14, and in reading these passages where the words are "The Lord hath spoken it" it will be observed that the last word "it" is in italics, and, if this is dropped the language is identical with the New Testament.

Thus "Jehovah, or God, hath spoken" but in the Old Testament it is God speaking by the prophets. That period closes with the words of Malachi and the oral ministry of John the Baptist, and at the end of *these days* God began a new way to speak to men in the Person of the Son. During the period of the Lord's life on earth, men heard God speaking in this new form. On the earth the Lord Himself said "I am in the Father and the Father in Me, the words that I speak unto you I speak not *from* Myself but the Father that dwelleth in Me." Not one word or act was independent of the Father, a perfect unison of thought, word, and act (John 14. 10 R.V.).

Then upon His return to heaven He has continued to speak from heaven. All the communications of the apostle were direct revelations from the risen Lord in heaven so that the whole New Testament page is God speaking in His Son. Heb. 2. 3;

12. 25: John in Revelation takes up the threads of Old Testament prophecy and brings them to a completion, but Paul introduces in his epistles the last theme in the range of subjects—the mystery hid in Old Testament times concerning Christ and the Church; this is the last of all the truths revealed and completes the entire word of God (See Col. 1. 24 and 25, New Tran.).

### VERBAL INSPIRATION.

Now we shall come nearer to the subject on hand and seek to answer the frequent questions "What is inspiration?" We have so far seen that in the Old Testament and in the New that God hath spoken, now let us point out the way that He has spoken. For light upon such an inquiry we will give you 1 Cor. 2. 12—16 and each verse will need to be read with care.

(1) "Now we have received the Spirit which is of God." This shows that the Holy Spirit sent down from heaven now indwells all believers who are born of God and possess eternal life. This is a New Testament truth of tremendous importance. Pious saints in Old Testament times were born of God and possessed a divine life, and at times the Spirit came upon them in order that they might fulfil certain forms of service, but in our New Testament age our bodies are the temple of the Holy Spirit. Now the Apostle passes on to show us the reason why we possess the Holy Spirit.

(2) "That we might know the things that are freely given us of God." It was by the Spirit the Word was given and it is by the same Spirit now that we understand what has been written, and thus have the truth in conscious possession day by day. Then the Apostle continues further.

(3) "Which things we speak not in the words which man's wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches." At the time the Apostle wrote this epistle there were rival schools of Greek philosophy, and both at Athens and Corinth there were pupils of those Greek Schools. One was that of Socrates and one of Plato and another of Aristotle. There were also other smaller rival schools but the pupils of each boasted of their acquired wisdom and knowledge gathered from their respective schools. Each sought to out-do the other and boasted with pride, "I am of Socrates," "I am of Plato," or "I am of Aristotle" but the Apostle here in writing by inspiration of the Holy Spirit, borrowed nothing in knowledge or language from those schools. All his communications came from heaven by the Holy Spirit so that the very words that he wrote were indited by the Holy Spirit. This corresponds with the Old Testament teaching where the Apostle Peter wrote that they were "moved by the Holy Spirit." Hence "all Scripture is given by inspiration of God"—God breathed—God spoken. And further he writes "*Communicating spiritual things by spiritual means.*" This is a correction of the Authorised Version in the valuable translation by J. N. Darby, and the Numerical Bible by F. W. Grant.

At the close of this subject I will relate to you a conversation that I had with a very pious minister of the gospel, which will serve to illustrate what I am presenting to you now. I asked him if his associate ministers understood properly the inspiration of the Bible. He replied "I believe most of them do," and after a pause continued, "I myself believe in the inspiration of the Bible." This showed at least that he believed the

Bible was divine and could be relied upon, yet I saw that the real truth as to the proper thought of inspiration was vague in his mind. Then he added: "What is inspiration?"

I then asked him to open his Bible at 2 Cor. 2. 12—16, the very part that we have had before us at this time. I slowly emphasised each part of those verses, and when we came to the important lines: "Not in *words* that man's wisdom teacheth but which the Holy Spirit teaches." Then the truth dawned upon him as never before. "Words" and the grandeur of the passage came to his heart with such force that the tears coursed down his cheeks and he lifted his hand and placed it over the face of his open Bible, and said with smiles through his tears: "My brother, I see now that this Holy Bible is the very Word of God" — verbally inspired.

With such a book in our possession "True from the beginning" we can with perfect safety pass on to another subject of vital interest and importance.

### THE LIVING WORD.

As the sacred Scriptures are the written Word, so Christ is the Living Word.

(1) In the beginning was the Word. John 1. 1.

(2) The Word of life. 1 John 1. 2.

(3) The Word of God. Rev. 19. 13.

Those verses properly express our Lord as the One able in His own person to express the mind and will of God. In the distant past-eternity—He was the Living Word. When He came to earth, the same person, God manifest in the flesh — the Living Word. Now in heaven He remains under new conditions but the same glorious person.

And further, He ever was, is now, and ever shall be, "the *only* begotten Son," and such language expresses a divine inherent relationship with the Father before all creation, and in view of our redemption the Father, "sent His only begotten Son into the World." In that relationship none other did exist for He was "the *only* begotten." Further He adds "I and My Father are one," one in deity with the Father. But He is also declared three times in the New Testament to be the *First*-begotten. This last term identifies Him in His incarnation and resurrection with others. Millions of others have been born of God. Millions now on earth have been born of God, but He the glorified Saviour in heaven will always have His place as *First*-born among many brethren. Thus in deity He was, "the *only* begotten," and in manhood He becomes, "the *first* begotten," and by and by when He reappears and shall be manifested there will be many crowns upon His head.

Having seen that the Scriptures give us the written Word of God, and that Christ our Lord was and is the living Word, and also the only begotten Son, the apostle continues to place before us a magnificent cluster of Truths that show us what a wonderful Saviour we have! and I urge, especially the young people present to dwell upon everyone of these statements with much thought and prayer, for in them we see magnificent glories that are associated with the person of our Lord Jesus Christ the Eternal Son (verse 11—21).

(1) "Whom He hath appointed Heir of all things" (the future).

(2) "By whom also He made the *worlds*" (the Universe).

(3) "Who being the brightness (effulgence) of His glory."

(4) "And the express image of His person" (Substance).

(5) "And upholding all things by the word of His power." As He created the Universe so now He sustains and maintains it.

(6) "When He had by Himself purged our sins" (this gives His atoning sacrifice presented to God on the cross).

(7) "Set *Himself* down at the right hand of the greatness on High" (New Trans.) so the One who created the Universe is now glorified upon the Throne in heaven. Once more, as I look upon the young faces before me, I repeat to you what a wonderful Saviour! and soon we shall see Him face to face and worship at His footstool throughout the boundless ages of eternity.

### THE COMPANIONS OF CHRIST.

In verse nine of our chapter the apostle in quoting from Psalm 45 reads "Thy God hath anointed Thee with the oil of gladness above Thy companions," and again we read in chapter three "For we are the *companions* of Christ." (Heb. 3: 14. New Trans.). This passage shows us the amazing grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and God the Father in calling us believers from among the Jews and from among the Gentiles, and imparting to us a divine life and nature by new birth and giving us redemption by His blood. So that we are thus His companions in time, and shall be His companions in eternity.

In the millennial age Israel as a nation will be blessed under Christ upon the earth, and outside Gentile

nations shall be blessed through Israel under Christ. The angels also in this chapter we read shall be *ministering spirits* in attendance upon Him and His throne in the place of servants, but we believers now called out in this day of grace are the *companions* of Christ, elsewhere, "friends," the grace and love expressed in the divine nearness and relationship, surpassing that of angels, when rightly apprehended, gives elevation and spirituality to the Christian life that glorifies His name now.

In closing I shall relate to you an incident:

"A devoted little girl yielded herself to the Lord in early life. She had a devoted Christian mother. After her play one day she fell asleep as she lay upon her cot. During this time she had a dream which she related to her mother a little while after. 'I was carried up into the holy city and an angel escort met me at the gate and took me by the hand and led me on the street of pure gold. On each side angels clothed in white bowed and paid homage to me. I observed a throne at the end and someone sitting on it. I wondered and wondered why homage should be extended to me, an insignificant little girl from earth below and as we reached the throne I ventured to ask the angel escort, 'why was such a welcome granted me and why this homage from the angels?' When we reached the throne he placed my hands in the hands of the glorified Saviour and said, 'because you are a blood relation of Him that sits upon the throne.'" Beloved brethren, we may say this was but a dream, but it illustrates the soul elevating and soul stirring truth of what we have had before us that we are the *companions* of Christ.

# COME!

W. Bramwell Dick.

Scriptures read: Matthew 11. 28; Mark 6. 31; 1. 17.

*Monday evening, July 25th.*

**T**HREE three familiar portions of Holy Scripture may be classified under three heads:—

COME TO ME—

COME WITH ME—

COME AFTER ME.

I am aware that this is not a gospel meeting in the strict sense of the word, but I propose to dwell on our first text by way of the application usually given to it by those of us who sometimes try to preach the gospel.

It is just possible that in this company there are some young folk who have come with parents or friends, who have heard the words of Matthew 11. 28 over and over again, but I wish to ask you have *you* come?

In the preceding verse the Lord Jesus had spoken of His unknown and unknowable glories as the Son of the Father. He had also indicated the object of His great mission and that was to reveal the Father. Then, looking upon those self-righteous Pharisees and hardened scribes, and with divine compassion on the publicans and sinners on the fringe of the crowd, He issued this marvellous invitation: "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

COME TO ME.

Let us ask you again: Have *you* come? If not will you come just now, in the presence of God, and surrounded by happy Christians, will you say to Him:

"Just as I am—without one plea,  
But that Thy blood was shed for me,  
And that Thou bid'st me come to Thee,  
O Lamb of God, I come!"

Now we pass to the second call. Let us visualize the scene. There came to the Lord the broken-hearted disciples of John the Baptist who had just lost their Master. Just then there came also the disciples of the Lord Jesus who had been on a mission for Him, and they told Him all that they had done and taught. Sad hearts—glad hearts. It may be that they who had glad hearts had the greatest need. When our hearts are sad we are, in a sense, driven to Him. When our hearts are glad because, it may be, of some little success in service, we are in danger of thinking of *our* service, *our* success, and less of the Lord. To both He said: "Come ye yourselves apart unto a desert place, and rest awhile." In other words:

COME WITH ME.

Oh! the matchless grace of our blessed Lord. He the Lord of glory said to a handful of humble men, come with Me. Far from the madding crowd. Away from the sights and sounds of earth, He took them into the quiet retreat of His own presence that He might minister to them, and that they might rest awhile. Most of us, perhaps all of us have come *to* Him, do we know the joy of coming *with* Him? No one was so active as He who was the perfect servant of the Father's will. Graciously associating His disciples with Himself, we are told "there were many coming and going, and they had no leisure so much as to eat." Yet, *HE* found leisure to take His disciples apart where they might rest a while. Yea, He Himself found leisure to pray. In Luke 5. 15, 16, we read that "Great multitudes came together to hear, and to be healed by

Him of their infirmities, and He withdrew Himself into the wilderness, and prayed." So much to do, no leisure to eat, yet He retired to pray. We are living in days of rush when everything is worked at high pressure. Have we to confess we have no leisure SO MUCH AS TO PRAY? Is not the barrenness of our Christian life; the weakness of our testimony; and and the absence of results when the gospel is preached just due to this: We have no leisure so much as to pray. The Sunday School teacher looks over the lesson ten minutes before leaving home on the Lord's day; the preacher resorts to some previously given address, results are nil and the question may be asked Why? Here is the answer. No leisure so much as to pray. Only as we respond to His call *Come with Me*, shall we be divinely fitted for His service.

This brings us to His third call,

### "COME AFTER ME

and I will make you to become fishers of men." The meaning of coming after Him we learn from verse 18, where we read of Simon and Andrew that "straightway they forsook their nets and *followed*

Him." He comes first, we come *after* Him. We take our cue from Him, we follow His directions, and *HE* makes us to become fishers of men, in other words fishers of souls. This is not confined to preachers, it is the privilege of every believer. Mother in the kitchen, father in the factory, the typist in her office, the student at college, the young folk at school, as they commend Christ by their lives, and testify for Him with their lips may be fishers of souls. We will not reach this by singing about it. He *makes* us to become fishers of men, and we qualify for this by cultivating His presence, and, if at the cost of an hour's sleep, by retiring with Him that we may hear His voice, and be fitted by Him for this great work. How happy if at the judgment seat of Christ, as He reviews with us our life upon earth, He reminds us of when we came to Him, and then tells us how He appreciated our coming WITH Him, enabling us to come AFTER Him, that He might make us to become fishers of men; and from His lips we hear "Well done, good and faithful servant." May the Lord encourage our hearts and give us to know the reality of these things for His Name's sake.

"God . . . now commandeth all men everywhere to repent." Acts 17. 30. W.B.Dy.

Where is our power?  
 What is our need?  
 Are we to reason?  
 Are we to plead?  
 Is the Word preached for  
 Approval of men?  
 Will they then hear us,  
 Turning again?

God is our power;  
 God is our fear;  
 His is the message,  
 Clarion clear;  
 Naught of man's subtlety  
 Slumber shall break;  
 Ask not the sleepers,  
 TELL them: "AWAKE!"

# THE JUDGMENT SEAT OF CHRIST.

E. P. Brown.

Scriptures read: Romans 14. 7—12; 1 Corinthians 3. 9—15; 2 Corinthians 5. 9—10; Galatians 2. 12—20; 2 Timothy 4. 1—8.

*Monday evening, July 25th.*

**W**E must first ask the question as to what the Judgment Seat of Christ really is. I have heard the wish expressed "may we all meet again round the Great White Throne." But only the "dead" will be at the great White Throne (Rev. 20), and we, I trust, are the "living," those who have passed from death unto life. We shall not be at the great White Throne but we shall "All be manifested before the Judgment Seat of Christ that we may receive the things done in the body whether they be good or bad." The One, however, Who sits on the Judgment Seat is He who died for our sins and rose again for our justification, and He is our unchanging righteousness before God. He will not therefore judge His own work. We cannot after being divinely justified be brought into judgment (see John 5. 24). "It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth?" Romans 8. 33, 34.

The word used for "Judgment Seat" could, I believe, be translated "reward seat," and thus it will be seen our presence there is not to determine our fitness for the Glory, that depends on the finished work of Christ, and is an already settled question for every believer, but rather that an adjudication of our works may be made to determine our rewards. It is well to notice that "all" will be there and the importance of it is that our little lives here so full of exercise and responsibility determine our places in the coming kingdom of the Lord (Luke 19. 11—26) and our reward for all eternity.

We are building now for eternity and how essential it is that we have the right foundation and that we build the right material upon it. We have nothing to do with the laying of this foundation, it was laid in the Counsels of Eternity, the fulness of time and in the sufferings of Calvary and on the great day of Resurrection. "Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ" (1 Cor. 3. 11). We must know what it is to have part with Him and be truly rooted and grounded in Him. Then we can begin to think of the building and have before us the Judgment Seat of Christ where all will be tested.

Take heed *how* we build is the exhortation of the Word and in this respect we need to consider both the plan and the materials. We must have the divine plan before us as set forth in the Scriptures. These are able to thoroughly furnish us unto every good work (2 Tim. 3. 17), and they must be studied if we are to carry out what is the mind and will of God. We have this clearly illustrated in the Old Testament in the building of the Tabernacle. Again and again it is said that Moses did all according to what was shewn him on the Mount. He did not deviate in any way from what God instructed him to do and every measurement and every bit of material used was according to what was told him. In our case we have to consider our most holy faith, not a theory or speculation — there are sufficient theories abroad, but we have the in-

fallible Word, the Word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever, as our guide. We need to be right as to the doctrine, taking heed thereto according to His Word. We must remember that everything is to come under the test and scrutiny of His all seeing eye, and only that will stand that is of and from Himself. It is towards that coming day of examination that I would seek to direct your attention. It is not the amount of our service and work, but the quality that matters. The "how much" has its place (Luke 19. 15), but "of what sort it is" (1 Cor. 3. 13) is all important.

We must consider the materials used. There are two distinct classes of these and three in each class, those that are accepted and those that are rejected and burned up. In the first class we have gold, silver and precious stones, all valuable, enduring, materials, and in the second class wood, hay and stubble, all corruptible and worthless. The building in this chapter is the house of God, and not only those who minister the word have their part in this but everyone of us in our intercourse with each other is a contributor to the making or marring of the building. Jude exhorts us to be building up on our most holy faith (20), and the material for this must be of and from God. His character and glory, His redeeming work, the variety and beauty of His wisdom and wealth: these I believe are indicated in the gold, silver and precious stones. There are some wonderful expressions in the Ephesian Epistle; "the riches of His grace," "God who is rich in mercy for His great love wherewith He loved us" "the unsearchable riches of Christ," "the riches of His glory." All these great things have been made manifest in Christ, and as the Spirit

of God takes of His things and shews them to us we have the material for building up ourselves and one another. What need of diligence and purpose of heart there is, if we are not to fail in this building. Our lives cannot be right unless our minds are furnished with these good things of God.

On the other hand there are wood, hay and stubble. These describe human thoughts and what is simply of men, it may be the philosophies of men, or their "science falsely so called," things that appeal to the mind and the flesh and puff men up with pride. Wood, hay and stubble bulk very large and may seem imposing, but when every man's work is tried by fire it will end in smoke. If we are lured away from what is of God and become engrossed with man's notions and works we shall impoverish our own souls, damage the souls of our brethren, mar the work of God and be losers at the judgment seat of Christ.

The story is told of the first Eddystone Lighthouse that when completed was a noble looking edifice, and Mr. Winstanley, the designer and builder, asked that he might occupy it when the first great storm arose. He had his desire but when the storm had passed there was not any trace of either lighthouse or occupants. The rock was still there, but the building, which was of wood, material that could not stand the test of the storm, had disappeared. So will many a Christian find it. They will be saved and not lost as Winstanley was, because they are on the foundation, but their work will be lost. That is the solemn teaching of our Scripture.

Thus once more we need to con-

sider that in view of the Judgment Seat of Christ Christianity is a life to be lived and so we come to the experience of the Apostle Paul as seen in Galatians 2. Here we have an epitome of what really a Christian is. He is crucified with Christ and Christ lives in Him and the outcome of that life must be pleasing to God. All life is mysterious, no man can understand it. The scalpel of the anatomist cannot lay it bare and the experience of the scientist cannot discover it. God keeps it in His own hand. Nevertheless divine life may be enjoyed by the youngest child who is willing to be a learner in the school of God. Life is spontaneous and there is all the difference in the world between the robot and the human. Robots are not men; they may be dressed to represent men and made to perform many movements, but if you put your hand on the heart or the pulse there is no life. Tried by this test much that passes for Christianity would fail. There is a form of Godliness but a denial of the power; it is not spontaneous but artificial. One may be baptized like Simon Magus or preach like Balaam, but yet be in the bond of iniquity and an enemy of God. They seek to perform the actions of life before having received the principle of life. How often we seek to work from without to within, whereas God always does the very opposite. Life is not an endeavour to do by a *constraining* power from without, what Christ undertakes to do is by an *inspiring* power from within. Life is powerful and in this respect is uplifting. It is related that a flagstone at a cottage door gradually tipped until the door would not open or shut. When the stone was lifted it was found that there was a fungus growth which was doing the lifting; and if the lowest form of life can do so much what of the mighti-

est? It is also overcoming and when the enemy seeks to upset the Christian, which he will do if at all possible, one is made to realize that greater is He that is in you than he that is in the world.

In view of the Judgment Seat one is led to ask why it is that this Christian life is not more widely and richly enjoyed? Is it not because we do not realize what crucifixion really is—not a cross dangling on the breast, but the knowledge that when my Lord went to Calvary I was there? Also there is a lack of comprehension as to what is mine. It is told that a farmer could not make his land pay and decided to sell his farm. He found a willing purchaser and to his amazement the buyer soon made a fortune. He had discovered a valuable mine on the land. It had been there all the time but needed to be discovered and a knowledge that mineral wealth was there on the part of the purchaser brought a rich reward. How often we miss what is just at our hand because of a lack of comprehension of what is ours and the right use of what is so richly given to us by God Himself.

In our last Scripture we have brought before us in the life of the beloved apostle what is possible for us. How blessed to be able to say "I have fought a good fight. I have kept the faith. I have finished my course" and to be able to speak of what "the righteous Judge" will bestow on those who love His appearing, those who have the Judgment Seat before them. Let us seek to hold fast that which we have that no man take our crown. How blessed to be in the path of His will, to be engaged in His service and to measure all our ways in the light of His approval. May God give us grace for it.

# A GREAT EXAMPLE AND A GREAT WARNING.

A. J. Pollock.

Read I Kings 3. 3—15; 11. 1—13; Proverbs 1. 7; 8. 11—31;  
Ecclesiastes 2. 3—11.

*Tuesday evening, July 26th.*

**T**HE Bible is made up of history —*history*, past events and movements chronicled; *prophecy*, future events and movements foretold. It has been well said that history teaches us that men do not profit by history. The history of the Great War should teach men the uselessness and utter futility of war. Yet the nations are slowly moving into the maelstrom of conflict, the upshot of which can only be inconceivable misery.

We are now about to consider a great example, and a great warning. Who will seek to follow the example and take heed to the warning? We believe many young lives will be altered for the better if this is done.

King David had won a mighty kingdom by his sword. His youthful son, Solomon, succeeded to this wonderful inheritance. We read he "loved the Lord, walking in the statutes of David, his father; **ONLY** he sacrificed and burnt incense in high places." It was good that he loved the Lord, good that he followed the excellent example of his father. But this "**ONLY**," was a fatal flaw, a weak place in his armour, something that led to disastrous consequences.

You must have heard of the Dutch dykes? Much of Holland is below sea level, and to prevent the sea flooding this land, dykes have been built to keep back the waters. Great vigilance is exercised. A tiny trickle is observed, **ONLY** a tiny trickle. It is carefully stopped, and the small

defect in the dyke repaired. They know, if neglected, it will gradually widen, till at length with a mighty rush the waters will inundate miles of country, destroy smiling farms, and the inhabitants will perish. We need to be careful as to "**ONLY**." They are the little foxes that spoil the tender vines.

The Lord appeared to Solomon in the night, saying to him, "Ask what I shall give thee." What an offer! What a test to this young man! Will he ask for long life, or riches, or success over his enemies? He greatly pleased the Lord. He might have been dazzled by the glory of his position. He might have cherished great ambitions and asked accordingly. On the contrary his conduct is beautiful. See his humility: "I am but a little child: I know not how to go out or come in . . . Give therefore Thy servant an understanding heart . . . that I may discern between good and bad." How beautiful this attitude was! How different from the attitude of modern youth to God, or even to their elders in this world.

The Lord was so pleased that He granted Solomon his desire, and added to it riches and honour and the promise of long life, if he walked in His ways. As for wisdom he excelled all who ever lived before him, as he would all who came after him. "Solomon's wisdom excelled the wisdom of all the children of the east country, and all the wisdom of Egypt . . . he was wiser than all men . . . there came of all people to hear the

wisdom of Solomon from all kings of the earth, which had heard of his wisdom" (1 Kings 4. 30—34). He spake three thousand proverbs, and of songs a thousand and five!

A slight examination of the book shows that when God gave Solomon wisdom, it was wisdom from *above*. His own wisdom, great as it was, was not sufficient to guide him as directed by himself. So we find "the fear of the Lord" connected with wisdom.

"*The fear of the Lord* is the beginning of wisdom."

"Choose *the fear of the Lord*."

"Then shalt thou understand *the fear of the Lord*."

"*The fear of the Lord* is to hate evil."

"*The fear of the Lord* prolongeth days."

"By *the fear of the Lord* men depart from evil."

"*The fear of the Lord* tendeth to life."

"By humility and *the fear of the Lord* are riches and honour and life."

"Be thou in *the fear of the Lord* all the day long."

The wonderful wisdom that God graciously gave him was to be governed by *the fear of the Lord*—the beginning, the A.B.C. of wisdom. If we carried all our plans, great and little, into God's presence and sought His guidance, our wisdom would be guided aright.

What is the fear of the Lord? Not the fear of a guilty conscience that fears the policeman or the magistrate or the judge, but the fear of a son, who is afraid to displease his father, filial fear, begotten of love. For all through Proverbs Solomon is

insistent upon affection, love. "My son, give me thine *heart*," "Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life."

The writer has been greatly struck by Solomon connecting wisdom with the fear of the Lord. And still more struck that Solomon should know where wisdom comes from, should know its source. Spell Source with a capital S, for wisdom in Proverbs 8 is Wisdom personified, even our Lord Jesus Christ Himself. Now Solomon's wisdom, surpassing that of all men of all time, was not sufficient for this knowledge. This knowledge came by *revelation* and wonderful revelation it was. The wit of Socrates or Plato or Solomon or any man was not sufficient for this. Their wisdom, left to themselves, could not rise higher than themselves.

But in Proverbs 8 we get wonderful things predicated of wisdom. Wisdom speaks, not as an abstract quality, but as a Person capable of loving and being loved. "I love them that love Me; and those that seek Me early shall find Me." And that Person tells us He was set up from everlasting, *anointed* from everlasting, the title, *Christ*, means the Anointed.

Not only so, but with Wisdom that never had a beginning there was a companion, so we read "I was daily His delight, rejoicing always before Him" (verse 30). Who was the delight of the Father but the Son; whose company did the Son rejoice in but the Father's — an eternal Divine Company that never had a beginning, and will never have an end. "Canst thou by searching find out God?" was asked of old, and the emphatic answer is *NO*. But here is not searching, but *revelation*. In the comparatively dim light of the Old Testament this is a wonderful shin-

ing forth of the mystery of the God-head. We get two forming a Divine Society in Proverbs 8. 30. In Proverbs 1. 23, we get the Holy Spirit—"I will pour out My Spirit unto you."

How did Solomon know there were two who formed a Divine Society, and a Spirit of God, who could be poured out, as Joel 2. 28, 29 prophesies, and which prophecy was fulfilled in measure on the Day of Pentecost as Peter avers (Acts 2. 16—18) and which awaits full fulfilment in a coming day when our Lord shall return to earth to take up His kingdom when "the knowledge of the glory of the Lord" shall fill the earth "as the waters cover the sea" (Habakkuk 2. 14). So we get foreshadowed the wonderful mystery of the God-head, an eternal Father, an eternal Son, an eternal Spirit—one God and only one, yet the one God so manifested in three Persons.

Not only so, but Solomon tells us of wisdom personified, of Christ indeed, "rejoicing in the habitable part of this earth; and My delights were with the sons of men" (verse 31). So Solomon traces "the beginning"—the A.B.C.—"of wisdom," to its source. Surely this comes out in all its fulness in the New Testament when we read of Christ in glory sending forth the Holy Spirit to indwell the believers, uniting them to Himself in heaven and to each other on earth in that grand fellowship that sets forth how God's delights are with the sons of men.

All this is very beautiful, and the great example of Solomon is before us, his humility—"I am but a little child"—his God-given wisdom. We have known of men of much *knowledge* and have trembled to see them speaking to immature souls, because with all their knowledge they lacked *wisdom*, and their knowledge

was often used to bewilder and stumble those they came across. But in the Book of Proverbs Solomon emphasises wisdom. Will he then continue to be the exemplification of what he preached?

Alas! here we get a great warning, even as we have had a great example. Let us follow the example and give heed to the warning.

Early on in his life Solomon wrote the Book of Proverbs with its beautiful trust in God, its understanding of God's loving chastisements (chapter 3. 11—12); of the advice to say, *No*, when sinners entice. He wrote the Book of Ecclesiastes at the end of his life. What lay between the writing of these two books. The sight of the wisest man becoming the biggest fool, a great warning to us all.

We read "Solomon loved many strange women, women of the Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Zidonians, and Hittites, seven hundred wives and three hundred concubines. He took wives of nations expressly forbidden of God, "Ye shall not go in unto them, neither shall they come in unto you: for surely they will turn your heart after their gods: Solomon clave unto these in love" (1 Kings 11. 1—3). True enough they stole his heart away from Jehovah and he worshipped with his wives the obscene and filthy worship of Ash-toreth the goddess of the Zidonians, of Milcom (Molech) the abomination of the Moabites. God was angry with Solomon and told him in the reign of his son his kingdom should be torn in two and part of it given to his servant. This came true when Rehoboam, a servant of Solomon, ruled over ten tribes and left his son with only two tribes—Judah and Benjamin. Sad indeed is this spectacle.

Young Christians may well be warned not to marry unconverted

partners. It is expressly forbidden in Scripture. What sort of Christianity can a young man or woman have to take for partner one who does not share his or her faith in the Saviour? "Can two walk together, except they be agreed?" (Amos 3. 3).

Ecclesiastes show what steps Solomon took in his own wisdom; great as it was, and not alas! in the fear of the Lord, and how it ended. Twenty-eight times in the book Solomon uses the phrase, *under the sun*. In Proverbs he looks *above the sun*, as chapter 8 so beautifully shows. He ends almost with his last word, "Whoso putteth his trust in the Lord shall be safe" (chapter 29. 25). How happy! But in Ecclesiastes he seeks happiness *under the sun*. Twenty-eight times he employs the phrase, *under the sun*. Is it not significant that he uses the word, *vanity* twenty-eight times — vanity, futility, empty pleasure, fruitless desire, pure emptiness. Indeed the monarch satiated with every sensuous and sensual pleasure can only wail out his utter disappointment, "Vanity of vanities, saith the Preacher, vanity of vanities; all is vanity"—vanity three times in the singular and twice in the plural. It all ends in the grave.

In Ecclesiastes Solomon tells us he went in for mirth and pleasure. People are pleasure mad now-a-days, but they do not look happy. Solomon says of such laughter, "It is MAD," and so it is. "As the crackling of thorns under a pot, so also is the laughter of the fool." The crackling of thorns does not last long and the pleasures of sin are only for a season. How foolish to forget God, the soul, eternity.

Solomon laid hold of folly so that he might see what was good for the sons of men—repeating the fatal act of our first parents in the Garden of

Eden.

We have known of young Christians actually going secretly to dances, theatres and worse places in order to gain experience. How terrible! To eat of the tree of the knowledge of good *and EVIL*, only brought evil results, and it will ever do so. Whoever goes in for sin (for just this once, not much harm in it, don't mean to practice it) does so at his or her peril. On these very lines Solomon in his happier days asks, "Can a man take fire in his bosom, and his clothes not be burned?" (Proverbs 6. 27). Solomon with great wisdom and vast resources of wealth gratified his every whim *under the sun*. He could only wail out in his old age, as he drew near to the gates of death, "Behold all was vanity and vexation of spirit, and there was no profit UNDER THE SUN" (chapter 2. 11).

To sum up we have a great example and a great warning. We have it reproduced in New Testament language. The young men in the family of God were strong, the Word of God abode in them, God's word governed their lives, they overcame the wicked one. Were they safe? Strong, were they secure? Overcomers, were they beyond temptation and a fall? Hear the solemn warning, "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him" (1 John 2. 15).

May we pay heed to the warnings of Scripture that may lead us to constant and daily dependence upon God for our path down here. "He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them" (Hebrew 7. 25).

## “LET NOT YOUR HEART BE TROUBLED.”

J. T. Mawson.

Scripture read: John 14. 1—9.

*Wednesday evening, July 27th.*

THESE words came out of the Lord's own mouth and have comforted multitudes, but we must know to whom they were spoken and whether we have a right to lay claim to them. The Lord was not speaking to self-sufficient and haughty men, He did speak to such sometimes but He did not say to them, “Let not your heart be troubled,” to them He spake words of denunciation and solemn warning, scathing words, that would have thrown them into the greatest trouble of heart if they had had any consciences at all. Nor was He speaking to notorious sinners who had grown weary of the lives they were living. His words to them were compassionate words and full of tender pity, for He came to call them to repentance, but He did not say to them “Let not your heart be troubled.” He was speaking to men who in the previous chapter are called “His own,” those whom He loved and would never cease to love. They were representative men, they represented all His own down through the centuries to this very day, and we gathered here this night belong to that favoured company. We may be feeble and fickle and some of us very young in the faith, but if we can say, “The Son of God loved me, and gave Himself for me,” we are “His own,” He loves us and will never cease to love us. “Having loved His own which were in the world He loves them to the end.” Then we can claim these words; they were spoken for us; to us He says, “Let not your heart be troubled.”

These disciples of the Lord were troubled because He was going

away. They had had no trouble while He was with them. “Lacked ye anything?” He had asked, and they had answered, “Nothing.” But He was going away and what would they do without Him? His answer to their unspoken fear was, “Let not your heart be troubled.” There would be no trouble for any of His own if He were here. “Disease and death and demon fled from His presence, and great peace had they who kept His company, but He is not here and He said in view of His going away, “in the world ye shall have tribulation,” and is not tribulation trouble? His answer is “Let not your heart be troubled.” That is His word to everyone of us. Do any of us think that He would have said that to us if He were not able to keep us from troubling? Did He ever mock a needy soul with vain words? We may be sure that He would never have uttered the words if He were not able at all times and in every circumstance to keep us from troubling. “Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on Thee, because He trusted in Thee.” “In the world ye shall have tribulation but in Me peace.” Then He proceeded to give the basis for this untroubled confidence. “*Ye believe in God, believe also in Me*” and in those words He declared His Deity and set Himself before us as the object of our faith and trust even as God is. God is invisible but real, He would be invisible but as real to faith as God is. Those disciples were well acquainted with Old Testament history. They had read of Abraham and Moses and David and Daniel and the three Hebrew youths. They

knew that these men had trusted in God and were not confounded, He had not failed any of them when they cried unto Him, at all times He was their shield and exceeding great reward. Well, said the Lord, all that God was to His trusting people in ancient days, I will be to you. Have the centuries that have passed weakened His strength and diminished His interest in His own? Has He grown weary of them and their troubles? Hast thou not known? Hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? "Ye believe in God, believe also in Me." Having loved His own which were in the world, He loves them to the end. "Let not your heart be troubled."

*"In My Father's house are many mansions, if it were not so I would have told you."* These men had trusted that He would redeem Israel; they had had great hopes for their nation, and for themselves as His chief friends, when He should sit upon David's throne as Israel's King. The Father's house had never entered their earth-bound minds, but of this He talks to them and not of thrones and crowns. And it was His will that they should understand that His Father's house was to be their place, for they were more to Him than servants or disciples, they were the children of His Father, and the Father's house is the children's home. And to remove all question from their minds He says, "if it were not so I would have told you." If I had not had something better for you than the earth can give you, something better than your highest expectations I would have told you. I would not have asked you to follow Me and then deceived and disappointed you. And that is His

word for us gathered here to-night, and to the young Christians very specially. Your Lord will not deceive you; if the world could do better for you than He could He would say to you, Go to the world. He would not have called you to follow Him if He could not do infinitely better for you than the world or the flesh or Satan. If His resources had been limited and the end of discipleship uncertain, if there had been any doubt as the result of your trust in Him, He would have told you, He would not have deceived you, He would not have called you to disappointment and final loss. He would have told you. Every word He has uttered as to His all-sufficient grace and final glory is the truth and you may trust Him fully and follow Him wholly, assured that earth has no prize to be compared with what He has to give.

*"I go to prepare a place for you."* That was the purpose of His going away, but before He could prepare a place for "His own" He had to prepare "His own" for the place. And because of this necessity He said at the end of this chapter, "Arise, let us go hence." Gethsemane, Gabbatha, Golgotha was the way that He took to the Father's house, for only on that road of sorrow could He prepare us for it. Nothing that defiles can enter the Father's house; and sin-soiled feet can not tread its courts, hence His death and resurrection were necessities, and His love was equal to the demand. He laid down His life for us and took it again.

*"And if I go and prepare a place for you I will come again and receive you unto Myself, that where I am there ye may be also."* We are told how He will come in 1 Thessalonians 4 and surely we cherish and value

the words. "The Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout with the voice of the archangel and with the trump of God, and the dead in Christ shall rise first, then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air and so shall we ever be with the Lord." But why will He come Himself? It has often been said, because He loves us too well to entrust us to others. I am sure that is true, but there is another reason. If the head of a foreign state, a king or president, was to pay a state visit to this land His Majesty would go himself to meet him, if one of lesser rank came he would send one of his brothers. *It is rank to rank.* I do not lose sight of the fact that our Lord is the eternal God, and as such there lies that distance between Him and us that must ever be between Creator and creature, but He became a man that He might die and rise again, that He might redeem us from death and the kingdom of darkness, and make us His brethren. He said to His Father, "The glory which Thou hast given Me I have given them," and now He is not ashamed to call us brethren, and because of the high dignity that is ours as His brethren, the sons of God and His Father, He must come for us Himself. "*That where I am there ye may be also.*" Therein comes His love, and it passeth knowledge, it cannot and will not be satisfied apart from having our company in the Father's house for ever.

As we meditate on these words of the Lord we realise that His great aim was that those whom He loves should know the Father. Indeed we may say that we must become acquainted with the Father before we can enter the Father's house.

Philip must have felt this when he said, "Lord, shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us." The Lord's answer lets a flood of light into our souls. "*He that hath seen Me, hath seen the Father.*" It is as we consider Him that we learn what the Father is. Behold that leper coming to Him. The law demands that he lays his hand upon his mouth and cries, "Unclean, unclean." If he had come near to Simon he would have shrunk from him with horror. If he had come near to John, he would have cried "Get away from me." But he came to Jesus; and He moved with compassion stretched out His hand and laid it upon him, and the poor wretch had not been touched by a human hand for years, and that touch most surely healed the sickness of his soul as the word of the Lord healed his corrupting body. He had no need to have touched him, His word was enough for his cleansing. But oh, the grace, the compassion in that touch! Would you know the Father? "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father."

The children wanted to see Him, but what use were children to Him? thought the disciples, so they drove them away.

"But Jesus saw them e'er they fled,  
And sweetly smiled and kindly said,  
Suffer the children to come unto Me."

And those children never ran to their mothers arms with the eagerness that they ran to His, and He pressed them to His heart and blessed them. "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father." Behold Him weeping with the sisters of Bethany at the closed grave of their brother, and see Him as He looks upon guilty Jerusalem and anticipating its doom weeps over it. Tears for friends and tears for foes! impartial

tears! Would you know the Father? "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father."

When He fed the hungry multitude and gave sight to the blind and healed the sick and raised the dead He was shewing the Father, for these were the Father's works. And His words were the Father's words. When He said to the widow sorrowing for an only son, "Weep not," and when He looked upon the sinner of the city bowing at His feet, and said to her, "Thy sins are forgiven thee," and to Zaccheus the publican, "To-day I must abide at thy house," and when amid the darkness and agony of Calvary He said to the dying thief, "To-day shalt thou be with Me in paradise," the compassion of the Father's heart thrilled in His words, He was shewing the Father.

Tell me, is not the Father attractive as revealed to us by Him? What are the world's friendships and its boasted prizes when compared with the knowledge of Him and His love? Are you not glad that the Father's house is your eternal home, and that you are to be for ever with the One whom Jesus has so blessedly revealed? "His Father and your Father, His God and your God!"

How indispensable to our eternal happiness is our Lord Jesus, and how dependent upon Him we are. We see the Father in Him, for "no man knoweth the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal Him," and we reach the Father by Him. "*I am the way, the truth and the life; no man cometh unto the Father but by Me.*" A pleasing story was very popular more than half a century ago. Queen Victoria was staying in Edinburgh at Holyrood Palace, and a wee laddie

from a poor home was very anxious to see her, but when he reached the palace gates the way was barred by the scarlet-coated sentry. They would not let him pass and he stood as near as he could sobbing with disappointment. A young man passing by noticed his distress and asked him what his trouble was. "I want to see the Queen but the soldiers will na' let me," he said. That young man was Prince Arthur, the now aged Duke of Connaught. He took the boy by the hand and led him past the sentry who saluted the royal prince and his little friend. No one challenged their right to pass right into the palace; footmen and gentlemen-in-waiting bowed to them until they reached the very presence of the Queen. The prince was that boy's way to the Queen, and Jesus is your way to the Father, you have trusted in Him and He has taken you by the hand to lead you to the Father. The Son has access to the Father and with Him and through Him we also have access. "If the Son shall make you free ye shall be free indeed." He gives us the freedom of the Father's house. The boy of our story had to return to his slum dwelling, but we through the infinite grace of God have become children of the palace, the Father's house is our home, the Father is our Father. Our Lord is the way to the Father, He is the truth as to this great and eternal relationship in which we are now with Him and He has imparted to us His own life so that we may intelligently enjoy the relationship. We are waiting for His coming for us, soon we shall be ushered into our eternal home; we shall meet the Father then and He will be no stranger to us, we know Him now for we believe and understand the words of our Lord, "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father."

# THE PRACTICAL EFFECT OF THE TRUTH OF THE LORD'S RETURN.

J. J. Anning.

Scriptures read: Matthew 25. 1—13; 1 Thessalonians 1. 9—10;  
Luke 12. 31—44; Romans 13. 11—12.

*Thursday evening, July 28th.*

**I** WANT to speak to you this evening of the Second Coming of our Lord from the point of view as to how His return affects our lives.

Early in the year I read a book by the Rev. A. Reese entitled "The Approaching Advent of Christ," in it the author endeavours to prove that the Church will go through the Great Tribulation. I spent a long time over my task and am not now suggesting that you should do the same. Our friends Mr. Hole and Mr. A. J. Pollock have answered the book, and have proved, I think conclusively, that the arguments are contrary to the teaching of Holy Scripture, so that, at the time, I wondered if the hours spent over the book had not been wasted.

One thing however transpired, and that was considerable exercise of heart and mind as to how far accepted truth as to the Lord's return had influence in my life.

Like you I was well conversant with the Thessalonian Epistles, but I felt that there was a real danger of the truth, therein stated, being theoretical rather than practical and I knew that the matter must be faced.

Now what applies to me may also do so to you. Our Lord is coming and coming soon — are you and I really waiting and watching for Him — is there habitual expectancy with us as there was with the Thessalonian saints?

From the first Scripture read we learn that all the Virgins, who set off to meet the Bridegroom, slumbered and slept. The atmosphere of the world may be said to be sultry and so to tend to drowsiness. The devil takes good care to provide the necessary sedatives, hypnotics and even narcotics, but what characterised us in our first love was that we, like the Thessalonians, turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, and to wait for His Son from heaven. How is it now? As shown in the third verse of the chapter read, the service was a work of faith, and the labour a labour of love and the waiting was the patience or endurance of hope.

These Thessalonians were young Christians, their conversion was very real, followed by much persecution and tribulation, and in consequence the waiting and watching for Christ was absolutely real; they were awake and expectant.

In this country we have at present an altogether easier time, we know scarcely anything of persecution and the affliction of the gospel, and we have alas therefore much more incentive to slumber and sleep.

May I ask this evening how you are going on, does the truth of the Coming of Christ influence your Christian state in every aspect of it? I feel that what I want to stress is that His Coming is not just an accepted doctrine, but a real and substantial part of our Christian life.

One writer states—"it connects itself with every thought and feeling of the Christian." St. Peter terms it a "living hope." The Lord's Coming is always presented in Scripture as a present operative expectation, with no thought of delay, e.g. "Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of Man cometh."

I turn now to the Scripture read from the 12th of Luke and we there see how waiting for Christ and serving Him whilst He is away characterises the Christian. "Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also" — the loins girded, light burning, men waiting to open immediately, affections in order — watching for the Lord's return.

No, it is not just a doctrine; the blessing is for the watcher, the one who has an object—and what an object!—calling him out into a state of patience and expectation.

How true it is that we cannot do without the power of hope. The blessing in our chapter is connected with watching rather than working; that is, it is not so much occupation with others as watching for Him. Watching is more bound up with our Lord's Person and with His love, so that it says "blessed are those servants whom the Lord, when He cometh, shall find watching." On His return, all the activity of His great love is shown and also all His gracious condescension. "He shall gird Himself and make them to sit down to meat and will come forth to serve them." When on earth, He had girded Himself and washed His disciples feet as is recorded in John 13, but here we see Him as the One who is a servant for ever according to the type in Exodus 21. He could say, as stated in John 17, "I have finished

the work which Thou gavest Me to do." He therefore had the right, as Jehovah's Servant, to go out free, but LOVE—amazing LOVE—declared "I will not go out free."

"If He shall come in the second watch, or come in the third watch" —does not this shew intentness? the watching is not a vague term, but it is carried out right through the night. They are looking for Him from first to last—the Son of Man coming in His glory. The 40th verse gives us the personal application—"Be ye ready also." Their treasure being in the heavens, their heart would be there also.

As another has put it, "present ease and unwatchfulness in a world of thieves always makes the return of the Lord to be more or less unwelcome." The only right attitude for our love is that of watching for Him. The late Dr. Wolston used as an illustration of this fact the case of two women, wives of sea-faring men who were due back from a voyage. One got already and *waited* at home for her man to arrive, but the other went down to the quay-side and stayed there *watching* to welcome her husband when he came ashore. Our LORD wants both the waiting and the watching and He says "be ye ready." The waiting means "I'm ready," the watching, "I'm expectant."

In the last Chapter of the Revelation it is stated three times that He is coming quickly. We say, Amen, even so, Lord Jesus. Forgive me, however in closing for reading from the 13th of Romans. "And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep, for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed. The night is far spent, the day is at hand."

## THE LORDSHIP OF CHRIST.

*Summarised Notes of Bibles Reading at Bangor, N. Wales, July 28th.*

Scriptures read: Acts 2. 29—47; 11. 19—30.

THE knowledge of the resurrection and exaltation of Christ made the apostles triumphant men, and we shall be triumphant too if instead of having these great facts as articles in a creed they are made real to us by the Holy Ghost. Jesus who died for us has been raised from among the dead, has ascended into heaven and has been made both Lord and Christ by God Himself.

A bone of Socrates was found some time ago and it was said if a bone of the Lord could be found the Christian faith would collapse. The angel's word to women who sought His body was "Why seek ye the living among the dead?" A Moslem thought he had a splendid argument against a Christian when he said, You cannot agree as to the tomb of Jesus and how do you know that He ever lived and died and had a tomb? Every Moslem knows where the tomb of Mohammed is! The Christians reply was, We do not need a tomb for we have not a corpse but a conqueror, not a tomb but a triumph.

The title Lord has a double significance. It carries with it authority and administration. Joseph in Genesis is a remarkable type of this two-fold dignity. He was made lord of all Egypt and he used his power and wisdom for the salvation of the world, he kept it alive. Pharaoh said to all the Egyptians, "Bow the knee to Joseph," and when they sought his bounty he said to great and small alike "Go to Joseph." Jesus is Lord and Christ, He has been set in supreme authority but He exercises that authority for blessing; for salva-

tion is bound up with that title, but it is only secured by bowing to His authority. So Romans 10. 9, "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth Jesus as Lord."

"He is Lord of all," so said Peter to the first Gentiles who listened to the gospel, Acts 10, and every tongue will be compelled to confess this to the glory of God the Father, Philipians 2. To all who acknowledge His Lordship now and bow before Him He administers the blessing of salvation according to the grace of God, He will administer judgment to the disobedient.

There is the actuality of His exaltation and His authority and administration. His authority calls for allegiance and His administration means adequacy of supply.

No greater proof that grace and blessing come through the Lord could we have than that forgiveness was preached through His Name to those who had murdered Him.

He was always Lord personally. David in Psalm 110 stresses this. "The Lord said unto my Lord. Sit Thou on My right hand until I make Thy enemies Thy footstool." Thomas said, "My Lord and My God," but He became man and humbled Himself to the death of the cross and God has highly exalted Him. He has been raised to the office of Lord. He administers on behalf of God. The title is His because of who He is, and it has been conferred upon Him as the once crucified Man for the fulfilment of God's will. He has proved

His competency to be Lord of all by His absolute obedience to the will of God even unto death.

It is remarkable that when the Lord told His disciples that one of them would betray Him they said "Lord, is it I?" but Judas said, "Master [Rabbi] is it I." Simon called Him Rabbi in Luke 5. 5, but when he saw the multitude of fishes, and realised that he was in the presence of the Creator, he called Him Lord, verse 8.

God has raised up and made this same Jesus both Lord and Christ, in contrast to what men did to Him "that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, God hath made both Lord and Christ." Peter's hearers had to decide where they would stand, they could not be both for and against. Those that received his word were baptised. They not only submitted to the Lord's claim, but in doing so they dissociated themselves from that "untoward generation" and so saved themselves from the doom that was to come upon it. The remission of their sins was two sided—governmental and eternal: governmental, in that by baptism they separated themselves from the nation that had crucified their Messiah, and eternal through their belief of the gospel; and they received the Holy Ghost. Baptism separated them from the old *position* of condemnation, the Holy Ghost was the power of the new life they had received through faith in the Lord.

In Acts 2 the preaching of the Lordship of Christ formed the first assembly of God among the Jews, the preaching of the Lord Jesus in Acts 11, formed the first Gentile Assembly. The life of the latter is described in interesting detail for a definite purpose. When God begins

something new He often gives a pattern for what His thought for the new thing is, we find that here. Notice the place the Lord has in it. They preached the Lord Jesus, the hand of the Lord was with them; they turned to the Lord; Barnabas exhorted them to cleave to the Lord. It was the same Lord who was supreme in the Jerusalem assembly that took His place in the midst at Antioch.

Satan outwits himself, and God turns his efforts to stamp out His work to its progress and increase. It was so in this case, these unnamed men who were scattered abroad could not keep the good news to themselves. They were not great preachers, but they had a great theme. The word is "they talked," or prattled, the Lord Jesus. It was the overflowing of full hearts. The preaching of Jesus would win the hearts of these Gentiles and of the Lord would bow them before Him.

A great number of the Grecians believed and *turned to the Lord*. They believed effectively, their faith turned them to a new authority and a new source of supply, and that meant deliverance from Satan's power and the world. They had looked to the world for all they needed hitherto, but now they turned from it to the Lord, He, the great administrator of the grace of God became their Lord and their source of supply, and as He had been sufficient for the Jewish believers so was He sufficient for these Gentile believers. So remarkable was the work that news of it travelled to Jerusalem, and they sent Barnabas to see what was going on. They could not have sent a better man. He was a good man and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith, and had a keen eye for what was of God, and what he saw gladdened his heart. *He saw the grace of God*. This

confirms us in the thought that as the Lord, our Lord is the administrator of the grace of God. These Grecians had come under the Lord's control and had received of God's grace in such an abundant measure that it was seen in their lives. Barnabas had only one thing to say to them, and it was, Go on as you have begun, cleave to the Lord with purpose of heart. He did not say, Cleave to the Shepherd or cleave to the Saviour. The Shepherd would cleave to them, for none could pluck them from His hand, but it was most necessary that they should cleave to the Lord as Lord.

The Christian life is a conflict, and an army in active warfare must keep in contact with its base. If the foe outflanks it and cuts it off from its base it cannot hope for victory. The line of communication with the base must be kept intact, for all supplies come from the base. So it is, the Lord is our base of supply, we are wholly dependent on Him, and we cleave to Him as we are subject to His holy will. Submission to Him means supplies from Him, and His grace, His supplies, are sufficient.

It is probable that Barnabas felt that Saul had something to give that these young Christians needed. At his conversion he not only learnt that Jesus is Lord, but that the saints on earth are one with Him, He is Christ the head of His body as well as Lord. He was head of the saints in Jerusalem and head of these saints at Antioch—one Head and consequently one Body. Barnabas brought him to Antioch and for a whole year they assembled with the church and taught much people. The whole year is a complete cycle of time; for that whole period they did not forsake the assembling of themselves together. Spring, summer, autumn, winter,

whatever the season made no difference to them. That is the sort of Christian that is a joy to meet and is helpful in the testimony of the Lord. So often we meet those who are bright enough when every thing goes well, during the spring and summer of revival and happy meetings they are there bright and happy, but they lose their interest and forsake the assembling of themselves together when difficulties arise and things are not so bright, the winter time tests them. We must be all the year round Christians, and shall be if we cleave to the Lord with purpose of heart. And the assemblies of the saints are the places in which to learn. The Lord administers there for the instruction of His own. We must not neglect our private study of the Word, but we shall not make progress if we neglect this assembling together where they "taught much people." The mind of the Lord is learnt more truly in His assemblies where His rights are maintained than anywhere else.

One thing they learnt at these assembly gatherings was that all the saints are one, there is one body. So that when they heard of the coming famine, they did not think of themselves, they thought of their brethren in Judæa whom they had never seen and sent help to them. It was a beautiful demonstration of what the grace of God from the Lord in glory could do, and a proof that they had learnt the indivisible oneness of the body of Christ. "If one member suffers all the members suffer with it." How God Himself must have rejoiced at this unselfishness in the midst of a selfish pagan city. It was His own character reproduced in His children.

You will notice that the disciples were first called Christians at An-

tioch, and that would be because they were like Christ. It is subjection to the Lord Jesus that produces this Christ-likeness.

The beginning of chapter 13 completes the picture. There they ministered to *the Lord*. There was a response of praise to all that He had ministered to them, and such subjection to His holy will that the Holy

Ghost was unhindered in expressing His divine will as to the going out of the gospel from their midst. It was not the assembly that chose these men for this mission, but the Holy Ghost, and *He* sent them forth, but the assembly had the great privilege of having fellowship with the Holy Ghost in this, and of identifying itself with this aggressive work of God in the world.

## ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

### Knowing one another in Heaven.

Please say something about this subject. It is said that 1 Corinthians 13. 12 proves that we shall know each other in the relationships that exist now, that husbands and wives and parents and children will recognise each other in these relationships.—KENT.

**T**HE Lord's answer to the Sadducees, Matthew 22. 30, is enough to prove that natural relationships cease with this life, they are not carried on into the resurrection life. His words on the subject are authoritative and final. Natural relationships belong to the natural life, spiritual relationships to the spiritual life.

Yet it is just as clear that we shall know one another in resurrection. Writing to the Thessalonians Paul said, "What is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming? 1 Thess. 2. 19 (see also 2 Cor. 1. 14, 1 John 2. 28). Paul will know his spiritual children in heaven. We are surely right in concluding that every true spiritual contact that we make will abide. We meet as Christians and have fellowship in the Spirit; this is the Spirit's work and all that He does must abide; we shall take up these links again in heaven. And in this lies the greatest value of these natural ties. A Christian husband and wife are not only one flesh, but they are one in the Lord, and as they have com-

munion together in His things and grow together in the knowledge of Him and share in His service they are developing a life and growing in a relationship that shall abide for ever.

A Christian mother who has prayed and agonised for her children and laboured to bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord will know them in the glory, not as the fruit of her womb, but as the fruit of her labour in the Lord for their salvation. They will be her crown of rejoicing there.

1 Corinthians 13. 12 simply means that the time is coming when our knowledge will be perfect. We shall no longer be learning little by little and discarding imperfect knowledge for something less imperfect, but we shall be in the full light with nothing in us to obscure our vision. Everything that is partial will have passed away. The illustration is the contrast between seeing an image dimly reflected in an imperfect mirror and standing face to face with the one whose reflection it is. It has nothing to do with knowing one another.

## THE HOUR.

A. M. Chambers.

*"The hour is come"* John 17. 1.*"For this cause came I unto this hour"* John 12. 27.

**T**HE hour is come! Stupendous awful hour!  
 The wave of evil risen to its height  
 About to crash in overwhelming power  
 And plunge mankind in everlasting night.

Inevitable hour! Counsels sublime  
 Had marked it in eternity long past,  
 And when began the solemn march of time  
 It but led onward to this hour at last.

Appalling hour! The power of darkness reigns,  
 Demons and men are banded 'neath its sway.  
 No element of mercy now restrains  
 Hell's hosts come forth in terrible array.

And is there none to meet them? Shall the hour  
 Sound it's dread knell of hopeless final loss?  
 Where is God's champion panoplied in power?  
 Behold Him—thorn-crowned—bleeding—on a cross!

Alone He hangs,—alone in earth and Heaven!  
 By God forsaken and by man abhorred;  
 Not to His aid are shining legions given,  
 Not to His heart one sympathising word.

Yet this is Wisdom. Here is Godhead's might  
 In silent suffering and submission shown.  
 Through this deep darkness shines the radiant light  
 Of righteousness on which is built His throne.

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Thus ever on through life we find  
 To trust, O Lord, is best.  
 Who serve Thee with a quiet mind  
 Find in their service rest.  
 Their outward troubles may not cease,  
 But this their joy shall be:  
 "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace  
 Whose mind is stayed on Thee."

# LIBERTY, RESPONSIBILITY, FRATERNITY.

F. B. Hole.

Read Romans 14. 1 — 15. 7.

*Bangor. Tuesday, July 24th.*

**W**E have to remember that there is a very real sense in which the kingdom of God is established to-day. If we turn to Exodus 19, we find that when God gave His law to Israel through Moses He said, "Now therefore, if ye will obey My voice indeed, and keep My covenant, then . . . ye shall be unto Me a kingdom of priests." Israel did not obey His voice, they broke His covenant and ceased to be a kingdom, which in any sense could be owned as His. God has not given up His thought however, and a day is coming in which His kingdom will be established in glory. It will be placed under the Son of Man, and extend beyond Israel to "all people, nations and languages," and be "an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away," as Daniel tells us.

This, I trust, we all believe, as we wait for the appearing of Christ in His glory. What we may overlook is that God has not given up His sovereign place even to-day; and if we have truly received Jesus as our Saviour and Lord, we have been brought into His kingdom, for He has "translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son." Paul went about amongst all the saints preaching the kingdom of God, as he reminded the Ephesian elders, in Acts 20; that is, he everywhere insisted upon obedience to the will of God, and showed what that will is in its details. This is what he did in the latter part of his epistles, and nowhere more extensively than in the Epistle to the Romans.

Hence in the passage that I have

read we find the kingdom of God referred to, and we are told that in its practical details it does not concern itself with "meat and drink, but righteousness and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." Righteousness does not consist so much in my enforcing what is due to me, as in my paying to all others what is due to them. We must yield to God all that is His due, and give to Christ the place that is His, and then practise everyday righteousness with all our neighbours, both saved and unsaved. Peace and joy in the Holy Ghost are then the practical outcome. Righteousness is the foundation on which they rest. This fourteenth chapter gives instruction in righteousness to all saints.

Nineteen centuries ago Rome was the great world-metropolis, and to it multitudes of people gravitated, Christians amongst them. Those composing the church in that city would doubtless belong to a variety of races, Jews and Gentiles mixed together. Hence among the brethren were bound to be found men brought up with widely divergent customs and ways, and many occasions would arise provocative of arguments and wranglings, especially between Jew and Gentile. Our chapter opens with the words, "Him that is weak in the faith receive ye, but not to doubtful disputations," or, as the New Translation has it, "not to the determining of questions of reasoning." As we read down the chapter we find that the one "weak in the faith" is the one of Jewish upbringing, who had scruples about matters of meat and a regard for days. Such were to

be received, but not in order to argue with them or dictate to them what they should do, or not do. These questions as to meats and days do not agitate us much to-day, but there are plenty of other questions that do, relating to affairs concerning our daily lives and also our service to the Lord.

We must emphasize that this passage deals with "questions of reasoning," and not matters as to which God has plainly spoken in His Word. Take for example that plain word, "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers." No reasoning is necessary when we read that; there is only one thing to do—obey it. If we do not obey these definite instructions of Scripture we are sure to come under the direct government of the Lord, to our cost. But, on the other hand there are many details of life and service as to which we have to judge by analogy and by comparing scripture with scripture. Here we may not agree, inasmuch as we vary so much in knowledge of the Word and in spiritual growth, to say nothing of our upbringing and temperaments. Now as to things of this kind, if we are not to argue until all are agreed, we must observe the principles laid down in this chapter.

The principles appear to be three, and each carries with it a corresponding exhortation. The first is that of

### CHRISTIAN LIBERTY.

We are set free, as to these matters of reasoning and spiritual judgment, from man's dictation or interference; set free, not to do our own wills, but that our souls may be placed in the presence of the Lord as our Master. This principle is plainly set forth in verse 4, where the question is asked, "Who art thou that judgest another

man's servant?" and the statement is made, "To his own Master he standeth or falleth." The Lord claims absolute right over His servants, and no one has any right to interfere and call them before some little judgment-seat which he has erected.

The exhortation attached to this is found in the end of verse 5: "Let every man be *fully persuaded in his own mind.*" Now that evidently infers that to begin with every man must be *fully exercised in his own mind* as to the point in question. He must aim at discovering for himself what is in the mind of his Lord. This, sad to say, is a thing that many of us are inclined to shirk. We would rather that somebody else had the exercise, so that we might do our thinking by proxy, and have an easy time of it. If we take up that attitude we become like some small boy who comes home from school with his sums, and thinks it delightful if father kindly works them out for him. If that becomes a habit, what is going to happen? Why, one of these days, when father is not available, he will run to somebody else who will produce ridiculous answers to his sums, and make him look very foolish at school. In any event he will remain a little dunce in things arithmetical, and be found out when examination day comes.

If I am to be fully persuaded, and in my own mind, and not somebody else's, exercise of mind there must be; and that exercise is spiritually healthful, and productive of spiritual development. Many remain spiritual dwarfs because they shirk this exercise; and if any man undertakes to judge me, and thus interfere between me and the Lord, he is helping to dwarf me. He may say that if he does not interfere with me, I shall make mistakes. No doubt I shall.

but the Lord will know how to teach me valuable lessons by my very mistakes, before lesson time is over; and at all events I shall not be wholly ignorant when the examination day comes.

The examination day is certainly coming. This brings us to the second principle; that of

**CHRISTIAN RESPONSIBILITY,** which is plainly set forth in verses 10—12 of our chapter. We are all going to “stand before the judgment seat of Christ,” and “everyone of us shall give account of himself to God.” These are very sweeping statements! Christ is Master and Lord to each of us, and He intends to assert His authority. No man ought to call me before his little judgment seat, because the Lord intends me to stand before His judgment seat of Divine power and omniscience. There every knee shall bow to Him. There we shall each render an account to God and get His mind as to all our course, and His approval where He can bestow it.

The exhortation which is based upon this is found in verse 13, and is in two parts—the negative and the positive. The negative side is this: “Let us *not* therefore judge one another any more.” There is no *need* to do so. Our judgments are at best partial and imperfect: His judgment which is to come is complete and perfect. The responsibility of each servant is to Him, and we are entrusted with the liberty, of which I have just been speaking, in full view of that fact. The one is the complement of the other.

The positive side of the exhortation is found in these words: “Judge

this rather, that no man put a stumbling block or an occasion to fall in his brother’s way.” Now this introduces us to the third principle which is so prominent in this chapter: that of

### **CHRISTIAN BROTHERHOOD or FRATERNITY.**

Verse 15 states it very definitely: “If thy brother be grieved with thy meat, now walkest thou not charitably. Destroy not him with thy meat, for whom Christ died.” Each one for whom Christ died is my brother, and I am to act toward him “charitably,” or, “according to love.” If some action of mine would have a destructive effect upon a brother, wounding him in heart and conscience so as to bring him under a cloud, and put him out of action in his service for our common Lord, then far be it from me to do it.

We have seen that the liberty which is accorded to us must be used in the full light of our responsibility to the Lord, which will reach its termination at the judgment seat. Now we find that the brotherhood which has been established also lays a restraining hand upon our exercise of the liberty with which we are entrusted. In certain matters I may be a ‘weak’ brother, entertaining scruples, to which you, as a ‘strong’ brother, are an entire stranger. In such a case I must keep my hands off you, and not drag you before my judgment seat, demanding that you conform to my thoughts. In other matters possibly you may be the weak brother and I the strong. Now again I must be careful, lest I despise you and insist upon going my own way, quite regardless of your feelings and of the spiritual damage I may be inflicting upon you. I may be convinced that the thing in question is according to

the will of the Lord, and one that, under *ordinary* circumstances, I should do; but if, under *these* circumstances, my doing it would work damage to you, then it is the will of the Lord that I refrain from doing it.

Hence the third exhortation which we have in this very important chapter is that which is found in verse 19: "Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another." We are to consider with real sympathy all our brethren, and aim at their spiritual good. A brother may be, in my eyes, a very awkward fellow, but I must never forget this great fact—Christ died for him. We need thus to cultivate, what I may call, the family feeling; for whatever our differences of judgment on these questions of reasoning, we all are brethren.

So the Apostle adds, "For meat destroy not the work of God;" and surely we may say, not only for meat but also for days, and for a good many other things beside. The work of God is by far the greater thing. Do not let us destroy the greater thing for the sake of establishing some lesser detail, as has so often been done, sad to say, in the church's history.

When the French revolution took place one hundred and fifty years ago, the great cry was for, "Liberty, Equality, Fraternity." In practice all

three were terribly abused, and ultimately entirely denied. Their boasted liberty degenerated into tyranny of the fiercest kind. Their equality became a farce, and upon its ruins strong imperialism was erected with Napoleon at the head of it. Their fraternity turned into fratricidal strife, the guillotine and the chopping off of many heads. The trouble with them lay in the middle term of their three. Now where they put "Equality," the Word of God puts "Responsibility," and that makes all the difference.

Equality means the flattening out of all things in a horizontal direction, whereas Responsibility draws a straight line in a perpendicular direction, lifting our thoughts from where we stand on earth straight to God in heaven. Man was in the centre for them, whereas God is in the centre for us.

Too frequently has the fourteenth of Romans been skipped by us. Let us give it the place which is its due, for the non-observance of the instruction that it gives has often wrought mischief in the past. If we observe the three principles that it establishes, we shall not only avoid doing damage to the work of God, but we shall further the kingdom of God, which is righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost. And further, serving Christ in these things, we shall be "acceptable to God and approved of men."

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I *cried*, and He heard. That is certain. It is an immense thing, in the midst of trial and difficulty, to be sure of God's hearing.

"I laid me down and slept; I awaked: for Jehovah sustained me." How emphatic and simple!

We are foolish as to difficulties and trials, measuring them by our own strength instead of God's, who is for us if we are His.

## “HOW THOU OUGHTEST TO BEHAVE THYSELF.”

David Ross.

*Bangor, North Wales. Wednesday evening, July 27th.*

“But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.

“And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory” (1 Tim. 3. 15—16).

IN most religions position and privilege are set before us as the reward of good behaviour, whereas in Christianity it is the very reverse, because the believer's conduct is determined by the place into which God in His grace has called him. He forms part of the House of God, and his conduct is in keeping therewith.

A house is to be in the first place an *habitation* and Eph. 2. 22. tells us that we are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit. A house takes character from its occupant, thus God's house must be marked by holiness for He is holy. The word house can also signify a *family*, and therefore the characteristic feature of all who belong to the family of which God is Head and Father must be in accordance with His nature which is Love. Again there is the thought of the *household*. No longer are we strangers and pilgrims, but of the household of God. If we belonged to King George's household how careful we should be to have our dress and deportment in keeping with such a dignity. How much more then ought our conduct to be regulated by the majesty of our heavenly Master! A fourth meaning of the word “house” is that of a *dynasty*. When we think of the loyalty shown by the highlanders of Scotland to the House of Stewart, which caused them to risk the for-

feiture of life, land and liberty, how much greater devotion should we bear to our Sovereign Lord, the King of Glory.

This house is here spoken of as the *Church*, a word which signifies, “called out.” What behaviour befits those who, though they were once the citizens of earth, are now “called from above and heavenly men by birth.” This Church, Paul informs us, is the *Body* of Christ and as such is the vehicle for the expression of the will of the Head. What dignity to be associated with the Risen Lord, who is above all principality and power and is Head over all things to His Church which is His body, the fullness of Him that filleth all in all. This Church is also the *Bride* of Christ which He has so loved, that He gave Himself for it, that He might present it to Himself a glorious church, not having spot nor wrinkle nor any such thing. What response should there be in those who form part of that which is to be the delight of His heart now and for all eternity.

What courage should we also display, despite all the threats which seem to forebode destruction, when we know that it is the Church of the *living* God. When Peter confessed Jesus as Son of the living God, the promise was that the gates of Hell would not prevail against the Church

built on that glorious confession. We belong to the "living" God, the God who never dies.

This church, we are told, is the pillar and ground of the Truth. The interesting figure here used is from the realm of Architecture. Ephesus, to which this letter was probably first directed, was full of magnificent buildings ornamented with beautiful pillars. Such a column usually consisted of three parts, the base or plinth, the pillar itself and the capital at the top. The ground or plinth is the broad base on which everything rests and speaks of stability, the column secures the necessary height or elevation on which can be displayed to the onlooker the beauty of the highly ornate capital. Solomon's Temple had two interesting bronze pillars which were called Jachin, i.e. "He shall establish it," and Boaz, which means, "In it is strength." The two "chapiters" or capitals which must have been wonderful works of art, with their nets of checker work, wreaths of chain work, pomegranates and lily work, were raised on pillars eighteen feet high for all to see and admire.

Some very ancient pillars were monoliths, i.e., they consisted of one huge stone, and it is precious to the saints to know that Christ and the Church which bears witness to Him, the Sanctifier and the sanctified, are "all of one." Most of these columns however were composed of separate stones or bricks marvellously fitted together, and thus fitly symbolise that wonderful structure, the Church which consists of a multitude of "living" stones, fitly framed together and growing.

A pillar speaks of testimony but its witness is never to itself and so the

Church is the witness of the Truth, which is found alone in Jesus. Any teaching which occupies the saints with the Church in itself, and not as Paul does with Christ *and* the Church, will surely result in something obnoxious to God and man, such as is seen in the monstrous pretensions of the Church of Rome. May God preserve us all from such "ecclesiasticism."

A pillar was often erected to perpetuate the memory of some great man or notable event. The wicked Absalom desired such a perpetuation of his name, when he reared up for himself a pillar, "saying, 'I have no son to keep my name in remembrance,' and he called the pillar by his own name." And who shall declare the generation of Him who was cut off out of the land of the living, and of whom men said, "When shall He die and His name perish?" God's answer is, "I will make Thy name to be remembered in all generations." He who is the way, the Truth and the Life has secured a generation through His death and resurrection to perpetuate His life and name in that Church which is the pillar and ground of the Truth.

Men sometimes find it difficult to decipher the inscriptions on ancient pillars. How important is it that in the Church and those who compose it there should be a clear unmistakable representation and reproduction of the Truth, so that men may see Jesus in us. He is the Truth which all men profess to be seeking, even though many are like cynical Pilate who, in the very moment of asking "What is Truth?" turned his back on its embodiment. This manifestation of God in Christ is confessedly a mystery, which means that it cannot be grasped by the mere processes of

ratiocination, not by flesh and blood, but only by revelation of the Father who makes it known, not to the wise and prudent, but unto babes. How many generations of these simple believing babes of all ages, races and countries have drawn near to Bethlehem's manger to wonder at the mystery of God incarnate.

O come, all ye faithful  
 Joyful and triumphant,  
 O come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem;  
 Come and behold Him  
 Born the King of angels:  
 O come, let us adore Him, Christ the  
 Lord.

God of God,  
 Light of Light,  
 Lo! He abhors not the Virgin's womb:  
 Very God,  
 Begotten, not created,  
 O come, let us adore Him, Christ the  
 Lord.

Truly a theme for adoration rather than analysis is this mighty mystery!

"Justified in the Spirit." To what particular point in His history this refers I cannot say, but I love to meditate upon and testify to that wonderful life which was lived completely in the power of the Spirit. His birth was thus announced to Mary, "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee and that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God." The Holy Spirit anointed Him at His baptism when God's Voice was heard expressing His delight in Him after thirty years in the obscurity of a Galilean village. He was full of the Holy Ghost, was led, indeed was driven by the Spirit into the wilderness to endure temptation for forty days, thence to emerge the all-victorious, because the all-dependent, Son of Man. By the Spirit of God He cast out the demons, thus as Son of God undoing the works of the devil; through the eternal Spirit He offered Himself without spot to God; and according to the Spirit of

Holiness He was declared to be the Son of God by the resurrection from the dead.

"Seen of angels." What a sight for these heavenly beings as they announced to wondering shepherds the advent of the Saviour, Christ the Lord, and directed them to the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in the manger! But how must they have marvelled, as they came and ministered to Him, after He had endured the fasting and the temptation of the wilderness. Again the angel draws near to strengthen Him, when the anguish of Gethsemane drew from His brow the blood-like sweat; and then what angelic jubilation as He burst the bonds of death asunder, and they announced the glad tidings, "He is not here, He is risen, come see the place where the Lord lay." As for His present glory the hymn well says,

"No angel in the sky  
 Can fully bear that sight,  
 But downwards bends his burning eye  
 At mysteries so bright."

"Preached unto the nations." How quickly this took place, as the persecutions scattered the Christians, who went everywhere preaching the Word, preaching Christ, preaching Jesus. Not ethics, politics, poetry, philosophy or even ecclesiastical principles. How have the Churches wilted and withered when these have been substituted for the preaching of Christ, and the word of His Cross, through which it has pleased God to save them that believe. May God revive in this and other lands this glorious preaching.

"Believed on in the world." He has become the object of faith to countless millions in this world of despair and unbelief, and the dominating influence in their lives so that

each can say with the Apostle Paul, "The life that I now live in the flesh, I live by faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me."

"Received up into glory." The gospel that does not tell of the Man in the Glory is incomplete. Somewhere, in Ireland I think, is a piece of statuary showing a group of men gazing into space with no apparent object, but just on the ground before them are to be seen two footprints. That is Christianity. He has left us an example that we should walk in His steps, but we can only rightly do so, if we are occupied with Him where He is in the glory of God. Occupa-

tion with Him produces conformity to Him. "We all with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory even as by the Spirit of the Lord."

What a privilege to form part of that House, the Church of the living God, the pillar and ground of this glorious Truth. Let this then determine our behaviour so that

"Faithful, holy we may be,  
Joyful in Thy full salvation,  
More and more conformed to Thee:  
Changed from glory unto glory,  
Till in Heaven we take our place  
Then to worship and adore Thee,  
Lost in wonder, love and praise."

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## A PRAYER IN TIME OF TEMPTATION.

A. M. Chambers.

*"Beginning to sink, he cried, Lord, save me!"* Matt. 14. 30.

Lord, I am weak; now let me feel  
That Thou art near to me.  
Uphold me with Thine own right hand  
And make me stand for Thee.

Lord, I am fearful; my faint heart  
Quails when the arrows fly.  
Now grant me courage, born of faith  
To lift Thy banner high.

Lord, I am sinful, and within  
Ever a traitor waits  
Eager to give the enemy  
A place inside my gates.

Weak, base, and foolish: yet Thy grace  
Sufficient is for me,  
And in my very weakness shall  
Thy strength perfected be!

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The presentation of Christ to all is our supreme business. This was placed beyond question by His parting charge, to go into all the world, and to preach the gospel to every creature. Through all these centuries the charge has come down to the present generation, telling of a purpose and desire still existent in the heart of our ascended Lord.

## TESTING TURNED TO TRIUMPH.

R. McCallum.

Read 1 Peter 1 — 2. 3

*Bangor, North Wales. Thursday, July 28th.*

THERE are five writers of the twenty-two epistles found in the New Testament. Of these Paul is characteristically the Apostle of Faith, Peter of Hope, John of Love, James of Works, and Jude of Apostasy.

The epistle from which I have read was written "to the elect pilgrims of the dispersion"—to those who had renounced Judaism for Christ, and was probably written about 64 A.D. Christians were meeting the first onslaught of persecution on a large scale from pagan Rome, and the fire kindled by Nero was spreading to the provinces. The recipients of the message were a frail people scattered throughout Asia Minor without wealth or power or the protection of earthly patronage: without organisation or even geographical unity to afford them strength and security. To such the Apostle writes, as the storm is about to break, and it cannot be without interest at this juncture in world history when a revolting parallel to the past is presented even in enlightened Europe, to note what this Apostle of Hope will adduce by way of comfort. What elements of the gospel story will he bring into prominence to minister consolation to those exposed to persecution and to succour them in their suffering? These he finds in the attributes of God.

First of all, he reminds them that *God is Sovereign* and that they are elect according to the foreknowledge of God. Now, I am aware, that to my brethren who know me most intimately, it may seem strange that I,

who normally am found stressing the truth of human responsibility, should to-night be emphasising Divine Sovereignty. I am deeply conscious that election is frequently presented in harsh, arbitrary and despotic terms representing God as capricious and differing little from fatalism. While one revolts from such a representation, it does, however, give stability to the soul to realise that God is behind everything, and that there is no one and nothing behind God. At the core of God's universe there is a settled purpose! If as we were reminded by Mr. Hole, the Cross of Christ which appeared to be the absolute negation of all law and order and purpose was nevertheless "according to the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God" we become prepared to receive the truth that through all the circumstances of life, however contrary to expectation or beyond human understanding, there runs the thread of the will of God. No threats of the enemy, no solitude, no persecution, however bitter and fiendish, could affect their standing before God as those who were the objects of His sovereign choice, and in whose salvation all three Persons of the blessed Trinity had been engaged, for were they not "elect according to the foreknowledge of God, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ"? There had been a response on their part, to be sure,—a free response, but nevertheless something had preceded that, namely, the work of the Spirit and if we remember that election, is not merely to privilege but to responsibility, instead of be-

getting spiritual pride, the doctrine will beget reverential fear and awe.

Immediately thereafter the apostle breaks forth in doxology as he glories in the fact that *God is Merciful*. "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to *His abundant mercy* has begotten us again unto a living hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead." God's people ought always to be a praising people. And indeed, the church has ever found that the secrets of her joy are mightier than her sorrows and when reviled and persecuted falsely for His name's sake believers have rejoiced and been exceeding glad. To make the assertion is merely to state a historical commonplace.

Here too we are confronted with a condition of which the philosophies of this world know nothing. They can expatiate grandly on education, culture, moral growth, evolution but "begotten again" is a phrase foreign to their vocabularies. But here is where the Christian begins. His blessing finds its origin in the mercy of God, is secured for him in the resurrection of Christ and results in a living hope centred in the glorified Christ. And let me remind you that churchyards are not merely the burial places of men's bones but of their hopes. Aye, and how many a hope is buried while the man lives! Have we not all had experience enough of them? But hope centred in the living Lord is living because he lives never more to die.

At this point suffer a digression, for the sake of those who are younger. It may confidently be asserted that there is no fact more securely established than the resurrection of Christ, but do not be misled as to the character of the evi-

dence required. There are at least three types of fact demanding as many different types of proof for their satisfactory establishment. A mathematical fact is demonstrated in the realm of pure thought and when I prove to a class that "The square on the hypotenuse of a right-angle triangle is equal to the sum of the squares on the other two sides"—the well-known Theorem of Pythagoras—all that is required is, to use the language of a former colleague "a little chalky-talkie," for those who have the necessary preliminary training.

A scientific fact, on the other hand, should be established in the realm of experiment. When the scientist asserts that hydrogen and oxygen combining in certain proportions produce water, I am satisfied only when the experiment is repeated and the result demonstrated in the laboratory. Such demonstration demands my consent: to it my mind bows. But by way of contrast I feel under no obligation to give mental assent, or to bow my soul, to the assertion that somewhere in primeval slime, millions of years ago, life somehow originated and from the primordial germ all life has evolved. Evidences, so-called, are usually found in the remotest parts of the earth and associated with the realms—not of man's clearest knowledge, but of his profoundest ignorance. All such is speculation, philosophical vanity, and mere hypothesis as distinct from scientific fact.

Historical fact is neither established in the realm of pure thought nor of experiment: it can only be established by adequate and reliable testimony. If someone rose from the dead to-night it would be no demonstration that Christ rose from the

dead two thousand years ago for historical truth is not substantial except by competent witnesses, customs have their origin in the event, or resulting institutions.

It is safe to assert that no historical fact has more substantial foundation than the Resurrection of Christ, although it is not my business to-night to adduce the evidences, save to mention one—the resurrection of hope and courage in the hearts of His disciples who were eye-witnesses of the Event. You will remember how the two going to Emmaus said to their unrecognised companion, “We *trusted* that it had been He who should have redeemed Israel.” That past tense spoke of buried hopes: but with the knowledge that Christ was indeed risen, there sprang up renewed hope. They had hoped in Christ: hope perished: “they were begotten again unto a living hope.”

Since Christ lives we shall live also, with Him. Therefore the apostle speaks immediately of an inheritance “beyond the reach of death, beyond the taint of sin, beyond the blight of change” reserved in heaven for us who are reserved for it “by the power of God, through faith, unto salvation, ready to be revealed.” Observe now this fresh cause for hope and trust “The power of God.” We are not kept by faith, although faith is an essential element in our preservation. But faith is no more the ultimate explanation than the switch is the final explanation of the artificial light that we now enjoy. To understand the light we must get beyond the switch and trace the wires to the generating dynamos in the power station; but the power is made available by the operation of the switch. In like manner faith puts

us in contact with the infinite reserve of power found in God, by means of which I am kept until that glorious reveille morning when the great army of the redeemed — patriarchs, prophets, priests, the godly of Israel, and the whole Church of God — all that sleep the sleep of the just, shall arise: when the living shall be changed and transformed to His own likeness and our salvation shall be completed. And, says the apostle, that astounding event is “ready to be revealed.” But someone may reply, “nigh two thousand years have passed and the day that Peter spoke of has not yet appeared. Was not Peter rash and greatly in error?” Well, even a Scotsman can appreciate that there is little difference between one million pounds and one million pounds less sixpence. We all recognise that where differences in magnitude are concerned it is not the actual difference but the so-called relative error that is of importance and in the light of the ages past, and the eternal ages to follow, “when in His light we see light,” we shall all, I am sure, be disposed to say, “You were quite right, Peter. In our impatience the time seemed long, but when you wrote our final salvation was truly “ready to be revealed.”

Now it is natural that we should rejoice in this hope, but there follows that which seems contrary to expectation — “ manifold testings,” sorrowful experiences, heaviness of heart, for those who are the subjects of the love of God and are kept by His power.

To-night I have it on my heart to speak for a little on the problem of suffering: a problem that is not solved by quoting pious aphorisms such as “our disappointments are His appointments,” true though these may be and helpful to some. Still less

is it solved by denying its existence as is done by the cult known as Christian Science, which my brother assured me only to-day, deserves its name because it is neither Christian nor Scientific, and two negatives make a positive. Some of you may have heard the story told by Dr. Torrey of the little fellow who returned from a visit to his grandfather's to report thus, "Mother, grandpa is ill." Now mother was a Christian Scientist and she reprimanded Johnnie for his lack of response to her teaching, dismissing him with renewed instruction, "You ought not to say 'Grandpa is ill,' but 'Grandpa thinks he's ill.'" During the following week Johnnie again visited his grandfather's and on return, looking gravely at his mother he said, "Mother, grandpa thinks he is dead," and, adds Dr. Torrey, "So did the undertaker." Sorrow and suffering are as real as death and I fancy that most here, in the agony and perplexity of a great sorrow, have at some time — perhaps not publicly, but in that fellowship by the fireside where reserves are broken down—raised the question "Does God really care?" Let me say at once, that there is a prior question; a question seldom raised even by the inquiring adolescent who has so much to ask, because he has been blinded by the belief that he already knows. The question is "Why am I here?" If the answer be "To enjoy myself and have a good, prosperous and easy time," then the problem of suffering is insoluble. But God has a higher purpose than this, namely that we be made partakers of His character of holiness and almighty love does not exclude from our experience those things by which character is enriched and deepened and our fitness for this service increased.

You will remember how it is recorded that on one occasion the sons of God appeared in His presence and Satan was there. To the question, "Whence comest thou?" he answered God, "From going to and fro in the earth and walking up and down in it," as if to say to God, "A sorrowful place it is! There is not one of Your creatures down there who loves You or cares for Your interests." To which there came the challenge, "Hast thou considered My servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God and escheweth evil?" Satan answered in effect "Cupboard love." "Hast not Thou made a hedge about him and about his house? Thou hast blessed the work of his hands and his substance is increased in the land. But put forth Thine hand and touch all that he hath and he will curse Thee to Thy face." Now I have often heard dear brethren say that God caused Job to pass through the furnace of affliction that he might learn himself and have his self-righteous thoughts cast down to the dust. To take such a view is, I judge, to miss the value of this great narrative. God Himself said to Satan "Thou movedst Me against him without a cause." The truth is that we have here an amazing thing — a controversy between God and Satan fought out in the arena of a good man's life. Job's trial—get this into your soul for your comfort, my sorrowing one—was the expression of God's confidence in him, and we rejoice that his uprightness survived the loss of all temporal goods; oxen, asses, sheep, camels, servants, sons and daughters—all, excepting his wife, and according to one old divine, Satan would have taken her too had she been a comfort to Job. What did Job do? He worshipped and said, "Naked

came I out of my mother's womb and naked shall I return thither: the Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord." "In all this Job sinned not nor charged God foolishly." But this was not the end of the controversy for when challenged as to the result Satan virtually replied, unabashed by his signal defeat "Job is the most callous of men and remains unmoved at the loss of those nearest to him, but touch his body and You will find what he really is", for "Skin for skin, yea all that a man hath will he give for his life." "And the Lord said unto Satan 'Behold he is in thine hand: but save his life'," and taking full advantage of the divine permission granted a second time, we have the pathetic spectacle of Job stricken with boils, probably with Asiatic small-pox: segregated from his friends; his isolation ward—the dust heap outside the city. Friends visited him—"Job's comforters" all of them, for they could only interpret suffering as divine retribution and Job clung to his integrity. It is true that Job spoke foolishly; that he cursed the day of his birth. But let us ever remember that while men judge our hearts by our words and our works, God judges our words and our works by our hearts and amid much that was foolish Job appreciates this vital point. "He knoweth the way that He taketh and when He has tried me I shall come forth as gold" and in the darkness of his perplexity he still clung to God, saying "Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him." And God did not forget the fevered mind, the perplexity due to bewildering loss, the domestic infelicity, the cruel suggestions of his friends. He revealed Himself to Job in a new and more intimate way so that Job learned through the discipline of suffering,

things he had never known before and was constrained to say, "I have heard of Thee by the hearing of the ear: now mine eye seeth Thee. Wherefore I abhor myself and repent in dust and ashes," and with the subsequent enrichment by the Lord we know that the latter end of Job was better than the beginning. This is what God has in view. For our consolation let us bear in mind *the Purpose of God*. He tests that we may be attested; He proves that we may be approved. He permits the trial of our faith that glory and honour may be ours in the day of Jesus Christ, the One whom it is true, we have not yet seen but Whom we love. The grounds of our love are, the excellence of the object and His perfect suitability to our needs, on account of which we sing

"We love Thee for the glorious worth  
Which in Thyself we see.  
We love Thee for the shameful cross  
Endured so patiently."

While it is true that our love is expressed in obedience to Him, we are not going to divest it of all emotion and sentiment. May the day never come when we shall think it too sentimental to sing

"Fairer than all the earth-born race,  
Perfect in comeliness Thou art.  
Replenished are Thy lips with grace  
And full of love Thy tender heart.  
God ever blest! We bow the knee  
And own all fulness dwells in Thee."

or to exclaim, in the language of Solomon, "He is altogether lovely. This is my Beloved and this is my Friend." He is "the chiefest among ten thousand." Of Ecclesiastes, to which our attention was directed the other night, it has been truly said the writer exhibits a heart too large for the object. In Solomon's Song we find an object too large for the heart. Surely this is what we have found in Christ. Yet with our imperfect ap-

preciation our love is real and on Him we believe. This is more than merely trusting in His Word. It suggests repose in a person in whom we rejoice "With joy unspeakable and full of glory."

Before leaving this section let me say that behind our sorrows, within the shadows, there may be discerned the *Love of God*. The story is told that on one occasion Bishop Moule, late of Durham, was called upon after a distressing pit disaster resulting in many deaths to hold a funeral service. He recounted how when he left home his mother gave him a book-mark on which three words were embroidered. Looking at one side there was discernible only a meaningless criss-cross of threads, but looked at from the other side there stood out plainly the words "God is Love." From this simple illustration he ministered comfort to the hearts of the bereaved.

Time does not permit of following the chapter in full detail. Suffice it to indicate very briefly three exhortations contained in our portion. It is ever the way with the apostles to set forth, first doctrine and to follow with duty: revelation to be followed by responsibility: a dynamic with an accompanying ethic. The first of these has already been dealt with by Dr. Anning and I therefore content myself by drawing attention to the call, "Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober (vigilant)—not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts . . . but be ye holy . . . because it is written "Be ye holy: for I am holy." The revised version reads "Ye shall be holy for I am holy," so that we may regard it as a command and a promise.

The second exhortation is found

in verse 22, a verse in which we have the lovely fruit of "Unfeigned love to the brethren." I imagine that most find it very easy to love in the atmosphere of Bangor. You have found brother so-and-so, who is very trying in the local assembly, amiable and lovable here: and he has had a similar experience. It may be that you have determined to return home and henceforth, while the Lord tarries, to love all the brethren. But, there is an atmosphere necessary for the growth of this desirable fruit, namely, "Obedience to the truth," and in obeying the truth there is something effected simultaneously. Just as the housewife bleaches linen by exposure to the beneficent rays of the sun, so we purify our souls by obeying God's truth and then we are ready for the exhortation, "See that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently" — up to boiling point, if you like, although I understand that the word in the original here signifies — constantly, and it is keeping it up that is so trying, is it not? The possibility of doing this lies in the truth developed in the subsequent verses, that by new birth we have received a new nature.

And lastly there is the exhortation to lay aside "all malice and all guile and hypocrisies and all evil speakings" and "as new-born babes desire the sincere milk of the word." The basic thought in the passage is that we have tasted that the Lord is gracious. The process of tasting implies a discriminating palate and the application of a discerning judgment. Every like established suggests a dislike. Every attraction, a repulsion. In like manner if we have tasted the graciousness of the Lord we shall refuse to engage in malice, hypocrisies, envies or evil speakings and we shall choose "the milk of the

Word, without malice." In the first address of this series our attention was directed to the fact that "God hath spoken," and I wish in conclusion to emphasise the necessity of paying attention to what He has said. We all know, I suppose, that nothing is more distressing to parents than an infant without desire for an infant's food. Let us suppose that in any home there is a delightful little babe, our very own, and that on my return from holidays I find my wife in great distress. On inquiry I find that she is agitated beyond measure because, try what she will, she cannot persuade baby to take its milk. But on hearing her story I say gaily, "Don't worry, mamma dear, baby will be all right. Let us put baby in the garden and the sunlight, fresh air and excellent environment will see baby well again. And I tell you what, mamma, we shall eat our meals before baby to show it a good example." Now just imagine my good brother to be an interested lis-

tener. What do you think he would say? Something like this, I imagine, "You may be all right when teaching other folks' children mathematics, but as a father you are hopeless. Look after other children when grown up, by all means, but let babies alone." Very likely you say, "Quite right too." Yet how often we are content to see babes in Christ attending meetings; receiving the benefits of a spiritual atmosphere and the advantage of a good example as they listen to their brethren discussing the pages of Holy Writ, while it may be they are not imbibing the sincere milk of the Word for themselves. Even an apostle will gladly suffer babes if only they are hungry babes: yet it is probably true that there is no Book more carelessly read than this book.

May the Lord graciously grant to us all, as the result of these meetings a greater desire to know and to obey the Word, for His name's sake!

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## The Lord's Supper.

T.O.

The Lord's Supper on the first day of the week is the external expression of fellowship. In its celebration we are identified before God in all the value of the death of Christ. The fellowship is essentially spiritual. But its expression in the breaking of bread is in the responsible sphere. We break bread in the Lord's absence. It is a physical impossibility for all Christians in every part of the world to come together to break bread. So the breaking of bread or celebration of the Lord's Supper is a local matter. But we shall not partake of the loaf correctly, if our

minds are occupied with a local congregation. We shall only celebrate the Lord's death rightly as we take account of all Christians. "We are all partakers" means that all Christians are entitled to partake. This is not a question of doctrine or duty but it requires love to be in exercise. The longer time we have the privilege of participating in the breaking of bread and the drinking of the cup the more these acts become invested with the characters of reality and beauty to our souls. Then the privilege has a limit. It is "till He come"!

## THE OPERATIONS OF THE SPIRIT IN THE ASSEMBLY.

*Summarised Notes of Bible Reading at Bangor, North Wales.*

1 Corinthians, chapters 12 and 14.

WE cannot separate chapters 12 and 14 from 10 and 11, for the basis of all the operations of the Holy Spirit, whether in the individual or in the Assembly, is the death of Christ. Christian fellowship has sprung out of the death of Christ; it is really the fellowship of the Lord's death.

In the death of Christ sin and the flesh have been exposed and condemned and the holiness and love of God have been revealed. We have acquiesced in what God did there, and our being partakers at the Lord's Table means we stand identified with the Lord's death (chapter 10). Every believer has a place there and it is continuous. It defines our position in the world in contrast to the Jew's altar, and the pagan's temple, and the indifferent world. This is continuous and not when we come together only.

Every day we stand identified with the Lord who died here. When we take the Lord's Supper (chapter 11) we declare afresh our identification with the Lord's death. As we remember Him, we say with Paul, God forbid that *we* should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified to *us* and *we* to the world.

It is a collective, not an individual act. Baptism is our individual identification with the Lord's death. The Ethiopian (Acts 8) said "What doth hinder *me* to be baptised," but at the Lord's Supper it is "the bread which

*we* break and the cup which *we* bless."

In these chapters we are on assembly ground. It is collective and corporate, not individual. Of course the Assembly is made up of individuals. Our individual responsibility to the Lord must never be lost sight of, but there is this added responsibility of being part of Christ's own company in the midst of which He is Lord and in which the Holy Ghost operates for the good of all. The assembly is made up of those who have owned Jesus as Lord. They have obeyed Him and the Holy Ghost has been given to them (Acts 5. 32). They are all baptised into one body by the Holy Ghost (chapter 12. 13).

In the one body there is *not uniformity*, that is what men work for, all turned out to one pattern; you may have that along with death; *nor independence*, which would make for confusion; but unity: *diversity* in unity, many members but one body, all controlled by the one Spirit, for it is the Spirit that operates in this chapter, and all working together for the common good. This diversity in unity is seen not only in the Spirit's operations, but in the Lord's administration and in all the work of God (verses 4, 5, 6, 7).

We ought to be greatly impressed with the fact that the ever blessed Triune God finds in the Assembly when gathered a sphere of operation. We might quote here Ephesians 3. 9, "To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the

church the manifold wisdom of God." That is a word that should make us think seriously as to our conduct when gathered together and fill us with wonder at the high favour that is ours as being part of the church or assembly. The world is the devil's sphere and is a scene of corruption and confusion, the assembly is God's sphere and where there is subjection to the Lord in it it is a scene of blessing and peace.

Chapter 3 says of the saints of God's assembly, "Ye are the temple of God." If all were subject to the administration of the Lord in the assembly so that God could operate through the gifts given by the Spirit, even an unbeliever coming in would confess that "God is in you of a truth" (chapter 14. 24).

Ought we not all to recognise that God is there? and if we did what reverence would be seen from our entering in to our going out. There would be no self-assertion and spiritual pride or levity about us. A realisation that God is there would produce a humble and contrite spirit within us while at the same time there would be joy in the Lord and freedom of spirit before Him.

A contrast is drawn between manifestations in the idol's temples and in the assembly of God. In the idol's temples many spirits spoke, the spirits of demons, the Corinthians had been well accustomed to that, and they had to learn that in the assembly of God one Spirit spoke, the Holy Ghost. He spoke in many ways and through various channels, there was diversity but harmony, for all that He had to say was for the glory of Christ and the edification of the company gathered together.

He may be quenched and hindered as 1 Thessalonians 5. 19 shews, by our indifference to His presence and operations, and it is to be feared that this is a widespread condition of things, we need to be recovered to the authority of the Lord in the midst, and to the fact that the Spirit is present to order things for Him.

Nothing could be of greater importance than this. When the Lord came into the world He came to His own things, and His own received Him not. "He was cut off and had nothing," but in resurrection He gathered His own together in the upper room and stood in the midst of them. We may be sure that He was supreme in that company, they were glad when they saw *the Lord*, we read.

We may be sure that they were not wondering what John would do or hoping that Peter would keep quiet for once; they would not be thinking of their rights, or who among them should be the greatest. Every eye would be fixed upon the Lord, their one desire would be to hear Him, and they would be united in the desire to yield His rights to Him. He was supreme there.

Wherever there is a company of saints gathered together among whom He is supreme there is the assembly; when His rights are not maintained and the will of man is rampant no matter what the profession or pretence may be there the assembly is not.

The gift of the evangelist is not named in the spiritual gifts in chapter 12, he has his place in Ephesians 4, his sphere is outside the assembly

and he, subject to the Lord's will, should be unrestricted in his efforts. He is sent by the Lord to every nation, the whole world, every creature, and is responsible to the Lord to carry out his commission. Here the assembly only is in view and the gifts given are for its building up, or edifying, and to make it fully adequate for its witness for Christ in the world, especially at the time of its inauguration.

Notice how often the word edifying occurs in chapter 14. Of the gifts given for this purpose prophesying has the first place. In Corinthian days this would be by direct inspiration of the Holy Spirit. We have not that now, and do not need it for the Scriptures are complete and in them we have the whole mind of God revealed, yet there is a sense in which the prophetic gift remains. The Lord who knows the present needs of His saints can give the needed word for edification, exhortation and comfort, chapter 14. 3. As it has been well put to build up, stir up and bind up.

"Let the prophets speak two or three and the rest judge," verse 29, comes in in this connection. This does not give licence for any one who thinks he has something to say to get up and say it. Where things are right the Lord will be recognised as the Administrator and there will be due waiting upon Him. Time spent in silent waiting on the Lord is not lost time. And we must remember the word in Peter "if any man speak let him speak as the oracles of God." A great and solemn responsibility rests upon one who stands up professedly to speak on the Lord's behalf. It is a shame and a scandal if saints have to go away from these gatherings disappointed and dis-

tressed instead of edified.

Prayer and praise have an important part in the gatherings of the assemblies, for these are the united voice of the gathering expressed through one mouth. Prayer should carry the whole company with it so that all can say, "Amen." Even the simplest should be able to do this, chapter 14. 10.

There is no need for every brother to thank God for the privilege of coming together, if one has done it and all have said Amen it is time to pass on to something else.

In singing, too, there is not much sense in singing, "Saviour unto Thee assembling, turn we now to praise," nearer to the close of the meeting than its beginning. We must sing with the understanding and pray with the understanding (verse 15). So that all may enter in to what is done. The part a brother takes is not an individual exercise, it is a collective assembly action. When this is realised the necessity for the Spirit's operation and subjection to the Lord will be understood.

It has been well said that in chapters 12, 13 and 14 we have the spirit of power, chapter 12, of love chapter 13, and of wise discretion chapter 14. See 2 Timothy 1. 7. In chapter 12 the machine, in chapter 13 the lubrication, in chapter 14 the machine at work.

Let us lay to heart the 37 verse of chapter 14, "the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord" and turn afresh to these chapters and seek grace from the Lord to be the vessels of the Spirit in carrying them out.

# THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW.

James McBroom.

Chapter 19. Continued from page 198, September Issue.

*The Young Ruler.* We have had the beauty of God's order in creation with regard to nature, then; the beauty of nature in its uncorrupted state in the little ones and the moral beauty and perfection of the Lord's ways with regard to both. In what follows we see how nature can conform to the outward forms of the Law without any true knowledge of self, and how one could seek the Lord's approval and blessing apart from complete surrender of heart to Himself. This is a peculiarly pathetic case. How it must have affected His blessed heart to look on this young man and love him and then to have to expose him to himself in the very springs of his moral consciousness. We have seen in this Gospel where man would prefer his commerce even among swine than have the Saviour, but here we have a character that is irreproachable, one whom the Lord could look upon and love (See the parallel passage in Mark 10) one who had kept himself blameless in the light of the outward form of the Law and yet he would prefer earth and its good things to having Christ and heaven. Nor, let it be remarked, was he alone in this for it is the universal state of man in nature as fallen and gone far from God. This is that which the Lord alone could detect and His doing it not only exposed this young man but shows to every one of us where we were and are apart from the grace of our God.

Here again the Apostle Paul shows the way out both in his doctrine and practice. He, like this young man was according to the law blameless. He could say, "I had not had con-

science of lust except the Law had said, Thou shalt not lust." The last commandment of the ten exposed him to himself and shewed him that however blameless he was in an outward way there was a state of corruption within from which nothing could deliver him but the death of Christ. This through grace he faced, as he tells us, "For I through the Law have died to Law that I might live to God" (Romans 7. 7; Galatians 2. 19).

The young man went away sorrowful. He was outwardly blameless, upright and lovable, but his love for earth and earthly things was too strong to allow him to have Christ and the precious things of heaven. Such a case cannot well be dismissed without a tear, but if so do not let us forget that but for the grace of God everyone of us would have judged things as he did. Another question might well be raised with those of us who know the Lord Jesus Christ as our Saviour, namely; how far do we in practice put earth and earthly things before heaven and the whole range of unseen things—the sphere of faith? It is just here that the whole-hearted devotedness of Paul was seen. He provided the perfect answer to what the Lord desired from this young man. Outstanding in every way as a man in rank, status and personal qualifications; he laid all down at the feet of Him who called him by His grace from being a rabid persecutor to be a humble follower of Himself, the rejected Christ. It was he who said, "For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of

glory; while we look not at the things that are seen, but at the things that are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal." (See 2 Cor. 4. 17—18; and Phil. 3. 4—10).

But the disciples had left all to follow the Lord, therefore Peter says, "What shall we have?" It's as if he said we have done what this young man would not do. The Lord graciously meets this with both present and future reward. They would have a distinct place in the coming day of glory; then widening out, He mentions a full present and eternal reward to all who give up what is natural for His Name's sake. Whatever the reward may be and thank God there will be a rich reward to each and every one that has given up for Christ and sought to serve Him, yet it is well to see that the Person of Christ and true devotedness to

Him is always the motive for true service. This indeed ensures the enjoyment of the hundredfold now as well as to inherit everlasting life.

Have we noted how the moral glory of our Lord Jesus Christ pervades this nineteenth chapter of Matthew? Difficult questions are met and delicate matters adjusted; human nature is treated both before the fall and after; in its sinful state under Law, and in its uncorrupt condition in the children, and in that peculiar state in the young man who though outwardly blameless had his heart set so on his possessions that he refused Christ and missed heaven's very best. But in this blessed and glorious Teacher there has come a new power which can carry us outside and above nature in every sense and make us lay ourselves at His feet and count everything else but dung and dross.

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## How we Know the Love of God.

*Love* was manifested to us in that He came to us in *love* when we were in our sins. It was perfected in that, as Christ is, so are we. We can say, "in this world," for it is here that we learn to know we are in Him.

How can I have but boldness in the day of judgment, when I am as the Judge before whom I appear?

And so it is with us. He comes and fetches us Himself, and changes our bodies into glorious bodies by the way; so that, when we appear before Him, we are like Himself in glory.

It is said, "No man hath seen God at any time" (ver. 12). What is the remedy for this seeming impossibility of knowing Him? The answer here is, If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and His *love* is perfected in us. Here is a wonderful way of knowing God, of enjoying in a most perfect way His *love*. How great is the intimacy when He dwells in us and gives us to feel immediately the sweetness of His present *love*.

We know it because it is communicated, and God is nearer to us than any other object in the world. He dwells in us. Wonderful place given to us.

## INCLUSIVE AND EXCLUSIVE.

H.J.V.

**I**T is important, in relation to the oneness of the saints of God, to understand the truth of the *one* body; to grasp in faith the fact of it. "There is one body." This is a fact whether we grasp it or not, but the Holy Spirit has given us the truth of it through Paul, in the Scripture, that we might be always kept in the sense of the necessity of every member of the body of Christ, for all are included in the body. Oh! that we may learn deeply and truly this blessed *inclusiveness*. That teaching of *exclusiveness*, which says that certain members are excluded on the principle of the one body, is not the truth of God. Indeed, it is very serious error. That teaching which maintains that wicked persons (those *characterized* by lawlessness in word or way) are to be excluded from Christian intercourse is according to the truth. The difference between the two is very great. To use the truth of the *one* body for the exclusion of members, is to act ignorantly, to misapply Scripture, and to injure the saints. To exclude wickedness and those characterized by it as unsuited to the holiness of God's house, is to obey the Word and to preserve the saints, but for the latter other scriptures are needed.

As to the inclusiveness of the one body, we are told, no member can say to another, "*I have no need of thee*" (1 Cor. 12. 21). Every member is necessary. Exclusion is not to be thought of. "God has tempered the body together, having given more abundant honour to the part that lacked." And the reason for this divine wisdom and care is, "*That there be no division in the body*" (25)! Inclusiveness is the truth here. The teaching of the "*one new man,*"

and of access to the Father by "*one Spirit*" in Ephesians 2. 15—18 has the same end in view; as also has the fact that we are "joint heirs, and a joint body, and joint partakers" of God's promise in Christ Jesus. Indeed, the very gospel-preaching of Paul was "according to the revelation of the mystery" (Rom. 16. 25); and the right effect of that would bring all the saints "to be *likeminded* one toward another, according to Christ Jesus; that ye may with *one* accord, with *one* mouth, glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Wherefore," continues the Apostle, "receive ye one another according as the Christ also has received you to the glory of God" (Rom. 15. 5—7). In this way the oneness becomes practical in the love and grace of the Truth.

*For a Day of Failure.*

The outward failure and breakdown as to this very truth amongst those who claim to be the church, or of the church, could not be greater, but it was all foreseen and foretold in the Scripture, and provision has been made in view of the failure in the ministry given through John. So that those who are really "of the truth" may be preserved and maintained in fullness of joy, and according to the oneness of which we speak, in spite of the outward breakdown.

No outward divisions or separations are seen by John, among the living company of true believers on the Son of God, for whom he writes. His Gospel is written that they may have *life* (John 20. 31): his first Epistle that they may *know* they have eternal life (1 John 5. 13). He sees *one family*, all loved alike by one Father, indwelt by one Spirit. In the

Gospel he sees *one flock*, all having eternal life, and all safe in the hand of one Shepherd. The flock is identified with the assembly by Paul's words in Acts 20. 28. It is true that here, as well as in John 10, the Holy Spirit foretells trouble from those who should succeed the apostles. Grievous wolves are spoken of, and also those who would speak "perverted things"; but the one flock, the true assembly, remains.

John 10 tells of *the thief* coming to steal, to kill, and to destroy; but the Shepherd, the Son of God, holds all His own in the hand of omnipotence. Unlike the thief, the good Shepherd came that His sheep might have salvation, liberty, and life abundantly. The *wolf* worries and scatters the precious sheep of Christ, and the *hireling's* heart is on his wages; he cares not for the sheep, and flees when danger comes; but the good Shepherd knows each sheep by name, and He loves each one with so great a love that He laid down His life for the eternal welfare of every one of them. Notwithstanding all the trouble the thief, the hireling, and the wolf cause, the one flock is safe, because it is in His hand, and in the Father's hand; and He has said: "No one *shall* seize them out of My hand," and "No one *can* seize out of the hand of My Father. I and My Father are one." Every sheep is included in the grasp of love and omnipotence. He speaks of inclusive oneness.

Those who are excluded in John's epistle exclude themselves—they *go out*. They apostatize (1 John 2. 11). In the third epistle of John, Diotrophes "*cast out*" the brethren; this treatment was meted out to the best saints. He could only cast out of the assembly where he had usurped the pre-eminence which belongs to Christ; he could not cast them out of that of which we are speaking. But it should be a warning to us to see to it that we have more than mere talk about assembly, which is dangerous; for even in apostolic days the state in this connection could be such that an apostolic communication could be refused; and even apostles themselves: "I wrote something to *the assembly*; but Diotrophes, who loves to have the first place among them, *receives us not*" (3 John 9). Certainly it was the work of an individual whose fleshly pride had made him Satan's tool, and who took and loved the first place among them. It is a significant fact that the only mention of the assembly in John's writings is in connection with this evil Diotrophesian conduct; doubtless this is to cast us back upon the living and inclusive oneness, to which prominence is given in his ministry by the Holy Spirit. The violent exclusiveness of Diotrophes was evil. It excluded the best. It is therefore said to Gaius: "Beloved, imitate not what is evil, but what is good. He that does good is of God" (11). That is the path which is surrounded by the abiding blessings of God.

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Ye who look for so much in another world may well be content with little in this. Nothing is more contrary to a heavenly hope than an earthly heart.

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The nearer we reach heaven in *hope*, the farther we recede from earth in *desire*.

## ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

### “Receive ye the Holy Ghost.” John 20. 22.

“A discussion has arisen regarding the giving of the Holy Ghost in John 20. 22 and in Acts 2. What is the difference between the two records? Some hold that the incident in John 20 was only preparatory to Pentecost, and to tide the disciples over until Pentecost. We observe that power was given to the disciples in the Gospel to forgive sins”—  
CARMARTHEN.

**I**N your study of John 20. 22 consider chapter 7. 30, “the Holy Ghost was not yet given because that Jesus was not yet glorified,” and chapter 16. 7 “If I go not away the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send Him unto you,” and I think you will conclude that whatever the Lord meant by “Receive ye the Holy Ghost” He did not mean that then and there they were to receive the Holy Ghost *personally and in power* as they did at Pentecost, for He had not then departed to the Father and was not glorified. And you will be confirmed in this conclusion by His words to them in Acts 1, “Ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence” (verse 5) and “Ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you” (verse 8). The actual personal coming of the Holy Ghost was on the day of Pentecost; it was then that the Lord sent Him from the glory, and not before.

What then did the Lord mean when He said, “Receive ye the Holy Ghost”? Let us consider the word in its setting. In Genesis 2. 7, He had breathed the breath of life into the nostrils of Adam; here, risen from the dead, He was Head of a new creation, and He breathed into His disciples His own risen life. He was “the last Adam, a quickening Spirit,” 1 Corinthians 15. 45, communicating His life to His own.

He could not have communicated His life to them apart from His death

and resurrection. Chapter 12. 24 puts that beyond question. “Verily, verily, I say unto you, except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.” The disciples were the beginning of the much fruit; by His breathing on them they were made to share in His life—eternal life, the life of the new creation of which they were now a part and of which He is Head.

Now the Holy Ghost was there in that symbolical breathing, as He was in all that the Lord did during those forty resurrection days (see Acts 1. 3) for the blessed Persons of the Godhead are One, and do not work independently of one another. The Holy Ghost is the power of the new life and apart from Him it could not have been imparted to them, so that there was a sense in which they received Him then, but in their full meaning the words were surely anticipative, for the Holy Ghost did not possess and indwell and empower those men until He came personally at Pentecost. Then was manifested the full divine power of the new creation life that the Lord had breathed on them on the resurrection day.

There is presented to us in this entrancing scene an epitome of the church, or assembly, in its relationships and resources during the time of the Lord’s absence from the world. Everything was new. The blood of the great sacrifice had been shed as the basis of it all; the Lord had risen

triumphant over death; He had gathered His own together, calling them His brethren; and had declared to them the Father's Name; He stood in the midst of them bringing perfect peace to them and shewing them His hands and His side, proof of His great love; He imparted to them His own life, and (anticipatively) the

Holy Ghost as the power of that life, by whom they were united to Him, their Head, and had access to the Father as worshippers, and had power to witness for their Lord in the world and carry into it the message of the forgiveness of sins, which as the Lord's representatives they were commissioned to proclaim.

## What is the Word?

W. B. D—y.

War, and the rumour of war. The nations bleed.  
Kingdom with kingdom battles, and creed with creed.  
These are the signs of the times, and the signs are rife:  
In the world, in the state, in the home, in the heart—strife.

The oppressor on earth; the accuser standing in heaven;  
And the witness abased by the working of unjudged leaven;  
A scattered Israel mocks at a riven church;  
What is the Word of the Scriptures to those that search?

This is the Word: that God hath ever sufficed:  
One flock, one Shepherd,—O faultless work of Christ!—  
One body; one Spirit; in the heavenly call  
One hope; one faith; one Lord; one Father of all.

## The Capacity for Knowing Divine Love.

1 John 5. 7—19.

There are two subjects in these verses—the capacity for knowing *divine love* and the manifestation or proof of it, or more generally how we know it.

Righteousness and *love* are the two great characteristic traits of the divine life, but the latter is what God is. Righteousness refers to others. *Love* is what He is in Himself.

If we have the elements of God's nature as ours, we are clearly born of God and know Him.

We *love* for, He *loves*. He has given us of His Spirit.

Our being partakers, then, of the divine nature and God dwelling in us form our capacity for enjoying God in love.

He sent His only-begotten Son into the world that we might live through Him. I was dead then—I live through another. I was dead. But God gave the one blessed object of His undistracted, undisturbed *love*—His only-begotten Son—for me when I was dead. Herein, then, was *love*, not that we loved God, but that He *loved* us.

## THE GRACE OF THE LORD AND THE WOMEN.

J. T. Mawson.

THE grace of the Lord Jesus was active towards all who came to Him when He dwelt here among men, but He seemed to have had the greatest consideration for the women. They were the weaker vessels and were not of much account in the estimation of the men. To this day in the Jewish Liturgy the men give thanks to God that they were not born women. But in contrast to the proud spirit of man the Lord stooped to the weak, the despised, and the neglected, and the greater their need the greater was His compassion for them. When He saw the weeping widow following the corpse of her only son to its burying, He was moved with compassion, and never before had a great sorrow been so swiftly soothed as hers, when He said unto her, "Weep not." But power and authority were in Him as well as compassion, and He came and touched the bier and the funeral procession stood still, arrested on its march to the grave. Then He said to the young man, "I say unto thee **ARISE**; and he sat up and began to speak. *And He delivered him to his mother.*" He might have claimed the life that He had restored; He might have said to him, "Follow Me," but He did not. He knew that the lad was his mother's only support and hope and He gave him back to her. Luke 7. 11—15. Such was Jesus!

The woman of the city could have expected nothing but scorn and rebuke from the Pharisee and his guests, then why did she venture across his threshold? Jesus was there and the grace that was in Him drew her to His feet, and that same grace broke her heart and moved her to repentance and saved her

from herself and her sins. With what wonder she must have listened as He talked about her, and approved her conduct and held her up as an example to the proud man at the other end of the table. She had been a great sinner, but He spoke even to her, for He would not let her go away without the comfort and assurance that only His voice could give; and what wonderful words she heard, never would the music of them cease to sing in her soul. "Thy sins are forgiven, Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace." No wonder she loved much, for of all the people at that dinner, and of all those that crowded round the door of that house, she, the most despised and sinful, was the chiefest object of His gracious consideration that day (Luke 7. 36—50).

Such was Jesus!

The woman who had been long plagued with the issue of blood was hopeless of any cure and bankrupt of all her resources. Who would care for her, the victim of a loathsome malady, robbed of all her charm and her wealth, and a burden to her relatives? But Jesus came to the town where she lived her unhappy life, and at the sight of Him faith awoke within her, and she said, "If only I could touch Him! She knew that she might touch Him, her heart told her that He would not resent it, and He knew what was in her heart; and in response to her outstretched hand He healed her of her plague.

She would have gone away satisfied with that, but He would not permit it. He intended that she should

carry into her brighter future, not the effect of His power in her body only, but the knowledge of His deep personal interest in her which would be an everlasting link between her soul and Him. So she saw His face and heard His voice, saying unto her, "Daughter, be of good comfort; thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace" (Luke 8. 43—48).

Such was Jesus!

It is not hard to understand the agony of Jairus and his wife as their little daughter, their only child, lay at the point of death. The Lord Jesus was their only hope, and the father sought for Him and besought Him to come and heal her. While He tarried on the road the end came and she died. But He came at last unto the house of sorrow and death, and taking her by the hand said, "Maid, arise," and she arose straightway. No wonder that her parents were astonished at that word of power and so bewildered that they seemed incapable of action, or was it that in their joy at receiving their only child alive again they forgot all else? He did not forget, He knew her needs and cared for them, and she but a girl. Did He ever use His power without revealing His heart? "He commanded to give her meat." Even the mother did not realise in her wonder and joy that the child needed food, but He did, He was more considerate for her than the mother (Luke 8. 49—56).

Such was Jesus!

Hear the indignant words of the ruler of the synagogue as he cries from his pulpit, "There are six days in which men ought to work; in them therefore come and be healed, and not on the Sabbath Day." What had

aroused this man's wrath? A poor creature bowed down with a sore infirmity had dragged herself to the synagogue on that Sabbath for Jesus was there. For eighteen years she had suffered, bound by Satan, and never once during those weary years had she been able to raise herself to look at the heavens. What cared the great man in the pulpit for her? She was only a woman, unattractive, deformed, a cripple. But to the Lord she was a daughter of Abraham, a needy woman held by Satan's power, an object of mercy with longings for deliverance from the fetters that bound her. He interrupted the service for her sake, He broke in upon its miserable formality and called to her. He singled her out and addressed her personally in that crowded congregation, saying, "Woman, thou art loosed from thine infirmity." And He did more, He laid His hands upon her, not one hand but both, and immediately she was straight and glorified God (Luke 13. 11—17).

Such was Jesus!

It has been thought and said that He treated the woman of Canaan with a strange harshness when He appeared not to hear her cry for mercy, but that was not so. She cried to Him as the Son of David, she a woman of the accursed race! "Cursed be Canaan," had been said of old, and such was the corruption and iniquity of that race that Israel was sent into the land to exterminate it. If He had acted towards her as Son of David He must have rejected her plea, she had no claim upon Him under that title. As the Son of David He was only sent to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. But she would not go without the boon she sought, and He would not send

her away empty as the disciples urged. She knew that He had what she longed for, and He held the blessing in reserve for her until she took her true place before Him. A crumb from His table would make her a happy, a blessed woman, and He had for her her whole desire and exceeding abundantly more than she could ask or think. It must have been one of those moments of great joy to Him when He said to her, "O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt"; and her devil-possessed and sorely vexed daughter was made whole that very hour (Matthew 15. 21—28).

Such was Jesus!

Of all the women of the Gospels that appear and pass with one mention only, not one commands our interest more than the woman of Sychar, for the Lord's way with her shews us how He prepares a soul for blessing; and He made revelations to her, ignorant and degraded, and a Samaritan though she was, that He did not make to Nicodemus, a leader of the Jews.

What a day that was for her when she came to the well, as she used to come daily to draw water, and met the Shepherd of her soul. He was there before her, waiting for her in the midday heat, and He being wearied with His journey sat *thus* on the well—a wearied man and hungry and thirsty withal! But His need was the opportunity and the way of approach to her. It was not merely to open the conversation that He said to her, "Give Me to drink." He needed the cool water from Jacob's well, He who had created the mighty Amazon and every river on earth! But this woman had not the grace of Rebekah who at the like request

from Abraham's servant said, "Drink, my lord," and hasted and let down her pitcher upon her hand and gave him to drink (Genesis 24). Her sinful life had destroyed her womanly sympathy, and her racial prejudice had hardened her heart and she preferred an argument to a kindly act. Only the patience of the Lord and the grace—wonderful grace! that was in Him could deal with such a case as hers.

He spoke to her of God, and of God's gifts of living water, which for ever satisfies the thirst of those who drink. He was revealing to her what God is, but that revelation did not and could not illuminate her dark soul until He had exposed what she was. He had to probe her sinful life; the light shone until all things that ever she did lay bare before her eyes, yet such was His grace that she did not fly from His presence. He spoke to her of the Father and at last He revealed Himself to her, and that revelation revolutionised her, she was a transformed, a converted woman from that hour, and a witness to the Christ who had blest her.

The disciples came and marvelled that He talked with the woman, and well they might for the grace that made Him do it was marvellous. That grace looks for no merit in its objects, but blesses them because of what it is itself. They besought Him to eat, for they knew how weary He was when they left Him to buy meat but an hour before; but He said to them, "I have meat to eat that ye know not of." "My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me, and to finish His work." In blessing that woman that all men despised He had been rested and refreshed. The Shepherd had found His sheep; the Father had found one of the first of

those worshippers who would worship Him in spirit and in truth, and the Father and the Son rejoiced together. John 4.

Such was Jesus!

“He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father,” He had said, and we know that “the only-begotten Son which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him.”

. . . . .

How did the women respond to the grace that was in Him? It is not recorded that ever a woman spoke a hard word about Him; even the wife of pagan Pilate would have saved her husband from the guilt of condemning Him, if he had hearkened to her; and tears flowed down the faces of the daughters of Jerusalem when He was led away to His crucifixion. But what of those whom He bound to Himself by His grace and made His disciples? Some of them had been “healed of evil spirits and infirmities.” Amongst these was Mary called Magdalene, out of whom went seven devils—she was not a woman of the streets as is popularly supposed, hers was a worse plight than that—a sevenfold malignant Satanic power had enslaved her and Jesus had set her free—and with her there was Joanna the wife of Herod’s steward, and Susanna and many others—we are not told from what particular evils they had been delivered, but they joined together with the Magdalene in the happy grateful service of ministering to Him of their substance. They had something to give and they gave it to Him, willingly and joyfully. Rich men came and ministered to Him in His death, but these women of substance cared for Him in His life (Luke 8. 2, 3).

We read that “every man went to his own house, Jesus went unto the Mount of Olives.” There was not a *man* in all the city of Jerusalem that said to Him at nightfall, “Sir, Thou art a stranger in the city and weary with the labours of the day, come home with me and rest Thee for the night.” The mountain cave was His refuge, and the cold earth His bed. The men shewed Him no hospitality, but there was a certain woman named Martha who had a house not many miles away, who when she came to know Him received Him into her house, and served Him with devoted love!

The women stood by the cross when all the men who had protested their devotion to Him had fled away, except John. The women were the last at His sepulchre on the night of His death and the first there on the morning of His resurrection, and to them He revealed Himself alive, before any of the men knew of His resurrection.

But there was one woman of whom special mention *must* be made, and that because the Lord commanded it. He said of her, “She hath wrought a good work on Me . . . She hath done what she could: she is come aforehand to anoint My body to the burying. *Verily I say unto you. Wheresoever this gospel shall be preached throughout the whole world, this also that she hath done shall be spoken of for a memorial of her.*” She had sat at His feet and heard His word, she had brought her sorrow to those same feet and learned that His sympathy was greater than the greatest sorrow could be, and now she bent at His feet again and poured upon them the costly contents of her alabaster box. That “pound of spikenard” would have distinguished her among

her acquaintances. It was the sort of thing that those eastern women kept for the greatest day of their lives. She might have poured it on her brother at his death, but she did not, much as she loved him. She had kept it for the feet of Jesus, well knowing that He was going into death. She had not used it for her own distinction. An eloquent writer has said, "She loved her Lord more than her own beauty," she loved Him more than she loved herself. The pouring out of the Lord's life for us was the supreme sacrifice, and next to that comes that that Mary of Bethany did. Her act of adoring devotion is bound up with the story of His great sacrifice by the Lord's own command, and to be spoken of wherever that story shall be told.

It was waste in the eyes of the disciples, it was "very costly" in the eyes of the Holy Ghost, who has recorded the act. What she did shews what the Lord's love can do in the heart of one who knows it. It made this Mary forget herself, and risk the criticism and scorn of friends who did not understand. The world had nothing for Him but a cross of shame and a malefactor's death, and she only of all His disciples realised this. To her henceforward Mary was nothing and Christ was everything; she would seek no distinction where He

was dishonoured. She wanted no place in a world that did not want her Lord.

. . . . .

We wonder at that devotion which we but feebly understand. But why should we wonder? If we see Jesus as Mary saw Him, and know Him as she knew Him, we shall cease to wonder; her act of loving devotion will not seem extraordinary to us, but we shall bow with her at His sacred feet and pour out our hearts' adoration and surrender ourselves there. And the frowns and criticism of brethren who think themselves more practical and wiser than we will not disturb us at all.

What a triumph for our Lord over all the subtlety and wiles of the devil was this, though he succeeded in Eden in seducing the woman from her allegiance to her God, the Lord found in the women of His day the most fitting vessels for His mercy and the truest devotion to Himself, and why should it not be so to-day. To Mary of Bethany, Mary Magdalen, and many another Mary since their day Christ has been everything and all. Christ and His cross!

"Christ is the end, for Christ was the beginning,  
Christ the beginning, and the end is Christ."

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All blessing hangs on Christ. He both provides the blessing and gives power to use it. He gives *life*. "The Son quickeneth whom He will." From His own word we learn the wondrous truth, that He is become our *life*. *Life* is come down from heaven, and if I am resting in faith in Him, life is mine.

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The Holy Ghost dwelling in the believer is the Spirit of Power, and it is He who makes the believer conscious of his blessing, for He is the Spirit of the Son, and by Him we cry, Abba, Father. He witnesseth with our spirits that we are children of God.

## “MY NAME.”

T. Oliver.

“*And hast not denied My Name*” (Rev. 3. 8).

“NAME” is a word with perhaps more variation of meaning than any other. A dictionary will show that it commonly signifies the means of identification, but it may also mean title, renown, character, reputation, authority, honour or dignity.

Many years ago having the experience of attending the logic class in a Northern University, the following proposition was encountered amongst others “Are proper names connotative?” i.e. descriptive of the attributes of the person to whom they are applied. That a negative answer should be given was well illustrated by the example of the class professor himself, since he had changed his name in order to inherit an estate in the country.

Names in the affairs of men are largely accidental! But in their inception, names were much more descriptive of the person or the thing than is the case nowadays. Names in ancient languages were to some extent descriptive of the person. Even in our language such a name as “Taylor” would arise from the person being engaged in one of the oldest of trades. But nowadays, “Goodman” is not necessarily any better than “Badman,” nor “Stout” bulkier than “Thin.”

In the New Testament, the Greek word “*onoma*” translated practically always “name” was undoubtedly connected with the root “*gno*” meaning knowledge or knowing and consequently the means of knowing. Therefore *onoma* signifies that by which a person or thing was

known. We have the characteristics, the qualities, the acts and the consequences, hence the name is not merely the label of external identification, but implies the description or knowledge of the attributes and the spirit of the person.

The Lord’s name signifies His authority during His absence and is more than a mere formal acknowledgment, but conveys the idea that consequent on knowing the Lord, His name exercises control over us, hence we gladly acquiesce in His domination. The result would be that we shall appreciate the transcendent thought set forth in Rev. 3 of being a pillar in the temple of God bearing the Lord’s personal inscription of His new name thereon.

The Lord Himself, while here, attached great importance to the matter. Speaking to the Pharisees He said how could they speak good things being evil. Out of the good treasure of the heart a good man brings forth good things. Goodness of heart promotes doing good deeds and speaking good words. The internal rectitude of heart and external rectitude of act meet in rectitude of thought. Therefore the translation of “*onoma*” implies description of characteristics and spirit as well as a mark for external identification.

It would be futile to do a cruel, unfair or foolish act in the Lord’s name. If any man have not spirit of Christ he is not of Him (Rom. 8. 9). The historical Jesuits may have borne His Name but they were apt not to manifest the spirit of Christ. The qualities of that Name are only

to be appreciated apart from the sectarianism of Christendom which shows the abundant fruit of the seed sown in Corinth. Yet we must not conclude that our being formally apart from the ecclesiastical systems confers upon us the prerogative to manifest hard-heartedness in our alleged faithfulness to the Lord. In so doing we shall be guilty of giving a false impression as to the spirit of Christ. Faithfulness to the Lord's Name will cause us to be very considerate of others who may differ from us on many points of doctrine and practice, and yet be just as well pleasing to the Lord as we shall ever likely be.

How often after major ruptures in our ecclesiastical relationships we do not only abstain from weekly con-

ference with our erstwhile associates about the only real matters to be considered in this life, but we refrain from visiting them in their homes:— all pastoral care for them vanishes. We may even become so estranged as to "cut" them when we meet on the street. Should it not be a salutary question for everyone who professes to bear the greatest of all names, as to how such a state of affairs can be considered congruent with the meaning of that name?

How good then it is to be found answering to the description of the Philadelphian believer in not denying the Lord's Name. How often those who profess His name are found in word and deed falsifying His character and thus earning the description of denying His Name!

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### "There is one body and one Spirit." (Eph. 4, 4).

There is one living organism, so constituted by the Holy Spirit of God, who indwells the members of that vital system. It is the one body which is inclusive of every true believer in Christ, the living Head of the assembly. It is not a mere *organization*: it is a vital *organism*. Reputable or disreputable religionists may be held together by strong organizers, or by an agreed upon organization: that, however, of which we speak is a vital system, an organism of living indefectible members, moved by one Spirit; and the glorious Head is Christ Himself, "from whom the whole body, fitted together, and connected by every joint of supply, according to the working in its measure of each one part, works for itself the increase of the body to its self-building up in love" (Eph. 4. 16, N.T.). How encouraging and assuring is this unalterable truth to the true heart which holds fast to the one Head of the assembly. What a travesty of the truth—nay, what offensive unfaithfulness is seen in the petty parties, or larger religious organizations, formed by men at variance with the revealed mind of God.

H.J.V.

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Think upon the grace of the Lord. He could warn Peter in Gethsemane, and comfort the dying thief on the cross. Whatever love dictated that He did.

## CORRESPONDENCE.

### Why so few Conversions?

I HAVE read with the deepest interest the letters recently published in "Scripture Truth" in reply to the question "Why so few definite, out and out, clean cut conversions?"

While agreeing with what the writers deplored in those letters as contributing to the poor results from the preaching of the gospel, I feel that not one of them in my opinion has touched the root of the matter, which is that the *necessity* of the gospel is not sufficiently pressed before presenting the *simplicity* of the gospel; preachers have been telling people how to be *saved* who never knew what it was to be lost.

Let me relate an incident which will show what I mean. I was asked, after the preaching of the gospel one Sunday evening in Dublin, to go and see a man who was dying of consumption in the Adelaide Hospital in St. George's Street, and, with the object no doubt of preparing me for what was felt a difficult case, I was told "He says he *believes* but I cannot get him to see that he is *saved*," and the next evening, fully armed with all the "recognised" texts for dealing with such cases (such as "he that believeth on the Son *hath* everlasting life," etc.) I went to see this dying man. For over an hour I used—not only all the "recognised texts" but, all the "recognised arguments" in order to get him to see that he was saved, but at last I had to leave him just as I found him; convinced in my mind as I wended my way to the Prayer Meeting, that there was something wrong somewhere; and so there was.

At the close of the Prayer Meeting I asked the late beloved Mr. J. C. Trench to go and see the poor fellow, finishing up with the words, "he says he believes on the Lord Jesus Christ, but he cannot say that he is saved."

Never shall I forget those kind but searching eyes of dear J.C.T. as he looked down at me for a few moments, and then said, "Can't see that he is *saved*! Did he ever see that he was *lost*?" The result of that question will never be fully known in time, but it will be in eternity. For not only did the dying man eventually see and *feel* that he was lost, and (as we say) "soundly saved," but it was used of God to teach me not to try and get people to see they are *saved* without first making sure that they know and *feel* themselves *lost*. God made Adam *feel* the ruin (sin) before He promised him the remedy—the Saviour.

T. C. MACCORMACK.

Dear Mr. Editor,

The correspondence in your columns as to the fewness of conversions is of great interest. Those who have contributed to it have made statements of undoubted truth and importance.

It may seem rather ungracious of me to raise a question as to the accuracy of the major premise implied. *Are conversions few to-day?* If so, how are we to account for the truly amazing number of young Christians

in the world: many of them keen, out-and-out, ready for sacrifice and service? Whence comes this multitude, if conversions are so few?

Your correspondents look at the questions, it seems, almost entirely from an English viewpoint. On page 172 we read that the devil "is not seen to-day in the character of a roaring lion." Ask our imprisoned and maltreated brethren in Russia what they would say to this! Ask the widows of the evangelists who were tortured and shot because they would not deny their Lord! Can the writer have read such a book as "A Thousand Miles of Miracle in China" and yet maintain that Satan has ceased to roar?

God has His times of visitation for different lands. England has had many a gracious season of blessing from on high, and thousands will be in heaven as the result. The countries of eastern Europe seem to be the principal sphere of God's present working: Poland, Czecho-Slovakia, the Baltic Republics, Bulgaria, etc. Evangelists who go there bear record of crowded meetings, prolonged far into the night, and conversions so numerous that they cannot be counted.

If a fisherman comes home with an empty basket the reason is not always to be found in his lack of skill or perseverance. He may have gone to the wrong place. Another fisherman comes home with his basket full. *He has been to the place where*

*the fish would bite.*

Suppose Paul and Silas, impressed with the tremendous need of the great province of Bithynia, had gone preaching there, toiling away diligently and conscientiously, what would have been the outcome? A few souls saved here and there, no doubt, for God blesses His own Word. But it was not His mind (Acts 16. 7). It was not that He was indifferent to the need of souls there. There were, later on, those who were, by His abundant mercy begotten again to a lively hope in Bithynia (1 Peter 1. 1). God had His elect. But "the Spirit of Jesus" (see R.V.) did not permit His servants to go there. He turned their eyes across the seas to the great, populous, heathen continent of Europe, and thither they obediently went. They had no reason to complain of lack of conversions! Cities and provinces were shaken, and they became known as men that "turned the world upside down" (Acts 17. 6).

If they had remained in Asia they might have started a discussion on why conversions were not more numerous. They had no need to do so, however, for they went to the lands where converts were to be won in multitudes. Those who follow their example to-day often have the same experience as they.

YOURS IN CHRIST.

"One who has preached the Gospel in 26 countries."

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Faith realises the presence of God, and when we are consciously in His presence we do not *murmur*, we do not dispute. These come of the flesh. The divine nature that is in the child of God makes him joyfully submissive to the will of God, and ready to serve his brethren with patience and love.

# THE SON OF GOD, THE CENTRE AND POWER FOR WORSHIP.

A. J. Pollock.

**T**HE very word Christianity, enshrining the name of the Anointed of God, intimates surely that He is the only Mediator between God and men. Every blessing we enjoy comes through Him.

Thank God, it is not being merely saved from the consequences of our sins that will suit the heart of the blessed God, wonderful and necessary as that is, and we ought never to lose the wonder of it. But God desires our *company*, and to be consciously in His presence means worship. Worship is the highest exercise the creature is capable of. Not only are we saved, but we are brought to God, and "accepted in the Beloved"—sons before the Father's face, priests in association with the Son of God, our great High Priest.

Perhaps we can best begin this subject by referring to John 10. There our Lord is not only the Good Shepherd, who gives His life for the sheep, ministering salvation and other blessings, but there is a Shepherd and—a flock—He is the Shepherd, and His own constitute His flock. It is not a question of walls, as in the fold—Judaism—but of the attraction of a Person.

Our Lord came to the Jewish fold, this system of law and ordinances, and called His sheep by name, and led them out. But He had other sheep, Gentile disciples, and these must be brought, and

"There shall be one flock, and one Shepherd" (John 10. 16).

The flock of Christ is not national, but universal; it knows no frontiers,

no social distinctions. The Church of God is not the Jewish Church nor the Gentile Church, but the Church of *God*. The Church of God is not the Church of England, nor the Church of Germany, nor the Church of Australia, but the Church of *GOD*.

We get in John 10 the first intimation of Jew and Gentile being brought together in Christ. It is brought out doctrinally in Ephesians 2. 11—17, where we get the middle wall of partition—the barrier between Jew and Gentile — broken down, and one new man made, so making peace. It is a great truth, for we are apt to be independent in our thoughts, and forget that Jew and Gentile, French and German, Hot-tentot and Greenlander, if Christian, are one in Christ.

They may speak many tongues on earth, but they will sing the one new song in heaven. They may belong to many nations, but they have only one Lord.

Let us see how this fellowship was actually formed. We would link up John 10, just referred to, and 1 John 1. 1—4. Our Lord did not go to Jerusalem, and find His first disciples among the religious elite of the Temple. He did not choose the scholarly, the educated, the philosophical. No, He went to the shores of the Sea of Galilee, and called fishermen, "ignorant and unlearned men" as they were in those days. He called Andrew and Peter, He called James and John. He called His sheep by name and led them out of the Jewish fold, and attached them to Himself.

In the companionship of the Lord

with His disciples a fellowship was formed. Christ was the Centre and Power of it. They were in close association with Him as He moved about in His three-and-a-half years of public ministry. Little by little it was borne in upon them, who He was. What character it gave to His manhood when they realised He was God—"God . . . manifest in the flesh." Did not Peter confess, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God?" (Matthew 16. 16). What thoughts must have filled their hearts! Dimly perhaps all this was apprehended, but when the Holy Spirit indwelt them, consequent on our Lord's ascension to glory, the power of these things laid hold of them.

The disciples could not fail to realise that He was the Son of the Father. Our Lord spoke much of the Father. "I and My Father are One" (John 10. 30), He affirmed, He was ever in communion with the Father. The Father was not the Son. The Son was not the Father. Yet, with the Spirit, they are *ONE* God, one in purpose, counsel, will, knowledge, movement. It is no wonder that one of the disciples, writing for the rest, could say,

"And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt amongst us, (and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father), full of grace and truth" (John 1. 14).

No wonder the disciples were drawn to the Lord. He was the Source of all their understanding of divine things, the source of all their blessings. His life, His power, His grace, His love, His death, His glorious resurrection, the gift of the Holy Spirit, drew them to Him, and, in being drawn to Him, they were drawn to each other. The more they shared these feelings and thoughts as

to Him, the more they were drawn to each other. It formed a fellowship the like of which had never been known before.

So precious was this fellowship, they could not keep it to themselves. That which they had seen and heard, they declared unto their fellow-believers, in order that they might have fellowship with them, and that fellowship was with the Father and the Son. Wonderful inestimable blessing!

This fellowship is ours to-day, and the moral or spiritual power of it is found in a blessed Person—the Son of God—an attraction that binds believers together in one fellowship of life.

We turn now to 1 Corinthians 1. 9,

"God is faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of His Son Jesus Christ our Lord."

If 1 John 1. 1-4 presents fellowship in its moral or spiritual power, which alone can maintain it in reality, 1 Corinthians 1. 9, presents it on the side of our being called unto it, our responsibility. So the apostle immediately begins to speak of divisions among them. The Corinthian assembly was highly blessed. They were enriched in all utterance and in all knowledge, and behind in no gift.

This should have kept them right in the assembly. Alas! it is not always so. The apostle does not disclose the names of the actual leaders around whom groups were being formed. He rebuked this tendency all the more effectually by denouncing it, and using his own name and those of Apollos and Cephas. The situation was serious, and we see the awful havoc such a tendency has made when we view the sects, denominations and divisions of Christendom.

It comes about through eyes getting off Christ. Eyes are fixed on individuals, instead of on Christ. Parties are formed, schisms are made, and that with disastrous consequences.

Taking up the apostle's figure, those, who said they were of Paul, lost Apollos and Cephas. Those who said they were of Cephas, lost Paul and Apollos. Why not benefit by *all* the gifts an ascended Lord has seen fit to give to His church? The church is a whole. Was Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for them? Nay *all* our blessings flow from Christ and

Christ alone. And our eyes should be upon Him and Him alone.

In that case we should prize God's servants, not less but more, and *all* of them as gifts from our Lord, the Head in heaven. In that way we shall hold the Head, and in holding the Head we shall hold each other.

May this be a voice to us to-day. We cannot put things right. We may surely be right ourselves. And a good deal of that lies *in our SPIRIT*—"endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Ephesians 4. 3).

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### "He dwelt among us."

W.B.D—y.

He came amongst His people, and His own received Him not.  
There was no worldly glory in that Man of God begot,  
But He brought the captives freedom, and the gospel to the poor,  
And the mercies of the Father, ever faithful, ever sure.

His walk was in the simple paths that knew no way of pride:  
There amongst the fishing boats swinging to the tide  
He would seek the lowly people in their own unhonoured place,  
And speak as never man before those words of truth and grace.

But His witness smote the leaders, and they could not seal His lips,  
So they put the fetters on His feet, and on His back the whips,  
And raised Him on the felon's cross, and shed the righteous Blood.  
They had looked for Judah's Lion, and behold, the Lamb of God.

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### "This is My Body which is given for you."

The flood gates of the love of Christ are thrown wide open—what Judas was doing at that moment—what Peter would do before the cock crew—what the others would do consequent upon the outrage in Gethsemane, hinders not in the least the outflow of that shoreless and fathomless ocean of love that swelled in the heart of the Saviour, and tore its living and triumphant way through every barrier that rose up against it, until the bitter chalice of Divine judgment was to the very dregs exhausted, and the blackness and the darkness and the wrath and the forsaking were over for ever. In all its solitary grandeur and greatness, it swathed Golgotha with a glory that declared salvation for a world of fallen men (Luke 22. 19).

J.B.

## THE SIN-BEARER.

J.N.D.

THE Lord had said, "Thou shalt surely die." (This was the judgment that lay upon Adam's sinful race). Christ came as the great witness to His people that "the wages of sin is death"; and that by imputation only, for He was perfectly and entirely holy. But He *took* our sins; He bore our iniquities. He was willing to be looked upon as the guilty, and to bear the penalty God had annexed to sin, "Thou shalt surely die," in order to vindicate the truth of God.

If any on earth could be spared the threatened punishment it was Jesus. Holy in all respects, abstractedly of His divinity; entirely free from sin or approximation to it; without the slightest shadow of evil as it regarded Himself, and yet by imputation, willing imputation, His: if any could be spared, it was He. But, no; God had said it, and Christ came to bear witness to the truth of God's word.

If we would see the bitterness of sin, the tremendous consequences of it, and its utter hatefulness in the sight of God, where shall we see it but in the death of Christ, God's fellow, His well-beloved Son? "He spared not His Son;" He delivered Him up to the death of the cross.

We see again how fully He vindicated the *love* of God. That God, whom man looked upon as a grudging God, keeping back from him that which was desirable, *that* God gave His only begotten Son for man's transgressions in which we are now living, the only living instance of unpunished apostasy; the consequences are to come. But man is the only intelligent being who is still alive in successful apostasy. What do we find in the case of the fallen angels?

Their sin brought immediate and irremediable punishment. Man—man alone is abiding in unbelief; condemned indeed, but still the sentence of execution is suspended.

We rest on God's truth when we declare there is no excuse that man makes which is not, in fact, the very ground of his condemnation, yea, the very reason of it.

"The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the fruit, and I did eat." The very excuse he brings is the very ground on which God condemns him. "Because thou hast hearkened unto thy wife. . . . Cursed is the ground for thy sake." Thus out of his own mouth was he judged.

Now we pass to the second Man—the character and work of the Lord Jesus Christ, and we shall see exactly the opposite of this in every particular.

We shall see how in thought, word, and deed He perfectly vindicated the truth, love, and majesty of the great God of heaven, which man had thus shamefully and wilfully dishonoured.

How did He vindicate the *truth* of God?

He needed not to die for His own offences for He had committed none; nor for His own sins, for He "knew no sin." He was brought nevertheless to the extremity of suffering and shame, and yet trusted and confided in God, in circumstances all opposite to those in which Adam was placed.

Christ was in the midst of poverty, degradation, and woe; so that He

could say, "Reproach hath broken my heart. I am full of heaviness. My soul is exceeding sorrowful." "My heart is like wax, it is melted in the midst of My bowels." "Dogs compassed Me. Bulls of Bashan closed Me in on every side." "I am poured out like water."

In the very moment when God was to visit on His soul the most awful effects of His people's delinquency—when, for their sins and the salvation of their souls, that they might everlastingly enjoy the presence of God's countenance, He was to withhold the comfortable perception of it from His expiring Son; when, at the extent and summit of such dreadful agony, the exclamation was drawn from His holy soul, "My God, My

God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" yet is the language of His soul, "But *Thou continuest holy*, O Thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel;" even in the moment of extremest sufferings a *doubt* of God's faithfulness never passed His holy mind.

All mankind are naturally and truly associated with the first Adam, and all Christ's people are as naturally associated with Him; "Complete in Him."

As certainly as we are by nature united to the first Adam, and bearing his likeness and image, so surely, if we are believers, we are associated with Christ in everything, "heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ."

## Obedience.

J.N.D.

THE spirit of obedience is the great secret of all godliness. The spring of all evil from the beginning has been independence of will. Obedience is the only rightful state of the creature, or God would cease to be supreme—would cease to be God. Wherever there is independence, there is always sin.

This rule, if remembered, would wonderfully help us in guiding our conduct.

There is no case whatever in which we ought to do our own will; For then we have not the capacity either of judging rightly about our conduct or of bringing it before God. I may be called upon to act independently of the highest authority in the world, but it ought never to be on the principle that I am doing my own will, which is the principle of eternal

death.

The liberty of the saint is not licence to do his own will. If anything could have taken away the liberty of the Lord Jesus, it would have been the hindering Him in being always obedient to the will of God. All that moves in the sphere of man's will is sin. Christianity pronounces the assertion of its exercise to be the principle of sin. We are sanctified unto obedience (1 Peter 1. 2) the essence of sanctification is the having no will of our own. If I were as wise as Lucifer (so to speak), and it administered to my own will, all my wisdom would come to be folly. True slavery is the being enslaved by our own wills; and true liberty consists in our having our own wills entirely set aside. When we are doing our own wills, self is our centre.

## THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW.

James McBroom.

## Chapter 20. Continued.

THIS parable of the householder and the labourers links on with Peter's question in the previous chapter, "Behold we have forsaken all, and followed Thee; what shall we have therefore?" It is confessedly a difficult parable but it is a parable of the Kingdom of Heaven, and may be more easily understood if we see that service and not salvation is the theme. Of course the motive power for all true service is salvation. We are saved by *grace* and it follows that our walk, our conduct and our service must be on the same principle. All true service is the outcome of salvation and life, but there may be service which flows from mere profession. This is supposed in the case of these labourers who agreed to serve the householder for a certain pay. They entered a profession, the pay and not the work was the first thing with them, that such a thing is possible is clearly proved in Luke 12. 45—48.

True servants of Christ have drunk of His grace and are controlled by the desire for His glory and the blessing of their fellow men, being filled with gratitude for the grace that permits them to serve such a Master, as is the Lord, our Saviour. The holy and estimable privilege of serving Him would be utterly lost if we bargained with Him about it. The legal principle of bargaining for so much pay shews that in this parable the Lord had the kingdom of heaven in its widest aspect in view and that of course includes profession.

Devotedness to Christ will not lose its reward, neither here nor hereafter but that devotedness is fed so to

speak by communion with the Lord in the blessedness of the new life and nature and in the power of the new relationship. The Gospel of Mark presents our Lord as the Servant-Son and the service of believers seen in its proper dignity is the service of sons. To work for the Lord because of future reward is mercenary but to work in the power of holy affections puts the stamp of heaven on the service and brings us out in the likeness morally of Him whom we serve. Reward may be promised while in the service but it is not the motive power. If we contemplate the Lord Jesus Christ in His service we learn how to serve.

Of the various groups of workers employed by the Master the first only made a stipulated agreement. This surely is Law and makes God to be man's debtor. But whoever makes the bargain will get his due and proper reward in righteousness, though it leaves him discontented and finding fault. There is nothing of this with the rest. Those hired at the third hour had borne the burden of the day much more than the eleventh hour men but there is no mention of complaint: they were evidently on the line of grace. The parable is only found in this Gospel and has a dispensational bearing, but we must remember that although the Gentile was brought in on the principle of grace, Christendom has long ago departed from the truth and indeed has gone further on the legal principle and on the line of bargaining than Judaism. The Lord had introduced the parable with the words:—"Many first shall be last, and last first." but closed it with the reverse; evidently

referring in the first to the way the servants conducted themselves but in the last to the work of God.

On the way up to Jerusalem for the last time the Lord speaks afresh to His disciples about His death. "The Son of Man shall be betrayed unto the chief priests and to the scribes and they shall condemn Him to death and shall deliver Him to the Gentiles to mock, and to scourge and to crucify Him and the third day He shall rise again." The deep and solemn events connected with the end of His pathway was bearing on His blessed spirit as the time was drawing nigh. Just then there came to the front the hidden arrangement between two of His disciples and their mother.

This is indeed a humbling picture. Peter had asked the Lord:—"What shall we have," James and John go further and ask what they want, but in doing so they employ their mother. All this be it remembered from the men who belonged to the inner circle of the Lord's disciples and at a time when His blessed heart was distressed with thoughts of the darkness of Calvary. The folly and vanity of fallen flesh is indeed amazing, in spite of the fact that we know it so well in ourselves. We may see in it the weakness of a fond mother for the public aggrandisement of her sons and on their part seeking pre-eminence by taking advantage of their fellow-disciples in a dishonourable way. It made the others angry; can we wonder? No, indeed when we think of what human nature is. And yet it was but flesh, petty fallen flesh meeting the same in their brethren. Ah, but Jesus was there. The Lord of glory: the One Who is above all and in Whom every glory centres and in the presence of the foolish aspira-

tions of His disciples He is on the way to the Cross. It gave occasion for a display of His wisdom indeed but far beyond that, it showed the lowliness and deep self-renunciation of the Man Christ Jesus. It put all concerned to shame and flooded the whole scene with peace and quiet. It was one of those moments in the history of our Lord when the combined features of supremacy and subjection, authority and obedience come out in such a way as to put not only the disciples but every one of us at His blessed feet in adoration.

What child of God could behold this scene without being deeply moved? The precious peerless Son of God with all the glory of pre-eminence, supremacy and majesty yet within the shadow of betrayal, scourging, mocking, taking the lowest place and shewing His poor disciples not merely by His words but by His ways what was their true place as followers of Him. Note His answer, "To sit on My right hand and on My left is not Mine to give but whom it is prepared of My Father." He then proceeds to shew the character of His Kingdom. "Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority over them. But it shall not be so with you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister (servant) and whosoever will be chief among you let him be your servant (bondman). Even as the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto but to minister and to give His life a ransom for many."

The two disciples were real in their desire. They said they were able to follow Him to death. They are two of the most honoured names of the New Testament. They gave up all to

follow the Lord; James was the first of the twelve to die a martyr's death and John was the last to die, after his sufferings on the lonely isle of Patmos. They will indeed have a great place in the Kingdom glory of their Lord. John was used by the Spirit to put on record the most sublime words ever written. They had the common weakness of fallen humanity and for the moment dropped beneath their level. They had a Master that knew them better than they knew themselves and their fall like that of Peter's later was used by Him for nobler work and a greater place in His testimony than they had conceived or their faith had yet laid hold. In saying a word on their failure we must not forget that their desire was to be near their Master and Lord and without doubt they will be near and with Him in the day when with their fellow-disciples they sit on thrones judging the tribes of Israel.

. . . . .

We are permitted to follow the Lord in the Gospel of Matthew and see Him (ch. 11), while here on earth in His own divine relationship as the unknown and unknowable Son of the Father and on through the many varied features of His glory right on through death, resurrection and ascension and to His coming again to be the adored Centre of a creation every part of which will ring with His praise and every part of which will bring its own quota to complete the glory for God's deepest delight.

May we connect for the reader the foregoing with some of the Epistles written for saints from among the Jews as following the Book of Acts. First and Second Peter with Hebrews connect closely with the Gospel which has Israel

and her King in view. The remnant of Israel which gathered round the Lord seen as wisdom's children are brought through the Book of Acts transferred from Jewish to Christian ground. These are addressed as in the Kingdom established at Pentecost, and in chapter two of the first Epistle called living stones in the new living structure which the Lord said He would build. The Lord spoke both of building and administration in Matthew 16, and both are seen here in 1st Peter. The Kingdom is still, of course, seen in mystery. But in the 2nd Epistle it is no more mystery, for the transfiguration of Christ in the Mount is there referred to as portraying the Kingdom in glory (Matt. 17. 1—8).

The Epistle to the Hebrews goes further, bringing out the deeper glories of the Lord as covering the ground we are on here in Matthew. Opening with His sublime grandeur as Son, the Creator, we are taken back to eternity to behold Him constituted Heir of all things. How exquisitely beautiful is the link with Matt. 11. 25—27. The unknown Son of the Father is the Creator and upholder of all things: the One Who is the brightness of Godhead glory, the express image of His substance, and Who upholds all things. So also He is constituted Heir of all things and in Matthew 11 we as it were see Him taking these all things from the Father. Again in Hebrews we get Him Son of Man under whose feet all things are put. Who of us in writing to Hebrew Christians would have passed beyond the Son of David to the Son of Man? But the Epistle goes beyond this to the utmost bounds of the creation (see Hebrews 12. 22—24). In this way the Spirit brings out the glory of Him whom man refused, linking up

those blessed features given in Matt. 11—17, with all that is intrinsic and eternal down to His Incarnation, humiliation and death, then on to the establishing the Kingdom in its present form and going on to the full manifestation in glory.

The Spirit, while bringing out the full glories of our Lord does not go on to the fuller and richer place of the Church as the Body and Bride of Christ. The truth of the Mystery as belonging to eternal purpose was

given through Paul. While Peter's Epistles and Hebrews were written for those from the circumcision, all that belongs to them as there brought out is shared by those other sheep which the Lord brings in from the Gentiles: and such are the inner intimacies of life and nature in the present economy of grace that all the deeper things of eternal counsels communicated to Gentile Christians are shared by those brought from among the Jews.

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### “Their own Company.”

We earnestly press upon our young Christian friends, that they seek the company of God's people. When you are free from your daily toil make your brethren in Christ your companions, like Peter and John, “who being let go went to their own company,” Acts 4. 23. Identify yourselves with Christ's interests, make them the great business of your life. Safety, security, happiness, the care that your spiritual babehood needs are all found in abiding under the sheltering care of the Head of the church. The church cannot preserve you, she is preserved; but as we “hold the Head” and cleave to the Lord we shall have joyful communion with all who are doing the same. You need your quiet times alone with the Lord, but you must not isolate yourselves from these who love Him; you need the blessing and help and comfort of family life, you will be a great loser without it.

---

### John 1. 29-35.

At this point (verse 35), the two disciples who hear John speak follow Jesus, not because they were commanded to do so, but because He had become the supreme object of their hearts. Their feet could but follow Him who had taken possession of their hearts. And this beautiful result of John's testimony was prophetic of that which now is in this day of the Holy Ghost. It is His great work to take of Christ's things and show them to us, to fill hearts with His beauty so that He

becomes all-sufficing. And here we have the fulness of the gospel and the effect of it. First, the Lamb of God, the sacrifice for sin upon the cross. Then that same blessed Person raised up from the dead and glorified in heaven, to give the Holy Ghost to all who believe in Him, and then Himself in that heavenly glory, the supreme object of the hearts of those whom He has redeemed—their Leader, Lord, and Centre.

## THE SOURCE OF PEACE AND ENERGY.

J. T. Mawson.

*"Princes also did sit and speak against me; but Thy servant did meditate on Thy statutes"* Psalm 119. 23.

*"I will run the way of Thy commandments, when Thou shalt enlarge my heart"* Psalm 119. 32.

THE Psalmist desired that his way might be directed by God's statutes (verse 5); he desired that it might be cleansed from every sin and inconsistency by His word (verse 9) and that he might not at any time wander from the commandments of God (verse 10), and he was sure that only God by His Word could preserve him from this, so he sought Him with His whole heart. Yet for all that he was a misunderstood man, not by those who were poor and humble, but by the princes of his people. Notice how he puts it: "*princes did SIT.*" While he walked and laboured they sat and watched him. They did not sit in the learner's seat, but on the judge's bench, and from thence they spake against him. Well, that is easy, even if it be presumptuous work. It requires no spiritual power to sit and speak against others, no God-given purpose no earnest prayer, no diligent study of the Word, though all these are needed if a man is to walk in the way of God's commandments.

Now while these princes sat in the judgment seat they were neglecting their God-appointed work. He had called them to bring their offerings to Him, as we read in Numbers 7; and to dig the wells for the refreshment of the people, as we read in Numbers 21. 18. God had given to them this two-fold ministry—offering to God, and refreshing the people; but these princes had forgotten their high and holy calling and were spending their

time speaking against a man whose heart was set upon the ways of God.

But the Psalmist was a wise man, made wise by the Word that he loved, and though he felt the hard words that were spoken against him, and felt them keenly, he did not retaliate, he does not seem to have thought it worth his while to defend himself. He turned to God and His word. He says "*But THY SERVANT did meditate in THY STATUTES.*" Wise man, he knew the source of hope and comfort and peace. It was the word that had caused him to hope (verse 49), and that same word was his comfort in his affliction (verse 50). We are reminded of a beautiful New Testament word, "That we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope" Rom. 15. 4.

It is a great stay to the soul of a man when he can look up into the face of God and say, "I am Thy servant;" he will be ready then to serve all, even the weakest of saints, and the weaker and more ignorant they are the more keen will he be to serve them; he will be ready to serve all men, yet be the servant of none. God's thoughts and will for His servants are revealed in His word and there alone, hence the Psalmist says, "Thy servant did meditate in Thy statutes." What peace that meditation would give him, what poise to his soul! How it would lift him above the irritation that this criticism would

otherwise have caused him! How it would help him to adjust his ways not to the opinions of his self-appointed judges, but to the will of God whose servant he was!

His meditation in the word of God revived his soul and made him eager not to walk in God's way only but to run in it. "I will RUN in the way of Thy commandments," he says. Now God's commandments are not grievous, yet not many seem eager to run in the way of them, and many who do desire stumble and fail, and seem to lack the spiritual power and energy necessary. The Psalmist had discovered the secret of this zeal and energy. "*I will run,*" he says, "*when Thou shalt have enlarged my heart.*" No man can run in the way of God's commandments if his heart is narrowed and his spiritual affections cramped. The christians at Corinth made a sad mess of their testimony and made no progress in the heavenly race because they were straightened by their worldliness and party strife, they had but a feeble apprehension of the fulness of the love wherewith God loved them, and the breadth and greatness of His interests on earth.

"*Be ye enlarged*" urged the Apostle. "I will run in the way of Thy commandments," said the Psalmist, "when Thou shalt have enlarged my heart." Fetters that bind the feet drop off when the heart is enlarged. Think of the words, "Strengthened with all might by His Spirit in the inner man, that Christ might dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth and height; and to know the love of Christ that passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God." Eph. 3. 16-19.

The traditions of men and their rules and regulations and standards of conduct chill and narrow the heart; it is this love that passeth knowledge, love that never faileth, that enlarges the heart, and the man with the enlarged heart will run, he cannot help it, and he will run in the way of the commandments of the Lord. "*And this is His commandment that ye should believe on the Name of His Son Jesus Christ, and LOVE ONE ANOTHER, as He gave us commandment.*" 1 John 3. 23.

## WHAT IS MAN?

T.O.

It may be worth while mentioning that whereas the Hebrew word for man "Adam" denotes earth, the Greek word in the New Testament (anthropos) is derived from three elementary words which combined denotes "the one who turns up the eye." That such should be the case is not an accident of man's mythology, it has been undoubtedly God-guided. Whereas other animals concentrate their thoughts entirely on earthly

things, man has the capacity to desire help from above. Whereas other animals have living souls connecting them entirely with their bodies; man has in addition a spirit which makes him capable of receiving light from God. He is created in the image of God with the specific object in view that he may glorify and enjoy God for ever. This end can only be consummated in association with the Christ as the last Adam.

## ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS:

### The Epistle of James.

Please give some help as to the Epistle of James. Was it written to those of the Christian faith or for Jews? And what application has it to us?—CARMARTIEN.

**J**AMES addressed the twelve tribes of Israel, dispersed in foreign lands, though he had specially in view those who had made profession of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. You will notice that he writes as "the servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ." It may be difficult for us to understand the condition of things amongst the Jews at that time. Multitudes even of priests and pharisees were obedient to the faith, Acts 6. 7; 15. 5, and yet they were zealous for the law and still offered sacrifices, Acts 21. 20, 26. It was a transition period, and God bore with the conditions for the time being to give all Israel time to repent, which they did not do. It was during this period that James wrote, and while he called upon those he addressed to be separate from the world, he said nothing about separation from Judaism. The call to come out of that was given to these Hebrew Christians at a later date in the Epistle that bears their name. "Let us go forth therefore unto Him without the camp, bearing His reproach," Hebrews 13. 13. The camp was

simply and only Judaism, out of which the Lord had been cast and which was then forsaken of God.

Though the Epistle of James does not give the full Christian revelation—there is in it no mention of redemption or of the body of Christ, which is the church,—we cannot do without this Epistle; the New Testament would be incomplete without it. It is essentially practical, and gives us the great principles for righteous living which stand true for all times. It lays before us the character that those should bear who have been begotten of God's own will with the word of truth. The fruits of the new life are plainly set forth and contrasted with those works that come from what man is naturally. We are instructed to look up, for all that is good comes down from above, and the way of righteousness and peace is set before us, a way that only faith can walk in, and the by-paths and false ways are clearly charted also. We shall not be losers by paying more attention to James.

### The Man-child and the great red Dragon.

Could you give me light on Revelation 12. 5. Who is the Man-child, verse 5? What does the great red dragon represent, verse 3? What does the beast rising out of the sea mean, chapter 21. 1?—ORKNEY.

**T**HE Man-child is the Lord Jesus Christ. The woman that brought forth the Man-child is Israel, according to God's purpose for her, and as she really will be in her glory during the millennial reign of the Lord over the earth. The great red dragon is

the Roman Empire, *specially energised by Satan and the direct tool of his opposition to the will of God for the earth.* The Roman power had reached its zenith in the past when the Lord was born, and at once His life was sought by Herod who repre-

sented that power in the land. He was crucified under Pontius Pilate, the Roman pro-consul, but raised again and caught up to God and His throne. But the Roman power was only the tool of Satan's malignity and he knew that the Man-child was the Seed of the woman that was to bruise his head (Genesis 3).

To the end of verse 5 we have history. The present parenthesis of grace does not come into the chapter. From verse 5 we have prophecy. The casting of Satan out of heaven and the trouble that shall come upon the earth and sea, and the persecution of Israel are future and cannot take place until the church is removed to heaven. During the great tribulation the Israelites will be the special object of Satan's malice, for he knows that God has made great

promises to them which will be fulfilled when the Lord returns to reign on the earth. The persecution that will rage against them under the revived Roman Empire will be initiated and energized by Satan with a view to their extermination in order that God's purposes might not be fulfilled.

The Beast of Rev. 13. 1—10 will be the great political and military head of the revived Roman Empire, and the second Beast, verse 11—18, is Anti-Christ, who will rule in Jerusalem. He will be an Apostate Jew, and is called the false prophet later in the book. Satan will give his power and subtlety to these two men and with him they will form an evil trinity, chapter 16. 13. Their doom is foretold in chapter 19.

## “The Lord's Prayer.”

Why do we not use “the Lord's prayer” in our public meetings? I think if it were recited at the beginning of a meeting some would be compelled to rise up and leave, realising that they are unforgiven because they do not forgive. It is a terrible thought, “Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive.”—ENQUIRER.

THAT which is called “the Lord's Prayer” is given twice in the Gospels. It has its place in the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew's Gospel, but in Luke's Gospel it was given in response to the disciples request, “Lord, teach us to pray,” evidently on another occasion. And the two are not the same; this you will see by reading the Revised Version and the New Translation by Darby. In Luke the Lord said “When ye pray, say, *Father, Hallowed be Thy Name. Thy kingdom come. Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our sins, for we ourselves also forgive everyone that is indebted to us. And bring us not into temptation,*” Luke 11. That is not the form used in public Christian services, but the

one given in the Sermon on the Mount; but even in this, as given in our Authorised Version, there is an interpolation. The final words, “For Thine is the Kingdom, the power and the glory for ever. Amen,” do not appear in either the Revised Version or in Darby's New Translation, and other Translations confirm these.

Whether it is the prayer as given in the more public sermon on the Mount or the one given in private to the disciples in Luke, each is perfect in its place; there could be no flaw in anything the Lord said or did. They gave to the disciples a perfect pattern as to what prayer should be in their then position and circumstances. In the Sermon the Lord had

been teaching them the true character of prayer in contrast to that which hypocrites practiced, and notice, He was not speaking of *public* prayer but of *private* prayer. *When thou prayest, enter into thy closet and when thou hast shut the door, pray to thy Father which is in secret.*" Then in contrast to the heathen they had not to use vain repetitions, as though they would be heard for their much speaking, for "your Father knoweth what things ye have need of." It must have been an entirely new view of things to those who listened with intelligence to His words. Then follows this perfect pattern of prayer for them, and also for us in its directness and simplicity and much more.

Now while the principles of this great prayer remain for us, we must remember that before the Lord's death and resurrection the fulness of grace and the final relationship in which believers were to stand with God as Father could not be declared and known. The Lord indicated this when He said to His disciples, "I have a baptism to be baptised with and how am I straightened until it be accomplished," Luke 12. 50, and again, "I have yet many things to say to you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when He, the Spirit of truth is come, He will guide you into all truth," John 16. 22, 23. In view of His departure to the Father and the coming of the Holy Ghost He said to them. "Hitherto ye have asked nothing in My Name," John 16. 24. Henceforward prayer was to be in His Name, chapter 15. 16; 16. 24. The prayer we are considering was not in His Name, for the simple reason that He was still with them.

To come to the particular request in it about which you ask, "Forgive

us our trespasses as we forgive." Before the Lord died and rose again the full and eternal forgiveness of sins was neither preached nor known, now it is the first bit of true Christian knowledge to be enjoyed by all who believe the gospel. We quote some of the precious passages that prove this. "In Whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace," Eph. 1. 7, "Having forgiven you all trespasses," Col. 2. 13. "I write unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you for His Name's sake," 1 John 2. 12. We have not now to pray for forgiveness, if we have believed we are forgiven, and we give thanks to the Father for it, Col. 1. 12—14. And being forgiven so freely and for ever, this becomes the measure and powerful motive of our forgiveness of one another. "Be ye kind one to another, tender hearted, *forgiving one another, even as God for Christ sake hath forgiven you,*" Eph. 4. 32, and again, "*As Christ forgave you, so also do ye,*" Col. 3. 13.

But you have in your mind the sins of the forgiven children of God, and particularly the sin of an unforgiving spirit, and certainly something does need to be said about that. If we sin after being forgiven once and for all, we sin as children and we have to do with the Father. This new relationship is not broken by our sin, but our enjoyment of it is. Communion with the Father is broken and it can only be restored by confession: not by asking for forgiveness, but by the confession of the sin that has caused the breach. This we learn from 1 John 1. 9, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness," "And if any man sin we have an Advocate with the

Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, chapter 2. 1.

If one Christian maintains a grudge against another and refuses to forgive, even to seventy times seven, he is evidently out of communion with the Father, his conduct is sinful, he is acting like those who do not know God at all, and the Father is displeased. He needs to have his conscience exercised and to confess how unlike the Father he has been, or he will surely come under the Father's chastening hand. It is entirely a question of the Father and His children, and not of the sinner's first approach to God, and as the Father He will not forgive for the restoration of communion with Himself if we do not forgive others.

To return to the prayer itself, we

might well continually incorporate every petition in it in our prayers, yet ever remember that we have now received the Spirit of God who not only instructs us in the truth but indicts our prayers in consistency with it; we are to pray in the Holy Ghost, Jude 20. We do not need any set form of prayer, if we are walking in the Spirit He will guide us as to what we should pray for at all times, and when we fail even in this He does not fail, for "Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings that cannot be uttered. And He that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because He maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God" (Romans 8. 26, 27).

## A HYMN.

W.B.D—y.

Here for a time in peace apart  
We come to meet Thee, Lord,  
In all simplicity of heart  
According to Thy Word.

The table speaks to us once more,  
That age-old Christian sign:  
The bread Thy body broken sore,  
Thy precious blood the wine;

Thy body broken on the tree,  
Thy blood poured out for us—  
So are our thoughts engaged with  
Thee,  
Thy beauty, and Thy cross;

The grace that brought thee forth  
to save,  
That met our deep need here;  
The love that took Thee to the  
grave,

That casts out all our fear;

And on beyond the tomb again  
Beyond death's bitter hour,  
To those bright scenes where Thou  
dost reign

In resurrection power.

Saviour, who bore our deep dis-  
grace,

Trod all that path alone,  
Lead us in God the Father's praise,  
Sons that Thy love hath won.

As we pamper the flesh we hamper the Spirit.

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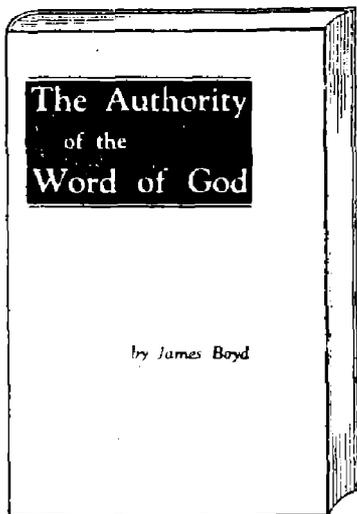
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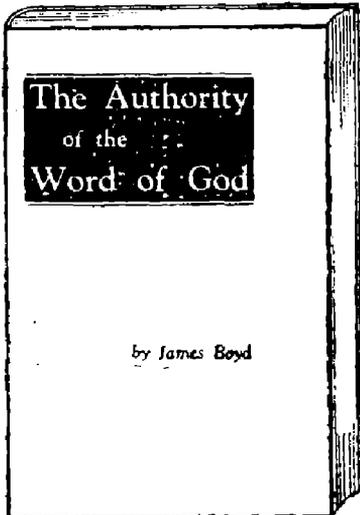
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# “WHERE DWELLEST THOU?”

*“Master, where dwellest Thou?”*

*They came . . . . and abode with Him. John 1. 38, 39.*

**M**ASTER, where Thou hast Thy dwelling  
Fain would I abide,  
With the sweetness of Thy presence  
Fully satisfied.

Hide me in that secret haven  
Where the strife of tongues  
Troubles not an ear enraptured  
With celestial songs!  
Where the enemy's assailings—  
All his subtlety—  
To disturb my soul's sereneness  
Powerless shall be.

In that fair abode my spirit  
Breathes her native air,  
Peace that passeth understanding  
Doth surround me there.  
Yea, the perfect joy of Heaven  
Is my blessed part!  
Strange that lesser things should ever  
Charm my foolish heart!

Keep me, Master, where Thou dwellest  
Occupied with Thee,  
So that body, soul and spirit  
Sanctified may be.

A. M. Chambers.

# THINE THE GLORY.

**S**AVIOUR, now on high exalted,  
Once despised and set at naught  
Man derided. God forsaken,  
Basely to a gibbet brought;  
Branded as a malefactor,  
Pierced thro' hands and feet and side,  
Loathed by princes, peers and people  
Friendless, mocked, betrayed, denied.  
Blessed be Thy name for ever!  
Blessed be the love divine  
That at such a cost would make us  
Thine, almighty Saviour, Thine.

By Thy dying Thou hast opened  
Unto us salvation's way;  
King and subject, prince and people  
May be blest and blest to-day.  
None too guilty to be pardoned,  
None too vile to come to Thee,  
Every soul on earth is welcome;  
Grace can save, and grace is free.  
Thine the glory everlasting!  
Honour, majesty and might  
Be to Thee in earthly places,  
And in heaven's highest height.

Lord of all the worlds created!  
Lord confessed by Thy redeemed,  
Lord of heaven, Lord of angels,  
Lord by hierarchs esteemed,  
Unto Thee be all dominion!  
When Thy Name shall mentioned be,  
Heavenly, earthly, and infernal  
Beings lowly bend the knee.  
Blessed be Thy Name for ever!  
Blessed be Thy love divine  
That at such a cost has made us  
Thine for ever, Saviour, Thine.

# He makes the wrath of men to praise Him.

**H**ERE in this dark world where the great seas rage  
And storms fill the night,  
Clearly and steadfastly from age to age  
Shines out Thy glorious light.

Though man be stricken in his greed for power  
And death ride grim and pale—  
Though all seem scorn and wreck in Satan's hour,  
Thy counsels shall prevail;

And from the deep mire of wrong and woe  
And the dead fruits of sin,  
By the strong utterance of Thy voice below  
The saints are gathered in;

Though the sharp sword of nations cleave the land  
And lusts of empire swell,  
Their power is tempered in Thine unseen hand  
To Thine own Israel;

And though in might across the earth to-day  
The dread conquerors pour,  
'Tis only that they blindly tread the way  
To God's great threshing floor.

More steadfast than the stars in their courses  
Thy hand is outstretched still,  
And the surge and shock of the world's wild forces  
But serve to work Thy will.

W. B. D—y.

# WHITER THAN SNOW

---

**T**O heart and soul how sweet Thou art,  
O great High Priest of God!  
My heart brought nigh to God's own heart  
By Thy most precious blood.

No more my countless sins shall rise  
To fill me with dismay—  
Thy precious blood before His eyes  
Hath put them all away.

My soul draws near with trust secure  
With boldness glad and free;  
What matters it that I am poor  
For I am rich in Thee.

Forgotten every stain and spot,  
Their memory past and gone,  
For me, O God, Thou seest not  
Thou lookest on Thy Son.

Is this a dream? Thou canst not lie,  
Thy Spirit and Thy blood  
Proclaim to sinners such as I  
The boundless love of God.

They tell Thy love, so deep, so free,  
They tell the Father's heart—  
Not what I am, or I must be,  
They tell me what Thou art.

Come, weary sinners, great and small,  
The door stands open wide,  
That blessed heart still welcomes all,  
O Lamb of God, Who died.

G.T.S.

# PRESS ON

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

Let us press on!  
The fog abyssmal woefully increases,  
The dread apostasy now near has drawn,  
God's holy Word is being torn in pieces;  
Bold with the sword unsheathed—*Let us press on!*

Let us press on!  
We shall not faint before the hosts infernal,  
Their confidence is shaken, courage gone;  
Once did they grapple with the Son eternal,  
Headlong and broken fell—*Let us press on!*

Let us press on!  
Called to a throne, a kingdom never-ending,  
A city bright that hath the sun outshone,  
A mighty Saviour His redeemed defending,  
And leading in the fight—*Let us press on!*

Let us press on!  
With thankful hearts let us embrace our calling,  
And for safe-keeping raise our orison  
To Him who can preserve our feet from falling  
And give us victory—*Let us press on!*

Let us press on!  
With wicked spirits is the conflict raging:  
Retreat is closed, we've passed the rubicon!  
For our destruction are they warfare waging,  
But God is on our side—*Let us press on!*

Let us press on!  
The land is ours, tho' held by the Pretender,  
So must we watchful be; rest comes anon.  
Our battle-cry is 'CHRIST!' AND 'NO SURRENDER!'  
Courage! The goal is near! **LET US PRESS ON!**

# THE CHRISTIAN'S LIFE

**H**EAR CHRIST, that formed by Him thou mayest be;  
**T**HINK CHRIST, for as a man thinks, such is he;  
**L**IVE CHRIST, that all men Him in thee may see;  
**S**peak Christ, that all may hear of Him thro' thee:

So shalt thou please the heart of Him who planned,  
Before were fashioned heaven, sea or land,  
That thou among His many sons should stand,  
Like Jesus, Chief and Firstborn of the band:

So shall unrieved the Holy Spirit be,  
To give thee power the unseen things to see,  
And in His high and holy office free  
To work the blessed will of God in thee:

So shalt thou be a tower of strength to those  
Who in a lonely land beset by foes,  
And fainting under all their weight of woes,  
Their souls to every fiery dart expose:

So shalt thou be in this dark world a light  
To guide, thro' the dark mazes of the night,  
The painful footsteps of the pilgrim, right  
To where the ransomed walk with Christ in white.

And when the desert path has all been trod,  
And when no more is needed staff or rod;  
When from celestial heights thou look'st abroad,  
How sweet to thee shall be the rest of God!

# SPREAD THE GOSPEL

---

**F**AR o'er the earth send out the joyful tidings  
Let the precious word be heard from sea to sea!  
Jesus has died—has risen again in triumph  
Satan's power is vanquished—sinners may be free!

No longer need they groan beneath sin's bondage,  
Labouring for nothing, toiling still in vain.  
Paid is the ransom,—opened is the prison—  
Tell them of salvation through the Lamb once slain.

See, from the grave come forth the mighty Conqueror,  
In His pierced Hand the keys of death and hell!  
All power in heaven and earth to Him is given,  
All the hosts on high unite His praise to swell.

Soon shall the universe be filled with worship,  
Everything that breatheth then shall praise the Lord!  
And sweet shall sound the song of ransomed sinners:  
"He alone is worthy! Let Him be adored!"

A. M. CHAMBERS.

# A CAUSE FOR THANKSGIVING

It was suggested at one of the meetings at Bangor that we should send some help to the Alvis Reis family in Lisbon, Portugal. It is well known that he is suffering a long term of imprisonment for a gigantic fraud on the Government, but has been brought to the knowledge of the truth and is now a most faithful witness for Christ. The response to the suggestion exceeded our expectation for £26 was collected. Those who contributed have the right to know what thanksgiving their generosity caused, so we give an extract from a letter from our brother in the Lord, Mr. George Howes.

Many thanks for your very welcome letter which I found awaiting me on my return from the morning meeting yesterday. Its contents caused indeed thanksgiving to ascend to Him Who is the Giver of all good: we *were* thankful for it came just at a time of special need, when our brother A.R., who has been, and is, very ill and suffering, needed special treatment which he can only get by paying, and this expense added to the many others was making it impossible at the moment for him to start the treatment. I had come to the conclusion that I must take the responsibility as I could not see him suffering so without treatment, and there came this gift direct from the Lord, and His people. I saw Mrs. R. at the meeting last evening and told her the news: she was so relieved and thankful, and though I told her I would go and see her husband this morning, she was so anxious to tell him the good news that she went round and got permission to see him, ere she went to her office, at 8 a.m.

During the last week or ten days our brother has been going out every afternoon for special electrical treatment, which they at last consented to give him and he has felt relief from this treatment, but for another ill he needs specialist treatment which has to be paid for, but there is every hope that the treatment may effect a cure. He has been suffering from two separate causes and whilst the one has yielded somewhat to the electrical treatment of the last few days, the other seems to have come to a head and is causing him a good deal of pain: he has been reduced to a state of great weakness.

We trust, however, if he can start this special treatment without much delay he may soon be feeling better.

It is of course very difficult for him having to go out for these treatments: he goes accompanied by two warders.

Do please, as far as able, convey to the givers the warm thanks for the gift and the love and prayers behind it, of Mr. and Mrs. Reis. The gift of £26 amount of collection made at Bangor and the further £2 and 10/-—£28 10s. in all, duly credited to our friend with a very grateful heart. Several pounds have already been passed on. At first our friend went out to his treatment in his prison garb, but last Friday was ordered to put on private clothes: he had none and had to get a borrowed suit, he will now be able to get a suit, indeed it is already ordered.

With love in the Lord to you both and all the friends.

Sincerely yours in Christ,      GEO. HOWES.

# WHEREIN LIES GRACE?

---

**W**HEREIN lies grace?  
Its praise from many is heard  
But less in the deed than the word.  
It is but the turning from self  
And the resting on God.

Not through our own devices  
Do we walk in grace ;  
Not in overmuch fasting  
Abstention from meats  
Or hard separation from persons or things  
(Though evil be judged)  
For in all these were mighty the Jews.  
But that same spirit  
By which we are also received  
In thought and action must live.  
And the debtor, forgiven much,  
Must also his debtor forgive.

Leaning on Christ  
Striving no more than we may  
Let us do with patience the task  
Clearly before us.  
And if it be nothing to-day  
What matter?  
Look up to Him  
Take pleasure in Him for Himself  
Apart from His work.  
Friends of the Lord Most High—  
Sons first, then servants maybe ;  
For gifts, which some have craved  
Last only a little. But grace  
Is ever our portion in Him :  
By grace we are saved.

W. B. D—y.

# THE MATCHLESS STORY

---

**T**HERE is a story, matchless in its beauty,  
A story of immeasurable grace  
That brought a Saviour to the lost and ruined,  
That took the Sinless to the sinner's place.  
The Son of God—oh! wonder of all wonders!—  
Descended from His high and lofty throne,  
Passed by the angels in their undimmed brightness,  
To walk this earth in poverty and grief alone.

Yet had He only lived that life of meekness,  
Separate from sinners, spotless, undefiled,  
The guilt of sin could never have been pardoned  
Nor rebels to their God been reconciled.  
The Son of God—oh! mystery amazing!—  
Died on a cross in shame and agony  
That sons of men who hated and despised Him  
Might share the joys of Heaven with Him eternally.

If that were all, how sad would be the story—  
A mighty love o'erwhelmed by mightier woe—  
But lo! the many waters could not quench it,  
No floods of judgment could that love o'erthrow.  
The Son of God—how joyful are the tidings!—  
Has ris'n in triumph from the silent grave,  
Seated above all power and all dominion  
Repentant sinners He is waiting now to save.

He yet shall see the fruit of His sore travail,  
Heaven shall be filled thro' everlasting days  
With countless multitudes from every nation  
Whose service it shall be to sing His praise.  
O Son of God: our hearts bow down before Thee,  
For Thou hast claimed us by Thy matchless love.  
Now let us live to be Thy willing bondslaves  
Until we serve Thee perfectly in Heaven above!

A. M. CHAMBERS.

*Tune: Londonderry Air.*

**I** SAW the flock of God, a goodly throng  
Of happy people spread in peace abroad  
O'er that fair earth in love's eternal light;  
Nor sun nor candle do they need; no night  
Is there, but endless day, the day of God;  
And every heart pours forth eternal song.

A trace of sorrow, death or curse, shall ne'er  
In that fair land be found; no sculptured stone,  
Symbol of crushed and broken hearts, no tears,  
No disappointments, no foreboding fears,  
No tree with fruit forbidden standing lone,  
Nor can the serpent ever enter there.

The hand of God hath wiped all tears away;  
No more a Visitor, as innocence  
Might into Eden's bowers have welcomed Him;  
Here shall He dwell unveiled, no distance dim  
Between Him and His creature, but from hence  
Sons with the Father for eternity.

Jesus is there, well known in His deep love,  
To walk with His redeemed thro' fields of light.  
There shall their hearts with holy joy recall  
His cross, His travail sore, His sorrows all,  
For them endured in love's eternal might  
That He might have them with Himself above.

O home of love! of life! of light divine!  
O radiant sphere of bliss! O for a tongue  
To tell the love of God, of Christ—the love  
Of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost! Above  
All creature thought! Above what hath been sung!  
The Father's house! Lord Jesus! Thine and mine!

# HOMAGE AND PRAYER.

O Lord, Thou Shepherd of the sheep,  
Who roused my earth-bound soul from sleep,  
Accept the homage of my heart  
For all that Thou hast done, and art :  
For humbling Thyself for me,  
For that great work on Calvary,  
For hope that lives beyond the grave,  
For Thy strong hand outstretched to save,  
For strength and faith beyond the flesh,  
For courage to rejoice afresh,  
For love and peace and gladness springing,  
And for the Holy Spirit's singing :

O Christ, Thou firstborn from the dead,  
The living water, living bread.  
Jesus the light of heavenly day,  
The perfect truth, the perfect way,  
Great witness of the Father's love,  
My life is hid with Thee above:  
Break with the furrows of Thy plough  
The worldly roots that grieve Thee now,  
That my brief span of mortal days  
May bring full harvest to Thy praise—  
That in my heart the pure seed growing  
May yield an hundredfold Thy sowing.

W.B.D—y.